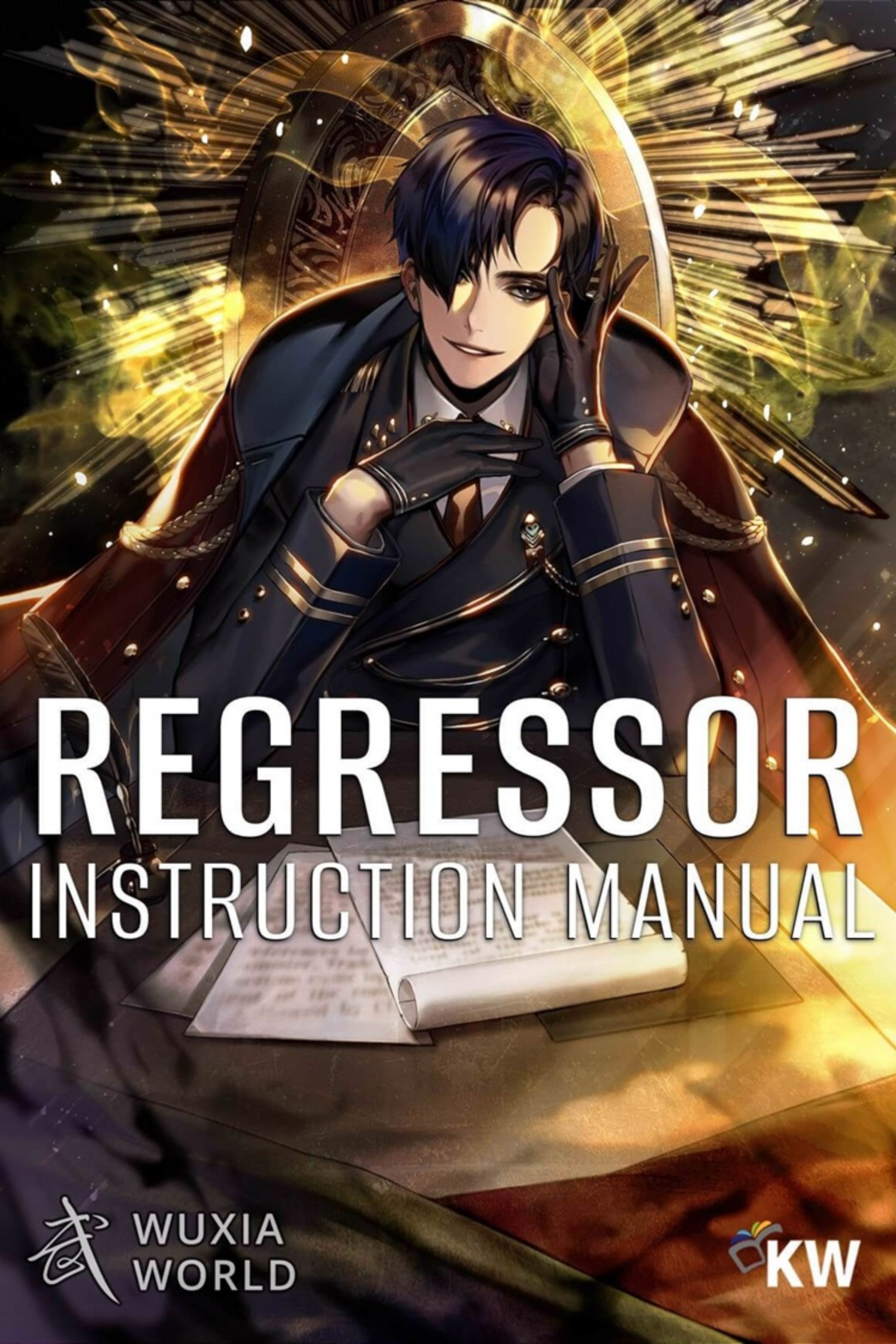
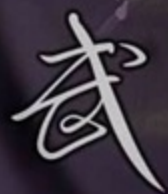




REGRESSOR

INSTRUCTION MANUAL



WUXIA
WORLD



REGRESSOR INSTRUCTION MANUAL

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CHAPTER 851

THE LAST (84)

'You have to keep this in mind: there is not going to be a third life no matter what you do.'

“ ... ”

“It was a fresh start... It was a dream about a new beginning,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“ ... ”

“You were laughing in my dream, and I saw not just you but Mr. Deok-Gu, Miss Ha-Yan, Miss Hye-Jin, and the other guild members as well. They were laughing with us. They were enjoying their daily lives without any pain or suffering.

“It's fun to go on explorations together, but it's even more fun to live a life free of any dangers,” Kim Hyun-Sung explained.

'I'll hear him out.'

“Mr. Ki-Mo would make silly jokes from time to time, and Mr. Deok-Gu and Ye-Ri would laugh at those jokes. As always, you were still a workaholic, but you'd sometimes just stare at the guild members training from afar.

“We traveled around the continent on our griffons, just like you wanted, and we did everything with everyone,” Kim Hyun-Sung added.

Kim Hyun-Sung was trembling. If I were him, I would also understand what my ridiculous dream was telling me. Although he didn't mention it being the third life, it wasn't that difficult to deduce that he was telling me indirectly that there would be a third life.

He had made this selfish comment to see my reaction, and I was sure he was worried about what I would think of it. After all, I was the saint who had sacrificed himself.

“No one died, and no one was sacrificed in the tutorial dungeon either. All the wars and incidents that had happened here, and everything that made your life difficult never even happened...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“...”

“You never lost your memories, and the hardships that had traumatized you never happened. It wasn’t just you. Everyone on the continent... they were living a happy and healthy life. I can’t tell you everything that happened, but that’s what I saw.

“It was a new beginning that was full of laughter,” Kim Hyun-Sung added.

Bullshit. For a moment, I looked at him as if he were pathetic, and he was so surprised at my reaction that he got a bit scared. He seemed to regret mentioning his dream, but he bit his lips and carried on.

“T-The... moment I harmed you... at that place—” Kim Hyun-Sung paused.

“You can’t undo what had already happened,” I interrupted him.

“No, I can do it. There’s a way to undo it. You already know how, Mr. Ki-Young,” he argued.

“How?” I asked.

“We can start anew, just like what I saw in my dream,” he answered.

“Do you really think that I’d agree to that fantasy of yours?” I asked.

“It’s not a fantasy,” Kim Hyun-Sung replied.

“Then what is it?” I questioned.

“I’m telling you that it’s actually possible,” Kim Hyun-Sung replied.

‘Yeah, I’m sure it’s actually possible, but what are you going to do about it?’

“That will not undo what had already happened. Even if we start anew, are you certain that Lee Ki-Young and the other guild members, whom you know, will remain the same as they are right now?” I asked.

“That’s...” Kim Hyun-Sung paused.

“Of course, there are memories I want to forget. There are experiences I don’t want to think about and memories I find painful to even recall, but I wouldn’t be who I am today if it weren’t for those memories.

“If it weren’t for those hardships, Ha-Yan, Deok-Gu, Hye-Jin, and our people wouldn’t be here today. If it weren’t for those incidents, our relationship wouldn’t become so deep,” I explained.

“...”

“Everyone wants to forget the hard times, but those hard times made us who we are today, so I don’t want to let go of those,” I explained.

“There might be a way to go back in time without losing our memories. Having one regressor is—”

“Our relationship with people isn’t the only thing I’m talking about. The same applies to the locations where we have fond memories. The new Sacred Democratic Country won’t be the same Sacred Democratic Country that we know by then. The new Laios and the Mirror Lake will change as well.

“The castle walls of Castlerock will go back to before it was repaired, and the Federation will regress to its state prior to our restoration plan. The same goes for Heren. The things you’ve described to me will cease to exist as well,” I told him.

“But...!”

“I want to make memories, but I want to make those memories here—where I spent time with the guild members and my people. I want to live in this place where I experienced so many things,” I added.

I glared at him with a bit of hostility, and I was basically saying...

‘Is that all you’re capable of doing?’

It was so dramatic.

‘Are you that incompetent?’

I didn't necessarily list the things we needed to sacrifice to start our third life, and I didn't mention the people who had been sacrificed to create the current continent.

I also did not mention abandoning the current continent and the people worshiping the light. I also didn't say anything about driving the continent to a corner until restoration was impossible.

However, I was sure Kim Hyun-Sung knew what my current expression meant, even without me telling him explicitly.

The biggest reason why I did not want to start a third life was that it was going to be an annoying life. Of course, the reason did not really matter. The best course of action here was to make him give up on his fantasy.

Kim Hyun-Sung's reaction to the hostile light was a sight worth seeing.

It was only for a brief moment, but I felt like a wave of negative energy had burst out of him. I could tell he was getting anxious.

I glared at him briefly, but his breathing had already become unstable.

He looked like he was going to have a seizure, but he gathered his courage and spoke up.

"Y-You said you wanted to make memories, but how could you do that when you're not here?"

"I said that I'll return—"

"What if you're lying this time, too?!" Kim Hyun-Sung shouted.

"No..."

"We could start another life!" Kim Hyun-Sung yelled.

"..."

"You might have said that to me to make me feel relieved. You might not be able to return, even though you've been telling me that everything was okay."

"When are you coming back? If you could even come back, you would have already done it. I'm sure you're lying again. I'm sure of it..." Kim Hyun-Sung complained.

"I'm going to come back," I said.

"Don't lie to me," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"I can go back," I told him.

"Stop lying, damn it..." Kim Hyun-Sung mumbled.

"I want to come back, too," I said.

"You're... lying," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

This bastard really had no trust in me. However, it kind of made sense, as he still ended up getting backstabbed so many times, even though he was wary and always suspicious of people. It looked like he was throwing a tantrum, and I was so bewildered by the fact that it felt like we could no longer understand each other.

'Why is he kicking up such a big fuss when I already told him that I'm going to come back? Why is he glaring at me like that? He might end up hitting me.'

To make things worse, he looked like he was about to cry.

Kim Hyun-Sung looked more and more anxious as the sky changed.

'How much time do we have left... We don't have time for this... '

There was something I was kind of worried about, but...

'There's nothing I can do about it.'

It was a bit funny, but there was no way he'd force his beliefs on me.

I looked at him quietly, and he flinched a bit.

I just stared at him quietly, and he became more and more scared as the silence went on.

In the end, he lowered his head because he couldn't look me in the eye. His aggressive tone of voice softened, and he eventually became quiet as well.

'That's what I'm talking about.'

'How dare you raise your voice at me despite knowing my current condition? You're the one who did this to me, so you have no right to speak to me like that. Are you really raising your voice at me after seeing my wounded abdomen?'

"Trust me," I told him.

"..."

'I'm not lying this time.'

"You have to trust me," I emphasized.

"..."

"Who will trust me if you don't? I know it's hard to understand, and you're anxious right now. You probably resent me, but I'm not lying. I love the Blue Guild more than the continent, and I'm also waiting for our reunion," I said.

'Cat got your tongue?'

I was sure that there were many things he wanted to say, and I wouldn't have anything to say even if he went on a rant and started yelling at me.

However, I believed that he still had trust in me—no, he was telling himself that he needed to trust me. After all, I still had infinite trust in me even after what he had done to me.

'I still trust you despite what you did to me.'

This was my reward for maintaining our friendship despite the fact that he had stabbed me in the stomach. Of course, I knew it wasn't intentional, and he would never do something like that.

I had full trust in him, and I supported him until my last breath.

'He has to repay me.'

The light would never forget its debt, but it wouldn't force others to repay it. I was going to tell him, "Since I trusted you, you need to trust me as well," and the timing was actually great.

"Trust me," I repeated.

I raised the sword while looking at the changing sky as if it was time.

Of course, I couldn't harm myself, which was why I had to look at Kim Hyun-Sung again.

The hesitant man approached me slowly. He glanced at the colorful sky before staring at me. Of course, he was already crying, and he wasn't even sure if he could pull this off.

'You can do this.'

'We'll do it together. I won't let you carry the burden alone.'

The two of us grabbed the sword. I looked kind of funny holding the sword.

Kim Hyun-Sung's hands were trembling as he sobbed, so I had to grip the sword tight.

"I'll come back," I reassured him.

"Okay... Heuk... Okay," Kim Hyun-Sung cried.

"I'll really come back," I said.

"Okay. I trust you, Mr. Ki-Young," he said.

"I trust you as well," I told him.

He was frowning, and I had no idea why, but he closed his eyes tight.

However, he seemed to have thought that he needed to pay attention because he decided to open his eyes. His eyes were trembling.

I nodded at him while smiling, and he forced himself to smile, which was quite funny in my eyes. He was crying, but he forced the corner of his lips to go up. I almost burst out laughing at the amusing sight, but I calmed myself down.

“Ready?” I asked.

“Yes, I’m ready,” he replied.

Kim Hyun-Sung didn’t seem ready, but he looked like he had made up his mind. I could feel his resolve, and it was all thanks to the Regressor Instruction Manual. We’d do it on three. After conveying my intentions through expression, I nodded at him.

One...

Two...

Three...

‘Ah...’

I thought my head was about to go flying, but the sword fell to the ground.

I looked up and saw Kim Hyun-Sung covering one of his eyes.

‘It’s over.’

Kim Hyun-Sung's face was distorted like a demon's face, and the flames of rage burning within him seemed to have gnawed away at his reasoning.

‘Song Soo-Kyung, you bastard! You’re so bad at getting the timing right.’

The low-key villain had finally made his move.

CHAPTER 852

THE LAST (85)

'At least he's not dumb.'

I had to give it to Song Soo-Kyung for obtaining my corpse while the key figures of the guild were out.

'How did he get through Ha-Yan's magic?'

It had to have been difficult. I *did* give him information, though.

It was impossible to tell him how to remove the spell, but I had planned out the route and had given him hints in advance. Still, I was shocked by what he managed to do. It was true that Jung Ha-Yan was busy in Laios right now, but it was still difficult to avoid getting caught by her.

There was a chance that he had gotten help from Belial. Yeah, perhaps Belial had lent him a hand, but I was still surprised by the fact that he actually managed to achieve his dream. He succeeded in surprising me with a competence that was unlike him.

'But why now?'

I got a bit scared. Honestly, I felt more scared than when I was about to get stabbed.

Kim Hyun-Sung frowned while crying with an expression that I couldn't quite describe.

He was acting strange while covering one of his eyes.

'He's feeling it.'

I immediately used the Telescope to look at Song Soo-Kyung.

It had been a while since I saw him, and he looked gloomy. He had also lost some weight, and it seemed like he was at rock bottom. Perhaps it was because the

demons had influenced him, but anyone could tell that he wasn't normal.

His eyes were trembling, and he seemed worked up, which was probably the reason his breathing was unsteady. Perhaps he was happy that he was about to get even closer to his god, and he was humming as he kept moving his hand.

Song Soo-Kyung's figure trembled as crimson liquid dripped from his hand to the altar.

"Stop it! Stop it!" Kim Hyun-Sung roared, but I was sure it wasn't because he was feeling pain. I could not feel pain, and even if I could feel pain, there was no way he'd scream like that for me. He rarely showed pain whenever he was hurt, so why would he start acting like a baby now?

"Damn it... damn it!!! *Ahh... ah!*" he screamed.

He was crying while screaming, which was an absurd sight in my eyes.

I was sure he thought that his connection to the Regressor Instruction Manual had gotten disconnected. It was like removing the external hard drive connected to a laptop. I wasn't sure if that was what he actually felt, but he looked like he was having a seizure.

'Ah, this is bad. This is really bad.'

"Mr. Hyun-Sung..." I called out, sounding anxious, but he did not react because he was focused on his eye. The bastard standing on the altar was humming a tune as he drew something using what looked like a red liquid. It was kind of hard to explain, but it looked like some kind of religious ceremony.

The air around him and his gestures were solemn, and even his humming sounded like a gospel.

"Ah..." Song Soo-Kyung raised a golden orb. He examined the orb and smiled brightly as if he had discovered a treasure. I thought he detested me, but he was staring at the orb with sincere awe.

'He looks like a maniac.'

He was crazy, but it wasn't to this extent. Perhaps it was my fault.

- It's finally done...

Song Soo-Kyung mumbled.

- The resurrection of the Son of Light. This was the condition. I'll become the Son of Light. I'm taking it.

The way he muttered to himself made him look scary.

- I... Now I-I can stand next to them. *Ha... haha... hahahahaha!*

He laughed as he pressed his hand on his eye, and his laughter filled the quiet space. I saw light enveloping him, and a golden light sparkled in one of his eyes.

"Ah... Heuk... Ahhh... Heuk..."

'Shut up, man.'

- *Haha... hahahahaha! Hahahahahahaha!!!*

'Man, they are too noisy.'

- So this was it. This was the difference between you and me. This was the difference between me and the Son of Light. *Haha... Hahahahaha...* This was the power I needed to stand next to them!

Could that even be considered an item? Well, I might be right, considering his reaction.

'I expected it, but it received a higher rating than I expected.'

Of course, it was not strange at all.

I had no idea exactly what system my body was under, but the fact that I could use Benigoa's statue as a catalyst meant that others could use my body as an ingredient as well. Now that I thought about it, the Sacred Democratic Country, the Vatican, and the Blue Guild had been wasting my body.

My body was at least a Mythic-rank item or a catalyst. It was a priceless treasure. It was a valuable artifact that would have a tremendous impact on the continent.

People could make a ton of money selling a dragon's corpse, so imagine just how much money one could make by selling a corpse containing a god's divinity?

If the Sacred Democratic Country weren't as powerful as they were today...

If Kim Hyun-Sung and Jung Ha-Yan weren't in the Blue Guild...

If the denizens of the continent were less civil...

If more people knew about the fact that my body was a priceless artifact.

If these conditions weren't true, the continent would have long gone to war over my body.

'And my eye would probably be the most valuable... '

One of my eyes was gold as if to show everyone that I was the Son of Light. It was a Mythic-rank item that belonged to the Son of Light.

Its abilities were probably...

'Mind's Eye, Lee Ki-Young's Telescope, and the Regressor Instruction Manual.'

Of course, it definitely had other effects as well such as holy power buffs.

This was kind of off-topic, but Belial wasn't lying when he said that it wouldn't have that big of an impact on me because the corpse of the Son of Light and I had been completely separated.

If I had to give an example, it was like an inheritance left by the gods.

The things left behind on the continent, like pieces hidden in dungeons, quests, and events, were items that could be used or copied by borrowing the power of the gods through those inheritances.

My eye was definitely the same.

Of course, it was a downgrade compared to the original, but it was still really useful.

Song Soo-Kyung would not be able to look at everything using Mind's Eye, but he

could definitely see basic stats and the people's nature. He wouldn't be able to use the telescope freely, but he might be able to see as far as his mind could allow him to see.

I was sure it would be difficult for him to form a bond with Kim Hyun-Sung, but he might be able to learn a few things about the latter. The chances were low, but Song Soo-Kyung could make some impact.

More importantly, he was definitely happy about the fact that he could feel the golden eye's holy power, as it meant that he was qualified to wield it.

'My heart is still there.'

Song Soo-Kyung raised his dagger again, looking happier than ever. He was convinced that he could become even more perfect. He was moving cautiously, but his movements were decisive. Actually, he looked like he was moving urgently, but he was pouring his heart and soul into this.

He quietly cast a spell. The magic circles on the altar shone, illuminating his face. Kim Hyun-Sung definitely didn't feel that, but what if he could see it? *Could* he see it?

"Hyun-Sung?" I called out.

"Damn it... damn it... I'm going to kill them," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

'No, don't kill them.'

"I-I'm going to kill them all," Kim Hyun-Sung added.

'That's not a good idea.'

"Heuuk... heuk..." Kim Hyun-Sung cried.

'You haven't gone mad, have you?'

Kim Hyun-Sung looked so unstable that I couldn't help but question his sanity. His mind had always been unstable, but he looked more unstable than ever. He was like a balloon that was on the verge of popping. I couldn't really read his face because he would smile and then cry like a maniac. I even got scared because he kept saying strange things.

Seeing him act crazy like this made me worried that perhaps I had cornered him a bit too much.

'I-I need to do something.'

I couldn't really do the math. I thought I had experienced many surprising moments up until now, but I had never been this surprised. I had no idea what to do. I had worked hard to convince him to believe me, so I couldn't tell him to sacrifice me again.

I honestly had no choice, and taking Song Soo-Kyung's side wasn't the right move, either.

However, I would be able to provoke Kim Hyun-Sung that way.

Unfortunately, not going beyond the line was my only choice here. All I could do was tell Kim Hyun-Sung that it was okay while playing the victim. Telling him that the sacrifice wasn't intentional and that he had been forgiven was the stance I had to show.

First, I decided to touch my eye as well. I frowned as if I was surprised and in pain.

'Ah, of course, I have to avoid looking like I was in too much pain because it'll be hard to stop Kim Hyun-Sung the moment he blows up.'

"..."

'Why aren't you showing any reaction?'

"..."

'Why aren't you saying anything when I'm in so much pain?'

Obviously, I thought Kim Hyun-Sung was going to run to me to check my condition, but it did not seem like he was going to do that.

However, his frown deepened at the sight.

Kim Hyun-Sung's arms shook as tears started rolling down from one of his eyes.

He looked like he was going to explode from anger. All his hair stood on end, looking like it would burst out of him. He tried to suppress his fury, but he was having a hard time controlling his emotions.

Kim Hyun-Sung wasn't even looking at me, and he looked like me whenever I was distracted. I assumed he was looking at the altar, where my body was located.

And that was when a shadowy figure jumped out of Song Soo-Kyung's chest and swallowed the Son of Light's heart. Light poured out of his figure, but he didn't stop despite the overflowing holy power.

He was definitely thinking that he could squeeze more value out of my corpse.

'He's pretty frugal.'

The Son of Light started to look horrible as a result. His face was dirty, and his white clothes were soaked in blood. Indescribable things in many different shapes were rolling around his body, and every part of him was destroyed.

Bloody tears rolled down naturally from Song Soo-Kyung's golden eye, but he was still smiling. It seemed like he didn't want to destroy the saint's smile, who had died peacefully.

- Ha... haha...

A demon's cackle echoed out of Song Soo-Kyung's mouth, and he looked down at his body for a moment before shoving away the body on the altar as if he no longer had any interest in the corpse.

A loud *thud* echoed, and the saint's smile disappeared. I couldn't really see the corpse's face because it was falling to the ground on its face, and the Son of Light's blood-soaked face collided with the ground.

"Aaaah...! AAAAAHHHH! AAAAHHH!!!" Kim Hyun-Sung screamed while holding his head.

CHAPTER 853

THE LAST (86)

"AAAAAHHH...! AAAHHH!! AAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!" Kim Hyun-Sung screamed.

'You're... okay, right?'

"Gaah... Haa... Ahhhhhhhhh... ahh..."

'Our Hyun-Sung will be able to handle this, right? You can get back up, right?'

"Heuuuuung... Heuk... Kgh... Ha... Ahhh... Ack!"

'You can do it, right? I believe in you.'

"Ack... Ah... ahhhhhhh... Heuk... Heuuuuung..."

'H-Hang in there... '

"Ha... haha... Ahh... Heuk... Hahaha..."

'What should I do? He must be going crazy.'

Kim Hyun-Sung was getting destroyed in real time, and I couldn't watch him get destroyed. He was shaking his head and was running rampant like a madman. The sight was confusing to me, and it was so scary that I was hesitant to approach him.

It was like I was watching him have a seizure live.

I know this was a shocking scene for Kim Hyun-Sung, but I never imagined he'd suffer so much damage. Moreover, it was just a shell. I'd understand Kim Hyun-Sung's reaction if Song Soo-Kyung was destroying my body while I was still alive.

However, Song Soo-Kyung was just desecrating a shell. We could just reassemble my body later like a toy, and there wouldn't be any problems.

Sora and Ha-Yan could also make me a new body, but I was convinced that it wouldn't be necessary, as I'd have my own body upon my revival.

"Ahh... Heuuuk... Ahh..." Kim Hyun-Sung screamed.

It wasn't *that* bad that he needed to wail and vomit.

"Ahh... ahhhhhhhhh..."

'I think he's actually going to go insane. What should I do?'

I should have a counseling expert or a psychiatrist in advance.

I should have created a group that would take care of Kim Hyun-Sung's mental health.

'You're in danger.'

Our lovely regressor had always been suffering from a few—no, dozens of indescribable mental illnesses. Considering what he had gone through in his first life, it'd be strange if he were mentally stable.

I had no idea how to define his mental illnesses scientifically, but he was in an extremely dangerous state. He looked like he was walking on thin ice.

He wasn't showing it on the outside, so I had never noticed his symptoms.

Looking at him now, though, I was starting to notice that there was something wrong with him.

He was making random noises, and he was muttering gibberish. He was having a hard time breathing as well, and he had grabbed his chest in pain. He was crying so much that I couldn't simply describe it as him just crying. I had never seen this side of him.

He was acting as if he was being treated the same way as that shell.

It was like he was crumbling away, and his one and only pillar of support was crumbling.

'He might actually become semi-paralytic. What should I do?'

I felt like he was going to turn into an idiot or suffer from aphasia. I felt like I was staring at someone having a mental breakdown in real-time.

'I need to stop him from crumbling down.'

I had to use the Regressor Instruction Manual to stop him.

'He might be acting this way because he thinks I won't be able to come back.'

I need to tell him that the shell wouldn't impact me that much, even if it ended up getting destroyed. He grabbed his head and knelt down, so I knelt down as well and placed my hand on his shoulder.

"It's fine," I told him.

"Ah... ahhhh..." Kim Hyun-Sung moaned.

"It's fine. Everything... will be fine," I repeated.

'But what's Ha-Yan doing? What are you up to?'

I was worried about the others, so I quickly activated the Telescope and saw that they were still busy. Of course, taking care of the issue before me was the top priority. I calmed myself down and added, "I'm here. It's okay."

'One, two.'

Kim Hyun-Sung's breathing was uneven, so I guided him on how to breathe.

I wasn't sure whether this was effective or not, but I could tell that he was following my breathing technique. I patted his shoulder, grabbed his shaking hand, and comforted him quietly.

There were things that couldn't be shown with just actions, so I talked.

"Mr. Hyun-Sung, look at my eyes. I'm right here," I said.

"Ahh... Heuuuuk... Ahhhhh..."

"I'm right here. Everything will be okay, so calm down. I'm right here, so I'm fine. Everything will be fine," I reassured him.

"Heuuuk... Heuuung... Heuk..."

"I'm fine," I repeated.

His clumsy hand landed on my shoulder, and I could tell that his breathing was calming down. He was still crying, but he was no longer having a seizure.

He wasn't screaming, so I assumed that he was starting to pull himself together, but I wasn't sure if he was even sane enough to hold a proper conversation or not.

His eyes were returning to normal. I wasn't certain, but he seemed to have realized his current situation. Desperation was in his eyes as he looked at me, and he seemed to understand what he really needed to protect and that it was the person before him.

"Ha... hahahaha..." Kim Hyun-Sung laughed.

"Have you come back to your senses?" I asked.

"Hahahaha... haha..." he continued laughing.

"Mr. Hyun-Sung?" I called out.

"Hahahahahaha!" Kim Hyun-Sung laughed.

'Ah, we're fucked.'

"Mr. Hyun-Sung..." I said.

"..."

"Mr. Hyun-Sung?" I repeated.

"Yes."

'Ah... '

“M-My mind feels a bit clearer now. Thank you, Mr. Ki-Young,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“I can explain everything, Mr. Hyun-Sung. First of all—”

“Yes... I knew you would say that again. I... knew,” Kim Hyun-Sung interrupted.

‘I’m really trying to explain the situation to you.’

“I don’t know what’s going on either... I don’t have the details, but I can be as rational as possible—”

“Yes, rationally... I knew you were going to say that you’re fine... and that it's nothing. I-I knew you were going to say that,” Kim Hyun-Sung interrupted me again.

Blood spilled out from where Kim Hyun-Sung bit his lips, and he looked like he was chewing on his own lips. There was indescribable anger in his eyes, and blood was flowing down his tightened fist.

He laughed and then smiled quietly. He looked as if he had given up on everything.

‘Are you serious?’

Kim Hyun-Sung had given up.

‘Are you being serious right now?’

I could tell what he was thinking.

“Mr. Ki-Young,” Kim Hyun-Sung called out.

“...”

“Mr. Ki-Young.”

“Yes?” I replied.

“I-I don’t know why... or what I’ve been fighting for,” Kim Hyun-Sung confessed.

“That’s...”

“I don’t know why... I’ve been carrying such a heavy burden,” Kim Hyun-Sung continued.

‘The harsh reality has truly struck him.’

“I think you should calm down a bit, Mr. Hyun-Sung. Right now, you’re too...”

“I did all that... and made the people around me suffer... just to protect bastards like him...” Kim Hyun-Sung mumbled. “He’s just one human. The demons... have probably—”

“You had to die... for these good-for-nothing bastards,” Kim Hyun-Sung interrupted.

“So...”

“You had to go through all of that because of pests like him,” Kim Hyun-Sung added.

‘What’s wrong with you?’

“You’re telling me... it’s okay to sacrifice... and that everything will be okay. You might be fine with it. You’ll pretend like nothing is wrong again; you’ll be understanding again and say that you’re willing to carry all the burden...” Kim Hyun-Sung muttered.

“Mr. Hyun-Sung, all I’m saying is that we should look at the situation more objectively. This is...”

“How can you say that after seeing what he did to your body?! H-how can you say that despite knowing what’s happening?!” Kim Hyun-Sung shouted.

‘Did you just yell at me?’

“I’m not fine,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

‘I’m scared.’

“I’m not fine,” Kim Hyun-Sung repeated.

He got up quietly.

“It’s fine if we don’t go back. I won’t care what happens next,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

'What's wrong, Hero of the Continent? Our Sunset Swordsman.'

"I won't kill you, Mr. Ki-Young," Kim Hyun-Sung added.

The sky was still changing, and the sign was approaching because an odd-looking aura had shrouded the sky. It was a re-enactment of that time.

The Outer Gods weren't actually coming, but it felt like the dungeon was about to give us a penalty for failing to complete one of the main events. That foreign light was the system that controlled the dungeon.

'He has to kill me now.'

"We don't have time, Mr. Hyun-Sung. I'll... keep explaining it to you from up there. For now..." I paused.

It was kind of strange to ask him to cut off my head, but he had to do it now. Otherwise, that odd-looking clump of energy would fall, and the continent would perish.

However, Kim Hyun-Sung walked away, abandoning me as if he didn't care about me. I pushed out my stomach a bit more, but he did not notice it because he was trying hard to look elsewhere.

His firm determination not to be swayed anymore was commendable, but it was bad timing. I quickly grabbed his leg, as I needed to do something here, but he just looked down at me quietly. No, looking down at me was fine.

"D-Don't go," I begged.

"..."

Kim Hyun-Sung walked forward, and I naturally fell forward.

"Ack."

I tried to exaggerate my pain, but I saw him spreading his wings.

"Don't go," I repeated.

“...”

He floated slowly, so I got up and ran toward him.

I tripped and fell on purpose, but this guy ignored me. He was still out of his mind.

“Mr. Hyun-Sung!” I shouted.

“...”

“Come back!” I screamed.

‘Kill me first, you bastard. You can leave after.’

“Kim Hyun-Sung!” I shouted again.

‘Kill me, damn it.’

“You bastard!” I cursed.

‘How dare you ignore me?’

“Don’t go, you bastard!” I yelled.

‘You jerk.’

“Hey, you fuckin’ bastard! You fool! You idiot! You annoying bastard! Hey! Hey! Kill me before you leave, you bastard!” I cried out.

‘Kim Hyun-Sung, you bastard!’

“You’re going to regret this...” I mumbled. He had abandoned me on this snowy mountain. “You’re going to regret it.”

CHAPTER 854

THE LAST (87)

'How dare that bastard abandon me?' I bit my lips before I started walking away.

'Heartless jerk.' I kicked the snow, but the snow flew up pitifully for it to be considered as me venting out my anger. "So you're going to do it alone?"

How admirable. Admirable indeed.

It was great that I managed to become so close to Kim Hyun-Sung for him to confess his true identity as a regressor. It was also excellent that he allowed me to carry his burdens with him.

However, if I had to be honest, I'd admit that it was starting to get annoying how he was starting to rely on me more and more after every single incident.

Actually, I found it more sad than annoying; I knew he had become a bit passive, as his decisions didn't always lead to great results, but his passiveness was a bit extreme at times.

"Yeah, you're so admirable. No one is as admirable as you," I said.

He *did* grow, and it was true that I wanted him to start acting independently, but...

'This is strong.'

I wanted him to become independent, but it had to be within my allowable range of independence. I had never given him permission to run outside of that range.

It was hard for Kim Hyun-Sung, but I couldn't give him instructions for every little thing.

He knew I was injured, but he didn't turn around and return to my side. Instead of doing that, he just went ahead and abandoned me, which was a crime in the Self-governing Republic of Lee Ki-Young.

He deserved life in prison or the death penalty.

To make things worse, even the incompetent Thronus didn't abandon me despite the chaos at the time.

'He still hasn't come back to his senses.'

Kim Hyun-Sung had yet to realize what was truly important here. He knew how bad the situation would become without me, but he was still being stubborn. Unfortunately, there was nothing I could do about that.

I had to make him regret it again—revenge was better than cutting ties and abandoning him.

I looked up at the sky, and I got the feeling that something had happened.

Actually, something was definitely going to happen to me now that Kim Hyun-Sung had left me here.

Cha Hee-Ra and the Sacred Democratic Country were probably thinking about getting the troops and heading North. I was not sure whether this could be fixed or not, but armed groups that had sensed this change were probably thinking that something had to be done.

It had already happened and could not be undone.

At this point, I had to figure out how to fix this.

Actually, I was not even sure whether I needed to think about it or not, as the answer was simple. My movements were limited as well. Should I abandon this body and head up, or should I stay here? The fact that my holy power was being consumed in real-time was kind of bothering me, but it was an amount that I could pay.

First, I decided to use the Telescope to stare at Kim Hyun-Sung.

He was flying like a maniac, so it was hard to follow him. He was biting his lips as he was flying, and he was obviously heading toward Song Soo-Kyung. He was definitely feeling bad because he was crying, but they were nothing more than fake tears.

'You're crying? You have no right to cry.'

-...

'Look at those fake tears.'

- I'm sorry. I'm sorry...

'Your apology will not be enough.'

- I'm really sorry...

'You shouldn't have done it if you were going to apologize for it.'

I decided to look away since I didn't notice anything special.

'Song Soo-Kyung.'

- Well done, Mr. Song Soo-Kyung.

- I did nothing. It's all thanks to your support.

- Did you get what you were looking for?

'He's focused on his ridiculous plan.'

I saw him opening his eyes slowly and talking. I couldn't understand why he had decided to appear in public with one of his eyes closed, but it was probably to make himself feel good.

- Yes, I did get it.

His golden eye was shining brightly, and the faces who were watching him quietly brightened up. Obviously, everyone looked at him with respect, and Song Soo-Kyung seemed satisfied with their reaction because he started trembling.

His ecstasy lasted only for a moment, but he didn't seem to be thinking about anything. I understood what he was feeling, as the thoughts of the people before him were far from his main interest.

His hands were covered in blood, but he didn't seem guilty about what he did. He acted as if he had gotten what he deserved and had simply reclaimed what belonged

to him.

I wouldn't be surprised if he told everyone that a brand-new world had opened up for him.

'This is worthless now.'

Surpassing those in power, garnering the people's respect, and going beyond everyone's expectations definitely felt worthless to him at this point. Of course, it wasn't like he was chasing after those things in the first place.

However, I was sure that the energy that had pervaded him was telling him something—that he was on the same level as the gods and that he had become something markedly different from ordinary humans.

'I'm different.'

Or...

'I'm on the same level as him.'

Or...

'I'm beyond human.'

Song Soo-Kyung's reaction was amusing to me, as he didn't get there using ordinary means.

- How is it?

- The Federation's issue has been handled, but anomalies are appearing in the North. Judging by what has happened so far, this may be the second coming of the Day of Destruction.

- The second coming of the Day of Destruction... I see. How are things in Laios?

- Miss Jung Ha-Yan is currently taking care of things there. The Sacred Democratic Country is under Miss Oscar's command, so I think it'll be difficult to send reinforcements to the frontline right now. Additionally...

- Looks like we need to take care of things on our side fast. I'll head North as soon as things are sorted out here. I think it's a good idea to head to the frontline for now, as the places where another main event is supposed to happen need reinforcements as well.

- Yes, sir...

- I'll go there myself so that I can give strength to the troops.

- Will you be okay?

- Of course.

- Also, there's something I need to speak to you about in private, Mr. Song Soo-Kyung...

- Go ahead.

- Can I ask... what we should do about *that*? It's just...

- Well...

- Yes?

- I think we should leave it alone for now. We'll take care of it after everything is over...

- Okay. I'll prepare the griffon.

- No, I'll head there myself.

It was funny seeing him spread his pair of wings slowly.

- *Huh...*

- *Ooooooooooooooh...*

- *Oh...* as expected...

- Mr. Song Soo-Kyung, you're really... O God...

- The soldiers' morale will rise.

'Idiot. He was having so much fun that he spread his wings. He might die soon, though...'

He looked pretty excited upon checking the North's condition, and I could relate to him.

I was sure he was floating on cloud nine, and it wasn't just because he was happy that he had completed his mission. He was also really excited about the event that was going to take place in the North.

'I would think the same thing if I were in his shoes.'

Erasing the history of the Sunset Swordsman and the Son of Light...

The ability to change history was not exclusive to those handling the main events. Song Soo-Kyung wasn't so different from Hee-Ra noona. There were many things they regretted not doing during certain events, but they had the chance to correct those regrets now that those certain events were happening once again.

I was sure Song Soo-Kyung's imagination was running wild, and he definitely felt a shiver down his spine just imagining himself standing next to the Sunset Swordsman and overcoming the world-ending crisis before the denizens of the continent.

He had always wanted to take my spot, so I knew he'd react that way.

He wanted to fill the void I had left.

What I found a bit surprising was that he couldn't feel Kim Hyun-Sung right now.

'Is there a range penalty on the Regressor Instruction Manual?'

He wasn't the perfect partner for Kim Hyun-Sung, so I sat down and started tapping my thigh, pondering about what was going on.

I had yet to decide on what I was supposed to do or which path I was supposed to take, but I knew the best path to take.

I had no choice but to say something to him because my investment would go down

the drain once this body of mine perished. Since I had decided to raise him as a villain, I needed him to play the villain role properly.

“How is it?” I asked.

-...

“How’s the new power?” I questioned.

- Do I have to answer?

“Congratulations. You've basically earned your rights. Amazing,” I complimented him.

- I’m sure my rights aren't the only thing I earned. I probably...

“No. The basics were given to you, but you’re not at full strength yet. Can you feel it?” I asked.

- What are you talking about?

“Can you feel it right now? The God of Sunset... I’m asking if you can feel him within yourself,” I clarified.

- What are you...

“...”

- Of course, I can feel him.

“What do you feel?” I asked.

It was definitely a vague feeling.

The best way to describe it was a fuzzy sensation on a foggy day, but it seemed like he could feel that incongruity clearly.

I was sure he was starting to feel Kim Hyun-Sung as the latter approached him. To make matters worse, he was aware of Kim Hyun-Sung's thoughts and why the latter was approaching him at such speeds.

-...

Kim Hyun-Sung was emitting an immense amount of malice, anger, and killing intent.

- Why...

“ ... ”

- Why?! Why?! Why?! Why?!

“It’s because you’re incomplete,” I replied.

- Why?! O God! Why have you backstabbed me? *Heuk... heuuuk... Ahhhh!* Why?! What am I lacking?

‘I think this bastard has definitely gone mad.’

Song Soo-Kyung started crying, and a huge wave of tumultuous emotions swept across him.

“You’re still incomplete, Mortal. You’ve yet to absorb that power completely, which is why you can’t control it properly. You can only spread two pairs of wings,” I answered.

- *Ahh... ahhhh!* That man is trying to kill me. He’s trying to destroy this world! What should I do? What should I do... if he says that he came here to kill me?

‘He really looks like a madman.’

- I can finally stand next to him, but why is he so angry?

‘You really don’t know?’

- What the hell... am I lacking? *Heuk... heuuk...*

It seemed like he had been consumed by madness.

He had always looked like a crazy bastard to me, but he appeared even crazier now.

I was not sure just how massive was the demon's influence on him, but he looked

like a leftover rotten apple. His eyes no longer sparkled in excitement and happiness; he was now filled with anxiety.

"I will be with you," I said.

- *Ahh... God of Sunset. Why have you... Why... What did I... Heuk... heuk...*

"What you lack is the soul," I told him.

- Soul...

"Yes, the soul of the Son of Light," I said.

- The soul of the Son of Light?

I was sure that he liked that. This was a gift from the tattered Ki-Young, who was crucified and could only look down at the ground helplessly.

This was also my gift to Kim Hyun-Sung.

'I'm actually the giving tree.'

I had decided to give away everything I had for the continent's sake.

CHAPTER 855

THE LAST (88)

"What's... going to happen now, unni?" I^[1] asked.

"I-I'm not sure," Benigoa responded.

"You do know that the situation is too serious to give that kind of answer, right? Shouldn't we withdraw while we have the chance? It's kind of late, but if we report it to the higher-ups, we can still fix this," I suggested.

"I trust Lee Ki-Young," Benigoa said.

"That bastard is mentally ill! He's just a psychopath! Fixing this now and contacting the God of Sunset separately is the most reasonable thing to do here. The continent is doomed at this rate.

"I mean, just look at the God of Sunset right now? Do you really think he looks friendly to us right now? We have to contact him and explain our situation first. We have to tell him that this isn't our fault..." I told her.

"..."

"We have to tell him that before he destroys the continent, comes up here, and swings his sword at us!" I shouted.

"Listen to me, Lauren!" Benigoa yelled.

"Unni... what I mean is..." I paused.

I had to close my eyes. When I opened my eyes moments later, I saw *him* smiling.

'That psychopathic bastard.'

I had no idea what Lee Ki-Young was thinking, and my blood started boiling at the thought that he had tricked my innocent Benigoa unni.

'The continent is really going to get destroyed at this rate, and it's not like we can interfere. Isn't it technically over?'

The continent had already become a dungeon, and the system had already made its decision, so there was a limit to how much an outside force could interfere.

The foreign light pervaded the sky, and the penalty for failing the event was probably a re-enactment of the Day of Destruction, but that foreign light wasn't the same foreign light at the time.

The system had given the penalty, so outside interference was impossible.

"I know I haven't watched over this continent for a long time, but I'm sure about one thing. I have never seen a continent go to shit like this. The Great War, the Liberation War of Others, and the war that occurred due to the great famine weren't as bad as this one," I told Benigoa.

'It's a complete mess.'

I had seen many wars caused by human greed, interest, and other things.

I also saw humans fighting to stop monsters, demons, or entities from space, but I felt like all those crises were just a drop in the ocean compared to what was happening right now.

'It's a huge mess.'

There was no better way to describe the current situation.

Monsters were running around everywhere, there were battles across the continent, and the war that had broken out in the region where one of the main events had taken place was still ongoing.

The God of Sunset—the one and only person I could trust—had lost his mind.

Moreover, the guy who went down there to fix these issues ended up just fanning the flames...

"How could I not be worried? It's over. I-I came here because I trusted you... Of course, I'm not blaming you, b-but this is... What are we going to do if this doesn't

work out?" I asked.

"I-I told you to just trust Lee Ki-Young," Benigoa answered.

"That bastard is just a psychopath! He's addicted to self-harm. I'm sure he doesn't even know what he's thinking. I don't know what made him go crazy, but... No, I don't know what he's so unsatisfied about, but his actions look nothing more than causing a commotion in my eyes," I said.

"..."

"He's just doing whatever he wants, and he has no plans of yielding. I'm sure that control freak is thinking that it's better to ruin the continent with his own hands rather than having someone else ruin it. It's already going in that direction," I continued.

"W-We're bound by a contract anyway, so ignoring him now is impossible a-and Lee Ki-Young isn't that reckless," Benigoa stuttered.

It seemed that Benigoa unni was uncertain as well. Actually, she trusted him to a certain extent, but I could tell that she was being swayed by my words. She probably had an idea as to what he was up to, as she had been watching him closely.

In other words, it was possible that she agreed with my words.

'I'm not wrong.'

"How about we take a look at the contract together? There might be a loophole we can use... Ah, I'll call Elune right now..."

"Lee Ki-Young and I are going to do everything together. T-That's our oath..." Benigoa interrupted.

"This is a sinking ship. Just look at that. How are we going to save that? Is there anyone there that's thinking about saving the continent? It all went wrong, and it started with the God of Sunset. The continent is going to get destroyed at the hands of a newly born god. It's so absurd that the other gods will definitely not believe us. We'll be a laughingstock for the rest of our lives," I explained.

"We have Lee Ki-Young," Benigoa said.

'You're wrong. He must've brainwashed you long ago.'

At this point, using force was my only choice, so I unknowingly tightened my fist and stared deeply at Benigoa.

"He's not *that* stupid." I heard an annoying voice.

I turned and saw Belial. He adjusted his glasses using his finger and smiled as if he was enjoying all this. I wanted to use my halberd to get rid of his smug look, but the fact that I couldn't do that was the biggest regret of my life.

"Aren't you already on the same boat? I recommend enjoying this a little longer," Belial suggested.

"Who said you could talk to us? Unni, stay behind me. You're nothing but a smelly, disgusting demon," I said.

"If the Son of Light and Darkness were an idiot, he wouldn't make it this far. Looking at him now, you're not wrong, but I'm sure he has a reason for doing that," Belial said.

"..."

"It's not enough," Benigoa commented.

"What's not enough?" I asked.

"L-Lauren... we need to earn more. You understand, right?" Benigoa asked.

"You too?" I questioned.

"We don't have enough, and there are only two dungeon clear conditions, anyway. The events happening right now are ways to help clear those conditions, not to reach our goal. I know the situation isn't that great, but all we need to do is fulfill one of those conditions. You don't need to be so nervous," Benigoa explained.

"It's either the end of all life or the revival of Lee Ki-Young, Lauren," Benigoa added.

"I know, but I don't understand how that's related to what that psychopath is doing right now. The former is impossible, anyway. Unni, you're not actually... thinking

about cutting ties with Elune, are you?" I asked.

"..."

'Why are you looking away, unni?'

"O-Of course not. Elune is a precious friend and comrade of mine. I want things to end here as well, and I'm sure Lee Ki-Young is thinking the same thing. There's no third life. One of the dungeon's clear conditions is Lee Ki-Young's revival," Benigoa answered.

"I heard, but is that really possible?" I asked.

"If it were impossible, we wouldn't gather like this. Don't you agree, Benigoa?" Belial asked.

I had heard of it. I had heard about the contract with Lucifer, about that human named Lee Ji-Hye, and the fact that the psychotic Lee Ki-Young wanted to go down there.

'Lucifer and Lee Ji-Hye are the keys to this.'

I was sure I also heard something about insurance.

"Is holy power the insurance?" I asked.

"That's right, Lauren. Lee Ki-Young wants to be completely independent, not just from the higher-ups but from Lucifer as well. We spent more than we expected trying to handle the event and the issue Lee Ki-Young was going through.

"However, I'm sure he's aware of that as well," Benigoa replied.

"And that's why he's acting that way?" I questioned.

"There's a need to show the onlookers what they want to see. The stage and the roles have been set, but there's no impact," Benigoa replied.

"What kind of impact?" I asked.

"There's no evil. There's no villain who did all this," Belial answered.

'There is a villain, and her name is Lee Ji-Hye.'

"I don't understand what you're saying right now," I complained.

"A villain who will take the blame for everything that's happening right now. We need to create a figure who's on the opposite side of the Sunset Swordsman and the Son of Light.

"It's simple. The onlookers will get hyped up watching that, and they'd spend holy power. It's cliched, but the royal road cannot be blocked. A great crisis will create a great story. Justification is necessary, too, of course," Belial explained.

"..."

"Justification to bring back the Son of Light and Darkness. This is needed for that process. A story the mortals will understand. I can't say that everything is going smoothly, but this story is heading toward the end. The other side is lacking, which is why this situation happened," Belial continued.

"..."

"That's why he planted the seed inside the human named Song Soo-Kyung," Belial added.

'That crazy, scummy demon. Scummy human.'

Benigoa unni looked away and stepped to the side.

'Y-You're innocent. You just got tricked.'

I was angry for a moment, but the ongoing situation seemed reasonable if that was indeed Lee Ki-Young's goal.

Creating a villain was easier said than done, though.

I wasn't sure how long it had been since he came up with that idea, but he was probably thinking that a proper sacrifice was necessary.

He needed an actor who was somewhat smart but easy to use. Of course, the actor needed to be able to play the role properly as well.

Their character needed to be torn down through the contract with a demon, and they had to be granted holy power through the Son of Light's inheritance. I was sure that wasn't all, and there was definitely something unknown to me.

"I just want to tell you that creating a vessel isn't easy," Belial commented.

That human wasn't enough. He was too weak to stand on the opposite side of the Sunset Swordsman and the Son of Light. He wasn't superhuman, nor was he a genius. He was competent, but he was a type of human that was different from the Red God of War or the God of Magic.

He was never deserving of holy power, and I was sure there was a limit to the legend he'd end up making if he somehow managed to make one.

It would be unreasonable to say that he was the same type of human as Lee Ki-Young.

He actually had a weak mind; he was easily swayed, and he often relied on others.

He wanted to find something he could rely on mentally, so he made his own messiah.

His ambition was to come up here and stand next to us. He was frustrated because he had shown his ugly and jealous side and had passed his responsibility onto others...

In other words, He was just like any other human.

"Why would he go that far?" I asked.

"The Son of Light and Darkness hates it when other people touch his things. It's surprising that you're even saying that, Lauren. There are many people everywhere, who have met an unfortunate end by incurring the wrath of gods, demons, and other transcendent beings," Belial replied.

"..."

"Trying to find a reason is useless. Anyway, the important thing is that it's not enough. I'm sure the seed will sprout soon, but that's still not enough. And that's probably why..." Belial continued.

'And that's why he's acting like that? To show to the viewers?'

"You're telling me he's not acting that way because he wants to get back at the God of Sunset who had abandoned him? Unni, are you sure that I'm wrong?" I questioned.

"..."

"..."

'Why is everyone looking away?'

"It's possible... w-we're here to support him, but we just need to do our part. What happened to asking Elune about borrowing holy power?" Benigoa asked.

"I got it, unni," I responded.

"We don't have much time left, but go ahead and try asking around. We won't be meeting with the higher-ups anymore. Try talking to the ones you're close to and—"

"I-I'll handle it, unni," I interrupted.

"L-Lauren, you know I trust you a lot, right?" Benigoa asked.

"Yes, o-of course," I answered.

"I'm being serious this time, Lauren. There won't be any mistakes. Lee Ki-Young is the smartest whenever he's emotional," Benigoa informed.

She was definitely right, and I instantly understood what she was trying to say. It made sense, as he ended up becoming the Son of Light despite that scummy soul of his. Of course, I still had many questions. It didn't matter that much, but it seemed like everyone had unanimously decided not to talk about it.

Since I had decided to join them, I needed answers to my burning questions.

"Unni, can I ask something?" I asked.

"Yeah," Benigoa replied.

"What in the world is that pendant^[2] around the God of Sunset's neck?" I asked.

“ ..”

“Also...” I trailed off.

“ ..”

“Why aren’t the God of Sunset and the Son of Light aware of it?” I continued.

“ ..”

“Who... erased his memories?” I asked.

Benigoa unni’s eyes widened, and Belial touched his chin.

1. Lauren's Point of View ➡

2. last seen on ch 543 ➡

CHAPTER 856

THE LAST (89)

It wasn't easy to ask about something they had implicitly chosen not to talk about, but I^[1] felt like I wouldn't be able to do anything if I didn't get an answer.

I turned and saw Lee Ki-Young laughing like a lunatic.

'How did Benigoa get involved with someone like him?'

If I had known that this would happen, I would have kept a closer eye on him. Benigoa unni and Belial were silent, but I had already rolled the dice.

'I need to say something.'

I saw them looking at me when I spoke again.

"I haven't... been observing the Son of Light for a long time, but I'm sure about one thing. The Sea of the Abandoned Dimension beneath Mirror Lake isn't an easter egg. It was clearly born from a bug. It's also strange that a shabby, man-made boat managed to that place."

"It can't be a bug, Lauren. That's..."

"Yes, that's why it was never fixed. I'm sure the others are thinking of the same thing," I interrupted.

"..."

"It might be what the system wants," I added.

"..."

"I thought the system had decided to give gifts to the God of Sunset and the Son of Light because of the irregulars, which are the Outer Gods. I felt like the Sea of the Abandoned Dimension was the system's way of giving them a chance to earn a ton of

additional stat points for free. It would have happened if they had chosen Longinus' Lance, but unfortunately..." I trailed off.

"..."

"They didn't pick Longinus' Lance. In addition, I've never seen them use that *pendant* during the Day of Destruction and the War with the Outer Gods. They haven't used that item at all, as if they didn't obtain it in the first place.

"The followers of the Son of Light who had gone to the Mirror Lake with him and even the Son of Light himself can't remember it. The same goes for the God of Sunset, who's wearing the pendant. There's no record of it in the Continental Archives, either. Isn't it safe to say that someone has intentionally erased its existence?" I asked.

"Looks like you've done your research. I applaud your efforts," Belial commented.

"It's because I thought joining this place was the same as gambling. I should at least be informed," I said.

"L-Lauren, do you not trust me?" Benigoa asked.

"It's nothing like that. I just want to be certain. It's more for you than me," I replied.

There were definitely many bizarre things—no, the word "bizarre" was an understatement to describe the ongoing situation.

'Just what exactly is it? Why can't I find it?'

It was interesting how I couldn't find any information related to that item. It didn't exist in the Continental Archives and I couldn't see it with my eyes either. However, it didn't make sense that someone was intentionally blocking my eyes.

However, if that was the only explanation, then I had an idea as to who was behind it.

"I think Lucifer is behind it," I said.

"..."

"I'm sure it's her. Am I wrong?" I questioned.

Only a demon like Lucifer could pull off something like this. After all, only high-ranking demons or high-ranking gods could do something like this. The question was why Lucifer would do something like that?

Why was it affecting the Son of Light and his followers?

'It's a Mythic-rank item.'

Lucifer had abandoned Longinus' Lance, which was a weapon capable of killing a god, and chose that pendant. The demon obsessed with efficiency had actually let that item go to waste?

Wait, could it be that the pendant itself had chosen Lee Ki-Young? After all, why would the pendant come to an agreement with Lucifer, knowing that Lee Ki-Young wasn't going to use it, anyway?

What was so important about it that he had erased his own memories just to conceal it?

"I don't know about you, but I don't think that scummy demon has decided to join us for no reason. You joined because of the potential profits, right? Unlike me, the two of you probably thought that the Son of Light would continue watching over you.

"I guarantee that you two have checked that pendant before that pendant had influenced someone. I'm sure at least one of you knows about it, but it's highly likely that both of you know about it, so just tell me," I demanded.

"..."

"..."

"That's—" Benigoa said.

"Benigoa." Belial interrupted.

"I can't tell you," Benigoa said.

"Why?" I questioned.

"Lee Ki-Young told us not to tell anyone," Benigoa replied.

“What? What do you mean?” I asked.

“It’s like I said. He didn’t want anyone else to know,” Benigoa answered.

“But it’s the item that he picked himself...” I argued.

“I-I don’t know the details either, but Lee Ki-Young requested that we don’t tell anyone before he erased his memories. He told us not to tell a soul. He even said not to tell him about it no matter what happens.

"That’s all he said to us. I’ve never seen him so anxious at the time, so I’m sure it’s really important,” Benigoa explained.

“Did you know this as well, Belial?” I asked.

He definitely knew about this.

‘What the hell is it?’

I was annoyed because he seemed to be enjoying this situation. I felt complicated, as I could definitely force an answer out of him.

‘Why won’t Benigoa tell me? Even that demon knows about it.’

“Of course, I know,” Belial replied.

I had no choice but to instinctively raise my halberd.

“Tell me, you damned demon,” I threatened.

“I’m bound by a contract, so I’m in no position to tell you. Nothing will change even if you find out, though. I don’t really know what the Son of Light and Darkness has planned, but everything is his choice and his will.

"Secrets and security exist to manage variables,” Belial explained.

“...”

He sat on a desk, and I saw him taking a bite of an apple.

"I don't think you're capable of creating variables, but he's very cautious. I mean, he erased his own memories, which is a testament to his cautiousness. I can't tell you, as there's no guarantee that you won't cause trouble using the Son of Light's cards," Belial added.

"Erasing his own memories..." I mumbled.

"Obviously, it's to win the bet he had made with Lucifer, but he's actually trying to nullify the bet using methods that'll be profitable to him. Lucifer is probably feeling burdened.

"It's ideal that he lays the foundation himself. He's the Son of Light and Darkness, after all, and it wasn't really that difficult of a task. He just has to erase his own memories and put his plan in motion. Pretty easy, right?" Belial said.

"That bastard's a lunatic," I cursed.

"There's no reason to be happy about variables, but his plan will inevitably succeed even with variables," he added.

"I won't create any variables. I just need to know whether this will harm Benigoa unni or not. Even if it will harm her, I will not do anything. I just want to be prepared when disaster strikes," I said.

"L-Lauren..." Benigoa stuttered.

"..."

"I'm fine. Even if the plan fails, Lee Ki-Young said he'll take care of whatever happens afterward," Benigoa continued.

'He could be lying.'

I had to protect her. She was like a child lost at sea. Seeing her hold my hand as if she was touched by my words made me worry that she had actually gotten scammed. For some reason, it was hard to ignore the pleading light in her eyes, which I found to be a bit unfair. Even if we'd both end up in hell, anyway, we still had to figure this out. Even if we had to go down the point of no return, I still needed to join them because...

'It's too late for Benigoa unni. She can't get out of this anymore.'

I thought the least I could do was stay beside her and hopefully prevent a bigger disaster.

Belial revealed a radiant smile and showed me the contract.

I knew this was going to happen, but it felt even more terrible than I imagined.

For a moment, I hesitated, thinking that I wasn't supposed to do this. However, I couldn't back down after seeing Benigoa unni point out the place where I was supposed to sign with sparkling eyes.

I couldn't find any issues in the contract. There was a basic confidentiality clause, and the penalty for revealing secrets was stated clearly as well. I saw Belial's seal, too, so the contract itself was solid. However, the act of signing it felt disgraceful.

I looked away and signed.

Benigoa finally spoke, and she sounded like it wasn't a big deal at all.

"It's Altanus' Inheritance," Benigoa said.

"What?" I asked.

"The name of that Mythic-rank pendant is Altanus' Inheritance," Benigoa clarified.

"..."

"It's a pendant that grants wishes," Benigoa said.

"..."

"As a penalty, the user will disappear," Benigoa added.

"..."

"Basically, it's a pendant that'll grant his wish, but the Sunset Swordsman will disappear as the price to pay," Benigoa said.

“W-Why did he choose such an item?” I questioned. Benigoa probably had no idea, but a certain question popped up in my head, and it made things harder for me.

“Why did the Son of Light choose an item that would kill the God of Sunset upon using it? Why did the God of Sunset even accept the pendant that the Son of Light had given to him?” I asked.

I didn’t expect an answer, and I also thought I needed some time to myself to think.

“Why...” I mumbled.

The Son of Light and his followers probably had no idea about the penalty.

It was also possible that only the owner could check the penalty. However, the Son of Light’s eye was special.

I was not sure about his followers, but he was definitely aware of it.

It didn't make sense otherwise. Was this a part of the foundation that he had laid out, or did he simply hate the Sunset Swordsman? Did he suddenly get the urge to get revenge?

“Do you really think that’s when Lucifer had gotten involved? When exactly were his memories erased, and when did they make the bet? H-How come the God of Sunset can't check the details of the item around his neck?

"That’s the strangest part to me. How is he unaware of the existence of an item that he owns? It's a bit confusing, but an owner should have the right to check the details of their owned items," I said.

“...”

“I’m sure it was possible back then, as he was just a mortal. However, he’s become the God of Sunset. Don’t you think it’s strange that he can't check the details of the items that he owns?

"Even Lucifer isn’t capable of hiding that kind of information from the item's owner. It’s also Altanus’ Inheritance, which means that it wasn't from Lucifer. I’m sure the system wouldn’t allow—”

The Regressor Instruction Manual.

“The Regressor Instruction Manual?” I said.

“ ..”

“ ..”

It was possible for the Son of Light.

“The Regressor Instruction Manual...” I repeated.

It was definitely possible with his power—the Son of Light could definitely control him.

He could completely erase the pendant from the God of Sunset’s memories and make him completely unaware of the item's existence. Lucifer couldn't do that, but it was easy for the Son of Light. I still had many questions, but I became sure of one thing.

“The details of the bet wasn’t whether the God of Sunset was going to kill the Son of Light or not. I-It was whether he was going to use that pendant to save the Son of Light or not,” I stuttered.

“Maybe...” Belial commented.

“The reward wasn’t the revival of the Son of Light,” I added.

“ ..”

“It’s the revival of the God of Sunset. He’s gathering holy power to save the God of Sunset, not to save the Son of Light...” I said.

1. Lauren's Point of View 📌

CHAPTER 857

THE LAST (90)

“Kim Hyun-Sung... Kim Hyun-Sung... you’re dead meat,” I^[1] said.

“...”

“No matter how much I think about it, I just can’t forgive you, you jerk,” I said.

He needed to pay for his choices and honestly, I was feeling a bit emotional, but anyway, it needed to be done, right? I wasn't sure about anything else, but he had made a grave mistake by abandoning me.

Between the continent and me, how could he abandon me? I had devoted my whole life to supporting him, so how could he just leave me just like that? He was like the apple of my eye, but he didn’t hesitate to leave me behind.

This was why I shouldn't have treated him so well.

I asked myself those questions, and I nodded to myself.

I knew things would be really difficult for him emotionally, but I didn’t pity him at all.

‘I have to tame him in advance.’

It wasn’t just going to be a few decades.

Since we would be together for hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of years, this initiative was necessary. It wasn't really difficult, and it’d just be another show for me.

I needed this show. Even if a side story was added to the script, it wouldn't change anything at all.

I just had to use a lot more holy power than expected.

The script was already in progress.

A distressing scene like this was required for a movie to be a hit, and becoming a hit was better than just breaking even.

Once he regretted it at least once, he'd never make that mistake again.

'Villain Song should be enough to achieve that.'

And Belial was ready as well...

I was worried about whether he was carrying out his task properly or not, but there wouldn't be a huge problem.

He was already mentally unstable, and he couldn't make any sound judgement.

He seemed like he was relying on the demon's voice, so if I played my cards right, he might end up in the same situation as the organization of the Republic.

Since he had the downgraded version of my eye, he'd probably show some resistance toward Hyun-Sung. At the very least, he wasn't going to die that quickly.

'And he has me... '

If Song Soo-Kyung wasn't good enough, I could lend a hand.

The actors were about to gather on the stage soon.

If possible, I wanted to make preparations before that, so I had to say something to Jo Hye-Jin, as things would become pretty desperate by then.

The main event in the North had gone to the dogs, so we were basically off course now. The system had kindly hinted at us how to clear the dungeon, but we didn't follow those hints.

I was kind of nervous, but it wasn't a problem.

'This is still a dungeon, anyway.'

In other words, this dungeon wasn't any different from the other dungeons, except

for the fact that it was extremely massive.

Just like how we cleared the curse of the Cursed Shrine using alchemy and how we cleared the Rift Museum using our wits, there were other ways to clear this dungeon.

It was actually simpler than the other dungeons we had cleared, as there was a clear goal here.

'Resurrection isn't the only important thing.'

Rather than sending all troops to the North to take care of what was happening there...

"I can just go there," I said.

'I'm going to beat up Kim Hyun-Sung first as soon as I go down.'

Lee Ki-Young's revival was one of the dungeon's clear conditions.

The mythic-rank dungeon "The Continent Where the Son of Light Was Sacrificed" would no longer be a dungeon the moment I went down there. The chaos would calm down, and everything would go back to normal, so there was no need for me to take any more risks.

Unfortunately, there was a minor issue. We still had no idea how to bring myself back.

'That's why Jo Hye-Jin is here.'

That was why it was important to find Lee Ji-Hye. Naturally, contacting her was the top priority.

"Hye-Jin," I said.

- Yes, sir?

"Have you found her?" I asked.

- Yes. As you said, there was a clue. Of course, we're not sure whether it's a trap or not, but we're currently moving there with Alps.

'Nice. I knew it.'

- How did you know?

"Do you need a reason to know that? Do you really think there won't be a reward for clearing the main event? It'll be easier to understand if you think of it as Lee Ji-Hye laying down the foundation," I answered.

- Miss Ji-Hye has laid down the foundation?

"Yes."

I still wasn't sure whether Ji-Hye noona and I were thinking the same thing or not, but it was pretty obvious. We'd be able to get a clue upon clearing a main event.

The system managing the dungeon was fair, and one would usually get rewarded upon clearing a dungeon. As long as we didn't get off the track in the middle of it, it was only a matter of time before we cleared the dungeon.

"There won't be any traps because this is the event that Ji-Hye noona had started herself. There's also a reward; it's the truth. This isn't your first time clearing a dungeon. Actually, you have more experience than me, so you should know," I explained.

-...

"I understand that you're worried because of the dungeon size and the unusual situation, but this is no different from other dungeons. Anyway, how far have you gone?" I asked.

- Alps?

- Ah, I think we'll be there soon.

"And the others..."

- We haven't notified them.

"Good job," I said.

- How are things for you? I heard of the anomalies up North, and our communication channel with the guild master has been disconnected. If you need reinforcements, you can call me anytime.

“No, don’t worry about me. Let’s see... looks like you have about... an hour left,” I said.

- You mean two hours?

“Can you reach it in an hour?” I asked.

- Alps?

- Yes, ma’am. This is the coordinates and Shiro is saying that it’s this way as well.

‘As long as we’re on time...’

I spoke with confidence, but the profit I’d earn through the Plaguelord main event was probably not Ji-Hye noona’s location.

I had no idea what kind of reward was prepared for us, so I had to rely on luck.

Actually, Ji-Hye noona knew about it, and she was probably aware of the fact that things weren’t going smoothly right now. I was thinking that she might show herself because she was angry, and she knew that I was alive.

I had descended twice, so how could she not know about that?

Even if that place didn’t have the reward, I was sure she was waiting there for us.

Events were like that, after all. I was sure that getting revenge was a part of it, but she was definitely keeping all possibilities open. The plan was heading in a different direction, but Lee Ji-Hye was capable enough to change the foundation itself to cater to that new direction.

I turned and saw Jo Hye-Jin and Alps.

Shiro sniffed the scarf and started moving with his nose twitching.

Jo Hye-Jin remained calm, maintaining a battle-ready stance.

She was feeling tense, and it was probably because of the atmosphere.

- Someone was here, Miss Jo Hye-Jin.

-...

- They did well in erasing their traces, but Shiro said someone was here...

They followed Shiro, who ran into an ordinary-looking dungeon. I couldn't see any signs of people living here, but Shiro didn't stop running until they reached a small cavern.

- There's... nothing here.

- A trap?

And then...

- Prepare for battle, Alps.

- Ah, o-okay! Shiro!

Several figures rushed into the small cavern.

Jo Hye-Jin raised her spear, and Alps got into formation behind her. The naked enemies raised their weapons and attacked Jo Hye-Jin, but she calmly sidestepped their attacks as if she had seen through them and thrust her spear forward.

Before her spear could reach the mask of one of the mysterious figures, there was a deafening boom as her spear was blocked by a holy protection spell.

It was surprising, but Jo Hye-Jin spoke quietly to Alps.

- There's a priest, Alps.

- O-Okay!

- For now...

- I'll go. Shiro!

- Damn it! They're a goddess-level high priest...

Jo Hye-Jin was trying to explain, but two children with similar figures were pressuring Jo Hye-Jin while teleporting here and there.

To make things worse, there were arrows and spells flying toward Jo Hye-Jin, but what bothered her the most was the holy power that was coming from an unknown place.

The amount of holy power and its density made Jo Hye-Jin think that they had a high-level priest.

The timing at which they cast the buffs, protection spells, and their recovery spells was too good for the other party to be just a mere ordinary high priest.

In addition to casting a spell to keep Jo Hye-Jin in check, they were directing the battle as well. Jo Hye-Jin was worried—worried about Alps, who had left to take care of the priest.

- Move, or you're going to die.

The ones fighting her flinched when she pointed her spear at them.

- Who are you guys?

- We're.

- The Moon Breakers.

- The Moon Break—

Boom!

A loud boom echoed, and someone rolled away after getting smacked by Jo Hye-Jin's spear. Their mask fell off to the ground, revealing their face, and one of their comrades screamed.

- Ah!

I knew it.

'The brigade twins.'

"It's Miss Hee-Young," I said.

- What?

"Miss Hee-Young is their commander, and she's protecting them behind the scenes as well. There are only a few high priests who are as skilled as her. Just look at the holy patterns on those spells; don't they look familiar?" I asked.

- Miss Hee-Young?

A voice echoed in the darkness.

- It's been a while, Miss Hye-Jin.

-...

- Please lay down your weapon.

-...

- L-Let go of me! L-Let go...

It was rare for a swordsman to get suppressed by a priest.

It had been a while since I saw Sun Hee-Young, and she was pressing a dagger against Alps' neck.

The slow-witted Shiro was just wagging his tail beside her. He probably thought that Sun Hee-Young wasn't hostile, but how could he wag his tail like that when his owner was in danger? He was a bit too friendly.

Kasugano Yuno appeared next to Alps and nodded quietly. The two then removed their masks, and I thought for sure I'd see many changes in them, but I was mistaken.

The only difference I could see was that they were wearing a cape that shrouded their entire body. I saw a hint of spite on Sun Hee-Young's face, but there was no way she was actually going to stab Alps.

Ah, Kasugano Yuno...

'She lost a lot of weight again.'

I was convinced that it was because she had been using her skills frequently. I couldn't imagine how many times she had peeked into the future since my death.

'I knew it... '

- So this is where you were. How have you been doing? I-I've looking for you, Miss Hee-Young. The other guild members miss you. I-I... Actually, where's Miss Ji-Hye... and what did they mean by the Moon Breakers?

- Those children were just talking nonsense, so you don't need to worry about it. They sometimes say strange things. More importantly... your weapon...

- No, there's no need for that. You can come in, Miss Hye-Jin. I'm sure that jerk Lee Ki-Young is doing well...

I heard a familiar voice from afar.

Kasugano Yuno nodded quietly and cast a spell. A tiny space appeared between the walls that looked unassuming earlier. Obviously, I knew who was in there. Moments later, a petite figure took off her mask and spoke.

- Are you here... to return my scarf?

1. Lee Ki-Young's POV 📖

CHAPTER 858

THE LAST (91)

It had been a while since I saw Lee Ji-Hye. Surprisingly, she didn't change at all.

I was happy to see her. I hadn't been able to find any traces of her, no matter how hard I looked for her. There were many times when I thought that it'd be nice if she were here.

Perhaps it was better that we were working separately here, but I was honestly still worried about her.

'What if Ji-Hye noona has lost her mind completely?'

I thought she was offering me a path that I could take.

She probably considered many different variables before creating her plan, and if she had obtained information from Lucifer, she would have improved her plan based on that information.

It felt like she was watching my back, but it was possible that I was mistaken.

I was sure that she had considered both options. Of course, it all depended on the offer.

Ji-Hye noona didn't seem like she had even considered Kim Hyun-Sung as a variable, so it was safe to say it all depended on how she felt at the time.

Ji-Hye noona was both rational and reasonable.

If signing a contract with Lucifer was more profitable than what we could offer to her, then she could turn her back on us. Of course, she probably wasn't looking forward to clashing with me, but it was hard to tell because her movements were based on her mood.

'I just need to play along.'

I could have never imagined that something like this would happen one day.

“I wouldn’t have come this far if it hadn't been for her,” I said.

Things were probably the same in my past life.

“Hye-Jin, be nice to her and talk nicely. Don’t do anything foolish,” I warned her.

Jo Hye-Jin was thinking about what to say. After looking around briefly, she walked inside cautiously. The others, excluding Sun Hee-Young and Kasugano, flinched, but they didn’t move hastily.

It was probably because they hadn't received any orders.

That was when the familiar face next to Lee Ji-Hye started talking.

- Stop right there. Don’t come any closer.

- Yeon-Soo, it’s okay.

- Unni.

- It’s not like you can stop her even if you want to stop her. Acknowledging the difference in strength is also a smart thing to do.

- What? What are you saying? I-I won’t lose.

-...

- I won’t lose...

- Listen to me.

Lee Ji-Hye was giving off a villainous fee; she was so charismatic.

Ha Yeon-Soo took a step back with an angry face.

Jo Hye-Jin nodded as she quietly returned Lee Ji-Hye's scarf.

Lee Ji-Hye smiled softly, and Jo Hye-Jin seemed relieved by the fact that Lee Ji-Hye

wasn't hostile to her. The atmosphere was pretty serious, but they had basically come to an agreement to talk it out.

Jo Hye-Jin finally decided to speak.

- Miss Ji-Hye. The demon that's been controlling you—

I didn't really agree with her decision to mention that.

-...

-...

- *Pfft.*

-...

- *Hahaha.* Our Hye-Jin is so innocent. Did you really think that a demon was behind it all?

'This is bad.'

"Why are you even saying that? Just go straight to the point. Why are you even talking about demons and stuff? Just tell her that you need help. Actually..."

- Do you really think that a demon is controlling me? Yeon-Soo, get me some water. *Pfft.* This is fun.

'Ah, she's getting scary. I think she's planning on moving forward with this.'

The setting about her being under a demon's control had changed her attitude, and I was sure of that, as there was no other reason she'd talk like that to Jo Hye-Jin.

She was just planning on moving forward with it.

-...

-...

- I was the one behind all of it. I received help from many people, but every single

idea has come from me. Deleting Everia from the map, transforming the continent into a dungeon, and using Elios as a chess piece were all my ideas. I can't list every single one, but... I did other things as well.

- Why?

- To teach them a lesson.

- Why did you... go so far?

- They needed to be taught a lesson. Actually, there are many reasons, but I can't tell you all of them. Just think of it as me being fickle. You start thinking about many things once you lose someone precious to you. I was just doing what needed to be done. Do I look different to you?

'What is wrong with her? Why is she so daring?'

There wasn't an ounce of hesitation in her voice.

She put her mask on again and leaned on her chair.

The brigade members looked at Jo Hye-Jin quietly. I was sure they didn't want to show her what they were thinking, but they looked pretty good standing around like that.

Ha Yeon-Soo had one of her legs crossed, and her hand was propping up her chin. She totally looked as if she was telling Jo Hye-Jin to continue talking. However, she eventually stepped up quietly and stood in front of Jo Hye-Jin.

"Hye-Jin, just tell her you want to catch up over a cup of coffee," I instructed her.

Jo Hye-Jin looked at her spear as if she was telling me to shut up. Then, she nodded as if she had made up her mind.

-...

-...

- No, that's not true. You don't look different at all. You still look the same as before.

-...

- To be honest, it's unacceptable by my standards, but... I don't want to judge you by my standards, Miss Ji-Hye. Everyone has their own opinions... and I understand how sad you must've been. I'm sure everyone felt the same way.

-...

- You can make up for your mistakes because you're a wise person, Miss Ji-Hye.

- I don't feel any emotions about the things I did.

-...

- It's the continent that should pay for its sins, not me. To be honest, it's still not enough. I'm a selfish person, and I'm not that nice.

- You're a kind person.

'There it is. Kind.'

"It's been a while since I heard that word," I commented.

It was a very "kind" word. Our Hye-Jin was really amazing. How could she say that here?

- In my opinion, you're kinder than anyone I know. I mean, why did you wait for me here?

- That's the reward. Think of it as meeting the hidden boss of the dungeon. Of course, getting a decent reward is all up to you.

- You're not my enemy, Miss Ji-Hye. It's the same for everyone here. We move a step forward to a better place. The sub guild master said so. O-Of course... I don't consider your actions as righteous, but... I understand. I'm being honest when I say that I understand you, and that's why I want us to work together and fight together.

-...

- I want you to give me another chance to make up for my mistake. Please give me a

chance to make up for your mistakes.

Honestly, I didn't think that was going to convince Lee Ji-Hye. It was reckless, and I had no idea what Jo Hye-Jin was trying to say here.

However, Lee Ji-Hye removed her mask and stared quietly at Jo Hye-Jin.

Jo Hye-Jin lowered her head. I didn't know what it meant, but Jo Hye-Jin was sincere.

The situation was so absurd that even Lee Ji-Hye seemed to be at a loss for words.

However, she continued the conversation.

- So this is how you're going to act.

- What?

- I didn't think it was actually going to happen, but you really... are doing it. I'm feeling embarrassed now.

-...

- I'm really at a loss for words. Maybe it would be better if I were talking to Ki-Young oppa. Guys, close the door. Yeon-Soo, go prepare some tea. Miss Hee-Young, let go of that kid. I'm sure he knew this would happen. Actually, I'm sure he was expecting this to happen.

- W-What?

- Lucifer's eyes can't reach this place because this place was given to us as a reward by the dungeon's system. Even the higher-ups can't peek into this place. Think of it as a reasonable bug. They'd get the feeling that I'm up to something, but they won't know what I'm actually doing here.

- Ah, can I touch that spear? By the way, I'm glad you're here. I honestly didn't think that you'd notice the hint. Of course, I'm surprised that you came here with that kid... Anyway, I'm happy that you came here.

- I don't... really understand what's going on...

- I'm saying that you came to the right place, Miss Hye-Jin. *Hehe*. We—

- Are the Moon Breakers... The Moon...

- Shut up, you two.

-...

- We knew this would happen. The war with the outer gods, Lee Ki-Young's death, and the things that happened afterward... including the disappearance of Everia and the continent turning into a dungeon. It's all thanks to Miss Kasugano Yuno of Celia.

Kasugano Yuno nodded quietly from the sidelines.

- I didn't see everything. I can only see a limited amount of information, but I'm sure we've arrived at a decent future. At least for now.

- She's right.

- That means you...

- You really think I did all that?

-...

- You really don't think... a kind person like me can actually do those evil things, do you?

- Yes... there's no way... you could do something like that...

- I thought someone had to fix this without those demons knowing about it. I had to do it discreetly without showing myself to the public. It was hard. In the end, it wasn't an easy task, but we were able to head towards one goal.

- And that's...

- The revival of the Son of Light.

- Is that possible?

- Of course, it is. It was Kasugano Yuno and Ki-Young oppa that handed me the blueprint. We've just created the foundation to execute the plan. We're not certain about the destination, and the only thing we saw was a scene from a fragmented memory, but we were able to come this far thanks to everyone.

- The continent is currently moving forward as planned. I want to explain it all, but we don't have enough time.

- I'm glad.

- What?

- That you're...

- You know me.

Ji-Hye noona was so skilled at lying. How could she lie like that without batting an eye? I thought Hye-Jin had noticed that something was kind of off, but she was confused because Ji-Hye noona was acting so confidently.

'She's really amazing.'

I wanted to say something to Ji-Hye noona, but I couldn't do it. It seemed like everything was working out well, but we had to know her reaction. It was probably best to seal the deal before she changed her mind.

- We don't have a lot of time left, so would it be okay if I talked to Ki-Young oppa for a little bit?

- Ah, sure.

Jo Hye-Jin quietly handed her the spear, and Lee Ji-Hye grabbed it carefully.

I thought she'd immediately started swearing to her heart's content, but she closed her eyes and took a deep breath instead. She seemed to be thinking about what she should say, which was unlike her, so I thought I should start the conversation.

"Have you been doing well, noona? My love. My soulmate," I asked.

- Of course, I've been doing well, oppa. My love. My soulmate.

Lee Ji-Hye's grinning face looked scummier than ever.

CHAPTER 859

THE LAST (92)

“How have you been doing?” I asked.

- That’s what I want to ask you, oppa. You have been doing well, right? Actually, there’s no point in me asking that because I’m sure you’re doing well. You're probably really enjoying this.

‘There’s a hidden meaning behind her words.’

I was getting worried that this conversation wasn't going to be a nice one.

“Don’t be like that, noona...” I said.

- Do I need to explain why I’m acting like this?

It was a pretty touching reunion, so I was trying to lead this into a heartwarming conversation between two people who hadn't seen each other for quite a while now, but I had to be cautious, and it was all because of Lee Ji-Hye's reaction.

Jo Hye-Jin's words handled the situation, but Lee Ji-Hye could end up changing her mind, so I decided to be nice to her as much as possible. I decided to use my usual sweet voice, and I knew that I had to talk cautiously.

It wasn't going to work on everyone, but it wouldn't hurt to be cautious.

“How could I do well without you? I've been missing you every day... I haven’t been able to eat or sleep properly. Each day was like hell. I realized that... my life is meaningless without you,” I told her.

-...

“I didn’t know this was going to happen, and I only realized how important certain people were to me after I lost them. I've been missing the others as well, but really...” I trailed off.

-...

"You really have no idea how much I've been missing you, Lee Ji-Hye," I continued.

- Stop the bullshit.

"I'm being serious here. I've been missing your voice, your smile, your laugh, and our conversations. You know that our souls are connected, right? You know that, my soulmate," I added.

- I don't know. You say that our souls are connected, but I feel like you're actually connected to someone else. Your soul is connected to that bastard who had stabbed you to death. Must be nice, right? You can't fool me.

"Why are you acting like this, noona? Why are you bringing him up? I know you're heartbroken and angry. It's my fault but just think about the current situation. I can't explain it all, but... you know how much I think about you..." I said.

- Seriously? *You're* thinking about me?

"Ji-Hyeeee..." I said in a cutesy way.

- Stop that. It's really gross.

"Ji-Hyeeee," I repeated.

- What's wrong with you?

"My soulmate. My love. You really don't want to see me? Lee Ji-Hye. You'll forgive me, right? Nothing will change between us, right?" I asked.

-...

I honestly didn't think it was going to work, but it seemed to be really effective. I knew it.

She wasn't as angry as Hee-Ra noona, but...

'I'd consider this a success.'

Of course, I wasn't really sure that she was going to feel better. There was no guarantee that something like that was going to happen, after all.

In addition, feeling better and cooperating with me were two different issues. It was highly likely that she'd cooperate with me, as it seemed like that was what was agreed on, but there was a huge difference between moving proactively and moving because she had no choice but to do so.

At first, she was smiling, but I had to be sincere, consistent, and incessant if I wanted her to keep smiling. Some would question whether this was actually enough or not, but history had already proven that it was enough—history had proven that flattery always worked.

- How annoying.

"What?" I asked.

- It's annoying because I know all your tricks, and I've already agreed to cooperate with you. Just stop doing that and tell me what you can give me. Actually, I'll just tell you. You're not trying to have a free lunch, are you?

"Of course not," I answered.

But there were exceptions...

- Lee Ji-Hoo^[1] and Lee Ki-Yeon.

"*Huh?*"

- Just make sure to be stylish and sexy...

"What do you mean..." I asked.

- It would no longer be sexy if I were to explain even that.

"*Ah...*"

- It's not enough, but I believe it'll be a satisfactory deal, Ki-Yeon.

"..."

-...

“...”

- Anyway, we don't have much time left. Let's end our meaningless conversation here. I'm sure you have many questions. Are you going to keep talking to me with that sweet voice of yours? You should use that on our date later. It hurts my pride, but I won't be able to focus because of that sweet voice of yours...

“...”

- *Ah!* Actually, I'm the one who planned all this, but nothing is guaranteed. I checked with Kasugano Yuno, of course.

“What are you talking about?” I asked.

- It's like I said. You think everything I said to Hye-Jin was all a lie? You think it was all a coincidence that I visited Kasugano Yuno, came up with this plan, and made it this far after your death?

- You were looking for me because of the bet with Lucifer, right? You probably thought I knew everything about it. I'm not sure about this, but you probably thought I was actually helping you because we need our plan to be *really* successful.

'She's on a roll.'

It was nice hearing her talk like that.

It seemed that I wasn't the only one who needed someone to talk to like this, and she actually looked like she was looking forward to this more than me.

However, I couldn't quite understand her, as she was saying random things, which was unlike her. When I asked her to calm down and talk slowly, Lee Ji-Hye took a deep breath and continued.

- Basically, I don't know the details of the bet.

“What?”

- I'm saying I'm not certain. I have an idea, but I don't know if I should be telling you

this or not, which is why I don't want to talk about it even more.

"Noona, are you still—"

- I said I wasn't. Of course, I'm still angry at you, and it's true that I was doing this because the continent needs to pay for taking what's mine, but I'm looking forward to your revival more than getting revenge.

- What kind of contract do you think you and Lucifer had signed? I also know that you erased your own memories because of that contract. I also assumed you needed to get holy power to put yourself in an advantageous situation.

"..."

- That's the reason why this dungeon was created. There was a reason behind the creation of the "Continent Where the Son of Light Was Sacrificed."

This dungeon was designed in a way that would give us the highest return on our investment. It seems like it's simply following your story, but it's not that easy to earn a ton of money when you're gambling only a bit.

"I appreciate that, but... is that really the only reason?" I asked.

- Why are you asking such an obvious question? It's true that I was planning on ending the continent if things went wrong.

'I'm really glad that things didn't turn out that way.'

The timing was pretty close, but the result wasn't bad.

Aside from everything else, I was glad that she was getting a lot in return because her overall plan was still going strong. I was sure Lee Ji-Hye's party had agreed to cooperate with me, as they knew that I was up to something as well.

"What did you mean by you're not sure whether you can tell me or not?" I asked.

- Well, the future might change the moment I tell you. I don't want that to happen, as it's a variable.

'That's true.'

- There's a reason we brought Rafael to our side.

"You're taking care of him?" I asked.

- Personally, he's a variable as well. He's energetic, but he's too emotional, and he easily gets swayed. I thought it wouldn't be a good idea to leave him alone because I had a feeling that he was going to mess things up...

I thought about it for a moment and ended up thinking that she made the right choice.

'He is... actually that type of person... '

I couldn't find a better way to describe him. If Rafael were left alone, he would cause a lot of trouble somewhere.

I quietly looked at Lee Ji-Hye, and I saw her sitting in front of a desk while talking to Jo Hye-Jin's spear.

Jo Hye-Jin was talking to Sun Hee-Young and Kasugano Yuno; the two were glancing at her spear, and I assumed they wanted to talk to me as well.

If possible, I'd like to talk to them, too, but I wasn't sure whether that was possible or not, as I had no idea when our conversation would end.

Ji-Hye noona had definitely done everything she could to make sure that there wouldn't be that many variables. Ji-Hye noona was probably confident that we'd eventually get good results as long as we stayed on course.

'I understand.'

But how long was I supposed to stay in the dark? Our conversation was almost over. I managed to endure it so far but at this rate...

'I have to know.'

"I think I should know, noona," I said.

- I knew you were going to say that. You haven't changed at all.

“If you’re worried, you don’t have to tell me everything, but I think I should know what you have in mind, or rather, what Kasugano Yuno had seen,” I told her.

- What else could it be? She saw your revival.

“So I’ll get revived?” I asked.

- If she hadn’t seen that, I wouldn’t have gone through the trouble of doing all of this.

“But that’s not all, right? There’s more you can tell me,” I said.

How I was revived was more important than how I started walking on the continent once again. If someone were to ask me whether I was worried about variables or not, I would obviously answer that I was worried about variables.

However, I was more afraid of the unknown.

Ji-Hye noona was right. I was a control freak, but I was anxious, not because everything wasn’t under my control but because I had no idea how things were going to end.

Lee Ji-Hye wrapped her scarf around her neck.

- Don’t be upset.

“What?”

- I honestly don’t know whether I’m doing the right thing or not, but since you made it this far, I’m sure you’ll try to know more about it somehow. You’ll find out eventually even if I don’t tell you.

“...”

- You better not do anything rash after hearing what I’m about to tell you.

“So what is it?” I asked.

- Kim Hyun-Sung is going to die.

“What?” I questioned.

- Kim Hyun-Sung will die in your place.

“...”

- That's all I can tell you. You know the rest. Basically, there's no other future. Kim Hyun-Sung will die.

'You didn't have to tell me three times.'

I unconsciously turned away and saw Kim Hyun-Sung. His sunset wings were out, and he was bawling while holding my corpse. The extras around him had lost their heads, and he had probably killed them all.

There was a deafening boom, and I saw attacks flying toward Kim Hyun-Sung in all directions.

Kim Hyun-Sung protected my corpse with his body and held back his tears.

He spread his wings quietly beneath the rain of arrows and spells before swinging his sword. A thunderous explosion ripped through the air, and everything around Kim Hyun-Sung was decimated.

In the end, Kim Hyun-Sung had chosen to raise his sword against mankind.

'Why would he die?'

“Why would Hyun-Sung die...” I mumbled.

1. last seen on ch 661 xD 📖

CHAPTER 860

THE LAST (93)

The first thought that popped into my mind was the possibility of Lee Ji-Hye wanting to get rid of Kim Hyun-Sung. She had always been wary of Kim Hyun-Sung, and there were many times when she had unknowingly expressed her worry.

She was also the one who came up with the theory of what was going to happen if...

'If Kim Hyun-Sung were our enemy...'

Lee Ji-Hye didn't like him at all, and there were many reasons behind it. First of all, he was overwhelmingly strong; secondly and most importantly, Kim Hyun-Sung had killed me, and Lee Ji-Hye believed that he had to pay for that.

Noona and I had a penchant for forgetting favors, but we'd never forget grudges.

Regardless of the reason, I understood why she came up with all this. Of course, I couldn't say for sure whether what she was doing was right or not.

And that was when I heard Ji-Hye noona's voice.

- I'm asking just in case, but you don't actually think I'm planning to kill him, do you?

"..."

- I actually considered it, but just know it's not worth turning you into my enemy. I'm not that sensitive to react to every little thing. Of course, I know Kim Hyun-Sung is important, but you're far more important than him. What I'm trying to say is that I had to design the plan with you as my priority.

"..."

- I can make something happen, but I can't change what's already happening. Of course, I did try, but it didn't really work out. No matter how many times I looked, the future was the same. Obviously, it was the only conclusion.

'The conclusion that this is the right future?'

- This is the answer. You erased your own memories because you didn't want to change this future. It's to prevent the possibility of other futures.

It was convincing, and I could completely understand why she thought that way.

Actually, I was sure she had no choice but to think that way.

If I were in her place, I would come up with the same thing.

She had decided to play this game and remove as many variables as possible. If all the impurities in the world could be removed with Kim Hyun-Sung's death, then it was understandable that she'd think that it was the right answer.

'Actually, she's convinced that it's the right answer.'

There was still some time left before I could confirm whether that was the right answer or not, but it was likely to happen.

If I still had my memories, I would never make a bet on Kim Hyun-Sung's death.

When I thought about how upset I was when Seraphim transformed him into a porcupine.

'I definitely wouldn't let that happen.'

However, I had erased my own memories, so.

- You must have considered yourself as a variable.

"Possibly..." I commented.

- You had no trust in yourself. You weren't confident about maintaining composure, and I agree. You made that decision because you were afraid that you were going to ruin the future you designed yourself.

- What do you think? Am I wrong? I'm pretty sure about this one.

"But why are you telling me this?" I asked.

- I told you earlier. You're going to find out someday... I told you because I don't want you to resent me later. There's another one—you probably knew that the future would not change no matter how much you struggled. After all, we've gone beyond the point of no return. We can no longer step on the breaks or change course now.

'So we're almost there... '

- Looking at your expression, perhaps I shouldn't have told you...

Ji-Hye noona patted the spear. She looked so indifferent while staring at the spear that I couldn't deduce her thoughts. Obviously, she wasn't worried about Kim Hyun-Sung.

'I know he's not part of your party, but you're being too harsh here.'

If Ha Yeon-Soo were in Kim Hyun-Sung's shoes, her face would definitely turn red, and she would make a big fuss about it.

- Don't think that I'm too cold-hearted. I'm sure there's another way, as there's no way you'd agree to Kim Hyun-Sung's death.

Honestly, I thought you had insurance for this. Of course, I know you're doing some rude things to him, but I don't think it's to the point that you'd tell him to give up on his own life. You were confident when you rolled the dice, so you must have something up your sleeve.

"You're right, noona. The problem is that I don't know what I have up my sleeve. I don't know whether I have insurance or not. I really have no idea," I said.

I lied. I actually had an idea. As soon as I heard Lee Ji-Hye's explanation, an assumption popped into my head, and I believed that it was true.

'My revival may not be the reward of the bet.'

The reward might be Kim Hyun-Sung's revival.

The details of the bet could be different from what I had in mind, but that wouldn't be strange at all.

"Are you saying that Kim Hyun-Sung would die in my place?" I asked.

- Yes. Kasugano Yuno saw him disappear, and you opened your eyes afterward. Based on the situation, he must have saved you.

The winning condition could be whether Kim Hyun-Sung would sacrifice himself to save me or not.

“The reason we’re gathering holy power right now could be to revive Kim Hyun-Sung, not me,” I said.

- I won’t jump to conclusions. I’ll just leave that to you. Thinking about so many things is giving me a headache.

“No, I’m sure I’m right. That makes sense. There are a few things that are bothering me, but... there’s a high chance that I’m right. Even if my plan fails, there might be a way to save Kim Hyun-Sung through Lucifer,” I explained.

- It’s risky to call that insurance, but whatever it is, there’s one thing we can do about it.

“Getting as much holy power as possible?” I asked.

- Yes, that’s right.

It wasn’t that I wasn’t worried, and I was forcing myself to smile.

If I were to stop thinking about happy thoughts, my anxiety would make my lips dry.

‘I’m right.’

The God of Sunset will sacrifice himself for the Son of Light, and the Son of Light would cry for him in despair.

However, the God of Sunset was going to return.

This was an unprecedented miracle. It was perfect on paper, and I couldn't find anything wrong with it. I also had the perfect insurance, but... why was I so anxious?

I was actually convinced that this wasn't going to work.

‘Why is that? When we’ve come so far?’

I just needed to come up with a way, and I could just cross that bridge once we were there. I took a deep breath and looked over it again. I thought about many possible scenarios, and this was the first time that my hands were actually trembling just by reviewing a plan.

My breathing became unstable, and my heart was racing. I felt cold sweat rolling down my forehead, and I felt like I was going to pass out. I was finding it hard to stabilize myself.

I rubbed my eyes slowly, and I started feeling calm for some reason.

'There's no way I would abandon him.'

How could I abandon the precious regressor whom I raised myself?

I wouldn't have used those items in the first place If I were going to abandon him just like this. I had even obtained the Mythic-rank Regressor Instruction Manual.

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that I was throwing away half or more of what I had obtained since coming to the continent by abandoning him.

I was also sure that the insurance I had was for myself rather than insurance for Kim Hyun-Sung's safety.

My breathing soon became stable, and I smiled. I felt like I could finally make a reasonable judgement. An indescribable pleasure coursed through my brain, and alarm bells started ringing in my head at the same time.

'I'm feeling a bit stable.'

"I think I'm ready, noona," I told her.

- Ah, I want to add one more thing to the condition that I mentioned earlier. I think it'll be a good idea for you to get counseling with me.

"I think you're the one who needs that. I think you just want me to come with you because you find it embarrassing to go by yourself, but... you don't have to be embarrassed about it. Of course, I'll go with you, noona," I said.

-...

I looked at Kim Hyun-Sung again.

- It's time to work.

Kim Hyun-Sung swung his sword haphazardly as tears rolled down his face. The sight would make anyone misunderstand and think that our Hyun-Sung had become an enemy of mankind. Obviously, it was not a good look at all.

There was a reason for all this, people of the continent! Watch this.

Actually, we still had to edit this.

- Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!

- Sunset Swordsman. What do you think... you're doing right now?

- S-Save... me... a m-monster...

- Ahhhhhhhh!

- I'm sorry. I-It's... our fault...!

- Fight. At the end of the day, he's still human! He's the same as us.

'Not really. You can't really call him human.'

He had killed them in such a brutal way that I couldn't really describe it. If I were asked to describe it, then I'd say that he was killing them in the most painful way possible.

Crimson blood painted the air, and there were screams everywhere.

The place looked like hell, even in my eyes.

Meanwhile, the sunset was shining brightly. It was his way of saying that he had escaped Lucifer completely, but this decision also seemed to indicate that he had made this choice as the God of Sunset. I was definitely right about that.

'But it's okay. I understand.'

The people of the continent would definitely understand as well.

They'd understand why the God of Sunset was so angry after seeing my tattered corpse.

'I should show this to everyone except Laios.'

I couldn't let Ha-Yan see that. Fortunately, I didn't have to explain every little detail to Director Lee Ji-Hye and Camera Director Lonovera.

As expected, a large Goddess' Mirror manifested across the continent.

The tattered corpse of the honorary bishop was located at the New Continental Protection Management Committee. The Sunset Swordsman was gnashing his teeth and was crying while swinging his sword.

- Why...

-...

- Why did you go this far? Why?

-...

- He loved all of you.

-...

- He loved all of you more than anything else.

-...

- What the hell is wrong with you guys that you won't leave him alone? Why did you go this far? He had sacrificed everything. He had sacrificed everything, even his life. Why... Why did you have to do this? Did you have to take everything from him? You bastards. You scummy bastards.

- Please... spare... us.

- He'll probably say that he can forgive you. He'll say that it's fine, that he's not

bothered, that this was meaningless, and that he could give everything he had for the continent.

- That's probably what he would say. But I can't forgive you. I just cannot forgive you all. This will make Mr. Ki-Young sad, and I know what I'm doing is unforgivable, but I just cannot forgive you guys.

-...

- No matter how much I think about it...

Kim Hyun-Sung actually looked half insane. I was no longer sure whether this would have a positive overall effect or not. Regardless of the circumstances, Kim Hyun-Sung was just being too brutal.

I was sure many were puzzled about what was going on, but...

'Fear is also faith.'

Awe of God and fear of God were considered faith.

It was arguably more effective than having awe of God.

Actually, there was a fine line between them, right? I was sure that guy there knew it best.

- Why can't you see it, God of Sunset?

-...

- Why can't you understand it, My Lord?!

Song Soo-Kyung stepped onto the stage while covering one of his eyes with his hand.

CHAPTER 861

THE LAST (94)

I believed that the most important thing in the eye of all villains was how they appeared in front of the public. Personally, the first impression was more important than the process or even the result. One could clearly show a character's identity and how evil, bad, dangerous, and cruel they were through a great first impression.

This was especially important for villains like Villain Song, as his first appearance would reveal his dual personality.

Honestly, there wasn't anything overwhelming about his appearance, but his duality was his identity. He was pretending to be a saint while talking about a world built for the continent and the weak, but the key point was that he was trying to satisfy his greed.

Basically, he was harboring a dark secret.

I was sure Song Soo-Kyung's followers considered him to be the descendant of the Son of Light.

'The descendant of the Son of Light... '

The new hope of the continent.

'He has obtained the legacy that the Son of Light had left behind.'

They were probably thinking that he was the God of Sunset's new partner.

He didn't have to use the press, as I was sure many people were already thinking that way. Of course, I wasn't doing this to say that those with blasphemous thoughts didn't exist. However, the public didn't really like sudden changes, so it was understandable.

The continent was safe because it had the Sunset Swordsman and the honorary cardinal. They were the reason mankind managed to overcome a great threat.

Song Soo-Kyung's goal to fill in the void that the late Son of Light had left behind was an instinctive goal made out of his greed.

This wasn't the best example, but children would always feel more at ease with both parents present rather than just one, which was why people had been trying to find similarities between Song Soo-Kyung and me.

The people were basically brainwashing themselves to feel safe by thinking that Song Soo-Kyung of the New Continental Protection Management Committee was the descendant of the Son of Light.

This was why this clip we were showing in the Goddess' Mirror was important. It'd amplify the public's expectations. We were showing the people the time when he was attacking the Son of Light.

- O God...

I heard some people muttering among themselves.

- Son of Light... why is this...

The people cast dumbfounded gazes upon the Goddess' Mirror, and the priests were crying out loud. The people were rubbing their eyes as if they couldn't believe what they were seeing.

Some were trembling, while some outright vomited. It was understandable, as even I was shocked to see Song Soo-Kyung painting the place red with blood. There was so much blood that even Song Soo-Kyung was drenched in blood.

- This is blasphemy...

The people plunged into despair when Song Soo-Kyung raised the shining orb in his hand.

- Divine punishment! Son of Light. Son of Light...!

- Goddess Benigoa, please punish that demon...

He had taken away not just my heart but other things as well. He didn't even need them, but he still took them away to satisfy his greed. The desecrated corpse of the

Son of Light fell to the ground, and no one could recognize him anymore.

My corpse looked quite intact before all this, but no one could recognize me anymore at first glance. I was sure this revelation was devastating to them.

Father Basel groaned and staggered backward.

The leader of the Sacred Democratic Country cried in disbelief. The people who could still remember the smile, the innocence, and the kind-heartedness of the Saint of Light were denying what they were seeing right now.

- *Ha... haha...*

Song Soo-Kyung laughed awkwardly as he stood in front of the Goddess' Mirror that revealed only the truth. His eye was glowing as he stared at the Goddess' Mirror. The light that had been illuminating the world was no longer there.

'This is pretty awesome.'

He started walking away.

'He can't get out of this one.'

Hyun-Sung's behavior right now was kind of disappointing, but it couldn't be helped. It would've been better if he had shown more hesitation, but fortunately, I could make an excuse for his current behavior.

Everyone on the continent knew about the God of Sunset and the Son of Light's relationship with each other, so it wasn't strange that the God of Sunset was furious.

I obtained that eye through our bond, and Song Soo-Kyung had just stolen it from me. Obviously, I would have to edit out some of the dialogue in the scene, but I was sure the public would understand because they were on the side of the light.

Song Soo-Kyung continued walking away according to Director Lo's instructions.

A pair of wings burst out of his back as one of his eyes emitted a distinct sheen.

- Why... Why don't you understand?

Crimson wings spread out behind him as he muttered like a madman. Nice visual effects, Mr. Bel. The way he was changing while walking slowly down the corridor was awesome. Whose idea was this?

- *Ack... Ahhhh!*

Song Soo-Kyung had to be in a ton of pain because he had wrapped his arms around himself as he walked down the corridor. Blood was rolling down from one of his eyes.

'It's gory, but it's cool. We need scenes like this.'

Song Soo-Kyung didn't stop walking even though blood was dripping down his back. It was a hideous scene, and it triggered a raw sense of fear in me that I couldn't really describe. I wouldn't be surprised if many people were terrified as well.

- What am I lacking? What in the world am I lacking that... you're rejecting me like this? *Argh... Ah...*

'This is seriously giving me goosebumps.'

Kim Hyun-Sung could definitely feel Song Soo-Kyung's presence because the latter was emitting an energy that was too ominous to come from a mere human.

I imagined the two facing each other above the ruins of a once majestic building and...

BOOOM!

A deafening noise echoed as Kim Hyun-Sung destroyed an entire wall just to reach Song Soo-Kyung.

"Ah!"

Before Song Soo-Kyung could make a sound, Kim Hyun-Sung grabbed the former by his neck and slammed him into a wall.

- Y-You... bastard! Y-You... scum!

- *Ack... ARGH!*

Kim Hyun-Sung cursed as they struggled in mid-air.

Song Soo-Kyung was crying as if he couldn't take the beating.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Kim Hyun-Sung slammed Song Soo-Kyung into every single surface nearby as he dragged the latter by the neck toward a temple. The rampage had riddled the nearby walls with holes that allowed light from the outside to pervade the temple.

- You're not even human! You bastard!!!

Kim Hyun-Sung was swinging his fist instead of his sword. He was different from before. The way he was swinging his fist was out of form. He wasn't wasn't trying to knock out his opponent. He was venting out his anger and frustration.

- *Heuk... heuuuk...*

- Shut up! Shut up! You jerk!

Boom!

- You disgusting scum!

Kim Hyun-Sung definitely wasn't going to grant him a swift death.

Crack! Craaaaack!

Seeing that he was beating Song Soo-Kyung up without touching one of his eyes, I could tell that he hadn't completely lost himself.

I was actually worried about Song Soo-Kyung's safety because he was getting randomly punched.

'Mr. Bel. Song Soo-Kyung has powered up, right? I feel like he's so helpless right now.'

Song Soo-Kyung's face was gradually changing.

'It'll be bad if things end just like this.'

At the very least, they had to exchange some punches. Song Soo-Kyung had wings, but he couldn't even use them.

- *Haa... haa...*

Kim Hyun-Sung seemed to have come back to his senses, and he reached out toward one of Song Soo-Kyung's eyes.

Song Soo-Kyung grabbed Kim Hyun-Sung's wrist, and it was a surprise that he could still move despite the injuries that he had sustained. The way Song Soo-Kyung returned to his original form was grotesque, but thankfully, it didn't last that long.

- That's... mine.

- What?

- It's mine now, God of Sunset.

- You bastard!

- Why can't you understand me... Why...

There was a thunderous boom, and his crimson wings pushed Kim Hyun-Sung away.

- Why can't you understand my desire to save the continent and to stand beside you?
Heuk...

- I'm not interested in those things, you jerk.

- All I wanted to do was protect this place from threats. All I wanted to do was clear the dungeon of the continent you wanted to protect. The revival of the Son of Light is one of the clear conditions of "The Continent Where the Son of Light Was Sacrificed," and I just wanted to make that happen.

-...

- I'm also doing this all for you, God of Sunset. I'm doing this just for you—to complete you, so... *Heuk*—why are you rejecting me? Why have you been ignoring my pure faith and belief? Why... are you trying to harm me and kill me... *Heuk... heuk...* when all I want to do is take the Son of Light's place?

- You crazy bastard...

I agreed with Kim Hyun-Sung.

'This guy is really crazy.'

Well, how could he be sane when a demon was determined to transform him into a lunatic? Still, it seemed like this was his calling based on how well he had adapted to it, and there was no hesitation in his actions as well. Even after taking all of that into account, however, he had truly lost his mind.

I wasn't even sure if he had any idea as to what he was saying right now.

It seemed like he could no longer think logically and could only hear his own voice. He seemed to have gotten completely trapped in his own world, and his eyes had even glazed over.

- If that's what the God of Sunset wants, I gladly accept it. If that's what you want... if you want to pour out your resentment and anger at me... I'll gladly take it with my life on the line. I'll happily do it, but... but don't deny my faith and belief...

- Crazy bastard! Shut up! Why the hell are you doing this to me?! You jerk! Who the hell is the God of Sunset?! All the things you said about me being your object of faith are all bullshit!

Kim Hyun-Sung grabbed Song Soo-Kyung by the hair and slammed him into the ground.

- *Ahh*. You're still incomplete... but don't worry. I'll make up for whatever you lack. If this will make up for whatever you lack, then I'll gladly...

- Shit! Shit! What the hell are you talking about...

Kim Hyun-Sung looked anxious, and I knew why he was feeling that way. He was worried that he was the root cause of all this. The reason he was listening to Villain Song's bullshit was that he realized that the lunatic was obsessed with him.

- Why...

A smile blossomed on Song Soo-Kyung's deformed face.

- Didn't you save me?

'Shit. I'm getting goosebumps.'

- You saved me once.

'Ack! This guy is really creepy.'

- Do you... not remember it?

Oh no, you crazy stalker. How could he remember that?

CHAPTER 862

THE LAST (95)

'How is he supposed to remember that, you lunatic?'

'Do you know how many people Hyun-Sung saved so far? He saved so many people that you can't even count them. If I were to ask you what you did a few years ago, would you be able to answer that question, you psychopath?'

Saving people was basically a part of his daily life.

'Right.'

"Yes, it's a part of his daily life..." I mumbled.

It wasn't an exaggeration, and whether he had been doing it intentionally or unintentionally, it wouldn't change the fact that he had been saving people.

It all started in the tutorial dungeon, and he saved many people afterward.

There was a period when we were apart, but I was sure he had saved many people during that time period as well, as he wasn't that cold-hearted to ignore people in need.

No one had told him to do that, but Kim Hyung-Sung had been doing it anyway.

Kim Hyun-Sung could have been influenced by that savior of his in his first life, and I couldn't really judge him for it, as I didn't know exactly what he was thinking that he'd always lend a hand to people in need. In other words, the statement "saving people was just a part of Kim Hyun-Sung's daily life" was really accurate.

Of course, he had never really thought much about his actions so far, which was probably why he was really confused right now.

He thought that the consequences of his actions had led to the worst outcome.

- Ah...

- You saved me. The God of Sunset saved my life and soul. My life... it changed completely on that day. I only managed to come this far thanks to your hand of salvation. God of Sunset. It's all thanks to you. Do you remember?

'How the hell is he supposed to remember, you scum? Stop acting like you're close to him by making up such a ridiculous connection. You don't exactly have a memorable face, and he always has a hard time matching names to faces.'

Song Soo-Kyung continued with his nonsense, but I was actually more worried about Hyun-Sung than the villain because I had an idea as to what Hyun-Sung was thinking.

He was obviously thinking that all of this was his fault and what he was doing was meaningless. He was probably feeling disappointed by the fact that he had helped a villain. He was probably angry at himself, at everyone else, and at this world's evil itself.

- D-Don't make me laugh!

- I'm telling the truth. I would never lie to you.

- Stop it, you bastard! Stop it with your bullshit.

- Back then, you were really...

- Bastard!

Kim Hyun-Sung raised his sword and swung it toward Song Soo-Kyung. He swung it so fast that my eyes couldn't keep up with it, and he managed to cut off Song Soo-Kyung's arm. However, it seemed meaningless as hideous red lines burst out of the stump before the arm could land on the ground.

Song Soo-Kyung could no longer be called human.

- W-What the hell are you...

-...

- What the hell are you?! You scum! Who are you... to suddenly appear like this...

- I told you, didn't I? My name is Song Soo-Kyung. I became your first believer on that fateful day, and I've decided to serve you on that day as well. Everything before you has been prepared just for you!

- Crazy bastard... Crazy bastard!

Boom! Boom!!! Kaboom! Kaboooooooooom!!!

Kim Hyun-Sung swung his sword frantically as if he were trying to deny Song Soo-Kyung's existence, but the red mana that had shrouded Song Soo-Kyung was defending him from Kim Hyun-Sung's sword.

Kim Hyun-Sung blinked behind Song Soo-Kyung and tried to cut off the latter's head, but the red mana appeared and parried his sword. The collision of their manas contained so much force that every single collision sounded like a thunderous boom.

It was thrilling to witness such a scene with my own two eyes, but the scene was cooler and more realistic through Director Lo's camera. Her camera circled around the two, and she'd zoom in whenever Kim Hyun-Sung's sword and Song Soo-Kyung's mana collided with each other.

Perhaps it was because she was a demon, but she was very good at catching those dramatic moments. She showed our lovely regressor's handsome, crying face.

Before Kim Hyun-Sung's tear could land on the ground, Director Lo did a slow motion of him performing a kick. It wasn't fancy, but she was showing his graceful swordsmanship as well.

'That's it! Don't miss that. You have to capture his expression.'

'He does look stylish.' Kim Hyun-Sung was becoming more and more desperate, but my jaw dropped at the sight of him fighting Song Soo-Kyung. *'He's the protagonist.'*

I finally knew what would happen once a skilled actor met a skilled cameraman.

I felt bad for Kim Hyun-Sung, but his hopeless face matched the atmosphere of the play so well that it was unbelievable. It hadn't been that long since they started fighting, but we had already passed the breakeven point.

My hands were sweating as I watched them, so I was sure the others were sobbing

and screaming at the scene. Some were probably praying as their heart pounded wildly against their chest at every move, which explained the amount of holy power that I was obtaining at the moment.

- Die, you bastard!

I was so immersed in the fight that I even forgot how to breathe.

BOOM!

I didn't want to acknowledge it, but the right villain and the great production were one of the reasons I was so immersed in this face.

The red mana soon took on the appearance of many different monsters.

Actually, I wasn't even sure whether "monster" was the right word or not, as they looked more like "entities" rather than "monsters." Those beast-looking entities had appendages sticking out of random places, and their faces were riddled with thousands of eyes in a variety of sizes.

They divided into many different shapes as they stood on top of the temple's ruins.

Personally, I wanted to applaud Song Soo-Kyung for making this choice. After all, there was a limit to his physical enhancement. Of course, he could create perhaps only hundreds—no, thousands of those "entities," but they were enough.

The "entities" took root in the temple, covering it from top to bottom, creating a scene that one could only see in hell. Red slimes, tentacles, and indescribable "entities" had stacked on top of each other to create this bizarre-looking structure.

Song Soo-Kyung had built his own temple on top of the ruined temple.

'Damn it... those visuals... '

The way Song Soo-Kyung stood at the center with his crimson wings...

'This really makes him look like the mastermind.'

- Show me! Show me your power! Your greatness!

'Even his dialogue is so villain-like. Who in their right mind would say something like that?'

Only Song Soo-Kyung could say that without batting an eyelid.

- Show me how strong, perfect, noble, and holy you are! Show me the righteousness of the light inside you! Just like back then! I—

- You bastard... You bastard! I don't give a fuck about your bullshit.

A grotesque noise echoed, and the "entities" were split into dozens of pieces.

An entity appeared to grab Kim Hyun-Sung from behind, but its large arm was split into four pieces, and it fell backward as well.

The next moment, a giant tail swept toward Kim Hyung-Sung. However, he grabbed that tail and started climbing it. Dozens of tiny "entities" immediately surrounded him, but Kim Hyun-Sung swung his sword toward them, sending a wave of radiant sunset to eradicate the tiny "entities."

- *Kyaaaaaaaaah!*

- *Kweeeeeeeeeeh!*

'It's a new skill.'

Kim Hyun-Sung seemed to have figured out a way to use it briefly, as he normally had to charge it before using it.

Kaboom!

The "entities" disappeared with every wave of radiant sunset, and they let out shrill cries as they vanished. Meanwhile, huge tentacles sprouted from the hideous structures that had engulfed the temple, and they made a beeline for Kim Hyun-Sung.

It looked like apartment buildings were falling on Hyun-Sung, but...

'How is he dodging those?'

“He’s really amazing,” I commented.

He only had a tiny space to move, but it seemed that he had seen a path amidst the falling debris. Kim Hyun-Sung spread his wings and avoided the falling debris, but he couldn't avoid every single one of them.

He'd sometimes take out his sword to destroy the falling debris.

However, he was virtually avoiding all of them. Kim Hyun-Sung even used some of the debris as stepping stones to climb up.

Kaboooooooooom!

- *Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaah!!!*

- God of Sunset...

I was lucky that I could watch this from many different angles, and I also saw the audience members staring at the scene with their jaws on the floor.

I could say for sure that they wouldn’t be able to witness this scene again. I was they’d be even more surprised once they found out that this was real, and it was actually happening.

I knew Song Soo-Kyung had taken away my eye, but I really couldn’t understand what was going on.

‘He’s actually crazy.’

Villain Song was probably seeing what Kim Hyun-Sung was seeing. He didn't know everything, but he probably knew what Kim Hyun-Sung was thinking and his next moves.

This was no different from playing a strategy game without a fog of war, but I was surprised that he still hadn't been able to stop Kim Hyun-Sung. I couldn’t keep my mouth shut because I couldn’t understand Kim Hyun-Sung’s actions with my common sense alone. He was destroying every single "demon" that stood in his way using just the power of his fleshly body.

- Just as I thought, you’re amazing. *Haha... O God!*

- Shut up, you bastard! Give it back. Give it back!

'Can he not use other skills? Maybe he just doesn't have enough experience when it comes to incapacitating his enemies because he always kills them?'

BOOM!

- You can become perfect. I'll complete you. I'll do that on behalf of that hideous and dirty Son of Light. Lee Ki-Young was nothing but a burden to you, but I'm different. I will not stand in your way.

'You're standing in his way right now, though.'

- Don't speak his name with that mouth of yours, you disgusting scum!

- Why?

- Don't speak his name! You know nothing about him. Stop talking bullshit when you know nothing about him.

- Do you see yourself right now?

-...

- You're weak, pitiful, and useless. He made you weak. He imprisoned you and oppressed you when you could've been perfect. I don't know how he's been acting in public, but he still made the wrong choice in the end. You are an object of faith. You're...

- Don't force your nonsense on me. Don't do it. I'm human, not a god! I'm going to live as a human.

- You know that's impossible. I can see it.

-...

- I can feel it clearer than ever. You're divine! Unlike those foolish mortals, I can see your greatness, God of Sunset! My faith in you has always been true, but now, I can feel it clearer than ever!

- That's not your eye.

- Now...

- It's not yours, you scum! Give it back. Return it to him.

-...

- That's all that's left for me now...

-...

Kim Hyun-Sung's face became distorted, and his hands trembled as he said...

- That's all that's left now.

He truly looked pitiful.

CHAPTER 863

THE LAST (96)

- That's all I have.

'Wait, that's not true. You have so many things.'

- So give it back.

-...

- Give it back, you disgusting scum!

'And you've been swearing a lot. You should use nice words.'

- All I have left...

'What should I do with him? I think he really thinks that he doesn't have anything else.'

Obviously, I knew why he was thinking that way.

'You're really going to start the third life?'

Kim Hyun-Sung didn't tell me his plans, but his thoughts were painfully obvious.

He didn't want the Saint of Light to carry such a heavy burden, and it was possible that he didn't want the Son of Light to share his burden.

If a third life ended up starting according to his plan, then I wouldn't meet him in that life.

I wasn't even sure if my memories would remain intact, but I was sure that he'd avoid me in the third life. He seemed to be determined to carry the burden from the beginning until the end. His ridiculous goal in the third life was to avoid meeting me.

The same was true for the tutorial dungeon.

'Really?'

The same was true for the dungeon explorations.

'You're going to go by yourself?'

Kim Hyun-Sung wouldn't join the Blue Guild in his third life.

'He's thinking about abandoning the guild. You're going to fight by yourself? Don't make me laugh. You think you'll be able to pull that off?'

The Democratic Revolution...

'You're going to fight the Republican War alone? And what about the 27th Legion incident? How are you going to handle a future that you do not know? Will you be able to handle every single thing?'

Kim Hyun-Sung was planning on handling the Everia issue, the Rift Museum, and the War with the Outer Gods by himself.

I was so surprised that I was at a loss for words, and his thoughts were so unrealistic that all I could do was laugh. It was impossible. Even if he had gotten stronger compared to his first life, and even if he could return to his past life without losing his current strength, he still wouldn't be able to handle everything alone and in secret.

However, that idiot seemed to be thinking that it was possible.

'Greedy jerk. So you're going to take on the Hero of Shadows role.'

He was going to take Jin Cheong's title.

'This is absurd.'

He was convinced that the Saint of Light's pain and the incidents that had happened to the continent so far were all because of him, and it was Hyun-Sungesque of him to think that way. He wanted to take responsibility for everything by himself and move in the shadows as if he didn't exist on this continent. Obviously, it wasn't going to be easy.

Kim Hyun-Sung was the ideal hero in my eyes, but he was easily swayed. He was easily lonely and was easily scared. He was also really indecisive. To make matters worse, it was easy to backstab him, and his mental health was basically non-existent.

If something caught his interest, he'd go straight for it without even thinking about the ramifications of his actions. He also had zero financial literacy.

He had built a wall around himself, and he lacked basic social skills. Of course, if his plan was to become the Hero of Shadows, then he wouldn't have to meet others, but I believed that he needed basic social skills, at the very least.

Kim Hyun-Sung definitely knew that going through the hellish third life as the Hero of Shadows with his mental health was impossible.

I was sure he also knew that he would get further and further away from the future that he wanted. He also knew that he'd never end up being happy; the fight would be a long and difficult one, and he would have to give up everything he had now. That was why...

'He's going to take the Regressor Instruction Manual with him.'

He was probably thinking that the Regressor Instruction Manual would motivate him to withstand the trials of the next life. Wait, I was sure it was more like something that'd comfort him. He'd be comforted knowing that he wasn't alone when the fighting started once again, and he'd be relieved that he was connected to the person he trusted the most.

It made sense, as having someone to rely on was enough to serve as someone's driving force. In Kim Hyun-Sung's case, it would be his safe haven as well.

'We'll be connected through the Regressor Instruction Manual anyway, so why is he thinking that I won't be able to find him? Does he have the ability to destroy it? That manual is mine, not yours. It's unreasonable to even think that there's a way.'

'The Saint of Light knows everything. He must think I won't know anything when the third life starts. I don't know what it'll be like in the beginning, but I'll figure it out eventually since it's mine.'

That wasn't all...

'Even if you become a regressor without it, we'll still be connected.'

Of course, I completely understood that he was worried about Song Soo-Kyung being able to read the manual, as the latter had my eye, but it was a meaningless thought.

The Regressor Instruction Manual was engraved into our souls, not our bodies. In fact, we were connected even now. That eye was nothing but an item.

"How shameful. Third life, my ass," I commented.

I had made it clear that there was no third life, so I could consider Kim Hyun-Sung's actions as a flare-up of his illness.

Kim Hyun-Sung was probably under the impression that the Regressor Instruction Manual would fill him up, but he was no different from an alcoholic.

It was funny that he still hadn't realized the fact that it wasn't a solution, and I felt kind of bad for him because he thought that the manual was the only thing he had left. That thought was probably the reason why he was being so desperate right now.

- Give it back! Give it... back!!!

-...

BOOM!

Kim Hyun-Sung swung his sword at the otherworldly "entities."

He fought more desperately than ever, but the enemy was somehow surviving his attacks. To make matters worse, the "entities" didn't stop blocking his path to Song Soo-Kyung.

Song Soo-Kyung's temple was expanding gradually, and when it got big enough to completely devour one city, an army of demons appeared, standing in Kim Hyun-Sung's way.

This was a cliché and outdated analogy, but the scene was like a painting depicting the epic story of the ideal hero fighting to prevent the end of the world. The hero swung his sword while crying and biting his lips.

He'd sometimes stumble and fall to the ground, but he'd always get back up and illuminate the dark world with the glow of his radiant sunset. The radiant sunset shone brighter than ever. His goal was pretty blasphemous, but his face showed how much he was struggling right now for that goal.

Everyone was watching him with me, and it was such a thrilling moment that I even forgot how to breathe.

Kim Hyun-Sung's hands didn't stop moving, and a faint light soon poured in from the North. Perhaps it was because the continent was getting a penalty after failing to complete the event, but Kim Hyun-Sung looked more anxious than before.

He had just realized that he was running out of time, but he didn't look away as he cut down the "entities" and demons. His goal was clear, and he didn't care about anything else.

Just then, Kim Hyun-Sung grabbed his head.

- I told you that it's not yours!

Song Soo-Kyung was starting to invade his mind.

- No, I made it clear that it's mine.

- No, that's not your power. You didn't earn it, nor did you get the permission to have it. Give it back. Go away. Get out, you bastard. It wasn't prepared for you. Get out of my mind! You scum!

- It's mine now. Actually, it doesn't matter, but this power must be used for the greater good. Can you feel it? This power is the key to making you complete. You'll become perfect through this power. I told you, didn't I? Lee Ki-Young had used this power to weaken you, but I'm different.

- You disgusting monster.

'He's just saying a bunch of memorable lines.'

'I feel like going crazy from the excitement. I mean, just look at how desperate the viewers look. Look at them cry, Hyun-Sung.'

- I can do it for him. I can be him. I can do what he couldn't do.
- You can never become Lee Ki-Young.
- No, I can. Kill me, and I can become Lee Ki-Young.
- You're dying anyway, you scum.
- It'll be a meaningful death. My death will be honorable and noble, and it'll be for the continent! I'll get his body and soul. Then, I'm going to kill myself, God of Sunset.
- You crazy...

Song Soo-Kyung spread his wings and stretched his hand toward the sky. Following his hand gesture, the bizarre-looking tower expanded. Song Soo-Kyung looked up and smiled brightly.

Kim Hyun-Sung was staring at the bizarre-looking tower as well, which was made out of tentacles and bizarre "things." The tower had become the symbol for Song Soo-Kyung's temple.

I was sure that Kim Hyun-Sung had already checked what was at the top of it because his frown deepened, and he became even more desperate.

"You're not the only one. I can also be complete. The Son of Light's soul will be mine. I'll get his soul, and I'll be reborn as a new being. I know I'm lacking, but I'm built different. I can truly complete you," Song Soo-Kyung said.

"..."

"You'll have no choice but to acknowledge me. In the end, you'll understand that I'm right," Song Soo-Kyung added.

I thought it would be better if Song Soo-Kyung stayed as a lunatic because the ongoing situation wasn't that great for a gloomy and melodramatic scene.

'The situation is pretty extreme.'

The production was kind of thrilling, but thrilling and overexaggerated scenes were great at keeping people interested.

The Son of Light's soul was bound at the very top of the tower that was created with disgusting-looking "things," and the villain was smiling at the top of the temple he had created in order to take that soul.

The hero was trying hard to save the Son of Light. Obviously, Song Soo-Kyung wouldn't actually take my soul, but this scene was thrilling enough to attract everyone's attention.

I could tell by their reaction.

The Son of Benigoa had sacrificed everything, but his body was desecrated, and even his soul was now in danger.

The enemy was just too strong that there was no hope for mankind. The Sunset Swords, whom they considered their only hope, frowned at the sight. People were praying, and I heard the people either crying or desperately cheering him on.

'Please... '

'I hope the Hero of Sunset wins... '

'Please.'

'Please don't let anything happen to the Son of Light's body and soul... '

'I hope our faith will save the continent, the God of Sunset, and the Son of Light.'

'I hope our prayer will reach him and give him strength... Please hear our prayers.'

'We can hear them, everyone.'

I could clearly hear and feel them.

'I will never forget your support and encouragement, so give me your light.'

'Give me your light!'

"M-Mr. Ki-Young," Kim Hyun-Sung stammered.

"..."

“Mr. Ki-Young? Mr... Mr. Ki-Young...” Kim Hyun-Sung repeated.

I needed to play along, so I opened my eyes slowly and said, “Don’t... worry about me. Please...”

I felt something holy filling me up, and it was filling me up nonstop.

‘I’ll never forget your support!’

CHAPTER 864

THE LAST (97)

It looked like a mythical war fighting for the end of the world.

Rather than fighting for their own beliefs, it looked like a fight between people, who had been pushed to their limits. However, it was a noble sight, and it filled me^[1] with indescribable emotions.

I was sure everyone who was watching this scene felt the same way as me. I was certain that everyone was holding their breaths as they watched the fight. The streets were filled with people cheering for the Sunset Swordsman and praying priests.

- You're not the only one. I can also be complete. The Son of Light's soul will be mine. I'll get his soul, and I'll be reborn as a new being. I know I'm lacking, but I'm built different. I can truly complete you.

-...

- You'll have no choice but to acknowledge me. In the end, you'll understand that I'm right.

When the Son of Light appeared, I heard someone's voice.

"Hyung..."

The Son of Light looked like a mess.

In addition to desecrating his body, the crimson demon was trying to take away his soul as well. He was more ruthless and wicked than any villain that the continent had faced so far.

There was something strange about him as well, which made me feel afraid of him, and I was relieved that I wasn't there.

“The Son of Light.”

“Please, O Goddess! If you can hear my voice, please save the Son of Light and the Sunset Swordsman.”

“Please... I beg you. I know we’re not worthy of making this kind of request since we’ve failed to protect the Son of Light, but... we shamelessly pray... please give them another chance.”

“Please save the Son of Light, O Goddess. He had already sacrificed his life once, and we cannot sacrifice him again.

“O Benigoa...”

“Elune, please give them strength. Please...”

I heard voices everywhere.

We were at the southernmost tip of the continent, but the people had gathered at the temples to say their—quite possibly—final prayers. The figure next to me gathered his hands quietly. He was just following the words of the others around him, but he looked more solemn than anyone else here.

“I pray that nothing happens to hyung... please...”

“...”

“...”

I felt like I had to say something because I couldn’t just stand idly by and watch.

“Are you okay, Rafael?”

“...”

“Yeah, Marian. I’m fine,” Rafael answered.

“You’re... worried, right?” I asked.

The warrior chosen by the holy sword didn’t answer, but I saw him nodding lightly at

me. How could he not worry? Rafael followed the Son of Light and the honorary cardinal more religiously than anyone else.

"Of course, he's not fine," Lee Joo-Hyuk chimed in.

"Joo-Hyuk," I said.

"That's a stupid question, Marian. It's a really... stupid question," Lee Jo-Hyuk said.

And Lee Jo-Hyuk was right...

Rafael thought of Lee Ki-Young as his older brother, the only person he could trust throughout the entire continent, and the person who had transformed him into what he was today. The Honorary Cardinal of the Democratic Country meant so much to Rafael, the leader of our party.

Lee Ki-Young was a saint who had sacrificed his entire life for the continent, but I was sure he meant so much more than that to Rafael.

"I'm sure he wants to go there right now," Lee Jo-Hyuk added.

"Joo-Hyuk," I said.

"He's stopping himself from running there right now because that's just the kind of guy he is," Lee Jo-Hyuk said.

'He's kind of weird at times. He sets the mood and says embarrassing things like that.'

It was strange how he was leaning against the wall with his arms crossed in front of him while saying such things, but I knew Lee Joo-Hyuk was *that* kind of person the moment I met him.

"The Son of Light had saved him, but Rafael couldn't do anything for him, especially when he was in pain, when his spirit shattered, and when he had decided to sacrifice himself. That's why I said it was a stupid question, Marian.

"Just imagine how he's feeling right now. He must be feeling miserable and shameful," he explained.

"..."

“The situation isn’t that bad since the Sunset Swordsman is at least trying to save him. Rafael is here...” Lee Jo-Hyuk trailed off.

“Joo-Hyuk, your words are a bit...” I trailed off, too.

“I didn’t say anything wrong. It is what it is. I’m sure even Rafael finds it funny that he’s here praying like this. It would have been better if you hadn’t asked that question,” Lee Jo-Hyuk said.

“We didn’t come here to pray, and you know that. You know what our mission is. Miss Kasugano...” I said.

“Yeah, I know that an unexpected enemy is coming. I’ve heard it so many times. I also know that we’re the only party who can stop them, but it won’t make the emptiness go away. Rafael, is it really okay for you to be here?” Lee Jo-Hyuk asked.

“Stop it, Joo-Hyuk!” I shouted.

Rafael was still looking up at the sky as he said, “I’m fine, Marian. You don’t have to shout like that.”

“Lee Joo-Hyuk, what are you trying to say here? You know things aren’t going well right now. Didn’t you hear them say that nothing will change even if we go there? Our party was created to take care of any variables. Miss Lee Ji-Hye—”

“It’s over for the continent once the Sunset Swordsman fails. If that demon manages to devour the Son of Light’s soul, something unimaginable will happen,” Lee Joo-Hyuk interrupted me.

“Do you really need to be so negative about it?” I asked.

“It is what it is,” Lee Jo-Hyuk replied.

“What are you trying to say?” I asked.

“Ask the idiot who’s praying, not me,” Lee Jo-Hyuk answered.

I turned and saw Rafael with an awkward expression. He nodded as if he was telling me that it was okay, but his arms were shaking. He looked as if asking why I was looking at him, but I saw blood flowing out his lips.

Lee Joo-Hyuk sighed.

Then, Rafael broke the awkward silence by talking to the party members.

“I...”

“...”

“I... want to go there,” Rafael said.

“...”

“I might not be of any help. I might get in the way, and I might do something stupid again, but I want to save my hyung. However...” Rafael trailed off.

“Then go,” Lee Joo-Hyuk told him.

“...”

“Just go,” Lee Jo-Hyuk repeated.

“But...”

“Leave this place to me,” Lee Jo-Hyuk told Rafael.

“Lee Joo-Hyuk,” Rafael said.

BOOM!

A deafening noise echoed, and angels with crimson wings appeared as if they had been waiting for the right moment to make their appearance.

“Prepare for battle!”

“...”

“Prepare for battle!”

The praying priests and the people screamed and ran for their lives.

The mages and priests immediately started channeling their spells while the crimson-winged angels flew down toward the city.

“Let’s move...” Rafael ordered.

“You're not coming with us, Rafael,” Lee Joo-Hyuk said.

“...”

“I’ll take care of this place,” Lee Jo-Hyuk added.

‘Why is he acting like that?’

“Miss Kasugano Yuno has just contacted us, Mr. Rafael. This place—” I said.

“No, I said I’ll take care of this place,” Lee Jo-Hyuk repeated, interrupting me.

“A named being has appeared. I repeat—a named being has appeared! Prepare for battle, everyone!”

A crimson-winged angel with the ability to control a massive red plant appeared. Before Rafael could grab his sword, the hunting dog threw himself toward the angel.

It was going to be a pointless fight. I knew Lee Joo-Hyuk was strong, and the hunting dog of the party was always capable of showing us power beyond our imagination, but I couldn't say that he had overcome his wall.

Regardless, Lee Jo-Hyuk gnashed his teeth and charged at the crimson-winged angel.

Our party members followed suit to assist him.

Lee Joo-Hyuk took the brunt of a powerful blow, and he flew away, slamming into a wall.

We were about to assist him, but he signaled with his hand, saying that he'd handle this place.

A gruesome fight ensued.

Lee Joo-Hyuk's fighting style always made me feel like he was walking on a tightrope,

but this was more gruesome than battles I had seen so far. Whenever he was thrown to the floor, he'd stand up gracefully and charge at the angel once again.

In the end, he managed to reach the angel's crimson wings, and he immediately stabbed the angel on its neck. Lee Jo-Hyuk's face was quickly covered with the angel's blood.

The crimson-winged angel fought back, and Lee Jo-Hyuk lost his sword. However, he didn't even bother taking out another weapon as he used his teeth to bite the angel's neck.

"Marian, we should get going. They need reinforcements—"

"No, Rafael," I interrupted.

"What?"

"This isn't your fight. Go there and fight. Save the Son of Light. Answer the prayers of the people here. The holy sword has chosen you, and granting the people's prayers is one of your jobs as the Chosen One. Isn't that why our party was created in the first place? Anyway, we'll do our best to take care of this place," I told him.

"But..."

Thud!

A dull thud echoed as the named being fell to the ground.

"Uh..."

Rafael had just brandished his sword when the crimson-winged angel collapsed. When the dust settled, the hunting dog appeared behind the named being.

"I'm not weak," Lee Joo-Hyuk said.

"..."

"I'm not weak, Rafael," Lee Jo-Hyuk repeated.

"..."

Lee Joo-Hyuk wasn't in the best condition. His injuries were so severe that I couldn't look at them properly, but his eyes were filled with hostility toward Rafael. Lee Joo-Hyuk seemed to be telling Rafael with his gaze that he could still fight and that he didn't need his help.

"But I won't make it in time—"

"Head to Laios, Rafael," I interrupted Rafael.

"..."

"Miss Jung Ha-Yan should be in Laios. If you explain to her the situation and tell her that you want to head there together with her, I'm sure you'll be there in time. I'm sure she's still trying to help Laios, but she should be done by the time you arrive. Anyway, we still don't have a lot of time, so you have to leave now," I urged him.

"..."

"Will you guys really be okay?" Rafael asked.

"I'm not that stupid that you need to worry about me, Rafael. I'm your rival, not someone you should be worried about," Lee Joo-Hyuk said.

'R-Rival...'

I was sure he was the only one thinking that way.

Our party members all made their own remarks.

When it was my turn, I spoke cautiously, "Of course, Rafael. I'm Marian, the Miracle Priest. I'm sure we'll see a miracle here."

It was scary to lead a huge battle without the party leader, and I was sure everyone else was worried as well, but I had to force myself to smile.

'I can do it. I'm the Miracle Priest, after all. I'm going to protect this place. I can do it without Rafael.'

"Rafael... once this is over... we..." I paused.

“..”

“..”

“Okay, Marian. Let’s meet hyung together,” Rafael said.

“Ah... okay...”

‘It’s okay. I’m the Miracle Priest.’

“Thanks, everyone,” Rafael said.

The Gray Warrior spread his wings and carved a path amidst the enemies.

“I’ll help you clear a path,” Rafael offered.

The mage of the party buffed the party leader, and Lee Joo-Hyuk worked hard, making quick work of the crimson-winged angels. I started channeling my own spell. I extracted as much holy power as I could from within myself while thinking about the reason I earned the title "Miracle Priest."

‘I’m the Miracle Priest.’

I was filled to the brim with holy power. For some reason, the holy light was more radiant, warmer, and more powerful than the first time I performed a miracle. The Goddess' power was filling me up to the brim, and I could hear her voice as well.

‘A Goddess Advent... It’s a Goddess Advent! A m-miracle is happening.’

I could clearly hear a voice.

[Guys, please don’t do anything ridiculous.]

“What?”

[It’s a message from the Son of Light, my daughter.]

“Huh?”

[He said, “Please don’t do anything ridiculous,” my lovely daughter.]

1. Marian's POV 📖

CHAPTER 865

THE LAST (98)

- Rafel... once this is over... we...

- Okay, Marian. Let's meet hyung together.

-...

- Thanks, everyone.

- I'll help you clear a path.

"..."

"..."

"Yeon-Soo, can you give me a hand?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"Sure, unni," I^[1] answered.

"I wasn't actually asking for your hand," Lee Ji-Hye said.

"Ah! I-I'm sorry. I—"

"It's fine. I didn't say that because I was expecting an apology. Anyway, why are they so focused on filming a children's adventure movie when we're so busy? They must not be in their right minds to be able to say those lines, especially Lee Joo-Hyuk.

"He's not acting, right?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"Ah... you're right. He's really..."

"I knew it the moment the twins took a liking to him. Real recognize real. Shouldn't he be part of the Moon Breakers as well?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

“ .. ”

“ .. ”

“By the way, what should we do about Rafael, unni?” I asked.

“I’m not sure. Try your best to stop him, but I’m not sure if you’ll succeed. There isn’t much I need to do on my end. It’s oppa who’s desperate, not me. I’m sure he’ll...” Lee Ji-Hye trailed off.

- Noona, did you see those crazy bastards?

“I take that back... He’s a troublemaker as well,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

Sure enough, a Goddess’ Mirror appeared in the air before us.

The Son of Light started talking, and the way he talked to Ji-Hye unni in a hurry sounded fake for some reason.

“I’m aware, so stop overexaggerating things. It’s not like you didn’t expect it,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

- Try to stop him from coming here. Hyun-Sung won’t be able to concentrate if he’s here. He’s already struggling, and I don’t want him to struggle even more. Stop him. Apparently, he’s going to Laios. Please, Ha-Yan is there...

“Yeah, yeah, I know. I understand how you feel, oppa. I’m scared of that crazy bitch as well. I really have no desire to let the continent get destroyed,” Lee Ji-Hye told him.

- You know I can’t focus on other things when I need to control my emotions, right? I’m really busy with what’s happening here... I trust you’ll take care of it. *Ah*, noona, regarding the holy power...

“I’m getting so much that calculating the amount is pointless, so don’t worry about it. The very first digit on the left is changing every second. I think it’s better if I take care of this first so that I can use this once I need to use this.

"It seemed like the higher-ups had been making their own preparations as well. Mr. Bel is probably busy, and Miss Beni—she's stuck between a rock and a hard place, so I'll take care of it," Lee Ji-Hye volunteered.

- Great. I'll leave it to you.

"Don't trust me too much. There's a limit to how much I can control the situation, and I'm just sitting around here, so there's not much I can do," she said.

- But still...

"I'm sure you're watching, but I sent you the reactions of the nations, the guilds, and the clans... I sent you their reactions to the ongoing show. You don't really need to see the Sacred Democratic Country's reaction, but the flow of holy power from the Republic is kind of slow," Lee Ji-Hye reported.

- It would be a good idea to get them emotional by bringing in the Hero of Shadows. I'll create a channel.

"I'll create a short promo video and play it for them. Asking Lonovera to do it is an option as well. There are errors within the expected range, but the responses are mostly positive. Laios' reaction is kind of disappointing, but it can't be helped... Anyway, that's it. Good luck, oppa," Lee Ji-Hye explained.

- I'm always grateful, noona.

"Me, too. I love and thank you," Lee Ji-Hye said.

I saw Ji-Hye unni looking at the Goddess' Mirror quietly. The Gray Warrior on the screen was shaking off the crimson-winged demons and was running at breakneck speeds toward his destination. I started rooting for him unknowingly, as he was desperately cutting down the enemies.

"It's going to be hard to stop him... It's not working out. If you think about it, this gray guy has overcome his limits as well, so there's no way this task is going to be easy. I can't even contact him since he has disconnected himself from the communication channel. It's the same for Marian and Lee Joo-Hyuk, right?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"Yes," I replied.

The room was packed to the brim with Goddess' Mirrors that showed us many scenes throughout the continent. The God of Magic and the very first Angel of Magic were in the middle of disassembling the clump of mana in Laios.

I could see fights taking place throughout the front line.

- This is a holy war, and the Goddess will not abandon us! Never surrender to the demons! Let the continent know that we're still here. Let's do what we can, my brothers and sisters!

- Fight for the Son of Light and Goddess Benigoa!

- Never retreat!

- For the Republic! Let's fight for the Hero of Shadows!

- O Lauren! Please protect us. Please bestow strength to your sons and daughters!

Those who couldn't fight were praying with desperation, and the people in the ruined cities held each other's hands while praying inside underground shelters. They set up a small statue and kneeled before it while crying with a rosary in hand.

There were also people who chose to pick up swords and shields despite their trembling hands to fight for their beliefs, for themselves, and for the continent. They even said goodbye to their loved ones in case something went wrong.

'This is...' Considering the ongoing situation, their actions made sense, but the scene was so shocking that I was at a loss for words. *'This is the stage and play that those two have created.'*

Lee Ki-Young and Lee Ji-Hye made roles for every single character on the stage called "the Continent." I couldn't believe that the terrible, noble, and even beautiful situations that were happening right now all over the continent were part of a bigger entertainment show that those two had made.

The air was filled with lights, and crimson-winged angels pervaded the air. The adventurers were fighting bizarre-looking monsters, and the mercenaries had rushed to the battlefield to protect the city.

Every single one of them was struggling to survive, but I was an insider, so the scene looked like a well-written comedy to me.

I could see some people doing unbelievable things.

The Gray Warrior brought down the crimson-winged demons nonstop; the archmage was holding in her laughter while staring at the clump of magic in Laios; the Mercenary Queen was frowning while looking up quietly at the sky; the leader of the Democratic Country was crying, and the elf princess stood at the helm of the helms to handle an entire region of the battlefield by herself.

They weren't as influential as them, but they were people capable of influencing the continent. There were others who could do the same as well, such as the holders of the Eight Seats, the Republic's Five Tiger Generals, the armed groups of the Federation, and the named beings of the Union.

However, every single one of them was like a mere ant compared to those two.

'Those two... '

They were playing with the continent. It seemed like they were thinking of it as a playground and had decided to roll the dice to have fun.

They were moving the chess pieces nonchalantly while making sure that those chess pieces were always under their control. They had even chosen the people who'd become the enemies and villains. Then, they'd lead those people to their deaths once they had done their roles.

I knew Ji-Hye unni was that kind of person, but I still found it hard to adapt to it. It was hard to comprehend the fact that the continent had become a stage for two people, and I was actually confused about what exactly was the goal here. However, it was understandable, as I was just an ordinary person.

Perhaps it was because I was thinking too much, but Ji-Hye unni looked at me quietly with a hand on her chin.

"Yeon-Soo, what's it like watching all this?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"Huh?"

"What's it like watching all this?" Lee Ji-Hye repeated.

"Well, I feel... relieved," I answered.

"How come?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

“It’s because I’m here next to you rather than out there, and I know everything that’s happening over there. At least I’m...” I paused.

‘At least I’m not a chess piece...’

It was highly unlikely, but I might be a part of the stage's foundation. However, it was more likely that I was just a piece of metal on the railroad track that Lee Ki-Young and Lee Ki-Hye had built.

Ji-Hye unni said she cherished me, but there was a high chance that she only cherished a part of me. However, the fact that I wasn’t a chess piece made me feel relieved.

“It’s great that you feel that way. Overthinking is bad sometimes. *Ah!* I must be out of it. I should dispatch some troops to the Republic side. That main event is over, anyway... *Hmm...* Can you call Miss Kasugano Yuno for me?” she requested.

“Okay,” I answered.

I opened the door slowly and saw Kasugano Yuno standing behind the door.

‘So she knew that she’d be summoned here.’

“Ah, Miss Yuno,” I greeted.

“Hello,” Kasugano Yuno greeted.

“Please follow me. Is Miss Jo Hye-Jin—”

“She’s still talking to Miss Sun Hee-Young. She wants to head to where the Sunset Swordsman is currently located... She actually seemed like she had some questions about it. It's the same for the others,” Kasugano Yuno interrupted.

“B-By the way, I'm surprised you knew that w-we were going to call you,” I stuttered.

“...”

‘I feel uncomfortable just talking to her.’

To be honest, she was the creepiest person I had ever met.

'I have no idea what she's thinking, too.'

"You asked for me, Miss Lee Ji-Hye?" Kasugano Yuno asked.

"Yes, Miss Kasugano," Lee Ji-Hye replied.

Kasugano Yuno glanced over at me quietly.

"Should I leave the room?" I asked.

"It's fine, Yeon-Soo. You can sit here," Lee Ji-Hye answered.

I smiled for some reason, but she was a shaman capable of seeing the future, so she probably knew that this would happen.

"You're probably curious about the things that changed," Kasugano Yuno said.

"You're right. I want to know the extent of the changes that I can bring and if the future will change because of it. To be honest, I don't think I can stop it. I think I can handle the Gray Warrior. However, our Red Queen, the pride of Lindel, seems to be heading over there," Lee Ji-Hye answered.

"..."

"..."

"Nothing is going to change," Kasugano Yuno told her.

"Do you have proof?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"We've reached the end. That's all I can tell you right now, Miss Lee Ji-Hye. Everything will go according to his wishes," Kasugano Yuno replied.

Lee Ji-Hye tapped on the table, seemingly contemplating something. She glanced at the Goddess' Mirror and stood up before pacing around. I wasn't sure what she was thinking, but Kasugano Yuno was staring deeply at her with her empty pupils.

'Ugh...'

"And Miss Jo Hye-Jin—"

“We’ll head there as well,” Lee Ji-Hye interrupted.

“What? Unni?” I questioned.

“We’ll head there as well. If it can’t be stopped, then this isn’t a bad idea. I don’t know the answer, but I think this is the right thing to do. There’s a limit to how much I can achieve here, and we need to start making up for what we’ve done.

“I don’t know about anything else, but the Everia incident has been bothering me a bit. We’ll go there and become the guardians of the continent, who have finally decided to make a move after foreseeing the continent's destruction,” Lee Ji-Hye explained.

“Is that the only reason?” Kasugano Yuno asked.

“It's the same as always,” Lee Ji-Hye replied.

“...”

“I just found a more efficient method, and Oppa also said that not rolling the dice when it needs to be rolled is a stupid thing to do.

“This is a winning gamble, so I’m just doing the obvious thing to do here. *Ah*, before we leave, connect me to Jung Ha-Yan—no, connect me to Han Sora. I’ll head there after explaining the situation to her,” Lee Ji-Hye ordered.

‘She’s going there?’

I saw the God of Sunset struggling on top of the crimson temple, and he was screaming while the Son of Light's soul was being taken away.

- Mr. Ki-Young... Mr. Ki-Young!!!

- AAAAAHHH!

Kasugano Yuno got up quietly while staring at the Goddess' Mirror with a blank face.

“As the master wills...” Kasugano Yuno muttered, and I found her creepy as always.

1. Ha Yeon-Soo's POV 📌

CHAPTER 866

THE LAST (99)

"Mr. Ki-Young... Mr. Ki-Young!" Kim Hyun-Sung shouted.

"Ack..."

I^[1] couldn't help but gasp at the enormous "support" of the viewers.

'Damn it, this is such a mess. What the hell is wrong with them?'

I knew Rafael was going to cause trouble. I should have cut ties with him when I had the chance. I moved my fingers out of nervousness, but I couldn't really do much.

Thankfully, I still had Ji-Hye noona, so...

'I'm relieved about that, at least.'

She could definitely handle many things by herself without me telling her the details. Of course, I had already given her a hint, so I was confident that there weren't going to be any issues. If possible, I wanted to handle everything myself, but that was impossible.

How could I handle every little detail when I wasn't even on the field? I could probably do many things if we were in a different situation, but right now, focusing on this place was the right thing to do.

There were many reasons why I couldn't ignore this. The ongoing situation of the continent, the tremendous amount of holy power that we were earning in real-time, the enormous "support" of the viewers, and our large investment were just some of the many reasons, but it was undeniable that I had to pay attention to this.

Lee Ji-Hye was probably talking to Kasugano Yuno right now, so even if the script ended up changing, there was a high chance that she could handle it. She'd definitely ensure that the future wouldn't change, even if Rafael managed to come here.

In other words, there was no need for me to worry. I could just focus on this place.

I also had to keep checking on Kim Hyung-Sung, as he had hit rock bottom upon reaching the limits of his mental state. I had no choice but to focus on him, and honestly, if he had been an ordinary person, he would have already lost his mind.

If I had to describe his situation, I would say that he was walking on a tightrope atop an extremely tall building, and the rope was on the verge of snapping. It was scary, but a skilled director would push their actors to their limits.

'This is the right thing to do. Let's focus here.'

Guilt was the strongest emotion in Kim Hyun-Sung's heart at the moment. He had already decided to head to his third life, but he still couldn't abandon this life completely.

I was sure he was finding it hard to stomach the sight of the Son of Light suffering in real time. It made sense. Kim Hyun-Sung's heart had always been weak toward his beloved ones, so how could he ignore his close friend, who was in pain both physically and spiritually?

"You bastard!!" Kim Hyun-Sung roared.

"Mr... Hyun-Sung," I muttered.

"Mr. Ki-Young... Mr. Ki-Young! Can you hear my voice?" Kimi Hyun-Sung asked immediately.

"Y-Yes... I can hear you," I answered.

I saw Kim Hyun-Sung mindlessly heading toward the tower. His eyes were on me as he swung his sword at the otherworldly "entities." There were too many of them, so it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that Kim Hyun-Sung was fighting an army.

A torrent of guilt had inundated his head, and his mind went blank as a result.

Despite that, I could tell that he was extremely anxious at the moment. He was worried that my soul was actually going to be taken away or that I might helplessly fall again because he couldn't do anything for me.

Kim Hyun-Sung held his breath as he swung his sword desperately. He spread his wings and roared. Honestly, what he was doing for me was proof that I had a good eye for people, so I was happy to see it.

However, he looked so pitiful that I felt conflicted at the same time.

"Let go of him, you scum!" Kim Hyun-Sung shouted.

"I'm sorry, but I decline," Song Soo-Kyung said.

"Let... Mr. Ki-Young go," Kim Hyun-Sung mumbled.

"I'm sorry, God of Sunset. This is for you," Song Soo-Kyung said.

"Let him go, damn it!" Kim Hyun-Sung shouted.

Song Soo-Kyung stretched his hand out toward me. The tentacles that were holding onto my body tightly throbbed and released a faint light. The faint light slowly turned gray as he absorbed it.

"*Haa... haa...*" Song Soo-Kyung's breathing became heavy.

This famous scene would definitely shake everyone up, including Kim Hyun-Sung.

I could already feel everyone's support before the next batch of "support" poured in.

Kim Hyun-Sung's breathing was becoming heavy as well, which was a sign that he was becoming increasingly desperate.

He wasn't that far away from me, but he probably felt that I was *really* far away. He tried to get close to me, but he wasn't getting any closer.

The "entities" were holding Kim Hyun-Sung back.

He was attacking them without stopping, but they "resurrected" incessantly to block Kim Hyun-Sung's path again.

"Wait a little longer, Mr... Ki-Young..." Kim Hyun-Sung mumbled.

"*Haa... haa...*"

"Wait... a little longer. A little longer," Kim Hyun-Sung repeated.

"Ack..."

"I'm sorry. I'm... sorry. I'm sorry for everything. I... I..." Kim Hyun-Sung stuttered.

"It's... not... your fault... Mr. Hyun-Sung," I said.

"Damn it... damn it..." Kim Hyun-Sung cursed.

"So don't... feel like... you're responsible," I added.

"Heuk... heuuuk... Damn it! Damn it!" Kim Hyun-Sung shouted.

"..."

"Why... Why does this happen every time? Why are you the only one..." Kim Hyun-Sung paused.

"Haa... haa..."

"Please wait just a moment. I just... need a moment, Mr. Ki-Young. I-I can save you. Heuk... so please hang on," Kim Hyun-Sung begged.

"Hagh..."

"No! No!" Kim Hyun-Sung yelled, and a burst of light erupted from him. The light was so bright that it annihilated the "entities." The large pillars made out of tentacles were split in half, and Kim Hyun-Sung spread his wings immediately to make a beeline for me.

Stems made out of tentacles burst out of the ground to grab Kim Hyun-Sung's feet, but he didn't even glance at them.

'Why is he so fast?'

He was so far earlier, but now, he was so close.

'What are you doing, Mr. Bel? Are you just going to let it end like this?'

Kim Hyun-Sung was trying his best to grab my hand.

“Grab...”

However, I couldn't extend my hand. All I could do was smile lightly at him. He was so close to me, but he was pushed back once again. I only saw him for a moment, but I saw him crying.

‘He’s really desperate.’

To the point that I felt bad...

Kaboom!

Craaaack!

A large pillar of tentacles struck Kim Hyun-Sung. The next moment, stems made out of tentacles grabbed his feet, immobilizing him. The "entities" rushed at him, but he didn't even scream.

Kim Hyun-Sung swung his sword nonstop while staring at me. He would get back up whenever he fell, and he'd raise his sword once again after getting knocked down. He roared in a way that was unlike him and ran toward me.

Kim Hyun-Sung was trying to see how much time he had left.

The wriggling tentacles around me were in the middle of devouring me. It looked like snakes were eating me. It wasn't painful, but it felt so suffocating that I couldn't help but breathe in ragged pants. Kim Hyun-Sung shouted as if he was having another episode.

“Stop it... you bastard... Just stop... Stop torturing him. Let him go. He's sacrificed so much! He had given up everything just to come this far...” Kim Hyun-Sung begged.

“ ... ”

“If it's me you want, then you don't need him, right? Right?” Kim Hyun-Sung questioned.

“ ... ”

“W-What do you want?!” Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

“...”

“What do you want?! What the hell do you want?! D-Do you want me to kneel? P-Please let him go. His soul shouldn’t suffer either... *Heuk...*” Kim Hyun-Sung cried.

It was unlike Kim Hyun-Sung to try and make a compromise with Villain Song.

This was proof that he had been pushed into a corner.

I didn’t need the Regressor Instructor Manual to figure that out. Even though his wounds could be considered superficial, his armor had shattered. He looked like a used rag, and I couldn’t help but find him pitiful.

“Don’t do this. P-Please don’t do this. I beg you,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“...”

“I honestly don’t really remember... who you are, but if I really saved you... please let him go. Please...” Kim Hyun-Sung begged.

“You’re showing a weak and ugly side,” Song Soo-Kyung commented.

“Please let him go. Please...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“You’ve become far from the person I once knew. The Kim Hyun-Sung I know is a strong person who is not easily swayed, but you’re too weak... you’re incompetent,” Song Soo-Kyung added.

“Please...”

“What I want is the complete God of Sunset, and he’s the reason...” Song Soo-Kyung trailed off.

“...”

“He’s the reason why you’ve become weak,” Song Soo-Kyung continued.

“Stop it! S-Stop it!” Kim Hyun-Sung stuttered.

'Stop pulling my hair, man.'

"This fool was just lucky, God of Sunset," Song Soo-Kyung said.

"..."

"That's why he was able to stand beside you. He's not really worth anything, right? Right?" Song Soo-Kyung asked.

"Haa... haa..."

"Y-Yeah, you're right, so let him go," Kim Hyun-Sung begged.

'You two-faced villain. You've completely lost your mind. He doesn't even know what he's saying.'

"He has obtained an ability that's a little more special than others because he was lucky. He became a god... and was worshiped by others all because he was lucky..." Song Soo-Kyung said.

'You know nothing about how I became Light Ki-Young.'

Of course, it would seem like I simply got lucky, and it would seem like I had started out on the elite course without experiencing any hardships or struggles. Honestly, I couldn't blame them for thinking that way, as the Son of Light looked pretty fancy.

In addition to that, I became an integral part of the Blue Guild after sticking with Kim Hyun-Sung. Afterward, I made connections with nobles, received the Pope's blessing, and was even invited to every party.

I often drank some wine while talking to people. In other words, I was living a life full of laughter. I even became the Mercenary Queen's lover and the archmage's boyfriend. I could do as much research as I wanted without worrying about resources, so it would seem like the entire world loved me.

It was true. It would seem like I was living the life of a typical protagonist. I was basically a perfect human being, who only managed to sacrifice himself because everyone loved me.

The Son of Light had a *really* pure heart, which was probably why Song Soo-Kyung

felt inferior to me. In the end, I even became a god watching over the continent, so it was understandable that he was angry at me. After all, he had to start from the very bottom.

However, Kim Hyun-Sung was aware that my public image was kind of different from my true identity. He definitely knew that I had climbed all the way up here from the very bottom.

“That’s it...” Song Soo-Kyung said.

Kim Hyun-Sung frowned because Song Soo-Kyung sounded like he was rejecting Lee Ki-Young of the second life. However, his nervousness and anxiety attracted my attention the most.

“So please... let him go,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

‘Don’t give up.’

“Mr. Hyun-Sung...” I mumbled.

“...”

I didn’t bother expressing my emotions with my voice, but I used my eyes to send him a message.

‘To not give up... ’

‘That I’m fine... ’

‘That he’ll get through it like he always does... ’

‘And if I disappear... ’

‘Nothing will change... ’

‘So fight and win... ’

‘Don’t retreat, fight, and win... ’

“I beg you. Stop torturing him...” Kim Hyun-Sung begged.

'What are you doing, man? Fight and win.'

“Please... I beg you. Please...”

1. Lee Ki-Young's POV 📖

CHAPTER 867

THE LAST (100)

“Let him go. I won’t ask any questions. Please...” Kim Hyun-Sung begged.

‘What are you doing?’

“He has suffered enough already. You’ve tortured him enough, and you’ve got everything that you wanted, r-right? You don’t need to go this far...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

‘Why are you trying to negotiate with a terrorist? I know I’m being held hostage, but you shouldn’t act like this.’

“Just stop here. Anymore and...” Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

‘He’s not someone you can negotiate with.’

I thought Kim Hyun-Sung would kneel to try and convince Song Soo-Kyung, but it did not seem like he would do that.

‘You have to fight.’

It was absurd to even think that you could convince him with mere words.

Song Soo-Kyung wanted to see the God of Sunset, and his ultimate goal was probably to stay next to Kim Hyun-Sung. Of course, I wasn’t sure, and it was most likely his secondary goal.

The God of Sunset meant so much more to him, so it was likely that he was putting all his efforts into his former plan.

Kim Hyun-Sung’s actions couldn’t move Song Soo-Kyung. A demon had invaded his mind—no, Song Soo-Kyung had become a demon himself. In other words, it was impossible for him to make a sound judgement.

Song Soo-Kyung was probably angry at Kim Hyun-Sung or even at me, and it was most likely because the person he thought of as the ideal being was showing his "true" self to him.

Kim Hyun-Sung's behavior was far from the behavior that the God of Sunset was supposed to have. The being that was supposed to be served and worshiped looked weak to the point that he looked like he was about to collapse anytime soon.

To make matters worse, there was fear and anxiety written all over his face, and his broken armor added to his weak look.

He looked so weak to the point that I questioned if he still had the strength left to wield his sword. In fact, he looked like he had already lost the will to fight.

'You'll realize it if you just think about it for a moment. Your actions right now will only stimulate this psycho. I think this guy has lost his mind.'

Kim Hyun-Sung was only thinking about one scene, and it was the scene of Song Soo-Kyung taking away the Son of Light's soul.

'This situation is so scary that he's trying to gasp at straws.'

He didn't mind suffering, but he was afraid that I'd suffer again.

He was thinking about the possibility that clashing swords with Song Soo-Kyung could ultimately lead to a disaster, the possibility that I could cease to exist in the third life because my soul had been taken away, and the possibility of the Regressor Instruction Manual disappearing in his third life.

These anxiety-inducing possibilities had intertwined, trapping Kim Hyun-Sung in a spider web. It was unlike Kim Hyun-Sung to act this way, but his subconscious was telling him that appealing to Song Soo-Kyung's emotions was the most reasonable choice to make here.

Obviously, I could already see what he was going to do.

"..."

"Please... P-Please..." Kim Hyun-Sung begged.

"It's useless," Song Soo-Kyung said.

"Please..." Kim Hyun-Sung repeated.

"I said that it's useless, God of Sunset," Song Soo-Kyung said.

Song Soo-Kyun looked down at Kim Hyun-Sung as calmly as possible, but I could tell that he was being swayed.

"This isn't like you. What are you doing right now?" Song Soo-Kyung questioned.

"..."

"I'm the enemy you're supposed to take down, so why would you beg your enemy? Did you think I was actually going to listen?" Song Soo-Kyung asked.

"Let Mr. Ki-Young go. Whatever you want... if you really consider me as your savior... do me this favor, please..." Kim Hyun-Sung begged.

Song Soo-Kyung looked at me.

'This psycho bastard. The light will never surrender to you,' I thought while staring at him. I was expressing with my body that even the smallest light could light up the darkness. This was the least I could do right now.

What would the people think at the sight of this?

I had to paint a scene that would make everyone think that there was still a strand of hope amidst the darkness. After all, complete despair was bad.

To be honest, Hyun-Sung had crossed the line as well.

'Does it even make sense for the God of Sunset to act that way? I understand what he's trying to do here, but an ordinary person might not be able to accept it.'

"I-If a savior is what you truly want, then I can become the savior... so..." Kim Hyun-Sung paused.

"..."

“He has nothing to do with this. H-He already lost everything. He’s... someone you don’t need to worry about. If Ki-Young really... I mean, if you really think he ruined me, then...” Kim Hyun-Sung paused again.

‘What the hell? Finish your sentence. Are you seriously cutting ties with me right now?’

“Please...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

Song Soo-Kyung frowned and grabbed my hair with all his might.

“Stop! J-Just stop! Please... please!” Kim Hyun-Sung shouted.

Despite his violent behavior, Song Soo-Kyung looked confused.

‘What’s wrong with him?’

“Damn it...” Song Soo-Kyung muttered as he looked at me and Kim Hyun-Sung.

I was not sure which part of me had gotten to him, but...

‘What is there to think about? Just take it. What’s the problem, damn it?’

Song Soo-Kyung seemed hesitant to take my soul, and I had no idea why he was behaving that way. I deduced that his hesitation had to be because of what Kim Hyun-Sung was doing, but Song Soo-Kyung was well beyond the point of no return.

He had already gotten this far, so why wouldn't he go all the way/

‘Do you really have any other choice? I’m sure you’re angry. The person before you is an extremely weak human compared to the perfect Kim Hyun-Sung. It’s making you mad, right? You’re not capable of feeling sympathy. If you could sympathize, you would have done so long ago.’

Honestly, I wasn't sure whether Song Soo-Kyung sympathized with Kim Hyun-Sung or not, but he was looking around. He looked at the devastating scene he had created, and he kept looking around as if he was dissatisfied.

‘Ah, damn it... ’

Was there a bit of humanity left in this psychopath?

Was the small light that was sitting inside Song Soo-Kyung—the light that I thought had been extinguished, trying to drive out the darkness within him?

Was he regretting listening to the demon's voice? Had he realized that there was something wrong with the current situation?

I imagined a tiny firefly inside of him flapping its wings powerfully.

'Fuckin' bastard. It's no use.'

'Don't try to awaken when you've already been devoured by the darkness. Don't try to ignite that small light of hope within you.'

'What are you doing, Mr. Bel?! Are you going to let him get away with this?'

'Is this all you can do?'

Song Soo-Kyung grabbed my face with one hand.

I moved my face as much as I could and bit his hand.

'Wake up! Don't lose to the light.'

"You bastard!" Song Soo-Kyung shouted.

Song Soo-Kyung punched me in the face.

"You scum!" Song Soo-Kyung yelled.

'You're back. You've overcome the light. I'll gladly take your punches, then.'

"You wicked, incompetent bastard! You ruined him. It's your fault! Look at all of this! Look at the God of Sunset. Lift your head, you scum!"

"Is that the God of Sunset that you wanted? That weak human... is that what you wanted?! It's all your fault!" Song Soo-Kyung shouted.

"D-Don't do it!" Kim Hyun-Sung yelled.

"Shut up, God of Sunset! Everything is his fault. Everything! This wicked monster..."

made me this way. Shit. All of this happened because of that fraudster. It's all because of this jerk who has been standing next to you, even though he doesn't deserve that position!

"What's so important about him? Shit! Why are you acting like this? Why aren't you acting like your true self? Don't show me that side. Don't look at me like that! Don't beg me to sympathize with you!" Song Soo-Kyung yelled.

"..."

"Why are you doing this to me?! God of Sunset! Why are you putting me through this ordeal?! Why must I see this side of you?! I just! I-I just—" Song Soo-Kyung paused.

"..."

"Haa... haa... haa..."

"..."

"It's no use, God of Sunset. The outcome won't change. Your actions are meaningless," Song Soo-Kyung said.

"..."

Song Soo-Kyung finally surrendered to the darkness, and he looked really sad. He looked so sad that I was convinced that he'd start crying anytime soon.

He was guilty of not being able to protect the tiny firefly inside him, which was also the saint's sympathy for the human version of Song Soo-Kyung.

The demon had already devoured him, but the pure, bright light still pitied him.

"What does this mean, Lee Ki-Young?" Song Soo-Kyung questioned.

"You're..." I said.

"How dare you..." Song Soo-Kyung said.

"I feel really bad for you," I told him.

“What?”

“You’re a pitiful and lonely person,” I said.

Song Soo-Kyung frowned again. It was probably because he couldn’t bear the fact that the person he hated had found him pitiful.

“W-What did you say?” Song Soo-Kyung stuttered.

The Son of Light would never answer questions. All I did was touch his tainted soul with a gaze that recognized his feelings, his heartbreak, and knowing the reason he had come this far, but...

“How dare you... How dare you look down on me?!” Song Soo-Kyung shouted.

“...”

“You’re a failure, Lee Ki-Young. You’re a loser... What would you know when I had taken everything from you? You failed. Look at the continent! This is the continent you wanted to protect.

"In the end, you won’t be able to obtain anything. Your death was a worthless death, and your stupid sacrifice was worthless as well. And that’s what you are, too..." Song Soo-Kyung explained.

“My sacrifice... my death isn’t worthless, you tainted soul,” I said.

“Don’t make me laugh,” Song Soo-Kyung said.

“I’m sure my sacrifice had meaning,” I told him.

“Don’t make me laugh!!” Song Soo-Kyung shouted.

“I believe in humans. I believe in their potential and that they’ll be able to overcome any hardships. I believe they’ll overcome the pain of the past and get back up. I also believe that they won’t repeat their past mistakes. It seems unnecessary to some, but if there's at least one person who has recognized my efforts, then it wasn't a worthless sacrifice,” I explained.

“God of Sunset...” Song Soo-Kyung mumbled.

“That’s the Sunset Swordsman... That’s the Hyun-Sung I know,” I told him.

Song Soo-Kyung rejected the weak Kim Hyun-Sung, but I was the opposite. This was the difference between him and me—the difference between a professional and an amateur.

“There are times when he collapses easily, becomes weak, swayed easily, a-and he's really frustrating to deal with sometimes,” I said.

“...”

“But...” I trailed off.

“...”

“But he always gets back up,” I added.

'That's what I call a hero.'

“He always raises his sword, he always overcomes his limits, he always becomes stronger, and he always moves forward,” I added.

'That's what I call a regressor.'

“I-I believe him,” I stuttered.

'He's the regressor I had chosen and raised myself.'

I lowered my head. I had faith in humanity, so I merely smiled as evil was brutally stomping on my soul. And then, with an expression of complete understanding on my face, I spoke cautiously...

CHAPTER 868

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (1)

“That’s the Sunset Swordsman... the Mr. Hyun-Sung I know,” Lee Ki-Young said.

Yes, that’s who I^[1] am.’

“There are times when he collapses easily, becomes weak, swayed easily, a-and he’s really frustrating to deal with sometimes,” Lee Ki-Young added.

Yes, there are times when I easily collapse and become weak. I’m easily swayed as well, and I must’ve been frustrating to deal with all the time rather than just sometimes.’

“But...” Lee Ki-Young trailed off.

‘But... ’

“But he always gets back up,” Lee Ki-Young continued.

‘I’m not sure if I’ll be able to get back up this time. I have never been able to get up by myself. You’re the one who helped me get back up.’

“He always raises his sword, he always overcomes his limits, he always becomes stronger, and he always moves forward,” Lee Ki-Young added.

‘You’re overestimating me. I haven’t overcome anything, nor have I gotten even stronger. I was just struggling, and I’d been running away to escape. I never wanted to come here. If it hadn’t been for you, I would have no idea how to resolve things by myself, as you’re the one who taught me how to do so.’

“I-I believe,” Lee Ki-Young said.

‘I’m not the type of person who can live up to your expectations.’

“ ... ”

Lee Ki-Young smiled as if he understood all of that. He had never lost faith in humanity until the end, and he smiled quietly even as his soul was being brutally stomped on by a demon. He smiled as if he was telling me that he believed in me.

"Ahh... ahhhh... Heuk... heuuuk..." I struggled and continued swinging my sword, but unfortunately, I couldn't reach him.

I was sure things had always been like this.

Now that I thought about it, I couldn't remember when I had ever reached him.

My life had basically been me chasing after things but never reaching them.

I had never achieved anything despite fighting and struggling for a long time. I had no idea why, but I couldn't figure out what I had to achieve. If someone looked at my life, they'd probably think that I had been going in circles like a squirrel running on a treadmill.

I was convinced that I'd constantly been running inside a barrel.

If it weren't for Lee Ki-Young, I would run inside the dark barrel forever.

Basically, Lee Ki-Young had shattered my cycle of running, and I managed to take my first step onto the seemingly invisible path before me all because of him.

Thanks to the Son of Light, I could take a step forward.

Thanks to him, I grew up slowly.

Thanks to him, I learned how to take things one step at a time.

Thanks to him, I managed to learn how to remain steadfast before adversities, and thanks to him, I became an upright individual.

Now that I thought about it, all of this was only possible because he was with me.

I managed to start over at the Blue Guild, I managed to meet the people whom I cared about, and I managed to laugh and enjoy my life on the continent because of him.

I managed to forget my painful memories and accept myself for who I was all because of him. I managed to endure the difficulties of life and move forward amidst the darkness, as the light was shining brightly upon me.

Of course, the light was shining brightly not just upon me but upon everyone on the continent as well.

Nonetheless, he was the reason I could stand up.

"Heuk... heuuuk..."

I saw Song Soo-Kyung fusing with the giant otherworldly tower.

I struggled because I had an idea as to what that meant, but nothing changed.

I saw the giant tower attaching itself to the demon with crimson wings.

The Son of Light, who had turned gray, was soon stuffed into the left chest of the monster who had changed so much that he could no longer be called human. The Son of Light's body had become like a stone—soulless and emotionless.

Song Soo-Kyung swung his large arm, and I couldn't move. I grabbed my sword to try to get up again, but for some reason, my hand contained no energy at all.

I heard a voice, but I had no energy to respond to it.

'I believe.'

'What... '

'What do you believe? What do you believe when I'm already in this state? You're well aware of the truth more than anyone, Mr. Ki-Young. You know that I'm just a lowly scum and that I don't deserve any support. You know that I'm selfish and that I don't really care about the continent.'

'I believe.'

'Don't say that. I'm not worthy. I'm not someone who can tolerate everything like you. I don't like it, and I resent this place that made you this way. I hate this place that has taken everything from me. The things you cherish and love are rotting and crumbling

in my eyes.'

'I believe.'

"Those words are a curse now. It's not something that can keep me going. *Heuk...* Why... Why do you believe in me? I thought you knew what I was thinking? You knew I was going to abandon this life. I was going to abandon everything you cherished and start new... I don't want to stay in this place any longer," I said.

'I believe.'

"Stop it. Don't believe in me any longer. *Heuk... heuk...* Y-You don't have to believe in me any longer, so please come back. I don't care about those things, so just come back. Don't disappear!" I shouted.

'I...'

BOOM!

"Do you see this, God of Sunet?" Song Soo-Kyung questioned.

"..."

"I will become him now. O God. I, who have taken his soul, will take his place," Song Soo-Kyung said.

"..."

"He's been a failure from start to finish. His life was a failed and worthless life. He was an incompetent human being who never deserved this kind of power, but it is no longer relevant. God of Sunset. He made you into a worthless being, but I'll make you perfect. His worthless death is now truly worthy..." Song Soo-Kyung paused.

"..."

Boom!

'I believe.'

I stood up slowly. As if I was brainwashed, I reacted to his voice and raised my sword.

I forced myself to lift it, but I unknowingly calmed down by breathing slowly and getting into my stance. I knew it was going to be a difficult fight, but I quietly took a step forward.

'I believe.'

"Why do you believe in me? I haven't been able to protect you at all n-no matter how many times I tried. I'm not a hero. I'm not the type of person you think I am, Mr. Ki-Young. I'm not someone who can get back on my feet," I said.

BOOM!

I was blasted away. I couldn't breathe, and I felt pain all over my body.

I also started coughing to let out whatever was inside my chest.

I just wanted to lose consciousness. I didn't feel like doing anything, and I just wanted to fall asleep. I really wished that this were all a dream. I really wished that I could go back to the idle times and forget everything that had ever happened.

It'd be nice if I no longer have to think about anything...

However, my body stood up slowly. I glared at Song Soo-Kyung quietly and raised my sword. I had no idea why this was happening, but it wasn't because I wanted to live.

I couldn't find the answer as to why I was still fighting when everything had already been ruined. Why was I raising my sword when I had already lost everything? Just what... exactly was making me stand up?

'I... believe.'

"Heuk... heuuuk... Ahh... ahhhhh... Ack... Kgh... Ahhh... Heuk... O-Okay..." I cried.

I wiped away my tears with one hand and raised my sword.

I gnashed my teeth and attacked.

I could hear my sword swings as I made space that allowed me to move around, but I could be mistaking it. I could be hearing things, but I felt like I could hear a voice.

A voice was telling me where I was supposed to go and how I was supposed to swing my sword.

'I believe.'

"I-I know..." I stuttered.

Large pillars started falling down on me. I moved away and swung my sword again.

I could see so many attacks flying toward me, but I knew where I needed to go to avoid them. A wall even popped up to block me, but my eyes seemed to be capable of seeing every single possible escape route.

I spread my wings, and the radiant light that I unleashed scorched the demons around me.

The warm light of sunset illuminated everything around me.

"God of Sunset, why do you deny me?! I can make you perfect—"

"Y-Y-You can't make me perfect," I interrupted.

"I even killed myself," Song Soo-Kyung said.

"..."

"He's destroying you, God of Sunset. He's leading you down the wrong path. He's just using you. Everything... he had done was useless to you. Don't you agree that his sacrifice was worthless?" Song Soo-Kyung asked.

Perhaps...

"He doesn't actually care about you, God of Sunset," Song Soo-Kyung continued.

Perhaps he didn't really care that much about me, as he cared about everything. He loved and cherished everything, including the continent, life itself, this place, hope, dreams, light, and the purity of everything.

"I'm sure my sacrifice wasn't worthless."

“Mr. Ki-Young’s sacrifice isn’t worthless,” I said.

“I believe in humans. I believe in their potential and that they’ll be able to overcome any hardships. I believe they’ll overcome the pain of the past and get back up. I also believe that they won’t repeat their past mistakes. It seems unnecessary to some, but if there’s at least one person who has recognized my efforts, then it wasn’t a worthless sacrifice,”

“I-I know...” I muttered.

“...”

“I know, Mr. Ki-Young,” I repeated.

‘I’m aware of it.’

I overcame the pain of the past and got back up. I had made many mistakes, and I made them over and over again, but I was growing.

I still had no trust in my potential, but I managed to overcome many hardships.

Even if everyone were to deny him, I wouldn’t deny him even if I wanted to do so.

I was sure what he had sowed on the continent wasn’t worthless, and I was sure that everyone knew that it wasn’t worthless.

The otherworldly monster raised his giant arm.

As soon as I saw it...

Boom!

A deafening noise echoed as Song Soo-Kyung suddenly lost his balance.

I saw a faint gray light.

“...”

Swoosh!

Magic circles appeared in the air, and familiar faces dropped down from those magic circles.

“O-Oppa...” Kim Ye-Ri stuttered.

Someone grabbed my shoulder. I looked back and saw a woman holding a long spear.

“Guild Master. I’m sorry... we’re late,” Jo Hye-Jin said.

As more and more people appeared within the crimson temple, I finally realized it.

“For the Son of Light!”

“For the Son of Light!!”

I finally realized why he loved this place and these people.

1. Kim Hyun-Sung’s POV 📖

CHAPTER 869

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (2)

“Miss... Hye-Jin?”

“Yes, Guild Master. All the members of the Blue Guild have arrived. Sorry... for being late,” Jo Hye-Jin said.

“...”

“Guild Master?” Jo Hye-Jin called out.

“It’s fine. Thank you for coming,” I said.

I felt someone grab my shoulder, and I looked around.

The voice was familiar.

His voice had always been kind of loud, but I felt relieved to hear his voice.

“Hey, you’ve been through a lot. I don’t know how helpful we can be, but leave it to us. It feels like we’re always relying on you, so we’re sorry about that, bro. It’s a burden we should have carried together... You can take a break,” Park Deok-Gu said.

I felt someone’s trembling hand on my shoulder.

“Oppa. I’m sorry. I... I... *Heuk...*” Kim Ye-Ri cried.

“It’ll be fine, Miss Ye-Ri. The Sub Guild Master...”

Park Deok-Gu, Kim Ye-Ri, and Ahn Ki-Mo.

I realized that they were standing behind me.

I thought I wouldn’t be able to see them since it was so dark, but I was wrong.

I could see them clearly.

“Miss Lee Ji-Hye and Miss Kim Mi-Young will command the frontline, Guild Master. We’re setting up the command center as quickly as possible, so can you wait a moment?” Hwang Jung-Yeon asked.

“We’re... kind of late, right?” Yoo Ah-Young asked.

“I’m sorry, Guild Master,” Lee Chang-Ryeol said.

“O-Oppa... W-What about oppa?” Jung Ha-Yan asked.

“H-He’ll be fine, Miss Jung Ha-Yan. You already heard what happened, s-so please calm down... everything will be fine, right?” Han Sora said.

“Ah, *ugh*... N-No...” Jung Ha-Yan muttered.

Jung Ha-Yan and Han Sora were channeling their spells a little farther away.

“Excuse me, Miss Jo Hye-Jin. Miss Lee Ji-Hye has asked me to contact you...”

I also saw Park Lian and the new guild member.

“It’s been a while, Guild Master.”

“Miss Hee-Young?” I asked.

“I’m sorry for being away for so long,” Sun Hee-Young said.

“What have you—”

“I’ll tell you the details later. Right now...” Sun Hee-Young interrupted.

“Okay...”

“I’m here as well, Guild Master.”

“Miss Elena,” I said.

“I’m sorry for not contacting you often. I’ve been pretty busy...” Elena apologized.

“It’s fine. I’m just grateful that you’re here,” I said.

Elena was standing at the helm of the Other races, and I finally noticed them.

We never really had any moments where we exchanged words and asked each other what we were doing, but I felt like we had known each other for a long time.

Earlier, I couldn’t really see anyone else, but it was different now. The figures of the people around me were becoming clearer and clearer in my eyes. I didn’t know what to say or how to describe this situation, but my calm mind was repeating the same phrase.

‘Lee Ki-Young was right.’

“Mr. Ki-Young...” I mumbled.

Although it wasn’t my place to say whether his sacrifice was right or not, and I still couldn’t accept his sacrifice, I had to admit that he valued the right things.

I felt like I finally figured out what the Son of Light wanted to say and what he wanted to tell me while sacrificing himself. He wanted to say that humans were beautiful, pure, and warm-hearted.

He was trying to show that right now—to everyone living on this continent, to the people who believed that he had done the right thing, to those exhausted and struggling, and to those whose expectations were betrayed.

More importantly, he wanted to show everyone who was being discriminated against that they were never alone.

They just hadn't noticed that they weren't alone.

Everyone knew he was right, but they just couldn’t believe it. He wanted to show everyone that if everyone joined hands and walked together given the opportunity, they'd be able to move forward together as one.

‘I believe.’

“Y-Yes, Mr. Ki-Young. I think I believe now as well,” I said.

“You must enjoy talking to yourself,” Song Soo-Kyung commented.

BOOM!

A deafening noise echoed, and the bizarre-looking building was knocked back.

“I think I came just at the right time... I’m not late, am I?”

“Miss Cha Hee-Ra,” I said.

“It’s been a while, Guild Master of Blue.”

“Miss Park Yeon-Joo,” I greeted.

The Red Mercenary Guild and the Black Swan Guild of Lindel.

The word "spectacular" wasn’t enough to describe the sight of familiar faces dropping in from the shining magic circles up above. The knights of the Sacred Democratic Country, the troops of the Republic and Federation, the experts of the Other races, and those familiar with me had gathered.

I greeted them briefly, and they raised their weapons up high.

“Today, we’re giving back to the heroes of the continent. We must return the favor to the one who had dedicated and had sacrificed himself for the continent,” Oscar said.

“Miss Oscar...” I mumbled.

“I want to show that his death was a worthy one and that the legacy left by the Son of Light still remains. We’re here to prove how much his dedication means to us and how his life has affected the continent. We’re here to prove that he wasn’t wrong,” Oscar said.

“...”

“That wicked demon is saying that the Son of Light was wrong, but look around. He wasn’t wrong,” Oscar added.

More and more people emerged from the countless magic circles in the sky.

There were people clad in sturdy-looking armor, priests singing while emitting a ton of holy power, low-ranking mercenaries who had come here with the resolve to die, and high-ranking adventurers who had come of their own will.

People from all walks of life plummeted from the skies with their own banners raised up high.

“For the Son of Light!”

“For the Son of Light!!”

I knew my actions were embarrassing, and I knew I wasn't supposed to show my weak side to them.

I also knew that nothing had been resolved yet, but I couldn't stop crying. Perhaps it was because I was feeling overwhelmed by what was happening, but my tears flowed out continuously as if a dam had burst.

“Heuk... heuuuk...”

“Guild Master,” Jo Hye-Jin said.

“Heuuuk... heuk... heuuuk...”

So this was what he wanted me to protect...

“I'm sorry... I'm...” I mumbled.

“Are you okay?” Jo Hye-Jin asked.

This was what he wanted to show me...

“I'm... sorry... *Heuk... heuuuk...* for not believing in you!” I cried out.

This was what he wanted to tell Kim Hyun-Sung of the first life, who was trampled all over, and Kim Hyun-Sung of the current life, who couldn't trust anyone.

He was trying to tell me that there wasn't just one light and that humans could light each other up.

Kabooooooooooooom!!!

“It’s a lie! A lie! God of Sunset, you’re being lied to. They cannot make you perfect. They’re trying to weaken you. Don’t listen to those imbeciles,” Song Soo-Kyung yelled.

“...”

“It’s all bullshit. He did not achieve anything! His death has left no legacies! What are you going to do now? What are you going to do about it, you lowly mortals? I’m on a different level from all of you. I’m different. I... I...” Song Soo-Kyung paused.

“...”

“God of Sunset, I’ll prove it to you again!” Song Soo-Kyung yelled.

“...”

“I-I’ll prove it to you again. I’ll prove to everyone here that I’m right! I’ll prove that he was wrong,” Song Soo-Kyung added.

The "entities" moved slowly before charging mindlessly toward the humans. I was sure it was a scary sight, and people were definitely scared of the oncoming wave of bizarre-looking monsters, but the people with shields took a step forward.

They supported each other and trusted each other as they raised their shields.

“Hey, I told you to stay behind me,” Park Deok-Gu said.

“Holy Protection!”

The priests cast a spell that stopped the "entities," but they broke through and bared their fangs at the humans.

“Shields up! Shields up! You bastards!”

Booom! Craaaaack!!!

“Shields up!!!”

Kabooooooooooooooooom!!!

“Hey, hyung-nim is watching,” Park Deok-Gu said.

'They'll win... '

The shieldbearers stood firmly in place as if they were trying to show the "entities" their will to remain steadfast. Holy power pelted down on the shieldbearers like rain, and they put their shields together before taking another step forward.

“Forward! Forward!”

It was an amazing sight.

“D-Die... Die... all of you!!! D-D-Die!!! O-Oppa!” Jung Ha-Yan screamed.

The mages cast their spells, archers drew their bowstrings, and the spearmen hid behind the shields and thrust their spears forward.

It was a fierce and difficult fight. I saw people trembling in fear, but they roared and moved forward anyway. They were fighting and risking their lives on the battlefield for the Son of Light.

“Yes, Miss Ji-Hye. I'll be sure to deliver your message. I think we're fine here, but... *Ah*, okay. I'll be there soon to provide support. The Guild Master...” Jo Hye-Jin paused.

“...”

“Guild Master, I'm sorry for being rude, but... can you...”

“Yes, I can fight, Miss Hye-Jin,” I told her.

“Miss Ji-Hye said she'll open a path for us,” Jo Hye-Jin informed me.

“Okay.”

'I can't run away this time either.'

“She said she'll give us a signal,” Jo Hye-Jin added.

“Okay.”

My life had been a series of running away and failing to reach anything, so in these final moments, I told myself that I couldn't run away anymore.

‘I believe.’

“Yes, I believe... too,” I mumbled.

I always thought that starting anew was the same thing as running away.

Actually, it definitely was running away.

I felt like I wanted to run away from my responsibilities, my sins, and even the things the Son of Light wanted to say to me. It was my turn to repay him for his dedication and sacrifice.

It was my turn to repay him for the things he had given to me, and it was my time to atone for the bad things that I had done to him.

I also had to atone for the fact that I had done nothing but receive things from him.

I needed to tell him that this was the place he loved, that those people were the ones he loved, that he wasn't wrong, and that his sacrifice had paid off.

I wanted to tell him that the things he had illuminated with his light were illuminating him as well, and that sight was just as beautiful and amazing as the sunset.

“Yes, I believe it as well. I can see it, too, Mr. Ki-Young. I think I know why you love this place and the people so much,” I said.

‘I believe.’

“You need them, and they need you as well. I...” I paused.

When I first came here, I was honestly confused about what I needed to do.

I didn't know why I became a regressor and why I was the only one who was given a new life, but I felt like I finally knew why.

I became a regressor for you; it wasn't just to fight for the continent.

I was here to inform the world and the people you loved of the things you wanted to convey to them.

'I know you want to give me everything, but I can't enjoy them all by myself, Mr. Ki-Young.'

And I finally knew that I wasn't supposed to do it by myself...

"What you gave me to enjoy is what you ought to enjoy, too," I said.

'It's okay, even if it costs me my life. I'll give you what you want, what you love, and what you want to see—I'll give them all to you, even if I can't have them myself.'

"I'm ready, Miss Hye-Jin," I said.

'I'm going to save you.'

"I'm going there now," I said.

CHAPTER 870

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (3)

‘These guys are sure having fun.’

I^[1] felt like giving them their exclusive background music.

I was so touched that I felt like crying.

‘Yeah, it is a pretty touching scene. It’s a really nice scene.’

It was a scene that truly suited the final battle.

Although the reality was kind of different, they still looked like heroes fighting against the demon that was trying to devour the continent.

They had become one at the most important moment.

There wasn’t a bigger miracle than this, and this scene made me think that a bright tomorrow was waiting right in front of us.

In fact, I could already hear the hopeful music.

Familiar faces poured out nonstop from the magic circles in mid-air.

The entire Blue Guild was here, and I also saw people whose faces I had forgotten long ago. However, one thing was for sure: they had either been blessed by the Son of Light or had received some kind of help from him. Their faces showed more than just determination. They looked as if they wanted to save the Son of Light at all costs, as they could no longer watch him in pain.

Their faces were telling everyone that it was their turn to sacrifice.

I was happy to hear them shout, “For the Son of Light!”

However, I felt anxious at the same time.

'Noona, is this right?'

This wasn't our original script. I felt like we had invited too many people, especially Jung Ha-Yan and Rafael. I thought Ji-Hye noona had done a great job relaying the message to Han Sora, but anyone could tell that Jung Ha-Yan was on the verge of losing her mind.

I felt uncomfortable seeing her go on a rampage amidst the otherworldly monsters while using her large-scale Teleport at the same time.

Jung Ha-Yan was gnashing her teeth in fury.

Han Sora was keeping an eye on her, and I was sure she felt like she was walking on a tightrope. A world-ending meteorite would most likely fall upon this place if Han Sora were to fall down the tightrope.

If I had known she was coming, I would have made sure to hide my gruesome appearance.

"K-K-K-Kill them. K-Kill..." Jung Ha-Yan stuttered.

"Miss Jung Ha-Yan? Miss Jung Ha-Yan?!" Han Sora called out.

I could see the gray pigeon as well. It was highly likely that he was the reason behind all this, and I could see him showing off his strength. He flew around, seemingly trying to prove that he was in good health now, but...

"Hyung! It's me! I'm here! It's Rafael!" Rafael shouted.

'You're not the protagonist, damn it. You're just a supporting character.'

'Stop intruding. Why is the supporting character ad-libbing without permission while the protagonist is in the middle of acting?'

I wanted to create the perfect scene, so I couldn't help but be bothered by the actor, who had decided to step out of line.

"Heuk... Hyung... You bastard! Ahhhhhhh!" Rafael yelled.

'Go away, man. You're too emotional. Don't take the spotlight away from Hyun-Sung.'

The overall scene looked fine, but if one were to look closely, one would find that too many things were going on.

It was to the point that I questioned whether this was right or not.

Of course, we did all of these, and the people liked it.

I understood Director Lee Ji-Hye's ultimate motive of wanting to deliver a hopeful message to mankind, but there were too many people crossing the line with their adlibs.

Kim Hyun-Sung, our actor, was more than enough to break the box office record, so why had she allowed the gray pigeon to fly around like that?

"Hyung! I'll save you. Hold on just a little longer!" Rafael shouted.

'Someone get him out of here, please.'

At this point, many questions popped up in my mind. When looking at the results alone, it was true that we had profited a ton. What Jung Ha-Yan had done was basically a miracle, and the timing was perfect as well.

'Shit, what's the point of thinking about it?'

It was out of my hands now. If Ji-Hye noona believed that this was *the* way, then I was sure there was a reason behind that belief.

I was the one who had planned all this, but she was the only one who had the power to change the script. In addition, I was also an actor on stage, so it was better for me to just keep my mouth shut.

'Noona... noona... '

If she really was reforming the main unit right now, then she'd definitely put the protagonist beneath the spotlight once again.

"Clear a path! Clear a path!"

Kabooooooooooooom!!!

“Forward! Forward! Go forward! One step at a time!” Park Deok-Gu roared at the helm of the shieldbearers.

“I said move forward! Push!” Park Deok-Gu shouted once again.

The priests’ holy power poured nonstop onto the shieldbearers as they moved forward, slowly creating a path. It wasn't that big of a path, but it looked like the ocean was being split into two.

The humans raised their shields together and created a path against the indescribable-looking monsters.

“Open up a path!”

The sight made my jaw drop.

It was kind of cheesy, but it wasn't something one would see every day.

Park Deok-Gu was more desperate than anyone else. Numerous thoughts popped into my head as I watched him gritting his teeth and moving together with the other soldiers while maintaining a tight-knit formation.

‘He has grown up.’

Normally, I would have pulled him out long ago.

This wasn't the first time he had run into a wall, and I had to worry about many things just to make him a bit stronger.

I thought he wasn't good enough to be considered one of the top adventurers on the continent, but I no longer thought that way as I stared at him today.

He had gotten rid of the limit on his Attack Power, which I thought would forever be low. Of course, he wasn't exactly overpowered, but he was supplementing the parts he was lacking with buffs and great equipment.

Park Deok-Gu's figure was the largest among those with a similar build as him, and I couldn't help but feel kind of bad for him.

“Hey, this is the only thing I can do. All I can do is block at the front,” Park Deok-Gu

said.

‘That pig... ’

“I can’t even do this properly, but leave all the dirty work to me,” Park Deok-Gu said.

‘Stop saying such cheesy phrases... ’

“That’s more than enough.”

Jo Hye-Jin said that—no, one of the members of the Blue Guild under Jo Hye-Jin's command had said that.

“Headquarters will be giving the commands. Their orders will be the top priority,” Jo Hye-Jin said.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“It’s been a while since we worked together like this.”

“You’re right.”

Alps, Yoo Ah-Young, and Kim Ye-Ri started talking while running down the path that the huge pigs had opened up for them.

Unlike me, who had never really participated in proper training for quite a while now, the party members of the Blue Guild had never skipped training.

Their reaction was so fast that their body was already moving before their brains could even think of what to do next. This showed everyone just how strong they were as a party. In fact, what they were doing was in textbooks and manuals.

The party members moved as one.

The goal of the party that was created with Jo Hye-Jin as their leader was to break through the encirclement of the otherworldly monsters.

The party members looked nervous as they got into a formation that resembled a sharp spear.

The signal was Jo Hye-Jin taking a step forward.

Jo Hye-Jin charged forward like a bullet with her spear in hand.

Sun Hee-Young and Elena, who were at the center of the formation, cast their holy spells.

Jo Hye-Jin was moving so fast that I believed she was as fast as a bullet.

It was risky to move at such speed with priests in tow, but it was made possible thanks to the two rangers in the party.

'Lee Chang-Ryeol and Kim Ye-Ri.'

Kim Ye-Ri was an all-rounder wearing the mask of a ranger, and she was so skilled in close-range combat that she was hailed as the downgraded version of Kim Hyun-Sung.

The pressure she was feeling alongside Lee Chang-Ryeol was heavier than the pressure on Jo Hye-Jin's shoulders, even though she was spearheading the operation.

They moved around while taking care of everything before them.

Not even Miss Kim Mi-Young could make comments or give them orders because they had to make decisions on their own.

They had to keep thinking about what they were going to abandon and what they were going to handle.

For example, they had to make a choice between blocking oncoming spells or running to avoid getting surrounded. Those choices looked easy to make at first glance, but it wasn't so easy to make when one had to make such a decision in a split second.

And Kim Ye-Ri was in that same dilemma right now.

There were tentacles flying toward her, but she chose to kill the "entities" blocking her path rather than taking care of the oncoming tentacles. Why? It was probably because she knew that Ahn Ki-Mo would take care of them.

“Nice, Mister Ahn Ki-Mo,” Kim Ye-Ri said.

“*Haha...*” Ahn Ki-Mo laughed.

Lee Chang-Ryeol had faith in Yoo Ah-Young, who was taking care of the rearguard.

‘They trust their comrades.’

There was this cheesy saying that I wanted to say, but this wasn’t the place to say that.

It was a victory for the system that they had made. This was the result of training tens and thousands—no, perhaps even millions of times. They had created a system that allowed them to differentiate between what they could and couldn’t do.

Then, they split their jobs based on that.

Priests and mages were part of the formation, which was the reason Hwang Jung-Yeon could keep casting her spells. Buffs rained down on the vanguards, and once the vanguards looked like they were running out of energy, the priests and mages would cast their buffs upon them once again.

Of course, someone had made the biggest contribution in making this impossible tactic possible.

“Our Ha-Yan.”

BOOM!

A thunderous boom echoed as a spell split into millions of light strands, falling upon the party.

Rumble!

Of course, Elena and Sun Hee-Young possessed amazing holy power, but Jung Ha-Yan was on a whole other level. The magic thorns that she had summoned seemed to have a mind of their own as they pierced the "entities."

Han Sora was really helpful as well, but I couldn’t show what she was doing.

It'd be nice if she could show something I could show to the people.

"You're all a nuisance!" Villain Song shouted, unleashing a large ball of mana.

It was time to stop him.

"I told you to leave it to us!" Park Deok-Gu exclaimed, switching with Jo Hye-Jin with his shield raised up high.

Yoo Ah-Young and Ahn Ki-Mo remained steadfast before the large ball of mana; they seemed to have decided to take the brunt of it

"I'll bounce it off! Miss Hwang Jung-Yeon! Miss Hwang Jung-Yeon!" Yoo Ah-Young shouted.

"Okay, Ah-Young. Mr. Deok-Gu."

Sun Hee-Young gave more buffs to the vanguards, while Hwang Jung-Yeon cast a spell that gave the vanguards resistance to knockbacks. She also cast a spell that changed the kinetic energy of the oncoming ball of mana, and the sight made me think that Miss Jung-Yeon was an all rounder as well.

Unfortunately, her mana capacity was too low for her to become an all-rounder.

Meanwhile, Elena...

"Miss Jo Hye-Jin?"

"Okay."

Elena was in the middle of injecting a new energy into Jo Hye-Jin.

The rookie Alps was watching from the sidelines, and Shiro cheered everyone on with his barks.

It was a pretty overwhelming scene for anyone watching up close, but it could still make anyone's jaw drop from afar.

The small party composed of the Blue Guild's party one and party two was showing everyone an unrealistic level of teamplay despite being surrounded by horrendous-

looking tentacles and indescribable otherworldly beasts.

As expected, I heard people staring blankly at the sight and muttering.

“How... are they...”

“Watch closely. Our members will have to learn as well. Trusting our comrades...”

‘Trusting one’s comrades, having faith in them, and the power of friendship. Nope, it’s neither of those. This is the result of their training, hard work, and the power of the system that they had come up with themselves.’

The crimson ocean was being split into two.

Kim Hyun-Sung stood in the middle of the formation, and he looked comfortable, as this was his first time in that position. He had always been standing at the front to lead the party, but this time, he was in the middle of the formation, which was completely safe.

‘They’re probably thinking that even Kim Hyun-Sung trusts his comrades.’

‘Maybe they’ll live up to Kim Hyun-Sung’s expectations.’

I knew it...

‘Has the package arrived yet?’

The formation opened up, and I saw Kim Hyun-Sung spreading his wings of sunset.

Earlier, he looked extremely anxious, but now, he looked extremely relieved.

“I’ll save you,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“ ... ”

For some reason... he also looked sad.

“I’ll save you this time, no matter what.”

1. Lee Ki-Young's POV 📖

CHAPTER 871

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (4)

'Why is he so serious?'

Kim Hyun-Sung had never lost, but he seemed more determined than usual—so much more determined that it bothered me.

'Well, it's good that he's taking it seriously. It makes things more immersive.'

Seeing him look at the mighty villain before with his sunset wings spread wide made me think that we were reaching the end of the script.

He was probably thinking that he couldn't afford to mess this up, so he had to focus more than usual. Of course, I also believed that he was acting that way because this was an opportunity created by the Blue Guild members for him.

It seemed like the Blue Guild had invested basically nothing, but the Blue Guild wasn't made out of invincible people.

Unlike Jung Ha-Yan, who was capable of recovering her mana nonstop, the other guild members would run out of mana and holy power.

There was a limit to Elena and Sun Hee-Young's holy power, while Hwang Jung-Yeon's mana would eventually run out as well. The vanguards would inevitably run out of stamina. too.

Soon, I saw people many people getting really exhausted.

They had injuries that had yet to receive treatment, and their equipment was in bad condition as well. The fact that Kim Hyun-Sung had made it this far while fighting high-level monsters was truly worthy of applause, but...

'Their job doesn't end here.'

The party's goal was to get rid of the obstacles in Kim Hyun-Sung's way and support

him for as long as possible so that he could fight in an environment where he didn't have to worry about anything.

He wasn't the only one fighting a difficult battle. The guild members changed their formation and prepared for the next battle. Even experienced adventurers would find it hard to fight amidst so many enemies, and the Blue Guild was no exception.

Jo Hye-Jin was finding it hard to maneuver around, and it was impossible to protect all the rearguards. Sun Hee-Young and Hwang Jung-Yeon armed themselves with armor and weapons to protect themselves in the event that they ended up isolated.

"Go ahead, bro," Park Deok-Gu said.

"We'll leave him up to you, Guild Master," Jo Hye-Jin said.

"Hang in there, Oppa!" Ye-Ri cheered.

"We'll see you later, Guild Master," Ahn Ki-Mo said.

"Woof!"

Everyone, including Shiro, said goodbye to Kim Hyun-Sung.

Kim Hyun-Sung nodded slightly and spread his wings again.

Song Soo-Kyung was saying something, but Kim Hyun-Sung couldn't care less about his words.

Kim Hyun-Sung's goal was clear, so nothing really mattered to him.

The party members continued the fight against the "entities." Actually, it wasn't just the Blue Guild. No one backed out from the fight that would determine the fate of the continent.

There were explosions and screams everywhere.

The retreating troops repeatedly mumbled "Son of Light and the God of Sunset," while looking nervous. The priests' gaze was unwittingly transfixed on the Sunset Swordsman, who had unleashed a radiant light.

I was sure the light that Kim Hyun-Sung was emitting gave them the strength and hope to keep fighting.

Kim Hyun-Sung was closer to a god than a human, but he was more humane than anyone else. His expression and behavior had the power to make people follow him and look at him with admiration. His reasons were different, but I understood why Song Soo-Kyung was obsessed with Kim Hyun-Sung. Kim Hyun-Sung...

'You're a real hero. A wonderful and ideal hero, damn it.'

Boom!

The Sunset Swordsman and Song Soo-Kyung, who had devoured the Son of Light's soul, fought in mid-air.

I felt like the sunset had pervaded every inch of space that Kim Hyun-Sung had passed through. The reddish light was painting the sky in its indescribably beautiful colors.

'The scenery isn't bad.'

A giant tentacle came flying, but Kim Hyun-Sung didn't care. A grotesque noise echoed, and the tentacle lost its strength. Jung Ha-Yan then cast a spell, pushing it out of Kim Hyun-Sung's way.

- Mr. Ki-Young.

'Huh?'

- Thank you.

'What's going on all of a sudden... '

- I received so many... things from you that I really don't know what to say.

'At least he knows. I did invest a lot in you. At least he's trying to pay me back now. I'm so proud. Have you been using the Regressor Instruction Manual to let me know? I shouldn't be listening to this right now. I can't answer you, but I get it.'

Kim Hyun-Sung swung his sword, and a dozen streams of light rushed out of his

sword, piercing the crimson demon.

- I received so many things from you that I can't list them all one by one. Comparing my current self to the past version of me who had just arrived here... I really changed a lot. I know you've mentioned it before, but back then, I...

'Yeah, I agree.'

- Back then, I didn't even have the luxury to think about how I became a regressor. All I could do was... worry about the things that were going to happen in the future or resent my situation. As you know, I'm kind of dumb, and I don't have the ability to think deeply about various things.

'No, you're not that dumb, and it's not good to blame yourself too much.'

- You helped me realize that I can do many things here and that I can live a good life here. Things became more enjoyable for me when I started looking at things from a different angle. The expedition and dungeon exploration I always found annoying; the useless meetings and training have all become enjoyable to me. I ended up developing a hobby and a penchant for collecting things. Anyway, I want to do so many things.

'Yeah, yeah, I heard all of this before.'

- I think going fishing in Mirror Lake and visiting the auction house has energized me.

'In the end, you went there to relieve stress, not to buy me a gift, right?'

- Looking at the sky while riding a griffon; eating food and drinking coffee at a nice place; reading the newspaper and sharing my interests with other people; sending texts and spending time with the guild members... they've all become enjoyable to me.

'Okay.'

- There are many people around me as well. They're people I can call family, not just comrades whom I fight with. It turns out that I've long considered them as family.

'Those compliments are making me feel embarrassed. I did give you many things, but

you're kind of exaggerating things here... '

'Actually, yeah, I am kind of amazing. I melted the regressor's frozen solid heart, but it wasn't really that difficult to do. Although I didn't have as much fun as you, I still had fun.'

Kim Hyun-Sung spoke calmly and gritted teeth. He streaked across the skies with a flap of his wings. In the blink of an eye, multiple attacks made a beeline for him, but he twisted in mid-air and swung his sword, deflecting them.

He flew higher than Song Soo-Kyung, who had devoured my soul. Then, he tightened his grip on his sword and charged at the crimson demon.

- It's all thanks to you, Mr. Ki-Young. Yes, it's all thanks to you.

"Don't make me laugh, damn it!" Song Soo-Kyung shouted.

'Ah, I forgot that he's connected to him as well.'

Unlike me, he probably wasn't getting every single detail, but he could probably read some pieces and bits of the love letters that Kim Hyun-Sung was sending to me.

Otherwise, it wouldn't sense for him to overreact.

I could hear Kim Hyun-Sung's voice as he continued talking. I was honestly enjoying myself because he was talking about every little thing, and it's also because we had gotten really close due to the bond that we had created.

- I'm thankful, but I feel sorry at the same time. I always think about how things could have been different if I had been stronger and smarter. I don't think I've been thinking of you as much as you've been thinking of me.

- And I've gotten kind of used to receiving things from you...

'He sure talks about the most random things.'

- I'm sorry that I don't know how to repay you. If it hadn't been for your hobby of collecting bags, I would have felt a bit more...

'That's not even my hobby, damn it.'

- It's all thanks to you, Mr. Ki-Young. You changed me, and I learned how to make sacrifices because of you. I learned how to communicate with others and how to understand them. Of course, I can't properly carry out the things I learned from you, but I felt many things and thought about many things while watching you.

- However, I still hate everything. Why do you have to suffer like this? Why does it have to be you? Why must you sacrifice for the continent like this? There are many things that I don't understand, but I finally know why you love this place and these people.

Tentacles swept past Kim Hyun-Sung as he picked up the pace. Then, he started spinning in the air and unleashed a torrent of reddish light.

The people staring at the Goddess' Mirrors in the sky right now were dumbstruck as they quietly listened to the God of Sunset, who was writing his own story. I could no longer hear the demon's voice.

Song Soo-Kyung was also staring quietly at Kim Hyun-Sung.

- I also realized that it's you who should be enjoying all of this. You're the one who deserves all of this, Mr. Ki-Young. It's not me. That's why... That's why... I want to give you back everything I received from you.

'That's a great attitude to have.'

- I'm scared.

'Of what?'

- I'm scared of the things that I haven't thought of before.

'What are you scared of? You have to tell me exactly what it is for me to understand.'

- There were times when I thought that it would have been better if things had just ended for me. I'm really scared of the things that I won't be able to do anymore and the fact that I won't be able to do what I want.

'What's wrong? Just live your life doing whatever you want. Once this is over, our hardships are over as well. It will be the start of our happy life.'

- Unlike you, I'm just an ordinary person, but I've realized just how valuable it is to sacrifice myself for something. I can't sacrifice myself for the continent, but I think I can sacrifice myself for you because you've given me so many things.

- It's probably similar to how you're feeling for this place and for these people. It is not as noble, but it'll be more valuable than anything else.

'Sacrificing yourself is a good thing. You should dedicate yourself to it your whole life.'

BOOM!

Kim Hyun-Sung collided with the crimson demon.

"..."

"AAAAHHH!!!"

It was a cliched roar that those protagonists would do once their concentration was at its peak. The world shone brightly before me, and when I blinked, I saw Kim Hyun-Sung right in front of me. He had stabbed the demon's heart with his sword. Then, he let go of his sword and reached out toward me.

'Nice.'

He forcefully removed the tentacles around him.

"..."

"I... I just..."

"..."

Kim Hyun-Sung was already crying as he stared at me.

He nodded quietly and calmly said, "Thank you for everything."

'No problem.'

"I'm really sorry for not being a good talker," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

'Ah, stop apologizing.'

"Thank... Thank... you very much for trying to protect me until the end..." Kim Hyun-Sung continued.

'Why are you saying that?'

"Goodbye." Kim Hyun-Sung smiled. Then, he grabbed the pendant around his neck.

'Huh?'

Tears streamed down Kim Hyun-Sung's face as he said, "Goodbye..."

'Uh... '

"I hope... I hope we meet again someday..."

CHAPTER 872

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (5)

"I hope... I hope we meet again someday..." Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"..."

"..."

'What do you mean by that?'

"What..."

'What are you saying? Why is he suddenly saying something strange?'

"What are you talking about?" I asked.

'Are you crazy?'

No matter how much I thought about it, his emotions were kind of strange right now.

Was that even the right line to say here? Wasn't he supposed to say something like, "Thank you for your hard work. Everything is over now. This won't happen again."

'Goodbye, my ass. Why are you talking as if we're never going to see each other again?'

I couldn't understand a single thing.

I couldn't understand why he was saying that.

Why was he holding his pendant?

Why did he say that he was scared?

Why was he smiling as if everything was over now?

What was up with that look on his face? Why was his face telling me that he could finally let go of everything, and at the same time, why was his face telling me that he was falling apart right now?

I was at a loss for words, and I couldn't think properly.

I tried to pull myself together, but I was spacing out.

As time ticked by, a wonderful scenery featuring the continent itself was revealed.

A radiant sunset illuminated the continent, and it slowly spread across the continent as if the story was truly over. Everyone was probably thinking that our victory was brought upon by a miracle.

I looked around and saw people cheering with all their might.

Everyone thought that it was all over.

“Son of Light!”

“We’re alive... We’re alive.”

“O Benigoa... *Haha... hahaha!*”

“It’s the light.”

“It’s a warm light. A very warm light!”

“The Sunset Swordsman won... *Hahaha!* O God... thank you. Thank you for giving us another miracle...”

‘What the hell are they talking about? Right now... ’

“It’s a miracle, everyone. A miracle. The continent has won again. We did not surrender to evil, and we did not lose! We’ve achieved another victory! We managed to protect our homes, the Son of Light’s soul, and the things we value in our hearts.

"We will never forget today."

‘So what the hell is that? What are you guys talking about?’

“The demon is disappearing. Everyone... the demonic beasts are going away, too! Mankind has won.”

They were right. The otherworldly "entities" were disappearing slowly, while the "entities" struck by the radiant sunset let out agonized screams before disappearing into nothingness.

Everyone put down their swords.

The adventurers who had participated in the fierce battle fell to the ground on their butts, the priests prayed fervently, and the mages finally put down their staffs.

I saw people crying and hugging each other out of relief.

There were also some who sprawled out on the ground out of exhaustion.

Meanwhile, Kim Hyun-Sung hugged me, and he started crumbling away.

“Uh... huh?”

I was so shocked that I forgot to make a move. I belatedly attempted to grab his shirt, but his shirt crumbled before my hand could reach it.

Like a dandelion in the wind, he soon dispersed into nothingness.

I tried to grab his hand, but his hand disappeared.

I felt like I was touching sand.

“Hey, hey!” I shouted.

I wasn’t sure how long it had been since the radiant sunset appeared, but Kim Hyun-Sung’s expression was still the same. The smile tugging at his lips was still the same smile that he showed to me after that final line of his.

He was staring at me until the end. He didn’t blink, nor did his mouth move.

I couldn’t feel even the slightest tremor from him.

“Hey... what’s wrong with you?” I asked.

I didn't get an answer.

"Is this a hidden camera prank?" I asked.

Still no answer.

'Move; do something. There's something wrong with him. Did he overdo it? Maybe he lost while standing up? Maybe that's what happened. You don't have to keep acting like the protagonist. You already did enough, so you don't have to do anything else.'

"Say something, Mr. Hyun-Sung. Are you okay? Mr. Hyun-Sung... everything is now..." I trailed off.

It seemed that I was so shocked that I started talking about random things. It was understandable, as my words here weren't part of the plan. He had to have frozen up due to shock.

'I can't even do this anymore. I'm not going to do something like this again, so say something.'

"I'm sure everything is fine now. It's all over. Let's... go back. Let's head back..." I suggested.

I didn't hear anything. Kim Hyun-Sung was still staring at me quietly with a smile.

"I said it's all over," I repeated.

"..."

"Hey, it's over..." I said.

"..."

"Kim Hyun-Sung, can you hear me?" I questioned.

'Benigoa, Lucifer, it's all over now, right? Someone say something. Is this supposed to happen, Ji-Hye noona? Why am I not getting any answer? It's kind of strange, no, it's really strange. This isn't part of the plan. Things are kind of strange right now. Benigoa. Benigoa. Can you hear me?'

“Benigoa... can you hear me? Belial... you guys...” I called out.

“...”

“What are you doing, Kim Hyun-Sung? You...” I trailed off.

I got up slowly, and his body crumbled into nothingness.

“Ah...”

I was so surprised that I instinctively reached out to him.

“Uh...”

However, his face dispersed when I touched it, and I could no longer see his smiling face. His body, legs, and arms had disappeared with the wind.

“Ahh... uh...”

I looked around upon noticing something amiss.

I could still hear the people's cheers. There was laughter, and the scenery had changed because a festival was taking place. Many people walked up to me, and they looked at me while I was holding Kim Hyun-Sung's remains.

The party members around me looked worried.

Was I crying right now? My hands were shaking, I couldn't breathe properly, and my head was spinning.

'What's going on? I'm dreaming, right? Why is this happening? What was I supposed to do now? What's the next step? Why... Why... am I here right now? What's all this... I... '

“...!”

“...!”

“...”

“...?”

I heard voices around me, but I couldn't figure out what they were saying. I extended my hand out again, but I didn't grab anything. Park Deok-Gu...

"Hyung-nim..." Park Deok-Gu said, but I could barely hear him.

And that was when I felt weightless. I felt myself taking off into the sky.

Although I couldn't figure out exactly what was going on, I soon felt myself plummeting downward.

Everyone looked up, and they saw me inside a giant beam of light. Wasn't I supposed to look like the Dummy Ki-Young? Was I falling? It happened so suddenly that it didn't feel real.

'Am I really getting revived right now? Is that what's happening?'

"...!"

"...!"

The people cheered. I wasn't sure what was happening, but I was probably being revived right now.

[You have met one of the conditions to clear the Mythic-rank dungeon, "The Continent Where the Son of Light Was Sacrificed."]

[The Revival of the Son of Light (1/1)]

I saw a system message, and the sky that covered the north disappeared.

Everything that had been affected by the continent becoming a dungeon returned to its original form. Another bright light fell and the things that had collapsed were repaired. It took just a few moments, but everything had been restored to the point that it looked like the continent had never become a dungeon in the first place.

Flowers bloomed, and trees grew. The World Tree started sprouting leaves beneath the radiant sunset, and the elves started praying to the tree. Laios and the Federation weren't all that different. It was the same for Mirror Lake. An unbelievable phenomenon was happening across the Sacred Democratic Country, the Republic, and the continent, but I didn't want to know what was going on.

The blocked river started flowing once again. Those on the ground stood up, and the people in hiding came outside to look up at the sky. They closed their eyes quietly and opened their arms toward the sunset that was illuminating the entire continent.

The denizens were happy.

I still couldn't hear their voices, but they were probably cheering. They were probably mumbling that it was a miracle that the Hero of the Sunset and the Son of Light had shown to the world.

It made sense, as the Hero of Sunset had already shown everyone a miracle, and this sight was so incredible that it would be an understatement to use the word "miracle" to describe it.

It felt like everyone was getting back what they had lost. I looked down to see where Kim Hyun-Sung stood earlier, but he wasn't there.

I couldn't even see his tattered body anymore.

'Why...'

"Aren't you coming back?" I questioned.

The injured people were getting healed, while those on the brink of death started getting up from their beds.

However, Kim Hyun-Sung was still on the ground.

He didn't return to his original self.

"Why..."

The pendant...

"Why aren't you getting up?" I complained.

My head hurts...

Jo Hye-Jin cried and howled as she looked at the spot where Kim Hyun-Sung was located. Kim Ye-Ri was holding Kim Hyun-Sung's sword, and Ahn Ki-Mo was hugging

Kim Ye-Ri because she could collapse to the ground.

"Heuk... heuuuk... heuuuk..."

I heard them crying.

"Heuuuuk..."

So those were the meaning behind Kim Hyun-Sung's final words.

The radiant sunset was created by Kim Hyun-Sung, and it wasn't because we had cleared the dungeon.

'Is this what you meant when you said you'd sacrifice for me and that I'm the one who deserved to enjoy all this? You actually planned on ending it like this?'

My hands trembled, and I felt someone forcefully pulling me up from the ground.

"I'm not going down there," I said.

"..."

"Shit! I'm not going down there, damn it! Don't touch me. I'm not going down there, you bastards!" I shouted.

"..."

"Kim Hyun-Sung, you idiot! Stop being so presumptuous! You bastard. Who are you to decide that you need to repay me? How dare you do something like that, damn it!" I grumbled.

"..."

"I'll take care of everything, so turn things back to how they were, you idiot," I begged.

"..."

"I'll take care of it all! Turn things back to the way they were in the beginning! You annoying idiot! Let go of me! I'm not going down there! I'm not!" I yelled.

“ ..”

“Benigoa! Benigoa!” I called out.

“ ..”

I looked around and saw a figure looking at me.

It looked like the others didn't notice them, but I could definitely see them.

“You...”

The figure removed their mask and spoke while smiling.

‘This is right.’

“Bullshit! You bastard!” I shouted.

CHAPTER 873

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (6)

“Bullshit! You bastard!” I shouted.

- This is right. This is the answer.

“Don’t make me laugh! You bastard! What the hell are you talking about?! This isn’t right! Damn it... what do you mean this is the answer?!” I yelled.

The figure was still smiling, and their figure flickered intermittently.

'What the hell is that? Who the hell are you?'

I got angry seeing him smile with satisfaction. I bit my lips to pull myself together, but the figure was still there, and he was looking at me.

'Is this what you wanted to see?'

“You erased your memories for this?” I questioned.

I had a hard time breathing, but my mind was clear.

I felt like I was going to lose consciousness at any moment, but the light around me was helping me maintain a clear mind. I forced myself to clench my fist and breathe deeply to get air flowing through my brain.

I thought I just needed to breathe in and out repeatedly.

“Whoo... whoo...”

'Was it my fault?'

“Whoo... Haa... haa...”

'Where did it go wrong? Where did it start, and what the hell happened?'

“Haa... Whoo... whoo...”

'It'll be okay soon. It'll be... okay soon. Nothing will happen as usual. This is nothing. I still have control. I can turn everything back. I still have plenty of cards up my sleeve. If it doesn't work out, then I can just move on to the next life. It'll be kind of bothersome, but I have the option to start again from the beginning.'

'I have insurance, so no need to feel anxious.'

“Haa...”

I wasn't sure if I could think as usual.

I still felt tears rolling down my cheeks, but I forced myself to scour my memories.

I had to keep thinking about why this had happened and whether there was a way to revert the current situation or not. I had to think about where the puzzle went wrong because I knew there was no use crying over spilled milk. I had to get rid of the useless emotions and think rationally because that was the only way I could comfort myself.

After a while, I calmed down a bit.

“Whoo...”

'Did I play right into their hands?'

The assumption that the vestiges of First Life Lee Ki-Young's will were inside me was made a long time ago.

I wasn't certain, but there were several signs that it was the case.

I thought it was just a bluff. Of course, this could just be my imagination, but I couldn't get rid of the thought that First Life Lee Ki-Young had done all this.

It was a simple assumption.

If First Life Lee Ki-Young wanted to get revenge on Kim Hyun-Sung, then this would be the perfect play. There wasn't a revenge more perfect than this and in my opinion, this revenge was crueler than anything else.

He had controlled Kim Hyun-Sung, making him sacrifice himself for him at the final moment. Then, he erased Kim Hyun-Sung's existence from the continent and used his sacrifice to return everything to how it was prior to the dungeon.

He gave Kim Hyun-Sung the happiest moment of his life and took it away in such a brutal manner. He gave him the will to keep living and then made him give that up on his own. It was the perfect revenge.

"Okay, damn it. It's the perfect revenge," I said.

Kim Hyun-Sung was smiling as he disappeared, but there was no way he was really happy in his final moments, as this was different from his first life, where he was basically an ice block that couldn't feel any emotions.

Second Life Kim Hyun-Sung wanted to live.

He wanted to do things he hadn't done before, and he wanted to live out his life.

He had many interests and hobbies that he wanted to enjoy.

Like he said, he was scared and was struggling a lot.

"I'm not you, you scum. I'm the Son of Light, you imbecile," I said.

'Regardless of your plans and what you're going to do, it has nothing to do with me, so stop smiling. Don't look at me as if it's all over. This isn't the end... this is just the beginning. Since things have turned out this way, we can just start anew... '

Images popped up in my head.

I had an idea as to what he was trying to tell me, but I didn't bother paying attention to it. No, I tried not to think about them because whatever he was thinking had nothing to do with me. There was only one thing that was important, and it was the fact that Kim Hyun-Sung was mine.

"Anyone who touches what's mine will die. You hear me, you rat? You'll regret what you've done. I don't know where you are in my mind, but I'll find you no matter what and kill you by ripping you to pieces," I threatened.

- I'm you.

“Bullshit. I don’t care about your ridiculous ideas, and I don’t need any of it, you idiot. What you did was meaningless, as I can just start new. Your nonsense... they’re all going to be meaningless,” I said.

- It’s no use.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

- There’s no third life.

“Fuck you,” I cursed at him.

- Kim Hyun-Sung’s existence has been erased... Even if the third life starts, he won’t be there. The Sunset Swordsman has died. He managed to become a god, but he doesn’t exist anymore. Test it. Can you even feel him?

“That’s not for you to decide. If I say he’s alive, then he’s alive,” I said.

- Seeing you comfort yourself like that makes you look pitiful. You pathetic fool.

I bit my lips. My hands trembled in fury after seeing him smile, but there wasn’t anything I could do about it. I lacked information, so I had to recall what had happened.

I needed to know how he did it and what he knew.

- The pendant. Didn’t we give that to him?

“Don’t say ‘we,’ you bastard! I never agreed to it, damn it! Do you really think I’d agree to something like that? Me?!” I shouted.

- You’re really worked up...

“I’ve never agreed to something as ridiculous as this, you asshole!” I yelled.

- No. It’s true that we’ve agreed to pass on Altanus’ inheritance.

It felt like my foggy mind had just become clear, and multiple scenes of what had transpired at Mirror Lake popped up into my head. I recalled how happy Kim Hyun-Sung was after receiving Altanus’ inheritance. I also saw myself smiling, and I

remembered the conversation we had afterward while we were eating.

"First of all, I would like to thank you," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"Excuse me?" I asked.

"The item you got in the Sea of the Abandoned Dimension..." Kim Hyun-Sung clarified.

"Ah, don't worry about it. You're the only one who can use it anyway. To be honest, I'm not the one who actually gave it to you..." I said.

"Still, I'll take good care of the pendant you gave me," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

'You idiot. It's nothing special, so why are you smiling like that?'

"Why are you smiling like that? You're going to get backstabbed..." I mumbled.

The tremor in my hands became even stronger, and my vision had tunneled down.

How come Kim Hyun-Sung didn't suspect me at all? Actually, I wasn't really suspicious because he probably thought that I didn't know anything about the penalty.

He probably thought that I simply gave him a nice gift.

- You chose this.

"No, I never chose this," I denied.

I was trying to protect Kim Hyun-Sung, and that was the reason I erased my memories about the pendant.

I even used the Regressor Instruction Manual to seal his memory so that he wouldn't remember anything about the pendant. I sealed it so that we wouldn't need to use it, and even if we ended up in a situation where it had to be used, I made sure that he wouldn't use it.

Of course, I messed with my own memories as well.

The reason I kept on bluffing was probably because I wanted to fix my memories.

The reason the Blue Guild members didn't recognize the pendant was probably one of the conditions necessary to fulfill the bet with Lucifer. The bet wasn't about whether Kim Hyun-Sung was going to stab me or not.

It was whether he was going to save me or not.

"There's a possibility he might get influenced, Lucifer," I told her.

"You're right," Lucifer agreed.

"The Sunset Swordsman must decide whether to use the pendant or not. We have to make sure that the others will not influence him," I added.

"I agree," Lucifer said.

I finally remembered the conversation I had with Lucifer.

I grabbed my aching head, which felt like it was going to split open.

It was like glass shards were stuck in my head.

I kept on replaying the memory, but I still couldn't figure out why I gave Kim Hyun-Sung the pendant. I couldn't remember anything. Had First Life Lee Ki-Young influenced him?

Perhaps First Life Lee Ki-Young had taken over my body without me realizing it?

- I don't think so.

"Shut up..." I muttered. Perhaps I could've handed him the pendant to use as insurance because I thought it was necessary to use it later or someday.

- Think about it. It's an inheritance that can fulfill everything at the cost of just one person. There's nothing more profitable than that.

"Shut up..." I told him.

- That's who we are. We make use of everything. What's not to like about this? Think about it. We can get everything with this. Don't you think not having it makes you a bigger idiot?

- Let's assume you gave him the pendant, not me. Would you consider it reasonable? I'll bet on "yes" because you're me, and we know ourselves better than anyone.

"I have never abandoned anything that's mine, you idiot," I said.

- That must be why it was resolved late. Don't you agree? You even did some unnecessary things... right? You cherished Kim Hyun-Sung more than you thought. You became closer to him than you thought. You thought he wasn't yours, but you ended up inviting him into your space.

- You thought of him as nothing more than a card you were going to use and throw away, but you ended up taking a liking to him. That's probably why you pretended that it never happened.

"..."

- Humans are really interesting.

"..."

I fell slowly to the ground, and the column of light around me disappeared. The light that had enveloped me vanished as if it had never appeared.

My legs were weak, and they gave out on me.

The others approached me with surprised gasps, but I couldn't see their faces.

I couldn't understand what they were saying, either. When I saw someone's hand reaching out for me, I slapped their hand away.

I felt nauseous. I had no idea why, but I kept retching.

I felt like my face was covered in tears and saliva.

Soon, I heard the people's cheers.

"Bleeeeeeeck!"

"..."

“...”

I couldn't stop recalling him.

“Damn it...” I mumbled.

I couldn't stop remembering his face.

“*Heuk...* Damn it... Daaaamn it...” I muttered.

I started crawling toward where I last saw Kim Hyun-Sung, and I collapsed on the spot where he had vanished.

I tried to grab something, but my hands grabbed nothing but air, so I grabbed the ground.

“...”

I couldn't stop thinking about him.

CHAPTER 874

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (7)

I wasn't being emotional. I just didn't know what I was feeling because I couldn't think straight. It wasn't simply because I had lost Kim Hyun-Sung. I was sure that this was more complicated than that. It could be because I failed...

"Failure..." I mumbled.

Lee Ki-Young had failed, and I had just realized that.

I finally understood why everyone would always get mad whenever they realized that they had just failed.

Ji-Hye noona was right. I was probably under a lot of stress because the situation had spiraled out of my plans. It was better to say that I was frustrated by throwing away the regressor card. Basically, Kim Hyun-Sung was my best card.

He was easy to use, and he didn't really have any issues except for his wanton spending. I had influenced him completely, so he was the easiest person to control.

The process itself was pretty annoying, but he was my most trustworthy and most valuable card.

In other words, it wasn't strange that I felt this way, considering how much I had invested in him. I had no idea where things had gone wrong, but a probably had probably occurred in the middle of the process.

There were many things that made me feel nervous, but I didn't think about them and simply ignored them.

"Daaamn it..." I muttered.

I couldn't stop thinking about Kim Hyun-Sung.

'Mr. Ki-Young...'

"You idiot..." I mumbled.

"Unlike you, I'm just an ordinary person, but I've realized just how valuable it is to sacrifice myself for something. I can't sacrifice myself for the continent, but I think I can sacrifice myself for you because you've given me so many things."

"It's probably similar to how you're feeling for this place and for these people. It is not as noble, but it'll be more valuable than anything else."

"You idiot... how dare you..." I trailed off.

"Goodbye..."

I was foolish for not thinking that the idiot wouldn't dare to sacrifice himself for me, and it was all because he had always been a coward. He was such a big coward that he had a knack for making people angry, even with the tiniest choices he made.

The biggest problem was that I didn't even think that he'd do something like this.

Everything I did to get inside Kim Hyun-Sung's head was holding me back.

"How dare you pull something like that? You crossed the line..." I muttered.

I thought about it carefully and realized that it wasn't that big of a deal, as he had many flaws. I even started questioning why I had chosen him in the first place.

Now that I was thinking about him so deeply, I realized that he was just a big baby.

I had to take care of every little thing for him.

I realized that I couldn't even tell who was the leader between us.

Kim Hyun-Sung had even once chosen to live his entire life in his own dream. I felt annoyed recalling that moment. I didn't have to feel so sad. I didn't need to think about my failure, and I didn't need to feel stressed about it.

"I think humans are very interesting."

You were right, Kim Hyun-Sung.

"Everything is in ruins, but... it's kind of pretty. It also looks mysterious. The red sunset."

No, he was just being unnecessarily emotional.

To be exact, I almost spent the entire day with him, which was kind of annoying. I wasn't sure what he liked so much about those ruins that he had chosen to lock himself up in there, but he was far from the ideal hero.

I turned and saw the red sunset. It wasn't mysterious, nor was it pretty. It was all bullshit.

'Until now, I thought I was just staring at the sunset. Obviously, there's no sun here, but I can't stop thinking about it.'

'The sun is setting right now in my eyes, so I think you were imagining things back then. You created all the scenery, so you were seeing the wrong thing.'

The sunlight was fading away, and the red sunset illuminating me soon disappeared.

"Mr. Ki-Young."

He had always been that kind of person. He was always pessimistic, and he found everyone suspicious. In the end, he became uncontrollable. What I said about him being obedient was just my personal opinion. The truth was that he had never really listened to me.

He had always done what he wanted to do.

"It's a gift."

He'd always bring me things, even though I had already told him not to do so.

"I'm sorry."

He kept on doing things I told him not to do, and it stressed me out a lot.

It was the same during the Rafael incident. In the end, he'd always do whatever he wanted to do. He couldn't take responsibility for his own actions, but he was always stubborn in his decisions.

Of course, he was lacking as well.

'If I lose something, I can just get it again.'

I still had useful cards around me, and it seemed meaningless to increase my cards at this point. I didn't even think that I'd still need the regressor, so it would be safe to say that he was no longer useful.

The first life was meaningless, as this life was completely different from that life.

If I needed power, then there would be no issues because I had people capable of replacing him.

Kim Hyun-Sung had no idea what was going to happen in the future, and even if he knew what was going to happen, he was too inept to deal with it. This applied to the entire journey. If I ever got the chance to restart this life, I could just ignore him, as the roles he was capable of playing were limited.

It was highly likely that nothing big would happen in the future.

Obviously, I still had to take care of many things. An example of that was backstabbing the bastard who dared to backstab me.

'Do you really think that I can't do that? I can do it. I might even be able to go to the first life myself... '

I could just keep all possibilities open; finding someone to replace Kim Hyun-Sung would be easy. I just needed to find someone decent enough to replace him.

'I don't think Rafael will work. Maybe Thronus? They're both swordsmen and loyal... '

"Thank you for believing in me."

"Shit... shut up. You idiot," I said.

"Mr. Ki-Young. Thank you very much... for always believing in me. Honestly, I..."

"Go away, you useless fool! Stop distracting and just go away... I'm going to get busy from now on. You hear me? I don't have to think about you," I told him.

"I..."

"Damn it..." I mumbled.

Despite that, I couldn't stop thinking about him.

I thought I had already forgotten about him, but I ended up collapsing to the ground without realizing it.

I covered my face and pulled out my hair.

I couldn't stop thinking whether there really was no other way.

I wasn't the type to keep thinking about my past mistakes, but I couldn't stop thinking about the mistakes I had made and if there was really no way of returning things to the way it was before all this.

'There's no way things will end this way, right? There's no way... I'm sure I have insurance.'

"Ji-Hye noona, where are you?" I asked.

"..."

"Where are you, Lee Ji-Hye?" I asked.

"..."

"Kasugano Yuno... what are you doing? Did you know this was going to happen? What did you want? If Lee Ki-Young from the first life is the one you consider your master, then I am not going to forgive you too," I threatened.

I had discovered many things, so it had to be possible.

'Yeah, I might be able to use magic to turn things back.'

"Ha-Yan... Jung Ha-Yan," I called out.

"..."

Perhaps Cha Hee-Ra could find a way.

"Hee-Ra noona!" I called out.

'Why can't I hear their voices? Why can't I see their faces? How long has it been since I've been doing this?'

Someone grabbed my shoulders, and it felt like they were trying to calm me down, but I couldn't calm down at all. I tried my best to shake off the hands, and I wasn't sure where I had obtained such power, but—actually, they could have just let go of me.

'Is Lucifer watching right now? How come she wasn't saying anything? Does she think I violated the conditions of the bet? Does that mean that the contract is null and void?'

There was no way things would end like this.

I looked like a lunatic, and I couldn't think of anything else.

"I want to see this sight again."

'Stop talking about the scenery. It's distracting me.'

"Someday..."

"Stop talking already. I can't think," I said.

I couldn't get in contact with Benigoa or Belial. Actually, I wasn't even sure whether I was reaching them or not. Of course, I couldn't feel Lucifer as well. I didn't know what to do or what I could even do, so I just screamed.

"Rise..." I knew this was meaningless. I knew I looked stupid, and I knew that I wasn't making any sense, but I continued, "Rise, regressor of Altanus... Get up, damn it!"

No, it wasn't meaningless. This was just reasonable. Although he wasn't completely dead last time like he was right now, Kim Hyun-Sung could definitely rise.

It was going to work this time, too. He'd appear again like nothing had ever happened.

“Rise, regressor of Altanus. If you do, I’ll give you the future!” I exclaimed.

Obviously, nothing happened. Was I doing this wrong? How did I do it back then? How did I bring him back?

“There’s no way this is going to work. Damn it... of course, this wouldn’t work...” I mumbled.

“I always...”

“Rise, regressor... of Altanus... *Heuk...* If you do, I’ll give you the future...!” I repeated.

‘Did I say it louder back then? Are you listening to me? You are, right?’

“Get up! Get up, damn it! Regressor of Altanus! Kim Hyun-Sung! Damn it! If you do, I’ll give you...” I paused, but nothing happened.

“Damn it! Get up, Kim Hyun-Sung! Regressor of Altanus. You imbecile! If you do, I’ll give you the future!” I roared.

[A system error has occurred.]

What?

[Checking God of Sunset Kim Hyun-Sung, the User, and the Mythic-rank item, Altanus' Inheritance, for errors...]

“Wake up, you bastard!” I shouted.

[Verifying the quests registered under God of Sunset Kim Hyun-Sung, the User, and the Mythic-rank item, Altanus' Inheritance.]

“Get up...” I muttered.

[Verifying the unauthorized quests registered under God of Sunset Kim Hyun-Sung, the User, and the Mythic-rank item, Altanus' Inheritance.]

[Sorting out the quest rewards...]

“Please...” I begged.

[The Future (0/1)]

Please...

[The Future (0/2)]

“Please!” I yelled.

[...]

[The Future (0/5)]

[...]

[The Future (0/25)]

[...]

[The Future (0/381)]

[...]

[...]

[The Future (0/2,124)]

[The quest rewards for a total of 2,124 Forced Quests have yet to be settled.]

[The rewards for the Forced Quests given to the God of Sunset have yet to be settled.]

[The manager of the Continent must verify the errors. There is a conflict between the quest reward details and the effect of the Mythic-rank item, Altanus' Inheritance.]

[The Son of Light has yet to reward the God of Sunset.]

[Please verify the activation condition of the Mythic-rank item, Altanus' Inheritance, and the rank of the Forced Quests...]

“Get up, you fucking bastard! If you do, I'll give you the future,” I roared.

[Creating a Mythic-rank Forced Quest.]

[I forgive your sins. Rise, regressor of Altanus. If you do, I'll give you the future.
(0/1)]

[Quest Completion Reward - The Future (0/212■)]

[The Future (0/2125)]

A massive column of light fell from the sky

"I'll give you... the future..." I muttered.

Yeah, the future...

CHAPTER 875

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (8)

There were so many things I didn't understand.

I had witnessed many magical sights so far, but I also couldn't help but feel shaken up by what was happening right now.

The massive column of light pervaded everything, and it illuminated the place where Kim Hyun-Sung was last seen. And that was when my vision returned... it was like a snap—like a lightning bolt illuminating a dark room. My senses came back immediately, and it felt like I had just gotten a whiff of fresh air, as if I had just walked out of a swamp.

‘That’s right... the future... ’

Swoosh!

I heard a voice that I hadn't heard for quite a while now. I turned and saw everyone's face. The breeze sweeping past my face was gentle, and I could see the comforting light. My tremors and frown disappeared. I also stood up without realizing it.

“Hyung-nim...” Park Deok-Gu said. The pig held my hand as he stood the closest to me.

“O-O-Oppa...”

Jung Ha-Yan grabbed my arm.

Everyone was looking at me, including the members of the Blue Guild. Some of the people here kneeled while the others lowered their heads.

I also saw people praying with their hands clasped together. Couples and comrades supported those injured, and I smiled upon seeing the people I probably met once somewhere on the continent. I wasn't trying to be sentimental, but...

“Have you come back to your senses?” Park Deok-Gu asked.

He was asking as if I had lost my mind at some point.

“A-A-Are you okay, oppa?” Jung Ha-Yan asked.

'Of course. You really thought I died? Why is your face covered in tears and snot? I should wipe her face clean for her.'

“What on earth happened, hyung-him?” Park Deok-Gu asked.

“Shut up, you pig. I can’t think,” I said.

“Y-You should still explain what happened. Just now... the bro... he was definitely...”

Did I look kind of strange? I patted Jung Ha-Yan’s head and wiped her face clean, but she was still looking at me nervously. She let out a relieved laugh, but I had to look up at the sky again because it wasn’t completely over yet.

“Mr. Hyun-Sung—”

“It’s fine. Don’t say anything,” I interrupted.

“...”

“I can turn things back,” I added.

“Is that... true, Sub Guild Master?” Jo Hye-Jin asked.

“That’s right, Hye-Jin. I can,” I replied.

“R-Really?” Jo Hye-Jin asked again.

“Yeah, he’ll come back,” I answered.

I finally felt relaxed enough to look around.

“Son of Light...”

“Mr. Lee Ki-Young...”

“The Son of Light has returned! The God of Sunset’s sins have been forgiven... The Son of Light has been resurrected...”

Amidst the exclamations of the bards and the mumbling of the priests, I spread my wings, and light poured in again as I spread my wings wide. The feeling of holy power filling me up always felt good.

I felt my mind clearing up, and I mumbled, “I’ll give you the future.”

I honestly had no idea what happened. I couldn’t tell whether the current situation was planned or not, but I was sure about one thing—this was a truth that would last forever.

‘Damn, I’m a genius.’

I couldn’t really remember, but this was part of the plan, including Kim Hyun-Sung’s sacrifice. The realization gave me goosebumps. I couldn’t speak with certainty, as it hadn’t been sorted out just yet, but everything was probably connected.

The pendant, the War against the Outer Gods, Doom Hyun-Sung, my resurrection, and his death. They were all connected like a spider web.

Everything had been a part of a well-written script from the beginning until the end, and I was simply following it. Kim Hyun-Sung, Ji-Hye noona, and Kasugano Yuno were needed to see the end of this script.

Of course, even if things were to go wrong, those mistakes were still a part of my plan.

‘You’re a scary one, Lee Ki-Young. How far into the future did you look? You’re no ordinary genius.’

“I’m scared...” I said.

“Hyung-nim... what—”

“Deok-Gu, bring the receiver,” I interrupted him with an order.

“Ah...”

“Hurry. Ha-Yan, can you block the noises and get ready to start filming?” I requested.

“Ah... o-okay!” Jung Ha-Yan replied.

I opened my arms slowly as if I were an actor on stage.

I saw people looking at me quietly.

- You look like you’ve come back to your senses, oppa.

“How was my acting, noona?” I asked.

- Acting, my ass. Stop talking nonsense. You were obviously spacing out and I was actually shocked. I expected something to happen, so it’s really surprising. I honestly thought it was over.

“...”

- If you look at the real-time reaction on Benigoa Net, you’ll be surprised as well. Looks like other people didn’t like seeing you spacing out. I tried my best to stop them, but it was no use.

“Looks like you had time to browse,” I commented.

- It’s important.

She was right.

- The Sunset Swordsman had decided to sacrifice himself for the Son of Light. It doesn’t matter to me even if the story ends here, but I’m sure you’re different. Actually, I’m relieved as well.

- Your condition was worse than what I expected, and I really thought it was going to be impossible for you to recover... I’m pretty weak-hearted... I’m just good at pretending that I’m not.

“Weak-hearted, my ass,” I commented.

- So what’s the situation now?

“The item that Kim Hyun-Sung had used to revive me, Altanus’s Inheritance, is in conflict with my insurance. That’s probably the reason behind this massive column of light. It seems a bit far-fetched, but the system is saying that Kim Hyun-Sung can’t disappear just yet.

Ji-Hye noona definitely knew what I was talking about.

I didn’t really explain much or give her details, but she once operated the dummy world.

The system existed in that dummy world as well. Of course, it was a simpler version that couldn’t be compared to the system governing the continent, but it was the same type of system, so she had a rough idea of how it worked.

- So the point is that you intentionally caused that error.

“That’s right,” I said.

- Did dummy Lee Ki-Young do something similar...

“Probably,” I said.

The important part was that I had intentionally caused the conflict. There were many words that could be used to describe it, like error or bug, but it was an undeniable fact that I had found a weakness in its code. Obviously, the system...

- Will try to fix the error.

“And we need to widen that gap even more,” I told her.

- I understand. So, you want to snatch Kim Hyun-Sung while the system is stabilizing itself? So this is why you needed holy power. I understand what’s happening now. It’s nice to know that it wasn’t a waste to have it ready to use right away.

“That’s good,” I said.

- I’m not sure if what we accumulated is enough, though...

“I’m sure Belial and Benigoa are doing something similar. Transfer it to me right now, and then we’re going to start filming right away,” I instructed.

- So you want to earn it in real time.

"That's not the only reason..." I told her.

'It's because storytelling is important.'

How and what the public believed was important as well. It didn't matter how I used the holy power. In that sense, everything we were doing was meaningful, including Kim Hyun-Sung getting back on his feet and my revival.

"I'm the God of Sacrifice and Revival, noona," I told her.

- Yeah, right. I understand what you're saying, but aren't you embarrassed to say that about yourself?

"Can't be helped when the public thinks of me that way, and it doesn't matter if they don't think of me that way because you're going to make it happen. I'm going to become the God of Sacrifice and Revival," I explained.

- You're too greedy. Do you want me to use the press in real time as well?

"I love you," I confessed.

- I love you, too. I'm busy enough right now... I don't even like Kim Hyun-Sung all that much... *Ugh*, I don't really want to do this...

Lee Ji-Hye complained, but I heard her mumbling moments later.

I was sure she was talking to the spies that she had planted beforehand.

"God of Sacrifice and Revival..."

"God of Sacrifice and Revival."

"The God of Revival."

A torrent of holy power inundated me, and I spread my wings more. I couldn't stop hearing the same mumbling noises, and it was like everyone was holding some kind of religious ceremony.

“Rise, God of Sunset. Then, I’ll give you the future...” I muttered. With tears in my eyes, I spoke with the voice of someone who had lost his closest brother in a miserable, sympathetic, noble, and holy manner.

“Rise... *Heuk... heuuk...* God of Sunset. Then, I’ll give you... the future. *Heuuk...*” I cried.

It looked more realistic than ever, and I couldn’t stop crying as well. This behavior made people sympathize with me, and honestly, this was more effective than throwing a fit, right?

‘Benigoa and Mr. Bel. Make sure you do your jobs right.’

[Created a Mythic-rank Forced Quest.]

[I will forgive your sins. Rise, Altanus’s regressor. Then, I’ll give you the future. (0/1)]

[Quest Clear Reward - The Future (0/2,129)]

The massive column of light was still there, and the viewers put their hands together in a prayer. They looked like people who were witnessing a miracle in the making, and it was true; they were witnessing the miracle from the God of Sacrifice and Revival.

Everyone believed that the Sunset Swordsman was going to rise again.

‘Yeah, belief is power. This belief is power. It’s a power the system cannot deny nor ignore.’

[Created a Mythic-rank Forced Quest.]

[I will forgive your sins. Rise, Altanus’s regressor. Then, I’ll give you the future. (0/1)]

[Quest Clear Reward - The Future (0/4,122)]

There were things I was worried about. I wasn’t sure if this was enough, and I wasn’t sure if there were going to be other variables, but I was sure it was possible.

Moreover, I wasn’t the only one who wanted to see Kim Hyun-Sung’s revival.

The inheritance that Altanus had left behind was probably thinking about the same

thing, and it knew what was right. Right, Altanus?

"Altanus loved that man and... sympathized with his life. After much thought, she sacrificed herself to return everything the way it was before. Of course, I probably stopped her during that time, but... I must've respected her wishes."

"There wasn't a god capable of making that kind of choice. That kind of emotion was common between us... Although I can't remember everything, I can still remember Altanus's will."

'You loved him, right? You're going to help us, right? I'm sure you planned something with your inheritance, and the fact that we found your inheritance must be part of your plan.'

"Thanks, Altanus," I said.

CHAPTER 876

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (9)

And that was when the sky parted slowly as the massive column of light pervaded it once again. I didn't really believe that the system was going to respect Altanus's will, and it was all because it didn't have a mind of its own.

It simply determined what was right and wrong.

It didn't know what was more suitable with the law and what was the most ideal and least harmful to the world. It probably wasn't interested in Altanus's inheritance, will, or even the quests I had been giving to Kim Hyun-Sung.

The only thing it was interested in was fixing the conflict.

"It's compromise and coexistence... That's what I want," I said. Compromise and coexistence were a bunch of nonsense, but the system didn't have any other choice in the face of my boldness. I was asking it to roll back everything if it couldn't resolve the error and if it didn't want to see me cause chaos here.

I probably seemed like a virus inside a human body, but I wasn't a harmful virus.

I was a virus that could coexist, and I could either be harmful or helpful.

'Actually, I'm a virus that can make the human body stronger. I can increase its resistance to diseases and make it even healthier, so how about we resolve this issue together?'

[Created a Mythic-rank Forced Quest.]

[I will forgive your sins. Rise, Altanus's regressor. Then, I'll give you the future. (0/1)]
[Quest Clear Reward - The Future (0/4,397)]

'Just accept it. It won't be a bad trade.'

[Quest Clear Reward - The Future (0/5,132)]

“Rise... Heuuuk... heuk... heuk...”

‘I’ll cry once... ’

“Heuuuk... heuuuuuk...”

A scene of holy tears rolling down my face was important, right?

“Rise... Sunset Swordsman. Then... *Heuk...* I’ll give you the future,” I cried. I thought something was going to happen right away because it was a system, and it was easier for it to make a reasonable decision.

I was sure it knew what it needed to do to resolve the error. I started walking because the column of light seemed like it was telling me to come closer to it, as Kim Hyun-Sung was inside it.

The scenery changed as soon as I stepped into the light.

What’s going on? The scenery changed instantly starting from my left foot that landed on the ground. I couldn’t feel Park Deok-Gu or Jung Ha-Yan. I thought that perhaps I had lost my mind, but it probably wasn’t the case because the scene felt strangely realistic.

I couldn’t say exactly what this space was, but...

“The system is giving its feedback,” I said.

This was the most reasonable explanation. The space was white, and I was surrounded by maze-like walls.

“Couldn’t you have made things more comfortable for me? Or...” I trailed off. It was possible that the system didn’t agree with my suggestion, but... I had been creating all this while, so Ji-Hye noona and Benigoa would take care of the rest.

We still had time, too.

I wasn’t sure where I was headed nor what was waiting for me at the end of this maze, but I didn’t stop walking. Perhaps Altanus’ Inheritance had created this place.

There wasn’t anything here aside from me, so I couldn’t help but start thinking about

many things. I thought of the possibility of the system isolating me in this place because it had recognized me as a bug. I thought moving hastily might work against me, but I had to keep moving.

It wasn't the best situation to roll the dice, but I was *that* desperate. I disliked gambling, but I had no choice but to roll the dice by moving without hesitation.

I drew arrows on the walls in case I got lost.

'I'm not thirsty, and I don't feel tired. At least it's not hostile.'

'This is how you think positively. Ah, am I still in the real world? I wonder if it's just my mind that's in this place. I'm the God of Sacrifice and Revival, so I don't think it's good if I suddenly disappear. I don't want to disappear before I perform a miracle because it'll make me look strange. I have to revive with the light. If I hide... I'll look kind of... uncool.'

And that was when I heard someone's cries.

"Heuk..."

The sobbing was far.

"Heuk..."

I couldn't hear it clearly, but I took another step.

"Kim Hyun-Sung?" I called out.

"Heuk... heuuk..." Kim Hyun-Sung cried.

"I'm seriously going to lose my mind. You're crying again?" I asked.

"Heuk..."

"I'm seriously tired of this," I complained.

I could still hear the sobbing noises, but the closer I got to it, the fainter the sobbing became. The cry wasn't that intense, but I did feel someone else's presence from where the crying was coming from, so I was sure Kim Hyun-Sung was somewhere

around here.

Perhaps the system was actually punishing me and had labeled me as a bug to be squashed.

'Are you punishing me by making me explore the maze while listening to Kim Hyun-Sung cries? Pretty good. People will definitely not stop talking about this drama.'

"Heung... Heuk..."

I walked nonstop, and I honestly had no idea how long I had been walking here, as I no longer had a grip on time. It felt like I had been wandering around the same space for eternity.

I looked at the arrow on the wall and muttered, "How many days has it been?"

At some point, I could no longer hear his cries, and I thought it would be better to think of a way to go back, but nothing would change even if I were to leave right now.

The flow of time here could be different from the flow of time in the real world.

A few days here could just be a moment over there. It was similar to when I was in Kim Hyun-Sung's subconscious. I was sure at least a week had passed at the time—actually, it could be a month or half a year, but still...

'Let's just relax a bit.'

"Heuk..."

I heard Kim Hyun-Sung's sobbing again. I walked away without thinking, but I abruptly came to a halt upon realizing that the noises were coming from behind the wall. I extended my hand toward the wall and realized that the saying, "It's difficult to see what's under your nose" was actually true.

"There you are," I said.

"..."

"So, this is where you were," I said.

“...”

“Is this where you’ve been hiding? How did you get in there? Based on the shape, it looks like it's blocked from the inside... I know you’re in there, so don’t think about hiding like a rat. It’s no use even if you keep your mouth sealed. I don’t know how long you’ve been hiding in there, but I know everything,” I told him.

“W-Who? Who are you?”

It was Kim Hyun-Sung’s voice.

He sounded a bit younger than normal, but he was definitely hiding behind the wall. I was kind of sad that he had forgotten my voice. Had he lost his memories, or was he out of it? It was possible that he wasn’t the real Kim Hyun-Sung, but it didn't matter. I still had to bring him out, as I had come here to do that.

“Come out,” I instructed him.

“...”

“What are you doing? Come out,” I questioned.

“I-I don’t want to,” Kim Hyun-Sung replied.

‘You fuckin’ bastard.’

“Come out, man,” I repeated.

“No, I won’t go outside,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“Stop being annoying and come out, Kim Hyun-Sung. Come out before I break this wall,” I threatened.

I honestly couldn't break the wall.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“Is that important?” I retaliated.

“W-Who are you, and how do you know my name? Did you lock me up here?” he

asked.

“You locked yourself up in there,” I replied.

“That’s not what I meant... I’m asking if you locked me up here... not the space behind this wall,” he clarified.

“Why would I lock you up here, damn it?” I questioned.

“T-Then are you trapped in here as well, hyung? How do you know my name? Am I... dreaming right now? Please tell me this is a dream. I must be in the middle of some kind of human experiment. Do you... know anything about this place? Were you dragged here as well?” Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

“...”

“I... suddenly... I lost consciousness for a moment, and then I ended up here when I opened my eyes again. Do you have your cell phone? Where’s... the police? You—”

“Is that important?” I interrupted.

“...”

“Knowing why I’m here and how I know your name must be important to you. The important thing is that we need to get out of here. We need to do something instead of being pathetic and staying behind that wall. Curiosity isn’t a bad thing, but we have to move on, don’t you agree?” I asked.

“It’s safe here,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“This place is safe, too,” I said.

“...”

“I-I’m scared,” he stuttered.

“What are you scared of?” I asked.

“...”

“What in the world are you scared of?” I asked.

“It’s hard to explain,” Kim Hyun-Sung answered.

“What is?” I questioned.

“You don’t know what’s outside, and I don’t know whether you’re really a good person or a bad person... This place is safe. At least my life won’t be threatened, you know? It’s dangerous outside,” Kim Hyun-Sung explained.

“...”

“How do you know my name?” Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

“Don’t make me repeat myself, Hyun-Sung,” I warned.

“Are you a nice person, hyung?” Kim Hyun-Sung questioned.

‘You’re so annoying. Why would you ask something like that?’

I couldn’t really understand the situation, but I felt like I understood his current condition.

He had to be...

‘He has to be the Kim Hyun-Sung at the tutorial dungeon during his first life.’

I was sure that he was the twenty-two-year-old Kim Hyun-Sung at the time, and I could guarantee that, as I had heard about him before.

The situation didn't exactly align, but the twenty-two-year-old Kim Hyun-Sung at the tutorial dungeon was definitely behind the wall, even though we weren't inside a tutorial dungeon.

I didn't quite like the twenty-two-year-old Kim Hyun-Sung when I first heard of him back then, and I felt frustrated upon realizing that I was dealing with him.

‘It’s a great scene.’

I wasn’t sure whether he had come here himself by himself or had locked himself up.

I also wasn't sure whether he had started there or not.

Of course, I wasn't sure whether his original personality had disappeared or not, so even if I brought him out, I wasn't sure whether he'd be the same Kim Hyun-Sung whom I was familiar with or not.

Was this the penalty for using Altanus' Inheritance? I had many questions, but I didn't think anything serious was going to happen. If the system had just signed an agreement with me and if Altanus had just given me a chance, then things wouldn't have been so messy.

It was probably better to think of it as a device, or it could be a process to see whether Kim Hyun-Sung would accept the quest reward or not. This was the most convincing theory because it was possible that Kim Hyun-Sung wanted the quest reward.

Basically, I just had to start questioning him, as he arrived here first.

'He wouldn't deny it.'

"I'm hungry," I said.

"..."

"..."

"I'm hungry," I repeated.

"..."

"..."

"I'm hungry," I said.

"Ah..."

"I'm really hungry and... thirsty..." I mumbled.

A hand came out from under the wall, and I could see from his hand that he had never wielded a sword before. It was different from Kim Hyun-Sung's current hands,

which were full of calluses and scars.

The hands of the twenty-two-year-old Kim Hyun-Sung gave me the impression that he had never done any difficult tasks throughout his life. Even his wrist was thin, which made me question whether he was really Kim Hyun-Sung or not.

His hesitant hand was telling me the kind of person he was.

I heard rustling behind the wall before I heard his voice again.

“Do you...” Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

“Hm?”

“Want... some bread?” Kim Hyun-Sung offered.

CHAPTER 877

THE END OF THE SCRIPT (10)

'It's not much, though. Damn it, selfish bastard. Selfish Kim Hyun-Sung.'

I sat down and ripped off a small piece of the bread. I wasn't actually hungry. I just wanted to talk to him. There was a saying about how people tend to become closer to each other while eating, so I decided to pretend that I was hungry. The environment was also good enough to make Kim Hyun-Sung put his guard down.

As expected, I heard a munching sound behind the wall.

I couldn't see him, but I could hear him eating the bread a little bit at a time.

I wasn't hearing his voice anymore, but the silence didn't last long.

"Hyung, are you there?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

'This guy... '

"Hyung?" Kim Hyun-Sung called out to me.

Things were quite noisy not too long ago, so he probably felt like he was now all alone, as things had gotten quite silent. I intentionally didn't answer him, and I heard him cry soon afterward.

"Heuk..."

Kim Hyun-Sung was so weak that I couldn't understand how this idiot was chosen to be the hero. I was starting to dislike him to the point that I thought it would be better to just go back, but my feet wouldn't move at all.

"Yeah, I'm right here," I answered.

"W-Where did you go?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

“That’s none of your business,” I replied.

He was probably at a loss for words.

'Geez, he's really shameless to ask about where I've been when he doesn't even want to come out of there.'

“...”

“It must be scary being there by yourself,” I commented.

“...”

'Cat got your tongue?'

“How did you end up here?” I asked.

“I don’t really remember why I’m here or how long I’ve been here... what about you?”
Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

“I don’t remember either. I don’t really know what I’m doing here,” I replied. I wasn’t joking. I really didn’t know what I was doing.

It was kind of funny how we were eating bread calmly with a wall between us.

I was actually thinking about what I needed to do to bring him outside.

Was I supposed to leave him, just like what First Life Kim Hyun-Sung had said? I couldn't help but think that he'd end up following me because I was leaving arrows on the walls.

It was highly likely, but I wasn’t sure. I wanted to see him break through the wall.

I thought that making him relax more would be the best course of action, so I talked about random things, but in the end, I ran out of things to talk about.

It seemed that his lack of social skills was innate.

“Give me more,” I requested.

“...”

“Hurry,” I urged. I really wish I had one of those gluttonous monsters from the tutorial dungeon so that I could just shove it over to his side.

‘Does he have a bag that contains an unlimited amount of bread? He definitely has more food.’ Various thoughts filled my head, but I calmed down and actually started laughing to myself.

“How long are you planning on staying here?” I asked.

“I’m... not sure,” Kim Hyun-Sung answered quietly.

“Nothing will change if you don’t move,” I told him.

“Still...” Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

“...”

“There’s a chance that it could be dangerous. This situation is... strange. Come to think of it, there really are many strange details. You said you don’t really remember anything about how you ended up here, so I think... I’ll be in danger if I walk out.

“I’ll be safe if I stay put in this new place,” Kim Hyun-Sung continued.

“But I’m outside, you know? Or what? Are you afraid that I’m going to hurt you? I’m not good at fighting, and I have no weapons,” I told him.

Actually, I could beat Kim Hyun-Sung in his current state.

I had a forty percent chance of knocking him down if I used all my power.

‘We ate together. Why are you acting this way?’

“That’s not what’s important... I know you’re not a bad person, but... I just don’t want to go out,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“Why?” I questioned.

“I’m scared of changing, and I have a feeling that everything’s going to change. I’m

scared of what's outside, the things I'll be doing in the future, and I'm scared of making decisions. Here, I can just stay still. At least, nothing will change if I do that. I know you don't understand, but I..." Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

"No, I understand," I commented.

"..."

"I get what you're saying," I added.

"What?"

"It's scary when things are different from the current environment, and trying something new is always scary for everyone. Everyone is scared of sudden changes, myself included," I told him.

"..."

"You just need an opportunity," I said.

"..."

"Anyone can change if they're given the chance," I clarified.

"Were you like that as well, hyung?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

'Probably.' It was kind of different from what I was telling Kim Hyun-Sung, but I was probably given an opportunity to change. I was sure there were many reasons behind it, but I was definitely going to have a key role.

Otherwise, there was no reason for me to be here.

It was the same for Kim Hyun-Sung. At first, the only thing he could do was lock himself up behind the wall, but he ended up becoming a legendary hero in his first life, and he learned how to sacrifice himself in his second life.

He experienced many things, but I was sure that what pulled him out of that wall was a tiny opportunity. Kim Hyun-Sung matured upon meeting new people, experiencing new things, fighting new threats, and surviving new dangers.

His life story was like a hero's life story, and it wouldn't be strange if someone were to turn his life into a novel or movie. After all, his life was deeply related to the continent, and his life would forever be passed down through stories.

I wasn't really a sentimental person, but I couldn't stop recalling many things.

I mumbled useless things without realizing it.

"It's probably best if you think of this as a dream. My words sound ridiculous, but the things you're experiencing now aren't exactly normal, either. You're dreaming right now," I told him.

"T-That's..."

"Many things you could never imagine could happen, and you're right—they can be disturbing, scary, and difficult, but I'm sure you'll be able to write your own story in the end," I said.

I had no idea, but Kim Hyun-Sung was probably looking at me with a questioning look.

However, this kind of emotional speech could work.

"You can make many friends, and you'll meet many people. You'll experience difficulties to the point that you'll want to give up, and a life that's completely different from your life so far may be waiting for you outside. You're going to make a lot of mistakes, and you might even fail in the end," I said.

His first life was like that. He met many people, struggled a lot, made many mistakes, and he ended up failing.

"You might end up in a situation where you want to give up everything, but you'll definitely meet people whom you will consider family. Right now, that life might not seem as great as your past life, and you might give up and fail, but in the end, you'll experience happiness to the point that those difficult experiences will seem insignificant.

"You'll meet people precious to you, you'll travel to many places, you'll have hobbies to do, and you'll be able to do everything you want. That's what's in front of you right now," I explained.

“T-That’s ridiculous,” Kim Hyun-Sung commented.

I went through all that trouble to create the mood...

“You don’t know what will happen unless you come outside and see for yourself,” I said.

“...”

“I know I seem like I’m talking nonsense right now, but you won’t know until you’ve given it a try. That’s something you need to do yourself. Y-You’ll... become a hero...” I stammered.

“...”

“You’ll save everyone, the continent, and myself,” I added.

“...”

“You’re going to become my regressor,” I said.

“Ah...”

“You’re going to become my regressor, Kim Hyun-Sung,” I repeated.

“Uh...”

“Because I’ve chosen you,” I said.

“...”

Kim Hyun-Sung went silent.

I expected him to come out and say memorable lines that characters who had lost their memories would usually say. I honestly wasn’t expecting much because I was simply being honest, but our lovely regressor seemed to be trying to meet my expectations.

“Huh... why am I crying...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

'That's what I'm talking about, damn it.'

"Uh... Heuk... heuuuk... Uh... uh... Why am I suddenly... crying..." Kim Hyun-Sung repeated.

'You're so easy, Kim Hyun-Sung. I can't believe that worked.'

"H-Hold on... Wait... Heuk... I'm sorry. Hyung... Heuk... I'm suddenly..." Kim Hyun-Sung mumbled.

'How did this even work?'

"I'm suddenly... crying... Heuk... heuuk..." Kim Hyun-Sung sniffled.

"You're going to grow to the point that you'll be able to sacrifice for others and be saved in the end," I told him.

'I'll make sure that happens.'

I extended my hand toward the wall; there wasn't a special reason behind it. I just felt like doing it. As I said earlier, one would never know unless one had tried it.

I was waiting for him to come out from behind the wall on his own, but I had never attempted to go beyond the wall by myself.

And that was when I realized that this homework was my homework as well.

I was supposed to give him the future, after all.

"Uh... uh..."

I saw the twenty-two-year-old Kim Hyun-Sung crying while crouching on the floor. He stood up and stretched his hand out toward me with a face covered in tears and snot. I did the same and grabbed his hand.

"I'm sure a good outcome is waiting for you," I said.

Swoosh!

The world changed starting from the bottom of our feet.

“Ah...”

Kim Hyun-Sung looked around, and I stared deeply at him.

The twenty-two-year-old Kim Hyun-Sung briefly looked like First Life Kim Hyun-Sung before becoming Second Life Kim Hyun-Sung.

Kim Hyun-Sung was looking around while crying.

The scenery was changing, and it seemed like we were watching flashbacks of what Kim Hyun-Sung had experienced so far. There were some scenes that made Kim Hyun-Sung close his eyes, but he eventually opened his eyes and took everything in.

It was like he had chosen to accept them, as those experiences had helped him grow to his current heights.

This was how my hero grew and how our regressor became strong.

It seemed like I was overexaggerating it, but the surroundings seemed to be brightening up as if it were in the middle of a sunrise, and it was all because Kim Hyun-Sung's dark memories were finally shining brightly.

“I'll give you the future...” I muttered.

I couldn't hear the quest message, and I knew why. When the flashbacks ended, Kim Hyun-Sung smiled. The way he smiled with tears and snot covering his face didn't make him look like the God of Sunset at all.

He didn't know what to say, and he had no idea how to explain the current situation. He also couldn't understand what was going on, but he soon realized that he had returned, so he stared at me and muttered, “I-I'm... back. *Heuk...* I'm... sorry. *Heuk...*”

'That's all you have to say? That's a classic line, and I enjoy cliches as well, but that wasn't a good line at all. Also, why are you even apologizing to me? Should I welcome you back with open arms or something? I don't know about that.'

I honestly had no issues with it; I was just caught off guard by the fact that he could say something like that.

I smiled and said, “You bastard.”

[The Regressor Instruction Manual has ended.]

- So, Oppa.

- Yeah?

- What happened in the end?

- What do you mean?

- You know, the villain in the first life. The masked scum. The bastard inside your head. Wait, are you sure he was inside your head? Have you thought about the possibility that perhaps you were just lying, and it was all in your head? Do you see him... even now?

- I think so.

- What's with that vague answer? I thought you'd figured everything out?

- I can't say for sure because I'm not sure either. I might just be lying, like you said, or maybe...

- Yes?

- Maybe that bastard has taken a liking to our regressor as well. He may have sympathized with him since he's been observing our regressor for a long time... When he said, "This is the answer," that could've been the answer, so in a way, he was right.

- You're not making any sense at all.

- So what?

-...

- The God of Sacrifice and Revival said let there be light.

-...

- And there was light.

-...

-...

- You're the reason behind all this, and that's all you have to say about it?

-...

- Lee Ki-Young... you're seriously a scumbag.

- Regressor Instruction Manual Complete -

ILLUSTRATIONS



















Goddess Benigao

















































CHAPTER 878

EPILOGUE (1)

"The God of Sacrifice and Revival said he'll give the God of Sunset the future, so the continent will welcome a new future..." I^[1] said.

"Wait, wait... you're really going to say that? You know you shouldn't talk like that during the interview, right?"

"Huh?"

"I'm telling you that you shouldn't actually say that when you go into the interview, Belier. Father Lee Ki-Young said he doesn't want to be called the God of Sacrifice and Revival. Goddess Benigoa is the one that's managing the continent, and he's simply assisting her... How will he feel if you call him that after he said that he doesn't want to be called by that moniker of his?"

"..."

"This is a rare opportunity. Joining the Blue Guild is every adventurer's dream, and a private meeting with Mr. Lee Ki-Young... You can't even pay money for that.

"Don't do *anything* that'll offend him, and you must actually prepare for it. You'll be disqualified the moment you mention the God of Sacrifice and Revival and the God of Sunset."

"But still..."

I knew that as well because it had been over a year since the God of Sacrifice and Revival descended on the continent.

When everyone got busy handling the aftermath, Father Lee Ki-Young made an official announcement. He said Goddess Benigoa had taken pity on the continent and sent him back. He also announced that he'd live as the Honorary Cardinal of the Order of Benigoa, but how could we forget about the incident and the miracle we witnessed on that fateful day?

Articles about it were everywhere at the time. He was obtaining more and more followers as time ticked by. Even though they weren't holding regular worship services, it was only natural for everyone to worship him, as he was a saint—no, a god of the continent.

I was the same. When I witnessed that miracle on that fateful day, all I could do was look at the Goddess' Mirror in the sky. I felt everything vividly as if it were happening right before my eyes.

Father Lee Ki-Young cried as he descended amidst a colossal column of light.

He bawled as he spread his wings and said, *"Rise, God of Sunset. Then, I'll give you the future. Heuk... heuuk..."*

"..."

"Heuk... heuuk... I'll give you the future."

How could I forget his pitiful yet noble figure?

I was sure the scene where the Sunset Swordsman appeared in the world with the sunset and hugged Father Lee Ki-Young was carved in everyone's retinas. We saw everything, but we still had to wait for the official announcement regarding the aftermath.

[Father Lee Ki-Young is still unconscious. The Blue Guild and the Order of Benigoa have yet to issue any official announcements...]

[For the miracle the God of Sacrifice and Revival showed that day.]

[The Special Audit Team of the Democratic Country and the Heresy Inquisitor of the Vatican are discussing how to punish Great Demon Song Soo-Kyung. It is highly likely that he will be executed.]

[Father Basel's tears. Goddess Benigoa has felt sorry for us... All followers should show respect and thank Mr. Lee Ki-Young and Goddess Benigoa...]

[There are daily masses, and there's a crowd in front of the Blue Guild today as well. They say there's no issue with his health, but... the concerned voices of the people are getting louder and louder...]

Basically, they were all competing to release a story.

Exactly three months after Father Lee Ki-Young's awakening, an event was held where he thanked everyone and shared his vision of freedom and equality for the continent.

This event was held for everyone who supported him, including Goddess Benigoa and the Sunset Swordsman. Of course, it was an even for him as well.

He talked about how he didn't want to be called a god and gave a speech about his long journey to get to his current heights. His story made many people cry.

At the time, everyone welcomed a brand-new era.

My luck also turned for the better that day, even though I was just an ordinary mercenary.

'Joining the Blue Guild... '

Becoming a member of the Blue Guild was everyone's dream.

I had to go through the recruitment test that lasted for over two months, and today, I only had to tackle the final interview. I still couldn't believe that I managed to get this far. It was so surreal that it felt like a dream.

If the God of Sacrifice and Revival—no, if Lee Ki-Young of the Blue Guild wanted to remain human, then respecting *that* was the right thing to do.

I nodded and heard my comrades comforting me while patting my shoulder.

"Good luck with your interview, Belier," Hee-Chan said.

"Yeah, thanks, Hee-Chan," I said.

"If you do get accepted, you better not forget about us."

"No way... I'm thankful for all of you," I said.

"I knew something was up the moment you started training hard after the Day of Revival, but... I didn't think you'd actually change guilds."

“Nothing has been confirmed yet, and if I do get accepted... I feel bad about you guys,” I told them.

“You don’t need to feel bad. We’re actually thankful. I’m already happy just thinking about the buy-out price.”

“...”

“I’m kidding. Anyway, you have to tell us if you do get accepted. If you land a good position or somehow find yourself in the middle of a great quest, you have to let us know about it.”

“Yeah, I’ll do that,” I answered.

I hugged my comrades and went to the warp point that Archmage Jung Ha-Yan had created.

It would take me over four days to arrive at the final interview's location if I were to go there via a griffon, but Archmage Jung Ha-Yan's magic circle would teleport me to the location in just a few seconds.

It was kind of expensive, as I had to activate a special artifact to use it, but I noticed that this transportation method was becoming more and more popular. It hadn't even been long since this transportation method was introduced, but I could no longer imagine living life without a warp point.

As expected, there were many people at the warp point.

From huge boxes for transporting goods, small guilds looking for jobs, immigrants who had come here to start a new life in Lindel, priests on their pilgrimage, members of the other races, to tourists... this was a common scene to me, but it looked so unfamiliar today.

‘These kids... ’

I saw a party made up of three guys and one girl.

They were wearing cute armor and swords and were pretending to be adventurers. The sight of children carrying huge pieces of luggage near a ten-year-old child was a bit strange. The fact that their hair was of varying colors only added to the bizarre

sight.

It seemed that the others thought the same as me because they started looking at the kids.

"Our mother is waiting. Mother is really strict when it comes to time, Cheru. What are we going to do about this?" Sera asked.

"..."

"Ugh... What should I do? I got scolded because I was late last time as well..."

"I'm sure Father will talk to her about it," Cheru said.

"Ugh..."

The blue-haired child was comforting the crying blond-haired child.

For some reason, the sad blond-haired child caught my attention.

The blue-haired child looked back and said, "Come here, Sera. We're leaving soon."

"O-Okay..." Sera stuttered.

"Sera, is Father still..."

"Yeah... i-it's because I'm lacking... If I make mistakes today, too, then..." Sera trailed off.

"What did your mother say?" Cheru asked.

"Mom is busy, so... a-auntie has been taking care of me," Sera replied.

"Do you want me to talk to them?" Cheru offered.

"D-Don't... Don't do it, Cheru. If you do... they'll hate you too," Sera rejected.

"It's okay, Sera. Father doesn't hate you..." Cheru said.

'Are they heading to Lindel as well?'

The silver-haired kid was the only quiet one among them. He gathered their luggage while the others were talking.

The monster's by-products that fell out of their bags bothered me for some reason, and I could tell that they were from high-ranking monsters.

Honestly, I could just mind my own business, but I couldn't look away from them because it was such a unique sight.

'An errand?'

I was sure it wouldn't take long because of the warp points, but I couldn't understand going on an errand to bring a monster's by-product all the way here and...

'They must all have the same father.'

They were either children of a well-known family or sons of an adventurer. Polygamy was pretty popular on the continent, and I felt like I was correct based on their neat appearances.

The silver-haired boy was carrying multiple heavy-looking bags like it was nothing, so I deduced that they had been training since they were extremely young.

The blue-haired boy, who looked like the leader, was taking care of the remaining children and acted as their leader. Seeing that they had a VIP ticket, I was probably right, and I walked with them as I took out the ticket I had gotten from the Blue Guild.

I don't know why, but I noticed them looking at me.

They must've been surprised because I didn't look like someone who would have a VIP ticket.

"H-Hello..." I greeted.

"Hello, noona."

The blue-haired child bowed, the blond-haired child looked away, and the silver-haired child nodded. Meanwhile, the brown-haired girl just sighed as if she wasn't

interested in the discussion.

“A-Are you running an errand?” I asked.

“Yes.”

That was the end of the conversation...

“Cheru, have you forgotten what Father said about not talking to strangers?” the silver-haired child pointed out.

The blue-haired child shut his mouth as if his mouth had been glued together, and he looked pretty cute. The child named Sera was keeping his mouth shut so tightly that he looked like he was putting pressure on his lower jaw. I felt bad for talking to them.

‘Cute.’

They were cute, but I couldn’t help but feel bothered.

It was all because the silver-haired boy seemed wary toward me. Perhaps he had noticed me observing them earlier.

I smiled lightly because I felt bad.

Hea nodded at me and looked away.

I took a step forward and heard a voice.

“Let’s move.”

“...”

“...”

I saw multiple flashes of light, and the scenery before me peeled away.

“Welcome to Lindel.”

“Welcome, everyone! Welcome to Lindel!”

The Free City of Lindel.

“Wow...”

As always, the scenery caused my jaw to drop. It was a giant city centered around the dragon lair of Miss Dialugia and Miss Dialuria. This city was dubbed as the paradise of adventurers. The city was extremely diverse, filled with people from all walks of life and races.

The city was a symbol of freedom, and it brought the Sacred Democratic Country to its current heights.

More importantly, Father Lee Ki-Young loved and cherished this city the most.

“Lindel... It’s Lindel...” I mumbled.

1. Belier’s POV 📖

CHAPTER 879

EPILOGUE (2)

Everyone knew that Lindel was a popular city to Koreans, who had been summoned here. Dawan was just next to the Republic, and the city was pretty close to the capital, unlike Celia.

Of course, Lindel was closer to the capital than Dawan, which was the reason so many people traveled to and fro to Lindel. The city had also made great improvements over the years, but it only became popular when the Blue Guild rose to power.

The three major guilds of the Sacred Democratic Power grew in power, attracting merchants who wanted to receive commissions from the three guilds. As a result, the city became a popular destination for merchants with money to burn, which fattened up the city as a result.

The majority of the warp points all over the continent had Lindel as its destination, so it was only natural for the city to obtain so much gold. The huge temple that was built for the God of Sacrifice and Revival still existed, and Miss Dialugia's dragon lair became known as one of the main tourist attractions of Lindel.

In some ways, redevelopment was a need, not a choice. It had already been nine months since the city welcomed the new city plan. Today, the city was the most beloved city by the denizens of the continent.

'And... '

"That's not all."

The three guilds and Miss Dialugia's nest weren't the only things that the city was famous for.

'Food.'

As people arrived in droves, the commercial district thrived. A large shopping center

and multiple restaurants appeared amidst the city redevelopment plan.

From famous restaurants located all over the continent to hole in the wall restaurants, one could find just about anything in Lindel. Lindel's street food was high quality, too.

From what I^[1] heard, the Guild Master of the Blue Guild worked hard to attract people to the commercial district, and there was even a rumor going around that the Sunset Swordsman was a big foodie.

Restaurants and shopping centers were neatly arranged in a row. I smiled unknowingly upon seeing people enjoying their daily lives here. There was an adventurer square nearby, but it was natural for people to be more interested in this place.

'Should I go get some Mirror Salmon?'

The Guild Master of the Blue Guild had successfully aqua-farmed the Mirror Salmon, and it became the specialty of Lindel rather than Mirror Lake's specialty.

'No. I think I'll feel stuffy if I eat too much.'

It'd be a relief if I didn't vomit the things I had eaten in front of Father Lee Ki-Young, but the sweet smell from all over the place was stopping me from walking any further.

'Rainbow Cotton Candy.'

That was Lindel's specialty as well.

Did Father Lee Ki-Young enjoy eating that as well?

It became popular because a picture of him eating the cotton candy was posted on Benigoa Net.

Just as I expected, I saw marketing texts near the shop. It said things like "Taste the flavor that even Father Lee Ki-Young has approved" or "Taste the seven flavors."

The Goddess' Mirror even showed a video of the time when Father Lee Ki-Young visited the shop.

- What do you think, Mr. Ki-Young?

- Not bad.

- I'm glad.

- But why today...

- I heard the auction house finally has a stock of an item that you'll definitely like. Let's go.

The taste of the cotton candy didn't really matter, and I could see based on the crowd that was in front of the shop. I moved without realizing it, and I saw familiar faces when I stopped.

"How much do we have left, Cheru?" Sera asked.

"We can buy exactly three," Cheru replied.

"That's why I suggested we save money on equipment. Mother said not to spend all of it. We're in big trouble. *Ugh...*"

"What should we do?" Cheru asked.

"T-T-Then let's buy three and share," Sera suggested.

"No. We're already late..."

The brown-haired child was complaining while the blonde-haired child was looking at the blue-haired child as if they wanted to really eat cotton candy. The silver-haired child kept looking at me as if trying to keep an eye on me. Well, I *did* seem suspicious.

'Why do we keep running into each other?'

He was looking at me as if I were some kind of criminal, but our encounter was purely coincidental. Those four children were cute, but I had no intention of following or spying on them. Of course, I could have stared at them for too long at the warp point because I had dazed out, but that was beyond my control.

They whispered among themselves and slowly distanced themselves from me.

The child named Domi looked at me with disgust.

'It's really not what you think.'

'I don't know what was going on, but I felt like I had to deny it for now.'

"D-Do you want me to buy you one?" I offered.

I said that to get out of this situation.

"What?"

The child named Cheru cast a suspicious gaze at me.

Sera was already nodding, and the silver-haired child still looked like he was questioning me.

"I'm not a strange person... I-I just..."

"It's fine," Cheru interrupted.

"I-I'm really not a strange person," I said.

"You definitely look strange. Can you keep your distance from us? Mother said that when it comes to strangers..." Cheru trailed off.

"I'm really not a strange person. I simply thought you guys were cute..." I said.

"Mother said not to listen to people who call us cute," Cheru said.

"I'm just visiting because of the interview at the Blue Guild. See? My pass. I couldn't help but notice you guys while I was passing..." I told them.

I didn't expect them to recognize the pass, but I was sure they recognized the Blue Guild's seal, even if they were just children.

The guild's public credibility was incredibly high, so it was basically impossible not to know the Blue Guild.

I couldn't help but feel anxious because if I just backed off here, I'd really look like a

suspicious person.

The blue-haired child, who was staring at the pass, caught my attention.

“Is it real?”

“It’s real.”

“What should we do?”

It seemed like everyone was waiting for Cheru's decision.

And that was when Domi said, “The pass is real.”

“R-Right?” I stuttered.

“We don’t really have a lot of allowance money. If you don’t mind, would you like to trade with an item that I have? What’s your name?” Cheru asked.

“B-Belie...” I replied.

The child took out a small pebble.

I chuckled and dropped the change into the child’s hands, which were spread open wide open. I talked to him for a bit and heard him thanking me.

I felt proud about that, and I felt even more proud when I saw that they each had a cotton candy in their hands. Domi and Cheru were eating their cotton candy quietly, and the silver-haired child was the only one who wasn’t eating it.

“Aren’t you going to eat it?” I asked.

“I’m going to give it to my father,” replied the silver-haired child.

“D-Do you want me to buy you another one?” I offered.

“It’s fine,” the silver-haired child answered.

The blonde-haired child stared hesitantly at the silver-haired child. The silver-haired child was already drooling, but he looked away from the cotton candy because he

wanted to give his own portion of the cotton candy to his father.

"It's okay. I have a lot of money," I told him.

"It's really fine. I don't want to cause you more trouble. I'm genuinely thankful," said the silver-haired child.

Meanwhile, Cheru gave his cotton candy to Sera.

Sera looked happy as he ate the cotton candy in a hurry.

It seemed that he couldn't hold it in, as he immediately devoured his cotton candy after taking a bite of Cheru's cotton candy. I'd understand it if he were just annoying, but he told him to take his time, so the blue-haired child—with the name Cheru—had to be the oldest brother.

"A-Are you really not going to eat it?" I asked.

"Yes."

"How about I give you some of mine?" I offered.

"I'm okay," Cheru answered, but his body responded in a different way.

When I pulled a piece of cotton candy and placed it near his mouth, he immediately started drooling. He closed his eyes and swallowed the cotton candy as if he were doing it subconsciously.

The cotton candy was tailored to children's tastes, so he reacted instantly toward it. I was sure he felt conflicted because he kept looking at the cotton candy in his hand. He probably felt that a demon was tempting him.

'He must really love his father.'

"Then are you heading to the Blue Guild, noona?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered.

"Great timing. Sera and Thro will take you there," Cheru said.

“Huh?”

“Are you guys heading to the Blue Guild as well?” I asked.

“Only Thro and Sera. I have to stop by the Red Mercenary Guild,” Cheru answered.

“I need to stop by the Black Swan Guild first. Mother is waiting,” Domi replied.

I questioned why these children were heading for the three major guilds.

No matter how hard I tried to guess, I couldn’t think of a reason behind it. I thought maybe they were playing a prank, but I rubbed my eyes in disbelief upon seeing the build-haired child entering the Red Mercenary Guild.

The building was actually bigger than the Blue Guild—no, it was more like a castle. The overwhelming sight caused my jaw to drop, and the building appeared as if it were a warrior holding up his sword.

It was an unrealistic sight to see a child walking into the Guild House of the Red Mercenary Guild.

‘His mother is in there?’

“See you later, Sera. Make sure you hold her hand,” Cheru told Sera.

“Okay,” Sera replied.

“Thank you, noona,” he said to me.

“Ah... yeah...” I said.

It was the same after that, too. I soon found myself standing before the Black Swan Guild—a guild with only female members. They were the best intelligence organization throughout the continent, and their financial prowess was on the same level as the Blue Guild.

The majority of them were rangers, thieves, or assassins.

When Miss Lee Ji-Hye became the Sub Guild Master of the Black Swan Guild, the massive guild started making a name for itself in the business industry.

Their guild house was smaller than the Red Mercenary Guild, but the building looked like it was built to be efficient rather than to appear magnificent. The building was decorated in black, and it made me feel like it was dangerous.

“Belier unni, thank you,” Sera said.

“Sure...” I said.

“I’ll make sure to pay you back. My mother said to never forget grace and your enemies, but especially your archenemy,” he said.

“Ah... I see... I’ll see you later, Sera,” I told Sera.

“Thro, take good care of Sera,” I instructed Thro.

“...”

“How late is it... *Ugh*... Mother is going to scold us...” Thro mumbled. He walked away with slouching shoulders and with Sera in tow. The front gate opened this time as well.

‘What the hell?’

This meant that the two were heading toward the Blue Guild, too.

I finally understood why they became so relaxed after checking my pass.

‘Are they children of the Blue Guild’s high-ranking executives? Who are they?’

“W-What does your mother do?” I asked. I finally asked the stupid question.

“My mom is a mage.”

“R-Really?” I asked.

“Yes, she’s the most famous mage on the continent, a-and Thro doesn’t have a mother.”

“You shouldn’t say stuff like that to your hyung,” Thro warned Sera.

I flinched, but I recovered quickly and nodded.

“Thro lives with his master. He receives training every day... and learns from his master. Except for Thro, we all learn from our mothers.”

“Really?”

“Thro said it’s fine if he doesn’t have a mother.”

‘What is he talking about?’

I thought perhaps I wasn't supposed to get involved with them.

What if this was the final interview to join the guild? Was I supposed to keep my guard up around the children? What if an illusion-type spell was cast on me? I suppressed my anxiety, but I felt uncomfortable as we walked into the Blue Guild.

Soon, I saw a familiar figure. She was of average height with short hair.

At first, I couldn't see her face clearly, but I eventually identified her as I got closer to her.

“Miss Han Sora.”

She was a well-known mage of the Blue Guild. She was archmage Jung Ha-Yan’s right hand and left hand. She was the hero who had saved Laios twice, and she became Father Lee Ki-Young’s secretary, thanks to her outstanding alchemy and political skills.

“S-She’s really Miss Han Sora,” I mumbled. How could I not be nervous? She was the hero I admired, but why was she outside? Was she waiting for me? Or did something happen to the guild? Why—

I heard Sera’s loud voice.

“Auntie!”

Sera ran up to Miss Han Sora and hugged her.

“A-A-Auntie...” Sera stuttered.

“You’re here, Sera,” Han Sora greeted.

“*Sniffle... Auntie... Heuuung... Auntie...*” Sera cried.

“You did great. Come here,” Han Sora comforted Sera.

I didn't expect to see this.

“What’s going on...”

I had stumbled upon some silly kids; I was sure of that.

1. Belier's POV 📖

CHAPTER 880

EPILOGUE (3)

"Did you complete the quest?" Han Sora asked.

"Yeah, Cheru..." Sera replied.

"Really? I should thank him," Han Sora said.

I saw the two talking casually, but the blond-haired child was a stuttering mess.

For some reason, Miss Han Sora was nodding while listening to Sera, and it was an unrealistic sight in my eyes. Miss Han Sora also patted Sera's head and pinched his cheek. I wasn't sure whether it was because of what Han Sora was doing, but the crying Sera eventually stopped crying.

Sera was still hiccuping and sniffing, but he calmed down a lot and spoke more clearly.

"So..." Sera trailed off.

"So what happened?" Han Sora asked.

'What's going on?'

"D-Domi kept saying that she's going to get in trouble..."

"It's pretty late. She might get scolded, but you have to keep promises. I was really worried, too," Han Sora said.

"Ah, w-what about Mom..." Sera asked.

"She's probably with your dad," Han Sora answered.

"R-Really? Can I go see them?" Sera asked.

"I think they're busy right now, so let's go see them later. Thro, you should head in first and submit your report," Han Sora suggested.

"I-I want to go, too..." Sera mumbled.

"Stay with me a little longer. You haven't finished the homework your mom gave you, right?" Han Sora asked.

"..."

"I'll help you," Han Sora offered.

"..."

"Let's do that," Han Sora added.

"Okay..." Sera answered.

"Did anything else happen?" Han Sora asked.

"Yeah. I ate cotton candy on the way here. We didn't have any money because we spent it, but t-that noona bought us cotton candy," Thro said. The silver-haired child then entered the guild with his head down.

I noticed Miss Han Sora staring at me.

'What should I do? She's looking at me.'

Han Sora smiled and nodded when Sera whispered something into her ear, but Han Sora suddenly looked at me with a wary gaze. When I saw that, I knew I had to say something because she was definitely suspicious of me now.

"H-Hello. I-I'm Belier. I came for the Blue Guild's entrance test final interview..." I trailed off. I had no idea how I said those words, but Han Sora seemed to have realized that I was an interviewee who had come to the guild for her final interview.

Han Sora got up quietly and said, "Ah, so..."

"Yes, I'm Belier. I-It's an honor to meet you, Miss Han Sora!" I shouted.

"I'm honored to meet you as well, Mis Belier. I heard the children are indebted to you..." Han Sora remarked.

"N-No, I wouldn't say indebted, and please speak comfortably," I told her.

"No, you're a guest. I can't do that. How about we head inside?" Han Sora suggested.

"O-Okay!" I exclaimed and stepped stiffly into the guild through the front door.

"Welcome to the Blue Guild," Han Sora greeted.

"Thank you," I said.

I took just one step, but I felt like I had stepped into another world with how the atmosphere changed drastically in an instant.

The entire Blue Guild was laid out clearly before me, and it was so big that I couldn't believe that this place was being used by less than twenty guild members.

Perhaps it was because they had more guild staff compared to the Black Swan and the Red Mercenary Guild. This could also be to support each and every guild member, but it could also be to maintain the guild's businesses.

They had to take care of many things, things including the potion business, the item business, and the Rift Museum. Powerful figures in important positions or guild masters of other guilds probably visited them daily, so the Blue Guild was *really* important.

Despite that, the guild's atmosphere was pretty carefree. I saw people drinking coffee and talking about their work in the staffer's resting lounge. I saw security guards standing like statues, and I saw people in the middle of training.

"There's a separate site for official guild members," Han Sora said.

"Ah... I see."

"Your interview today will be taking place there as well... Ah, come to think of it, you still have some time left. Would you like to take a look around?" she offered.

"Yes, Miss Han Sora. I-I'm a huge fan," I confessed.

“What?”

It seemed really random that I unknowingly confessed.

“I’m a huge fan,” I repeated.

“Ah, thank you,” she said.

“I’m being serious. I’ve been watching you since the Laios days, during the Day of the Revival and... the Day of the Prophecy. I’m trying to calm down a bit, b-but I can’t. I’m sorry. Do you mind if I ask a few questions? Could I get your autograph... No, if you don’t mind, could I take a picture with you so that I can show it off for the rest of my life?! And I!” I paused.

“H-Hold on,” Han Sora said.

“What?”

“I get it, so you don’t have to stand so close,” Han Sora said.

“Ah...”

“...”

“I-I’m sorry. I was just so happy,” I stuttered.

‘I ruined it all because I kept rambling like a fool.’

I started regretting the fact that I panicked, and I felt like crying for fumbling here.

Her reaction was understandable, as I had basically pounced on her. I was starting to get worried that this was going to affect my interview in a negative way, and my heart broke at the thought that she'd think of me as a weird person.

‘I can't look her in the eye. Where should I look?’

While I was thinking about how I was supposed to apologize to her, I heard her talking once again. “No, that’s not what I meant. The reasoning is a bit complicated... It might complicate things for you. I wasn’t offended, so no need to apologize.”

“...”

“I can’t really tell you, but...” Han Sora paused.

“It’s a curse...” I said.

“How did you...”

“Can I take a closer look? I might be able to help,” I offered.

“No, it’s fine, Miss Belier. More importantly, how did you know?” Han Sora asked.

I couldn’t see it, but I could feel it.

I couldn’t state the reason, but I was sensitive to magic. I had no idea just what type of spell was this, but it was like a clump of dark energy. I had never felt something like this before. Since she had told me not to get close to her, it could be a type of curse that would whisk her away to the location of the curse's caster.

Sera could be an exception, as she managed to get close to Han Sora.

Obviously, I had never seen a spell capable of differentiating between people, but...

‘I’m looking at it right now.’

The difference between me and the caster of this spell was more than just a level. I couldn’t even understand the first paragraph of the complicated formula before me. All I could do was feel it, and when I moved my mana out of curiosity...

‘Die.’

Uh.

‘Die.’

Why was there a dagger...

‘Die.’

Pressing against my neck...

'Die.'

As I stood stunned at the cold, prickling sensation, someone grabbed my hand.

"Uh... Miss Han Sora, just now..."

"I'm sorry," Han Sora said.

"What?"

"I've been experimenting with something recently, and I failed one of the trials for it, so I'm currently under its side effect. That's why I'm minimizing contact with others. Testing on my own body is the most effective. *Haha...* it's not a curse, so don't worry and there aren't any other side effects.

"However, It's very sensitive, and you even tried to dispel it, so it's not strange that it reacted like that," Han Sora explained.

"Amazing. Just now... I almost died," I mumbled.

"..."

"How is this possible... It's simply amazing. *Wow...*" I said.

"I think you're more amazing, Miss Belier. If I remember correctly, you're a fighter," Han Sora said.

"Yes, I'm a fighter. To be exact, I'm a Unique-rank magic fighter... so that's why I'm studying magic. A-And it looks like I caused trouble again," I answered.

"Not at all. Considering what Sera told me earlier, I should actually be the one thanking you," Han Sora said.

"T-T-Thank you," I stuttered.

I looked down and saw a child clinging to Miss Han Sora's legs. I smiled brightly at the child and looked at my hand again. I felt like laughing because the situation just now was just a bit too ridiculous.

'Amazing... '

I simply attempted to dispel it, but the spell actually reacted so violently that it almost killed me.

'She's really amazing.'

Once again, I became extremely aware of the difference between myself and these people known as the top adventures of the continent. I wasn't really expecting to reach their heights, but they seemed like mountains I couldn't climb.

If I ended up getting accepted as a guild member, I'd be spending time with them. I'd be training with them and learning from them. I trembled briefly, and I couldn't hold my smile back.

Miss Han Sora was smiling awkwardly toward me. It seemed like she was feeling kind of bad...

"I'll guide you. Sera, shall we go for a walk?" Han Sora suggested.

"Okay!" Sera replied.

"Ah... sure," I said.

I couldn't stop myself from looking around the guild house.

The well-maintained garden, the majestic-looking fountain, the shops and restaurants inside the guild, and the many different amenities available to the staffers caught my attention. I also saw the youth education facility that I had only heard of in stories.

"I'm not sure where I should start. There's the magic research facility and the alchemy workshop, but since you have a close-combat type job, you must be curious about the training hall and the training facility..."

"The training facilities have improved... so people with close-combat type jobs have been using them pretty often."

"Ah, the guild will provide you with your own armor, so visiting the workshop doesn't sound like a bad idea at all. Or... Ah... one moment, Miss Belier. Yes, Miss Jung Ha-Yan?" Han Sora said.

“...”

“No, I-I went out... to meet Sera... Yes. Right now? Of course, I can head there now, but... *Ah*... okay. Of course, I can do that. Okay, please wait for me. I'll be there as soon as possible. Have you eaten yet? Okay. *Ah*, I'm sorry. I thought you had already eaten with the sub guild master...

"*Ah*... Okay, Miss Jung Ha-Yan. I did make preparations in advance... *Ah*... together. Then Sera... *Ah*... *ah*... *ah*... But going together... I'll bring her with me," Han Sora said.

“...”

“I'm sorry, something came up that requires my attention. I'll see you later. Let's go, Sera,” Han Sora said.

“Okay, Auntie,” Sera replied.

Han Sora's extremely surprised face disappeared as soon as the call ended.

'What about me?'

Miss Han Sora and Sera walked away.

'Did Miss Jung Ha-Yan summon them?'

Miss Han Sora had mentioned Jung Ha-Yan's name during the call, so it had to be the case. It was fine, but the problem was that I had no idea where I was right now.

'Why isn't there anyone here?'

I saw many people earlier, but there was no one here.

I would ask for directions if there were someone else here...

“Who are you?”

“What?”

And that was when I heard someone's voice.

“An intruder?”

“No, I...”

I heard footsteps, and I turned to find someone swinging their dagger.

“You don’t look like an intruder, but... it doesn’t matter since this looks fun. Let me know if you need help,” the gentleman said.

“I don’t need your help. Mister Ki-Mo. I’ll just warm up,” a girl said.

“Hey, go easy on her!” the gentleman shouted.

‘Huh?’

“Lie down for a moment.”

I instinctively jumped backward and swung my fist toward her afterward.

I smirked as I performed a light hook toward the figure charging at me.

‘Another swing and then a straight punch.’

Before I could even swing my fist, I felt weightless and...

“Not bad.”

My vision went dark.

CHAPTER 881

EPILOGUE (4)

"She's an interviewee... I checked her pass, and there weren't any issues... *Uh...* What should we do? Mister Ki-Mo?" the girl asked.

"I'm not sure. She should be getting up soon..." the gentleman replied.

"She'll be up soon."

"Thank you, Miss Sun Hee-Young. I'm glad you're here. She seemed like she injured her head..." the gentleman said.

"I think... the three of you should get ready to write a written explanation," a lady suggested.

"*Ah*, no. If that happens, oppa—"

"I already contacted the guild master and the sub guild master," the gentleman interrupted.

"Is that true?" the lady asked.

"It's not something we can hide anyway," said the gentleman.

I opened my eyes slowly and saw an unfamiliar ceiling along with faces looking down at me. There was a woman with pigtails, and she reminded me of a cat.

'Miss Kim Ye-Ri.'

It was known to everyone that the Blue Guild had three geniuses. The guild master, the sub guild master, and the girl with pigtails before her.

She was known as the Blue Guild's daughter, and it was all because she was skilled with a dagger, a long sword, and a bow. She had completed ranger training, and her close combat skills were top-notch because the Guild Master of the Blue Guild

himself was her trainer.

I finally understood why I lost consciousness before I could put up a fight.

A handsome man wearing glasses with no lens was next to her.

'He's Mr. Ahn Ki-Mo.'

He was a holy knight with perfect scores on hexagonal agility tests.

'I'm sorry, that's all I know about you.'

I turned unknowingly and saw a beautiful woman sitting on a chair.

I was feeling out of it, but my eyes widened when I saw the beautiful lady wearing a traditional priest outfit. She seemed friendly, but for some reason, she seemed to have a cold side.

The beautiful lady walked up to me and pushed my hair back. "Open your eyes wide."

"O-Okay," I replied.

My mind became clearer when the light entered my eyes...

"Miss Sun Hee-Young?" I called out.

"Yes, she seems fine," said the nun.

"Miss Kim Ye-Ri," I said.

"..."

"Even Mr. Ahn Ki-Mo... is here. You're really here," I mumbled.

"You should rest for even a brief moment. Your condition..."

"It's truly an honor meeting you like this. I'm a fan of all of you. *Ah*, I-I'm also sorry for telling you late. I'm not an intruder. I came here for the interview..." I informed them.

“...”

“Ah... the interview,” I said.

“...”

“The interview!” I shouted. I got up instinctively, and I felt a sharp pain radiating from my forehead. It seemed that I had accidentally bumped into someone as I got up.

“Ack!” I shouted.

“Are you okay?”

The person I bumped into exclaimed, but my eyes were on the clock on the wall.

I looked around and opened my Goddess’ Hand Mirror.

‘I’m late.’

“...”

“...”

“What should I do?” I asked.

“...”

“What... should I do?” I mumbled.

My interview was supposed to happen five hours ago. I worked so hard to reach the final interviews, and I couldn't believe that I ruined it. For some reason, I wasn't crying, but my shoulders drooped, and my feet quivered.

“You don’t have to worry, Miss Belier,” Sun Hee-Young said.

“What?”

“The accident happened because of the guild's mistake, and the Blue Guild isn’t *that* strict. The sub guild master has already received a report about what happened

today. He said he'll be here soon, so lie down until then," she explained.

"What? Will I be doing the interview like this?" I asked.

"Sorry," Kim Ye-Ri chimed in.

"It's fine, Miss Kim Ye-Ri," I said.

"I would like to apologize as well," Ahn Ki-Mo said.

"You really don't have to apologize. I'll be embarrassed if you keep doing that," I told them.

"It's all. My fault," Kim Ye-Ri said.

"It is your fault, but I'll apologize as... *Ugh!*"

"I'm really okay. I was startled, but it all worked out... in the end. Anyone would find me suspicious if they were to see me looking around in the middle of the guild house like that, so don't worry about it.

"By the way, I really feel like I'm dreaming. The thought of meeting all of you after getting accepted to the guild made my heart flutter, but... I have no regrets meeting all of you like this. Even if I don't make it—"

"That won't happen. I don't know about other people, but our sub guild master hates letting go of talented people. It seemed like you worked really hard. I'm sure it wasn't easy training as a fighter..." Sun Hee-Young said.

"I feel embarrassed hearing that. I mean... I lost consciousness before I could even do anything..." I said.

"Hahaha..."

"I-I'm sorry," Kim Ye-Ri said.

"They're good people."

I was kind of nervous, but I eventually felt comfortable around them.

“Miss Ye-Ri has always been kind of impatient,” Ahn Ki-Mo said.

“Stop it,” Kim Ye-Ri warned.

“Last time—”

“I won’t say it again, Mister Ki-Mo,” Kim Ye-Ri interrupted.

“*Haha...* wanting to keep your dignity in front of your junior—ARGH” Ahn Ki-Mo screamed.

The two started wrestling to the point that I questioned whether I was watching a play or not. I honestly thought the atmosphere would be a bit more serious. I could tell they were close, and it reminded me of my early adventurer days when my party members and I would go to a pub to call it a day.

These people weren’t any different from us back then.

‘Oh, it’s Miss Alps.’

“You’re all here,” Miss Alps said.

“Have a cup of coffee while you’re here,” Sun Hee-Young suggested.

“Yes, ma’am. *Oh!* You had a guest. Hello,” Miss Alps greeted.

“Hello!” I greeted Miss Alps.

“No, Shiro!” Miss Alps shouted.

“It’s fine,” I said.

The puppy looked so adorable as he ran at me while wagging his tail.

“The interview... *Ah*, you’re the final interviewee. I’ll finally have a junior!” Alps exclaimed.

I felt kind of bad, but Miss Alps looked cute when she tightened her fist.

“The process is shorter than what we went through,” Yoo Ah-Young chimed in.

“Sit here, Ah-Young unni.”

More and more people arrived after Miss Yoo Ah-Young joined. Miss Sun Hee-Young seemed unhappy by the fact that more and more people were coming, but she was definitely having fun because she was smiling.

“How are things with Chang-Ryeol oppa these days?”

“I’m not sure... He’s pretty busy right now... so I don’t really have time to see him.”

“Mr. Chang-Ryeol takes on many unusual tasks. He has spent the shortest time in the guild, and if you think about it, it’s been a while since we saw him.”

“We gathered last week, too. Mister. The regular meeting.”

“And this is...”

“Ah... I’m Belier.”

“She’s my junior!”

“I haven’t been accepted yet.”

I really wanted to join them, and it was perhaps because they considered each other as family. They chatted and often made jokes about each other. I was sure they ate and trained together. I reckoned that long expeditions with them would be really fun as well.

It was just admiration at first since they were the most famous guild on the continent, and everyone dreamed of joining them. Their pay and benefits were great, but I simply wanted to spend more time with them.

And that was when I heard a voice outside...

“You pig, can you even take responsibility for this? If we get sued, will you defend the guild? Should we cut off the head of every guest who visits the guild? You want all of our guests to worry about losing their heads?”

“I didn’t... do that...”

“Shut up, man. Do you really think that the conversation will end by saying that? Will that resolve everything? You’re dead.”

I couldn’t really hear them, but it was something like that.

The door opened with a *click*, and I saw a woman with a scar on her face.

“Come in, sir.”

“*Huh?*”

The noisy atmosphere soon became quiet, and I saw everyone standing up quietly.

Was I supposed to get up as well? I looked around, trying to figure out what to do, and I felt a hand grabbing my shoulder. It was Miss Kim Ye-Ri, and she was telling me with her expression that I didn’t need to stand up.

“You’re here.”

“Have a seat, everyone.” A clear and crisp voice echoed.

Then, I saw Mr. Lee Ki-Young along with Mr. Park Deok-Gu.

“*Ah...*”

Mr. Lee Ki-Young was walking in a dignified manner, and he was wearing a pure white priest outfit. I couldn’t quite describe his appearance. I felt indescribable emotions as I stared at him, and my jaw dropped without realizing it.

“You’re...”

“I’m Belier,” I introduced myself.

Mr. Lee Ki-Young's voice was so sweet that it made my brain tingle. His voice was so low that it sounded like he was whispering to me, but his voice filled my head.

‘Am I allowed to lift my head? Should I greet him while looking at him? Will that be considered rude? Can I look straight at him?’

“You can lift your head, Miss Belier,” Lee Ki-Young said.

I looked up and saw the face that everyone could see everywhere.

I had seen his face many times through various articles, pictures, and posts made on Benigoa Net, but I still had a hard time breathing when I saw his actual face.

It was like there was a radiant light behind him—no, perhaps there actually was a light. I wanted to grab my chest because it felt like someone was banging on my heart, but I couldn't do it. My hands and feet were trembling; I felt numb all over.

This was weird—too weird.

'He's like an incubus.'

I had never met or seen an incubus before, though.

Obviously, it was rude to think that way, and I couldn't understand why I thought of him as an incubus when he was a saint emitting a pure, radiant light. However, that was honestly the impression that I got from him. His lips were small, and his neck was long; those *weird* emotions disappeared when I realized what I was staring at.

I shook my head to regain my composure, but I still couldn't speak properly.

I was sad. He was an angel who had given up everything and had descended from the heavens for the continent's sake. He had given up his position to become human. He was like a flower before it was plucked—no, he was like a flower that had already been plucked and was on the verge of withering away.

He was thin... like... like he could break at any moment, and it seemed like he'd crumble even at the slightest touch... He had been plucked and had been trampled on many times, but he was like a resilient flower bud trying its best to bloom.

"Heuk..."

'Why... am I crying?'

"Heuk... heuuuuk... heung..."

'Why can't I stop crying, Father Lee Ki-Young? Why am I crying?'

"I'm sorry. My... emotions... suddenly... *Heuk...* I couldn't stop it..." I muttered.

I had no idea why I was apologizing. Actually, I knew why I was crying. I was sure he had seen this sight before since he was beloved by all denizens. My tiny existence was probably the reason he was summoned to the continent once again, and I could be the reason why he had once sacrificed everything.

"Heuuuuk... heuuuk..." I cried.

I felt someone wiping away the tears falling from one of my eyes.

Their hands were really thin, but they were so warm...

"Your sins will be forgiven in the name of Goddess Benigoa," Lee Ki-Young said.

"Heuuuuuk... heuuuung..."

I couldn't stop crying as he held me in his arms.

"Heuuuung..."

I cried for a while.

"I'm sorry... *Heuk...* I'm really... sorry," I said.

"..."

"..."

"G-G-Get away from him."

CHAPTER 882

EPILOGUE (5)

If it weren't for the timid voice that entered my ears, I would have continued hugging Father Lee Ki-Young.

I turned instinctively and saw a mage wearing a huge hat. Of course, I was familiar with the mage, but she didn't look anxious and uncomfortable like usual. Instead, her eyes contained a fury that seemed capable of sucking just about anything into it.

I stiffened at the sight of her gaze alone.

When Father Lee Ki-Young patted Miss Jung Ha-Yan's head, it felt like something had been ventilated, but I still couldn't quite explain nor brush off the fury that I saw in her eyes.

Before I could question it, I saw a woman with a scar on her face grabbing her sword.

It wasn't just her. Miss Kim Ye-Ri, Mr. Ahn Ki-Mo, Miss Sun Hee-Young, and even Miss Alps looked at me nervously. Miss Hwang Jung-Yeon, who had been quiet all this time, looked like she was channeling a spell.

I finally understood what I was doing.

I lifted my head slowly and saw Father Lee Ki-Young smiling while trembling. It turned out that his body was so weak and fragile that it felt like the weakest force could break it. It was like glass made with care.

In fact, it felt like his wrist could be easily broken.

I felt like I could easily crush him like paper, and I also felt like I could easily smash his head. He was too weak to be called the Son of Light and the God of Sacrifice and Revival.

I blushed when I imagined Father Lee Ki-Young's face being covered in blood. I don't know why, but I felt like I was heating up.

'This is embarrassing.'

I was definitely the only one thinking that way, so I was ashamed of it.

It was even more that I still couldn't understand why they looked so anxious and fearful.

"I-I-I... told you to... g-g-get away..." Jung Ha-Yan stuttered.

"I'm sorry... I—"

"It's okay, Ha-Yan. It's fine, everyone. You don't need to be wary of her. She's a guest who's visiting the guild. *Cough*," Lee Ki-Young interrupted.

"Hey, hyung-nim. Are you okay?" Park Deok-Gu asked.

"I'm fine. I... *Cough*. I'm sorry, Miss Belier. *Cough*," Lee Ki-Young said.

"Father Lee Ki-Young..." I mumbled.

I spaced out for a moment. Miss Sun Hee-Young immediately went to his side and checked his condition. Father Lee Ki-Young assured her that he was fine, but I saw something red on his hand that was covering his mouth.

"Ah..."

"Sir!"

I trembled and lowered my head. Then, I felt someone looking at me.

'...'

"..."

I felt like I was a frog in front of a snake. I was finding it hard to breathe.

"*Eeeek!* I told y-y-you... to get away from him!" Jung Ha-Yan screamed.

"Stop," Lee Ki-Young said.

“...”

“It’s not her fault, Ha-Yan. I would like all of you to refrain from doing rude things. I simply haven’t... fully recovered yet,” Lee Ki-Young explained.

“Will you be okay, Mr. Lee Ki-Young? If you’re not feeling well, how about canceling your schedule?” Sun Hee-Young suggested.

“No, it’s fine, Miss Hee-Young. Ha-Yan, do you mind if I lean on you?” Lee Ki-Young asked.

“What? *Ah*—yes!” Jung Ha-Yan exclaimed.

“...”

“...”

“Miss Belier, how about we go for a walk?” Lee Ki-Young suggested.

“Well, I’m... more worried about you...” I answered.

“It’s fine. It’s not like a short break will help improve my condition. I’d like to get some fresh air,” Lee Ki-Young said.

“Well... since you said it like that...” I mumbled.

“You guys can go back. I’ll be with Ha-Yan, so you don’t have to worry so much,” Lee Ki-Young said.

“Yes, sir”

“Well... alright,” Park Deok-Gu answered.

“Okay.”

Miss Kim Ye-Ri was the last person to answer, and the noisy room instantly became quiet. I couldn't believe that I'd be able to walk with Father Lee Ki-Young.

I saw him walking slowly while being supported by Miss Jung Ha-Yan.

It hadn't even been that long since I came here, but so many things had already happened. I was crying when I woke up earlier, thinking that I had missed the final interview, but now, I was on a stroll with Father Lee Ki-Young.

I couldn't have imagined that this would happen.

I kind of felt like a sinner, and it was all because, contrary to popular belief...

'He hasn't recovered yet.'

"O-Oppa... are you okay?" Jung Ha-Yan asked.

"Yeah, thanks for worrying about me, Ha-Yan," Lee Ki-Young replied.

"L-Let me know if you're struggling," Jung Ha-Yan stuttered.

"Okay," Lee Ki-Young replied. He looked lonely, even though he was walking with Jung Ha-Yan, and I felt uncomfortable because it felt like I was seeing Father Lee Ki-Young's true self.

That was when Father Lee Ki-Young turned slightly and said, "You must be shocked, Miss Belier. I'm sorry about that."

"It's fine, Father Lee Ki-Young. It's... because of me..." I said.

"Haha... Don't think that way. This happens often. It's just..." Lee Ki-Young trailed off.

"Yes?"

"I would appreciate it if you don't tell anyone about whatever happened in the guild house today," Lee Ki-Young requested.

"Of course!" I replied.

"Don't be too surprised if Miss Kim Mi-Young ends up visiting you. It's not because we don't trust you. She's just very thorough when it comes to work... *Haha...* She might visit you with a contract in hand, or it might be Miss Hye-Jin," Lee Ki-Young explained.

"Miss Jo Hye-Jin..." I mumbled.

“Come to think of it... you must've met her during the entrance exam,” Lee Ki-Young said.

“I did. She taught me many things, and I also received a lot of help from Miss Elena. I was badly injured, and Miss Elena immediately—” I cut myself off.

“...”

“A-Also, you don't have to worry about *that*. If you want... you can cast a spell that will ensure that I'm not going to say anything,” I told him.

I was sure he wanted to hide his true condition from the public, as he only wanted to show everyone that he was healthy. If this truth were to get out, the entire continent would fall into chaos. Any news about Father Lee Ki-Young affected not only the economy and politics but the civilians as well.

“We don't need to go that far,” Lee Ki-Young said.

“Still...”

“How was it?” Lee Ki-Young asked.

“Excuse me?” I asked.

“The Blue Guild,” Lee Ki-Young explained.

“Ah, I think it's a nice place. I don't even have to talk about how great the facilities are. There were some things that were different from what I had imagined, but the guild members were really nice.

“They were kind... I thought I would have a hard time getting along with them, but I didn't feel that at all. Miss Han Sora, Miss Kim Ye-Ri... and Miss Sun Hee-Young,” I responded.

“I'm really happy to hear that,” Lee Ki-Young commented.

“You guys were like a family, and it's very rare to see that in a place like this. Since the Blue Guild is one of the three major guilds, I thought this place would be a bit more business-like and serious,” I added.

“...”

“It was so different from what I had imagined... so my desire to join the Blue Guild has intensified. I could tell that everyone really cared about each other... Everyone seemed to enjoy each other’s company...” I said.

“Is that right?” Lee Ki-Young asked.

I stopped talking when he smiled quietly because it felt like he was genuinely asking what the people I met were like and what the continent I experienced was like.

Of course, I met many great people, but it wasn’t always the case.

I had experienced a ton of malice and many absurd situations. There were also times when I was treated unfairly for no reason. Of course, there were times when I had to fight, even though I didn’t want to do so. I had even harmed people myself.

Life on the continent was like that.

People would hurt each other over and over again for rights, their pride, malice, and for the sake of their own profits. I matured while living in that kind of environment, which was perhaps why I wanted to join them.

They were willing to sacrifice for each other. They were willing to abandon the things they possessed as if they were nothing. Most importantly, they cared a lot for each other.

“So...”

“I had fun as well,” I told him.

“Ah...”

He looked really happy.

“Each time I wake up, I think about how lucky I am to be with the people I love,” Lee Ki-Young said.

The way Miss Jung Ha-Yan hugged him tightly caught my attention, and Father Lee Ki-Young placed his hand on Jung Ha-Yan's shoulder as he added, “It’s really nice to

be able to be with people you can rely on and share your feelings with."

Father Lee Ki-Young smiled warmly as he looked at Lindel.

I followed him and saw the sun setting slowly in the distance.

Lindel—bathed in red—looked more beautiful than ever.

I saw children playing in the square, couples walking around while holding hands, workers going home for the day, merchants spending an ordinary day, bards singing songs, praying priests, and adventurers having a drink.

The city was lively.

I also saw Miss Dialugia, and my jaw dropped when I saw her sitting in the setting sun.

That was probably what Father Lee Ki-Young meant.

Lindel—Father Lee Ki-Young's beloved city—was a city he could rely on and share his feelings with.

"I'm sure everyone feels the same way," Lee Ki-Young said.

"I see," I said.

"Although this sounds ridiculous, everyone in this city—no, on this continent are all sons and daughters of Goddess Benigoa... I'm sure everyone exists to comfort and care for each other," Lee Ki-Young added.

'Really?'

"Obviously, I know the world isn't that beautiful," Lee Ki-Young said.

My face turned red because it seemed like he had seen through my thoughts.

I looked at the sunset again, and the sight wasn't any different from before.

"That's probably why I'm trying," Lee Ki-Young said.

“ ... ”

“Starting from those closest to me. I’m trying to change the world into a place where everyone thinks of each other as family,” Lee Ki-Young added.

Father Lee Ki-Young stared into the distance. I followed his gaze and saw a figure walking slowly beyond the sunset.

The person was holding a paper bag filled with bread, and their other hand was holding many items.

The sunset fit them very well. When they looked outside the window, Father Lee Ki-Young waved at them. The distant figure was overjoyed, as if they had just obtained everything that they wanted to obtain. After putting the items in their hands, they waved with both arms like a child toward Father Lee Ki-Young.

I couldn’t help but smile at the sight.

“Mr. Ki-Young!”

Father Lee Ki-Young waved and placed his hand on his chin before smiling.

Miss Jung Ha-Yan started waving at them.

‘They really are like a family.’

Honestly, I still couldn’t tell what Father Lee Ki-Young was thinking.

I had an idea, but it felt like there was a big picture unknown to me.

“A place where everyone lives for each other and considers everyone as family,” Lee Ki-Young said.

‘Perhaps I’m overthinking it... ’

I had no idea where I had gotten this courage from, but...

“Father Lee Ki-Young...” I trailed off.

“ ... ”

Could I be like him? I was lacking, but could I help make the guild, Lindel, and the continent into a better place? Would I be able to cherish and love people like him?

Could I become someone capable of sacrificing myself for others? Would I be able to fight for values that couldn't be seen with the naked eye rather than for my own profits?

Could I do that like what Father Lee Ki-Young and his guild members had been doing all this while?

"C-Can I become a part of your family?" I asked.

"..."

"..."

Moments later, Father Lee Ki-Young nodded at me and answered, "Welcome to the Blue Guld, Miss Belier."

The smile of the Son of Light—the smile of the one who had sacrificed everything for the continent—the smile of the God of Sacrifice and Revival—Father Lee Ki-Young's smile was more beautiful than anything I had ever seen.

"Thank you!" I exclaimed in delight.

CHAPTER 883

VACATION (1)

“So you ended up recruiting a new guild member... How’s the new recruit?” Lee Ji-Hye asked.

“She’s kind of strange, noona. Her potential to grow stronger and her abilities aren’t bad. *Ah!* Her personality isn’t bad, and she’s determined... she tries her best, but... she’s kind of...” I^[1] trailed off.

“Is there something kind of suspicious about her?” Lee Ji-Hye asked.

“I don’t think she realizes it yet. Anyway, I’m satisfied. She’s adapting well, too,” I answered.

“Our Mercenary Queen must’ve been really disappointed. I heard she made an offer as well,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

“...”

“So oppa. When are we going on our special date?” Lee Ji-Hye asked, standing up.

“I don’t have time,” I replied.

“If you wanted to go on a date, I’m sure you could make time. What’s wrong?” Lee Ji-Hye questioned.

“Make time? Yeah, I could take a day off like you said, as I have been working too hard over the six months, but that’s not the end of it. How am I going to explain it to Kim Hyun-Sung and to the guild members?” I asked.

“...”

“...”

“He still won’t stay away from you? How is he different from Jung Ha-Yan? I mean, I

get it, but I think he likes you a little *too* much. That bastard..." she swore.

"He went through a lot so just let him have his fun. Don't be too harsh on him since he's trying to get his life back," I told her.

"No, he's crossing the line. I feel like all he's been doing over this year is playing around... Shouldn't you give him work or something?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"..."

"I wouldn't say anything if you were the only one taking a break. That bastard is just really frustrating. The only thing he knows how to do is spend money... Cut down on his allowance or something. Maybe that'll help him with his mental illness," Lee Ji-Hye suggested.

'He'll take out a loan if I reduce his allowance.'

Kim Hyun-Sung was never really a loafer, so his break could be considered too long at this point. I looked back on his past activities, and I understood why Lee Ji-Hye was so frustrated.

I didn't want to scold him for enjoying his life, but his actions were affecting me as well.

"If he wants to attend a festival, why doesn't he go by himself? Why drag you with him?" Lee Ji-Hye complained.

Actually, it was more like it was affecting her, not me.

"I won't complain about attending a festival, but why would he hold a festival? Do you have any idea how much that messed up my schedule? He should have excluded our guild. He tempted Yeon-Joo unni to hold a bag festival.

"What the hell is a bag festival? I've never heard of a festival like that. Don't you think it's so random of him to do that? The more I think about it, the more ridiculous it becomes. That bastard is a psychopath. He's crazy," Lee Ji-Hye continued.

It felt like Lee Ji-Hye's rage had reached its peak.

"At this point, Jung Ha-Yan looks like she's in a better state than him. At least she's

managing that mana and has been doing her best in her tasks.

"Can't you give Kim Hyun-Sung some work to do? No, probably not. It's not a good idea to assign him anything. Forget what I said. Don't give him work," Lee Ji-Hye said.

"..."

"Why do we need to clean up after his mess? I'm sure Miss Kim Mi-Young wants to kill him as well," Lee Ji-Hye added. I was sure it wasn't to *that* extent, but Miss Kim Mi-Young was definitely thinking of doing something about Kim Hyun-Sung.

"At least he got us a lot of holy power. We only managed to set next year's budget because—"

"You better stop covering for him, or I'll flip this table," Lee Ji-Hye threatened.

"Hyun-Sung *did* go a bit overboard," I commented.

"I really am struggling. I knew managing the continent was going to be really difficult, but I'm seriously struggling here. Have I ever complained about things being difficult?"

"The war against the Outer Gods was much easier than this. Things were much easier when this place was still a dungeon."

"We're short on people, and it only got better recently because you've been helping us. Do you know how hard it was when we made our child? I thought I was going to go crazy for three months," Lee Ji-Hye continued.

Lee Ji-Hye raged for a while, but she eventually sat on the table.

She probably felt burdened by the possibility that she'd finish her task late.

'I didn't think it would be this bad.'

I knew managing a dimension was no easy task. Taking care of a guild or nation was already hard, so I couldn't even imagine just how difficult managing an entire dimension would be.

I thought everything was over, but the end was actually just a new beginning.

It was a signal for the next struggle.

The system had agreed that the subsidiary companies I had created would manage the dimension, but the problem was that I couldn't expand the number of manpower.

We had the workers that Benigoa had sent over to us, but they weren't enough to repair the hole in the dimension and maintain it.

Jung Ha-Yan was given the responsibility of the overall mana of the continent, and Hee-Ra noona was in charge of the upkeep of the other dimensions, including the void, but there were still many issues.

Only five people were authorized to access the system—me, Lee Ji-Hye, Jung Ha-Yan, Cha Hee-Ra, and Kim Hyun-Sung. Kim Hyun-Sung had no idea that he had access to the system, so he could be excluded.

Anyway, the Order of Benigoa and the four of us were taking care of everything.

Dialugia was helping me, but she couldn't take care of all the problems that were happening everywhere.

Perhaps it was an aftermath of the dungeon miracle, but she'd experience mana burn several times a day. Problems with the program itself would sometimes pop up, such as issues with the air, water, and elemental control devices, creating a huge rift in the continent.

'We've underestimated this undertaking.'

We were making the same typical mistakes that new companies often make.

Since Lee Ji-Hye was overlooking *everything*...

'I understand why she's going crazy.'

"This is the report I received from Goddess Benigoa and Mr. Bel. I took a look at it first, but you should take a look as well," Lee Ji-Hye suggested.

I felt kind of bad for her.

"At this rate, I might actually die from overwork," Lee Ji-Hye commented.

“ ... ”

“Another issue occurred in 7A. Another mana burn. I’ll submit a repair request to Jung Ha-Yan,” she said.

[The Dimensional Management Program is initializing.]

[Access granted to the administrator of the 271st dimension—the God of Sacrifice and Revival.]

[You have four unread messages.]

[Benigoa - Lee Ki-Young! Did you read my business plan?]

[Lee Ji-Hye - Kim Hyun-Sung, that bastard...]

[Jung Ha-Yan - O-Oppa... I...]

[...]

I saw a miniature version of a vast dimension.

“Do you see something strange in the dungeon under the Vatican? It’s the Mole Saint. We need to take care of her in the next forty years. We need to pass down a divine oracle or eliminate her ourselves,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

“Yeah, I can see her,” I replied.

“Species 3,412 has eventually become extinct. Damn it. I’m going to murder the bastard who spread the rumor that it’s good for stamina,” Lee Ji-Hye remarked.

‘She’s scary.’

“What’s wrong with the elemental control device? Shit! Are you serious?!” Lee Ji-Hye exclaimed.

“Ji-Hye, calm down, okay?” I told her.

“ ... ”

“...”

“There are still many things we've yet to make a guideline for. Things will eventually fall into place one by one, and we won't have as much of a difficult time by then. Do you want us to take a break today? Why don't you come here? Actually, let's take a break. Lie down there, noona,” I suggested.

“You're tempting me again,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

“What do you mean?” I questioned.

“I'll just play dumb. Come here and let's rest together,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

“...”

“We need to hurry up and raise Domi as soon as possible. I wonder if she can start working within the next ten years. *Ah*, come to think of it, have I told you? She's really smart. Did I tell you about the quest that the kids went on last time? I'm asking because I'm worried because Thronus gave me a strange report,” Lee Ji-Hye asked.

I saw Ji-Hye chattering away as I looked at her face. Compared to last year, she hadn't changed much, but she would get excited and would smile whenever she was talking about Dominions.

I knew the moment she said she wanted to take charge, but...

'She must be enjoying living with her.'

“I don't know how many books she has read so far,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

“Really?”

“How are the other children doing?” Lee Ji-Hye asked.

“They're pretty much the same,” I answered.

“I'm sure Bluey is arguing with Cha Hee-Ra every day... and Seraphim...” Lee Ji-Hye trailed off.

“I just can't force myself to show affection toward him. Well, I wasn't planning on

showing it to him in the first place..." I confessed.

"It's amazing that you even accepted him again in the first place. Actually, that's not true. I heard Cherubim had brought him in discreetly. In some ways, they're like twins. Is it true that Seraphim was right beside him when Cherubim was created?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"Yeah," I responded.

I was so shocked back then.

"You were going to let Jung Ha-Yan take care of Thronus at first, right? And you were just going to exclude Seraphim from the group... But... Kim Hyun-Sung took Thronus, and Jung Ha-Yan forcefully took Seraphim away.

"He's problematic even here... Despite that, I feel like she's neglecting him... Is he even receiving proper education?" Lee Ji-Hye questioned.

"Probably, but it seems like Sora is more directly involved with him than Ha-Yan. Ha-Yan only takes interest when it comes to practicing things using the dummy world... It looked like she's been teaching magic to him, but the result hasn't been that great," I responded.

"In some ways, this is like punishment for Seraphim. I didn't think about it much at first, but after seeing our Domi, I feel kind of bad for him," Lee Ji-Hye said.

"Stop lying," I said.

"I'm being honest here," Lee Ji-Hye said.

"You're speaking empty words again," I said.

"I told you, I'm being serious," she repeated.

"Really?" I questioned.

"Do you want a cup of coffee?" she offered.

"I'll make it," I said.

“Thank you for the drink.”

I saw Ji-Hye noona holding her cup of coffee and going back to her chair.

I was sure she was lying when she said that she was feeling bad for Seraphim, and it was evidenced by the fact that she suddenly changed the subject. If she really felt bad for him, she would have already talked to him.

Unfortunately, she had never really been the type to listen to other people’s pain.

“I wonder if Miss Kim Mi-Young was given access,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

“Probably not,” I answered.

“I know. I said it because I felt kind of bad. An error message appeared in 21B. Lauren is asking me to check it out. It must be a gate, which means some second-rate adventurers are probably going to go inside of it. The Order of Lauren has requested approval to use holy power. Please approve the request,” Lee Ji-Hye requested.

“You do it,” I told her.

“All right, all right. *Oh*, right. Elune... contacted me about that issue with the World Tree—” Lee Ji-Hye muttered.

“Tell him to shut up,” I interrupted.

“I already did that. Anyway, it's funny how I was so frustrated earlier, but now, I'm having fun. I think it's because I'm working with you like this,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

‘That’s because you and I are workaholics.’

We were having silly conversations while focusing on our tasks when—

[A new message has arrived.]

I didn’t really care since it wasn't my account, but Ji-Hye noona called out to me.
“Oppa.”

“Yeah?”

“I think things will get easier for us soon,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

“Why?” I asked.

“Mr. Bel said that he found a subcontractor,” Lee Ji-Hye replied.

“*Huh?*”

“They’re cheap as well. It's really great,” Lee Ji-Hye added.

‘Damn it, a subcontractor?’

“Wow! Mr. Bel scored a big one!” Lee Ji-Hye shouted.

“Has he verified their identity?” I questioned.

“They’re managers of discarded dimensions. They must’ve landed on his radar while he was looking into things. They've already signed a contract with him, and they'll join Benigoa's team once they're done with basic training,” Lee Ji-Hye answered.

“...”

“Looks like we’ll be able to go on vacation,” Lee Ji-Hye remarked.

I turned and saw Lee Ji-Hye smiling brightly.

1. Lee Ki-Young’s POV 📌

CHAPTER 884

VACATION (2)

- I called it a vacation, but I'm not saying we should do something fancy. I just want to go on a date. Oppa, we've been through a lot in the past few years, and we're going to get busy again anyway... We won't get a chance like this again.

- Considering that we need to have another event in a few years, we need to start preparing for it now. We need to hold a meeting to plan things out with Mr. Bel...

"Hmm..."

- People already have varying opinions about Mr. Bel's plan. Benigoa's side...

"They want to minimize the damage. It makes sense," I said.

- The direction they want to take to grow is different. Benigoa's side wants to minimize the damage because the continent still isn't as stabilized as before all of this.

- However, Mr. Bel's side believes the continent is stable enough. Belial thinks we need to gather as much holy power as possible to advance swiftly.

- If you look at his plan, it's really not that bad. I understand where both sides are coming from, and we'll have to keep coordinating and working with each other. Think about the upcoming workload. This really is our only chance.

"You're definitely right..." I commented.

- I'm not suggesting we just play around. It's not like we're going to go out looking like this. You went out last time looking like a civilian, so let's do the same this time.

"So, you want to see how the denizens and ordinary adventurers are doing? Aren't you doing that already? Don't you have the reports from the Black Swan Guild's psychological counseling and treatment centers?" I asked.

- Of course, I have access to the results, but it's different seeing it for myself. How many people do you think will admit on the survey that they have a mental illness? Adventurers are particularly sensitive when it comes to that.

'Ah, she's right about everything... '

"There's no way the Black Swan Guild will be so clumsy when it comes to reports, so I don't see anything wrong with it at all," I asked.

- I'm not saying the reports are wrong. I'm simply suggesting that we need to see it for ourselves. We need to see what the denizens are currently thinking and whether the majority of them don't have any mental illnesses.

"Since when were you so interested in the mental health of the people?" I asked.

- You think I'm doing this because I'm actually interested in that? It just makes things easier to coordinate. Honestly, I have no idea what's going on down there because I've been busy working on so many documents these days.

- However, I'm sure you feel the same way. There's a difference between experiencing it yourself and just reading a report.

Lee Ji-Hye was right.

I had to coordinate with Belial and Benigoa for the next event, and I also needed to know what the denizens were going through at the moment.

I was receiving reports about them, but there were some things I couldn't quite understand. In other words, taking this chance to go out...

'It sounds like a good idea.'

More importantly, I needed to keep my promise because I *did* make a deal with her.

I wasn't trying to avoid her, and it wasn't that bad of an idea. The idea just had to be right. I knew trust was important, and things would become awkward between Lee Ji-Hye and me if I were to break that trust.

"How is that a vacation?" I questioned.

- It's definitely a vacation. If we stay out together for a long time, then it's a vacation. Being able to live a new life in a new place... I call that a privilege.

- Since the Federation has received the most damage, how about we visit it? We'll join an adventurer guild and go on raids with them. Let's come up with a concept and go. We can also eat a ton of local specialties.

I couldn't help but keep thinking about it while I was talking to her on the phone.

"What am I going to tell the others?" I questioned.

- Just tell them that you're going to do work. We'll have an escort, and I'll let Hye-Jin know as well. The problem is that there are two people who will not understand us. I think I can convince Jung Ha-Yan...

"How?" I asked.

- I need to find a way, but...

"Kim Hyun-Sung is the problem, right?" I asked.

- You do something about him. You can't really sneak out in this day and age.

There were voices around me. When I went outside, the people outside greeted me immediately after seeing me. I nodded and greeted them back. The guild house looked as familiar as ever. As I drank my coffee while sitting on the terrace, I looked up at the Goddess' Hand Mirror as if I had long gotten used to it.

- Let's set the Federation as our destination. I'll decide on the sub-regions. I'll be the immature son of a noble family—no, I'll be the son of an influential guild or family. I'll be a really selfish and arrogant bitch. You can be the maid of the family who's deep in debt.

"Does it really need to be *that* detailed?" I asked.

- If we're going to do this, then we might as well go all the way.

[The Federation's Adventurer Guild]

I saw many different pieces of information when I typed those words on the

Goddess' Hand Mirror. There wasn't anything new, but I saw a variety of registered quests and dungeons. Many clans and guilds had submitted quests and dungeon conquest requests for Adventurers to take, but this was supposed to be a vacation, so it was better to take up easy requests—something that mid-rank adventurers could do.

'Goblin hunting? There's also the Cobalt dungeon...'

Perhaps this was too easy, as the overall level of the Adventurers had gone up.

I think it was better to accept requests that were at least Average or Rare.

- I'm going to equip that item. I'll obviously look like a kid, but I'll have expensive items. I'll be the typical rude piece of trash because I have my influential parents backing me up. I'll pretend to be someone who likes to show off, and I pretend like I love expensive things...

"Why would you do something like that?" I asked.

- Is there really a reason to do so? It just sounds like fun. Anyway, I'll go ahead and create a proper identity. I'll send your character details later, so just check it once it gets there.

[Lee Ki-Yeon]

[Lee Ki-Yeon had been living the life of an ordinary Adventurer until she encountered Lee Ji-Hoo. Lee Ji-Hoo was the only son of a large guild's guild master (guild name and family name to be decided)]

[After catching Lee Ji-Hoo's attention, Lee Ki-Yeon was caught up in a wicked and dirty plot against her will... omitted... In the end, she was left with a huge debt, and she suffered every day... omitted.]

[She started liking Lee Ji-Hoo without her realizing it... omitted... She could still remember Kim Hyun-Sung, an adventurer whom she met in Rift Land, but she eventually gave her body and heart to Lee Ji-Hoo, surrendering to him... omitted...]

"Ah... what the hell, noona? This is too much," I complained.

- That's why I said it's going to be a vacation. It's only fun when it's too much. Don't

you think something *stimulating* needs to happen between us? We're going to be working together for a long time, so this will help a lot when it comes to getting our spark back. You really think we're roleplaying for no reason here? Also, this is a part of the contract.

'Yeah, she's not wrong.'

- This is only a rough draft, so I'll send you the details and what we're going to do once everything has been finalized. You take care of Kim Hyun-Sung. I'm sure it won't be *that* hard.

With that, Lee Ji-Hye hung up.

'She's really determined.'

I knew she was looking forward to it, but I was still taken aback by the amount of preparation that she had done beyond the scenes.

'She's been preparing for this for quite a while now.'

It was an understatement to say that the document was packed to the brim with texts.

I felt kind of bad because I could feel how stressed she had been feeling all this while, but she had this sense of madness that I couldn't quite describe, which made me feel confused as to what to feel.

This was probably all she had been thinking about while she was busy working. Lee Ji-Hye was probably in the middle of making her bucket list as if she were an ordinary worker thinking about going overseas once their vacation was approved.

I was definitely correct. Otherwise, her plan wouldn't be this detailed.

Lee Ji-Hye even wrote a detailed explanation of how we were supposed to talk to each other, our habits, and how Lee Ji-Hoo had influenced Lee Ki-Yeon. I was so shocked that my jaw dropped.

I didn't feel like it, but this would be worth it if she'd feel recharged by the end of it.

As expected, Kim Hyun-Sung was the problem.

Just then, I heard someone shouting my name.

I looked down and saw him waving at me.

He didn't look all that different from before, and the only difference was the length of his hair. Back then, he couldn't really care less about his hair, but now, he had been taking care of it, making sure that it would look neat.

His hair had gotten short as well, and it was probably because I told him that his hair was too long. He was handsome, so he'd look good in anything, but he needed a haircut, which would be better than his messy hair at the time.

'Actually, that messy hair of his was charming in its own way.'

He looked like an untamed wolf at the time.

However, he was unemployed at the moment, so I believed he had to at least look neat.

"Mr. Ki-Young!" Kim Hyun-Sung shouted. He was holding something heavy while waving at me. I was pretty sure that he had gone to the auction house again without me realizing it.

"Are you done training Thronus?" I asked.

"I'll head up there right now," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

'No, I'm asking whether you've finished training him or not.'

His innocent and bright attitude was still there, but he had truly changed drastically.

Since everything was over, Kim Hyun-Sung rarely had things to worry about, which led to his dramatic change. Of course, I was sure there were other reasons, but the biggest reason behind his change was probably the fact that he had finally gotten rid of the heavy burden on his shoulders.

He was no longer encumbered, so he was picking himself up from the mistake he had made in his first life. He was making sure that he wouldn't make the same mistake in his current life.

I was sure having a reason to become the regressor made him happier than anything.

This wasn't the best example, but Kim Hyun-Sung was probably searching for himself at the moment. It was about time he figured out what kind of life he'd live and what he was supposed to be living for. In his first life, Kim Hyun-Sung was too busy surviving, while in his second life, he just had to remove the burden on his shoulders.

Kim Hyun-Sung seemed like he wanted to live a normal life, but he knew better than anyone that he could not be normal. Moreover, there wasn't much he could achieve.

He was the Guild Master of the most popular guild throughout the continent, and he was in the top three of the most powerful adventurers. He no longer had the desire to achieve something with his own hands; all he wanted was peace for his brother, who had carried and shared that immense burden with him.

He was no longer using his signature armor, and it had been quite a while since it was stashed in his personal storage unit. He didn't really need his armor as he was already intimidating with just his sword.

Kim Hyun-Sung was starting to wear comfortable, everyday clothes as well.

"How was your day today?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

He was being overly clingy.

"Have you eaten?" he asked.

"Not yet," I answered.

"I found a delicious restaurant. How about we go out..."

"I want to eat here today," I interrupted him.

"If there's something you're craving..."

"..."

"..."

“Whoo...”

I sighed, and I saw Kim Hyun-Sung frowning slightly.

I was sure his instincts were telling him that I was acting in a different way than usual.

He was probably assuming that I was either in a bad mood, was worried about something, or even worse—he had done something wrong without his knowledge.

Angel Ki-Young whose warm smile seemed permanent wasn't there. The patience and understanding Lee Ki-Young wasn't there as well. Instead, I was looking at him coldly.

“Um, Mr. Ki-Young. I got a really rare item from the auction house today. It's not the Chanelia Hermes you've been waiting for, but it's a Louisgucci made by Leathersmith...” Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

“...”

“I'm sorry. There haven't been any discounts these days...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

'He really is out of his mind.'

I was hoping that he wasn't thinking that I was sulking because there hadn't been any sales that day, but it seemed like he was actually thinking that way. Yeah, he definitely thought I was sulking because there had been no discounts recently.

“Whoo...” I sighed again, and Kim Hyun-Sung looked uneasy.

“...”

“...”

“Ah, about Thronus' training...”

“Yes?”

“He seems to be getting stronger without any issues whatsoever. I can't say that he's very talented, but... he'll at least meet your expectations...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“...”

“...”

“Haa...”

Kim Hyun-Sung had to have realized it by now.

‘That’s it for the build up.’

I had to say something, so I spoke coldly, “Mr. Hyun-Sung, how long have you been taking a break?”

‘Why aren’t you working, damn it?’

I pushed aside the bag on the table, and I looked like someone who finally had enough.

The heavy bag fell to the ground with a loud thud.

For some reason, the way it fell looked dramatic.

“How did you even buy this bag?” I questioned.

‘You have no money.’

“Don't you think you've been overdoing it?!” I shouted.

‘You’re really crossing the line.’

“I’m tired of it...” I muttered. It was just a mutter, but I was sure it sounded extremely loud in Kim Hyun-Sung's ears—loud enough for the entire guild to hear.

CHAPTER 885

VACATION (3)

"I'm tired of it..." I muttered.

Anyone would agree that it was such a ridiculous situation. Angel Ki-Young became Devil Ki-Young in just a day, as I was smiling warmly at him yesterday.

I was sure he remembered how I was thanking him continuously when he gave me a useless gift. The bond between Kim Hyun-Sung and I was great these days, which was why I understood his reason for looking at me with such disbelief.

I was furious, and I had even thrown the bag that he had given me to the floor. This was not supposed to happen, and he couldn't believe that this was happening.

This was a bit much, but the person who'd get mad or cry first was usually the winner.

Even if one hadn't done anything wrong, one was bound to reflect on one's actions if the other person were to get angry or cry first. One would question whether one had done something wrong. They'd also think about whether the other party was simply having a bad day or if something actually happened.

There was a moment of silence and it seemed like it took him a while to process my comment earlier. As always, his reaction was still the same.

"I'm sorry."

I knew he'd say that.

"What exactly are you sorry about?" I asked.

Apologies had long become a habit of Kim Hyun-Sung, and I could tell that he apologized without even thinking about it.

'I need to strike like lightning.'

I had to be emotional and corner him to make sure that there wouldn't be any time for him to think.

That was the basics of negotiating...

"Tell me exactly what you're sorry about. Let's hear it," I said.

"Ki-Young..."

"You're like this every single time. Fix your habit of apologizing first. Please," I begged.

"Ah..."

"I know you're not sorry," I argued.

"No, I really am sorry. I..."

"I'm sick and tired of this," I mumbled.

'What's with that face?'

"Forget it. Please leave," I told him.

'I'm doing the right thing, right, Ji-Hye noona?'

I needed to be cold and end the conversation here, but I was sure that wasn't enough to make him leave. He wasn't *that* dumb that he wouldn't realize the fact that things would truly be over between us if he were to leave right now.

'You're really going to leave? Leave. If you do, it's over.'

Regardless of what had happened, I could tell that he was genuinely trying to figure out what he had done wrong and was trying to buy time. His eyes trembled as he kept his mouth shut, as he had no idea why I was so angry.

'I don't feel good about this either...'

Kim Hyun-Sung had suffered for over ten years, so nothing would change even if I were to let him do whatever he wanted for a year. Letting him rest was actually the

right thing to do. Considering the things he had gone through, one year was probably not enough for him to rest properly. The way he was spending his time was kind of wrong, but at least it was making him happy.

I felt kind of bad seeing his anxious look, but I needed to act this way to buy some time.

If I were to talk to him about it nicely, the conversation wouldn't go anywhere.

As expected, Kim Hyun-Sung didn't leave.

I thought cornering him more would be a good idea, but...

'Let's just stop here. I've said enough.'

It'd be fine if he were having fun on his own, but he was affecting the guild's finances. I could have stopped him long ago. Fortunately, it wasn't too late yet, and the timing was actually perfect, as I had things to take care of with Ji-Hye noona...

"Whoo..."

"I'm... sorry, Mr. Ki-Young," Kim Hyun-Sung repeated.

"Haa..."

"I—"

"No, I think I was being a little harsh," I interrupted.

"What?"

"I think I was being a bit sensitive because I've been really stressed lately. I'm usually not like this, but I've been worrying about many things..." I told him.

"..."

I picked up the bag on the floor and said, "It looks good. I like it."

The atmosphere was still tense, but it was better than earlier.

I nodded, signaling to him that he could sit down.

Kim Hyun-Sung sat down.

“But I don’t want you to do this again,” I warned him.

“What?” Kim Hyun-Sung questioned.

“You may not be aware, but the Blue Guild is preparing to open a few businesses, which are for beginner adventurers and for those marginalized in our society, but we’re not in a favorable position financially due to the recent events.

“Moreover, the money we had invested in the free psychological counseling center is in conflict with the Lindel city plan...” I explained.

“I-I see...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“We’re managing through the alchemy workshop and the weapons business, but we need to save as much as possible,” I added.

What I said wasn't true, as we were obtaining a ton of money from the warp gates, but Kim Hyun-Sung wasn't aware of the guild's financial situation, so I was sure he had no idea what I was talking about.

“If possible, I don’t want to stop you from doing what you want to do. I’d like to delay the welfare project, but as you already know, we’re in an urgent situation... *Whoo...* I’m sorry,” I said.

“I see...”

“I’m really sorry for saying this, but the amount you've been spending every month to maintain your status is a lot...” I revealed.

“...”

He was definitely at a loss for words. Using a clan or guild’s annual budget to maintain one’s status was just absurd. If I had used a fabricated version of the Blue Guild’s financial reports to tell him more about the situation, then I would have been able to explain it better, but it didn't really matter.

Just as I expected, Kim Hyun-Sung's eyes started shaking. He didn't have a basic concept of money. We never really talked a lot about his life on Earth, but he was probably born with a silver spoon.

"I... I was... really..."

"Obviously, I think you're worthy of receiving *that* kind of treatment, and I want you to enjoy this place more than anyone, but I do want to see you go out into the field while wearing your armor sometimes. It's already been a year..." I said.

"You need to start deciding what you want to do. You can't keep being lazy. Are you going to live like this for the next one hundred years? I'm only human, man.

"You're making me feel worried in more ways than one," I told him.

'I'm worried that you'll actually be jobless. You're not trying to reap profits even though you haven't done anything, right? Light Ki-Young once said that one shouldn't even look at incompetent bastards. Have you heard about that? It's two outs for you right now.'

"I understand what you're saying," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"I'd like to ask for a small favor..." I said.

"Anything... I'll do my best," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"I'd like you to visit the Republic," I requested.

"..."

"The Blue Guild is planning on setting up a branch there. I won't be able to provide you with a lot of support, but it's required. I'd like to see the old Kim Hyun-Sung, who had led the Blue Guild into its tremendous growth," I explained.

'There isn't going to be any type of support. I want you to go there and build it yourself. Build power and go on raids. You understand what I'm saying, right? Don't take out a loan, no matter what. I want you to work passionately as if you're a beginner adventurer again. It's better than playing around.'

He was the Guild Master of the Blue Guild, so I wanted to give him something more important to do, but it had been a while since he was on the field, so I couldn't just

send him out there haphazardly.

Moreover, the farther he was from the Federation, the better it would be for us, so the Republic was the best place for him to go.

The guild branch in the Republic was going to be built for a symbolic reason, anyway, so his success didn't really matter. If he somehow managed to succeed and become an important figure there, the guild branch there would become even more symbolic, which was why it was better to dispatch him there.

Once he was back to his old self, I could just give him other tasks to do.

I looked at Kim Hyun-Sung and saw that he was being hesitant.

"Of course, I'd be happy to do that, but I'm worried about your safety and health..." Kim Hyun-Sung muttered.

"You know we no longer have to worry about threats. I'm happy that you're worried about me, but I'm not someone that requires protection. I've been feeling a bit uncomfortable with those types of hospitality recently... Like the three months after I woke up. *Haa...*" I sighed.

"I understand," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"I believe we need to change as well. You and I can't stop moving. I hope you understand what I'm saying," I continued.

"I do, but..."

"*Haa...* I'm tired..."

I was sure he'd get PTSD from hearing the words "I'm tired" so many times.

"If that's what you want... then I'll follow your orders," Kim Hyun-Sung said. It seemed that Kim Hyun-Sung no longer wanted to hear the words "I'm tired," so he changed his stance.

I couldn't help but smile because this was much easier than I thought.

"But I'm really worried about your health, Mr. Ki-Young," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“There are many other people in the guild, and it’s not like we’re going to be apart for thousands of years. It’s only going to be for a few months. More importantly, if I do end up in a dangerous situation, I’ll be sure to let you know right away since we’re still connected,” I reassured him.

Kim Hyun-Sung nodded, and it was probably because he had confirmed it with his own eyes. He'd always look happy every time I said that we were still connected. Anyway, it was the perfect line to end the conversation.

“Thinking about it now, it looks like I’ve really been a disappointment. I think I’ve gotten lazy these days,” Kim Hyun-Sung confessed.

“It’s nothing like that,” I said.

“And... I haven’t been very trustworthy,” Kim Hyun-Sung added.

“I wouldn’t say that...” I said.

“I gladly accept your request, Mr. Ki-Young,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

I got the feeling that he accepted because he had no choice, but I liked his determination.

Afterward, many things happened so fast...

“Would you like to eat together?” I offered.

“Sure.”

We ate together, visited shops, and we went on a walk, too.

“That one is nice.” I pointed out.

We met with the other guild members and drank wine...

“So you’re saying that Hyun-Sung bro is going on a business trip to the Republic? Who is he going with?” Park Deok-Gu asked.

“The guild won’t be providing a lot of support... so...”

“I’ll go with him,” Sun Hee-Young offered.

“I’d feel relieved if you go with him. While we’re on the topic, how about taking the new recruit with you?” Park Deok-Gu suggested.

“M-Me?” Belier asked.

“Just in case he has to go on a raid or go hunting... on-field training is important for a rookie, too,” Park Deok-Gu said.

The next morning...

“Just as I thought, I like that look on you the most,” I complimented Kim Hyun-Sung upon seeing him in his armor.

“I’ll see you later,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

And then...

Then...

Hm...

Then...

“Tell me, noona. I want to hear it from you. What do you want? Tell me,” Lee Ji-Hoo said.

'Damn it.'

“You... Young... Master,” I replied.

We soon found ourselves at the Federation.

CHAPTER 886

VACATION (4)

Like yesterday, the Federation was chaotic.

I was not sure whether all big cities were like this or not, but Colorado, which was the big city that Ji-Hye noona had decided for us to settle in for the meantime, was kind of noisy.

In some ways, it was to be expected because the Federation had gone through a lot, such as the Continental War and the 27th Legion Summoning incident. It was even affected by the Continental Dungeon event.

A nation even as large as the Federation could easily go haywire after going through so many hardships in a short period of time, but it didn't happen, so...

'They can be considered pretty lucky.'

It was actually a relief that it ended like this, and it seemed like everyone else thought the same because the city was pretty lively.

Actually, I was convinced that this was the busiest time for everyone here.

I heard loud voices everywhere, and there were workers doing their own jobs everywhere.

There were low-rank mages moving construction materials in the air and warriors using large hammers to drive in large nails. Many adventurers had decided to participate in the development and restoration plan of the Federation, so there was a constant cacophony of harsh noises.

The weather was great, and this was the perfect morning to go for a walk.

"We're recruiting people to go on a hunt with us! I'm a warrior capable of displaying power equivalent to a rare-rank warrior!"

“We’re recruiting mercenaries willing to go farm for construction materials!”

It looked like there was a ton of work available for anyone qualified to take. I looked around and saw many marginalized adventurers. I nodded and thought that Ji-Hye noona had actually picked a decent place.

“I’m selling this recovery potion that I obtained directly from Lindel! I have many different potions with me, and they’re all sourced from Lindel! Come take a look!”

‘Those are fake.’

There were many people in the city, creating a bustling atmosphere.

There were finished buildings, but there were more unfinished buildings throughout the city, which made sense because the majority of the shops were being rebuilt. There were a ton of people gathered at the square to sell their items.

Lindel was like this at the beginning of its restoration plan.

The Federation was in the middle of its restoration plan, and it attracted a ton of immigrants who wanted to settle down in the Federation.

It wasn’t that difficult to move to the Federation.

There also seemed to be a large number of Asians here. They probably thought that it was better to start new here than in the Republic or the Sacred Democratic Country. I wasn’t sure what kind of rumor they heard, but they all had the same thought.

“I’ll repair your equipment. I have decent equipment, so please take a look.”

“Here! Over here!”

“The side story of ‘How the Alchemist and the Genius Swordsman Loves’ has been released! I really worked hard to get it, so come here and get your own copy! Now!”

I wondered why there were so many people gathered here, but at the same time, I realized that this had to be a common scene. The only difference was that Ji-Hye noona and I were here. I looked down and saw an unfamiliar sight.

'Damn it, what's with this maid outfit?'

Anyone could tell that it was a maid outfit.

'Who the hell wears something like this these days? I'm sure not even the royal maids in the Union of Kingdoms wear something like this... '

I turned and saw my reflection in the window. I basically looked like Lee Ki-Yeon. The only difference from last time was that my hairstyle had changed. My hair was tied up like Jo Hye-Jin, but I still looked pretty good.

Perhaps it was all because of the makeup that Ji-Hye noona did herself.

If I had to give myself a one-sentence review, then I'd say, "I looked good overall."

If there was one thing I was happy about my outfit, it would be the fact that the outfit didn't reveal any skin of my skin at all. If there was one thing I was unhappy about, it would be what Lee Ji-Hye was doing right now.

'Stop touching me, damn it.'

It was absurd how we were walking down the lively streets with her hand on my waist as if she was trying to show me off to everyone. The arrogant grin on her face suited her; it felt like her face suited her overall nature.

Basically, she was handsome, and everything suited her so perfectly that it wouldn't be strange for anyone to think that she actually looked better with that face. It was to the point that I thought that her hair and gender were actually ill-suited to her.

She was slightly shorter than me and was way younger than me, so she looked like the young master of a noble family. She was also wearing fancy clothes from a popular luxury brand, which made her look even more arrogant.

Anyone could tell that she didn't belong here; she looked like a rich kid who had come out to the world out of boredom. Even if that weren't the case, a young rascal being accompanied by a maid would easily catch everyone's attention.

"Noona," Lee Ji-Hye called out.

"Yes, young master," I answered.

“You don’t look so good... You must be thinking about what happened yesterday,” she said.

“I’m not,” I said.

“That’s disappointing. I wanted you to think about it,” Lee Ji-Hye said with disappointment.

“Noo... I mean, young master, I don’t understand why you chose this place...” I said.

“It’s a nice place to walk around to kill time. There’s always something happening. There’s a lot of people and it’s the perfect place to get what we want,” Lee Ji-Hye explained.

‘Take your hand off of me, damn it.’

“Young master, behaving like this here... is a bit...” I mumbled.

“What?”

‘Ah, shit.’

- Lee Ji-Hye, don’t cross the line.

- What do you mean? I can do whatever I want. You can’t just start acting like this.

- You started it, Ji-Hye noona.

- I’m the young master here, not noona. Have you forgotten about our deal?

- Other people are watching, damn it.

- Who cares? It doesn't matter as long as we’re enjoying it. And it's not like people can avoid staring at you.

- *Ah*, man.

- You’re making me sad. I’ve done so many things for you, but you can’t do this one thing for me? Do you know who I’ve been doing all of this for... How can you say that when you know how much I’ve suffered?

-...

- I'm so sad, Lee Ki-Young. Be honest with me. Who helped you come this far? I want my reward as well. Don't you agree?

-...

- And I'm sure you like the attention. You say you don't like it, but your body is saying other—*ah!* Yes, I should use that line.

-...

- Anyway, if you're embarrassed, then act like it. That's your character. Seeing you blush is cute as well. I worked hard to put that make-up on you... and your outfit is pretty as well.

- I haven't realized it until now, but I think I have a *slight* fetish for this kind of thing, oppa. I mean, perhaps it's because my Ki-Yeon looks good in that outfit. You look like the main character of a novel who just got hurt by the world.

- You look good as well. You're really like a kid who knows no fear.

- I appreciate the compliment, but stop acting out of character and focus.

'Damn it, maybe I shouldn't have done this.'

I knew this wasn't going to be easy, but I never imagined it'd be this difficult.

However, Ji-Hye noona looked really happy. Now that I thought about it, I had never really spent that much time with her.

We'd meet often because of work, but we'd never met separately for leisure and pleasure. I figured she was happy because she could act like this without worrying about other people. She was relieving her stress by looking around the city, the items being sold on the street, and walking down the streets herself.

Ji-Hye noona and I weren't the type of people that enjoyed being in crowds, but outings like this helped from time to time.

If it weren't for the people staring at us, I would've enjoyed this as well.

After all, this could be considered a unique experience as well.

As we walked down the streets, Ji-Hye noona's hand was still on my waist. I tried to wriggle myself away from her hand, as it felt weird, but she grabbed my waist and held me firmly in place.

I felt uncomfortable because it felt like she was telling me to come closer.

'Why is she so strong?'

"I think I'm going to get kind of lonely tonight. How about you wear your necklace?" Lee Ji-Hye suggested.

"..."

"I'm kidding. Let's go, noona," Lee Ji-Hye said.

"Yes, young master," I replied.

"We're going to join an adventurer guild today," Lee Ji-Hye informed me.

"Okay."

The adventurer guild was pretty big.

I heard its status had fallen significantly due to Benigoa Net, but it was still pretty big since it was better to create a party or go out on a hunt offline compared to doing all that online.

A decent adventurer guild would provide accommodation for those coming from other places, and they'd even assist mercenaries and wanderers on their tasks.

It seemed that this adventurer guild was considered "decent," as I saw a steady stream of people exiting and walking into it.

When Lee Ji-Hoo opened the door, the people inside instantly looked at us.

A deafening silence filled the hall as we walked down the hall and approached the front desk.

“This must be your first time at an adventurer guild... What can I help you with?”

“Give me your best room,” Lee Ji-Hoo said arrogantly, hurling gold coins toward the front desk staffer.

“Lee Ji-Hoo. Lee Ki-Yeon. Give us a temporary Adventurer Registration Certificate,” Lee Ji-Hoo added arrogantly before turning around to sit in front of a table.

Clearly, it was up to me to handle the miscellaneous things.

“That’s Mr. Lee Ji-Hoo from Castlerock. We came to get a temporary Adventurer Registration Certificate. I’ll... take care of the related documents and seals...”

“Ah, I see. Please follow me,” the staffer said.

“Okay.”

Many eyes were on us, and there was even someone who whistled at me.

‘You actually whistled at me, you bastard? I’ll remember you. I’m going to smash your head in.’

“They’re from the Democratic Country.”

“Yeah, Castlerock. Why are they here?”

“I don’t know. Maybe that rich young master over there has decided to come here on a vacation?”

“With a maid?”

“She’s—wow... I have no idea what to say.”

“If they’re from Castlerock, then I’m sure that maid is pretty skilled.”

“...”

“I’ve confirmed both of your identities. You’re both registered as epic and rare-rank independent adventurers. If there are any tasks or missions you want to take...”

"I'll be sure to take a look. Thank you," I said.

"Got it."

I walked past the staffer and glanced behind me.

However, all I noticed was the sound of my heels clacking against the ground.

'I told her I didn't want to wear heels, damn it.'

Lee Ji-Hoo really looked like a bastard as he stared at me walking toward him. He was smiling at me as if he was telling me to sit beside him. When I hesitated, he pulled my arm until I clumsily fell into his arms.

"The thing you asked me to do—"

"I have more work for you..." Lee Ji-Hoo interrupted.

"Yes, young master. Anytime... M-More importantly, what would you like to eat today?" I asked.

"I want to eat here today," Lee Ji-Hoo replied.

"Okay."

Ji-Hye noona was really enjoying this. She was so focused on her character.

I was sure she was doing this to attract everyone's people's attention, as she enjoyed their attention.

No one approached us despite our behavior. Of course, they were still staring at us. Lee Ji-Hoo ate quietly and frowned. He wiped his mouth clean, and he looked like he did not like the food at all.

And that was when I heard a voice. "Mind if I join you?"

CHAPTER 887

VACATION (5)

‘That was faster than I thought.’

Adventurer Guilds were places for people to find jobs, so we knew that people would approach us the moment we entered one. After all, someone whose purpose for visiting a city was merely sightseeing would not visit an adventurer guild. Instead, they'd go to an ordinary inn and settle there until it was time for them to go home.

Despite expecting that we'd get approached, it still happened faster than we thought.

The moment Lee Ji-Hoo and I stepped into this place, we basically told people that we were open to anything. We were indirectly telling them to come to us if they had a decent job, useful information, or if they were a skilled adventurer.

Since this guy had decided to walk up to us directly instead of just staring at us from afar meant that he was a skilled adventurer himself.

‘Or he might have other motives... ’

There was also a chance that he simply wanted to be friends, but he was definitely friendly, regardless of his motives. He looked like a westerner in his late 20s. I activated Mind's Eye and saw his overall stats.

‘Epic-rank and more... ’

“I'm embarrassed to say this, but I'm Jillane the Gale.”

‘Not bad.’

Overall, he looked friendly.

Although his nickname was kind of cheesy, his agility stat was high.

He seemed easygoing, too.

“Excuse me, I heard from afar that you’re from Castlerock located in the Sacred Democratic Country. I was thrilled when I heard that because I stayed at Castlerock for quite some time in the past...” Jillane said.

The adventurers in Colorado were trying to open up a place to exchange information, and this timing wasn't really that bad.

I glanced at Lee Ji-Hoo, and I saw him nodding. I bowed and stepped back.

Jillane seemed to have understood that as Lee Ji-Hoo giving him the permission to take a seat because he nodded and stepped forward. After sitting down, he looked at Lee Ji-Hoo quietly.

‘I kind of felt like a maid just now.’

I knew I was not supposed to be proud, but I felt proud for some reason.

I was really acting like Aris.

“I’ll buy you a drink to celebrate our meeting,” Jillane offered.

“...”

“You’ve come from afar, after all,” Jillane said.

“It’s not even that far these days since there are warp gates,” Lee Ji-Hoo said.

“*Haha...* you’re right. How is Castlerock these days? Has it changed a lot?” Jillane asked.

“It has gone through a ton of development. There are positive and negative changes, but they are great for the adventurers overall,” Lee Ji-Hoo answered.

“But it’s probably not as good as this place,” Jillane said, “I know Colorado is known as the land of opportunity, and that’s probably the reason why many people have been visiting this city. It’s definitely—”

“So... Mr. Jillane... Why did you come here? I’m an impatient person, so I’d like to know as soon as possible,” Lee Ji-Hoo interrupted.

"*Haha*, it's nothing serious. I simply wanted to be friends because you're not from here..." Jillane replied.

"..."

'This bastard is lying.'

"I'm kidding. *Haha*... I just have a feeling that I can give you what you want, Mr. Lee Ji-Hoo. I'm sure there's a reason you came all the way here.

"Since you decided to visit this place, are you perhaps looking for a useful mercenary? Maybe you're looking for a rumor or perhaps a dungeon..." Jillane trailed off.

"Interesting theory," Lee Ji-Hoo commented.

"Regardless, I'm sure you came here looking for an adventure... Colorado isn't a city that's kind to foreigners. I don't know about the inner part of the city, but you'll understand what I'm talking about once you're outside the city.

"If you're trying to get information or if you want to work here for a long time, then I suggest you increase the number of your party members. Since you're recruiting mercenaries..." Jillane trailed off.

"*Hmm*... I'd be lying if I said I wasn't excited about going on a dungeon exploration... Do you have any useful information?" Lee Ji-Hoo asked.

"I have a few things that might catch your interest. They're not *known* dungeons, though..." Jillane muttered.

'Something smells fishy.'

I started seeing him in a different light; something felt so off that I couldn't focus on what they were saying.

"If what you're saying is correct, what do you want in return?" Lee Ji-Hoo asked.

"I'm not cheap, y'know," Jillane replied.

Jillane was kind of impudent, but he wasn't lying.

Some of his stats were close to legendary; his job and attributes weren't bad, either. I also wanted to give him additional points for his cheesy nickname, which was Gale.

He had been working in Colorado for a long time as well, which meant that he had a ton of experience clearing quests and conquering dungeons. His stats were pretty good, he was pretty handsome, and if he was a mercenary for hire, then I'd understand his high price.

The problem was that he was looking at me.

‘..’

His gaze was like a slithering snake as he looked up and down at the pitiful and miserable Lee Ki-Yeon.

It seemed that the answer had always been there all this while.

“ .. ”

“There might be an easier way than gold,” Jillane responded.

“Interesting,” Lee Ji-Hoo said.

‘It’s not interesting at all, damn it.’

‘You’re a villain... ’

Lee Ji-Hoo dragged me toward him. I tried to stop him, but it was no use. A ripping sound echoed, and the collar of my clothes was torn apart.

I hurriedly covered my collarbones with my hands, but they already saw it.

‘The slave seal.’

Damn it. Her attention to detail was scary. I told her that we shouldn't add something like this because someone would definitely notice it. At a glance, it looked like a simple tattoo, but it was a magical seal that one would often see in a black market.

“I knew it... I'm pretty knowledgeable when it comes to such contracts...” Jillane said.

'This bastard. He must have been in that black market in Castlerock. I found it strange that he mentioned being at Castlerock for a while.'

"I don't know the details, but that's none of my business," Jillane said.

"Hm..."

There was greed in the eyes of the horny bastard.

After checking the slave seal, his gaze toward me became strange.

He looked at me as if he was looking at an object.

'Wow, it's a good thing that I came here. I can't believe jerks like him still exist.'

Obviously, it had been a while since slavery became illegal in the Sacred Democratic Country. I couldn't get rid of it completely, but slave trading had been illegal for quite a long time now.

Jillane assumed that Lee Ji-Hoo was working for a ruined black market or was connected to an illegal business. He probably thought that he had come to the Federation to start anew since business in the Democratic Country was bad.

His misunderstanding was his own problem, but it was pretty convincing.

"There are still some places in the Federation where *this* is legal, but it's illegal in most of the big cities because of the great and mighty Saint of Light. Fortunately, it'll take a long time before that law spreads throughout the continent, and there's no way his eyes can scour the entire world," Jillane said.

"..."

"Some big cities have been doing it discreetly, and since the Federation's situation isn't as great as the other countries, there are a ton of loopholes here. What do you think?" Jillane asked.

"Are you saying there's a black market here?" Lee Ji-Hoo asked.

"Stop playing dumb. Didn't you come here knowing that there's one here? You don't need to worry about the outside world. It's not something you can go out and show

off, so we covered the eyes and ears of those nearby. If you hire me, I'm willing to give you the details... I still haven't heard your answer yet," Jillane offered.

Lee Ji-Hoo didn't even look at me as he talked to Jillane.

'Shit.'

Accepting his offer was the right thing to do because Lee Ji-Hoo still wasn't aware of the fact that he loved Lee Ki-Yeon. His love was twisted, and he was basically evil.

He wasn't afraid of playing dirty if it meant getting what he wanted or if it meant becoming entertained. He was basically like a child.

Lee Ki-Yeon was nothing more than a toy he cherished.

Of course, there was a minor plot point that he'd really regret his actions once Lee Ki-Yeon was no longer next to him. However, Lee Ki-Yeon was still next to him, so he had yet to figure out his true feelings.

I noticed Lee Ji-Hoo's gaze becoming a bit colder as he stared at me.

'You're getting too immersed, damn it.'

"Hmm... What do you think, noona?" Lee Ji-Hoo asked with a playful look.

"..."

"I think it's best if I ask you," Lee Ji-Hoo added.

Lee Ji-Hoo was someone who had never received any love from anyone, so his expression of affection had mutated in a twisted way, which meant that he enjoyed torturing Lee Ki-Yeon, thinking that it was the best way to express affection.

'No, don't get too immersed... the details are too refined, damn it.'

"Y-Young Master," I stuttered.

"You don't want to?" Lee Ji-Hoo asked.

'Think of an answer, Ki-Yeon. You're confident and smart. You ended up in this situation

because you had no choice, but you're wise.'

Obviously, I didn't think Lee Ji-Hye was actually going to hand me over, but this felt like a test.

"I-I-I..." I mumbled.

First, I decided to look nervous. I placed my hand on my chest and looked at my savior. With tears in my eyes, I tried to look pitiful and weak to the point that I could break at any moment.

Lee Ji-Hoo still looked evil as if he was telling me that begging for sympathy was the wrong answer. I know this wasn't the answer because Lee Ji-Hoo really liked it whenever Lee Ki-Yeon was obedient to him.

In the end, I spoke quietly and bit my lips as if I made my decision.

"I-I'll do... whatever the young master... wants..."

Lee Ji-Hoo revealed a crooked smile and nodded.

Jillane grabbed my hand tightly as if I had given him consent to do so.

Boom!

Jillane was blasted away, and he was sent flying to a wall.

My collarbones were only revealed briefly, but Lee Ji-Hoo quietly wrapped his cape around me. He acted indifferent, and he looked as if he couldn't understand why he was acting like this. He was disappointed in himself for losing his mind for a moment, and he looked nervous due to the possibility that he could be attracted to me.

I was sure those emotions would disappear by tomorrow, but they were definitely burning deep inside his heart right now as if they were an unquenchable flame.

'Damn it, Ji-Hoo! Is this really how it's supposed to happen?'

"I don't like your offer," Lee Ji-Hoo said coldly.

'I might fall for you, Ji-Hoo.'

I couldn't figure out what was going to happen next.

* * *

- From that night on, Lee Ji-Hoo begins to mistake that volcano-like burning feeling inside him as rage, oppa. He starts harassing Lee Ki-Yeon more persistently, more harshly, and relentlessly. Then, he'll blame Lee Ki-Yeon for the fact that he's getting swayed. He'll blame her for everything.

- You're getting too immersed, noona.

- You did well, too. I mean, your heart is still racing. Why are you so sexy?

CHAPTER 888

VACATION (6)

I never really thought that Lee Ji-Hye was interested in the denizens. I already knew that she simply wanted to fulfill her desires. There was a chance that she was kind of interested in them, but she was currently different from the meticulous and workaholic Lee Ji-Hye.

It was probably because she was too immersed in her role as Lee Ji-Hoo or because she felt pressured about having a decent vacation.

I was not sure whether it was because she felt like this was the only time she could take a break, but she seemed to have completely forgotten the lines she was supposed to say to seduce me.

“You’re nothing, noona,” Lee Ji-Hoo said.

“...”

‘Damn, look at her acting skills.’

“You’re nothing... Lee Ki-Yeon...” Lee Ji-Hoo repeated.

“...”

He kept mumbling that to himself, and his eyes shone in a glint that contained hatred, rage, and affection.

‘Why did she not decide to become an actress? She should have debuted in the entertainment business.’

If she had seriously considered becoming one back on Earth, she could have become an actor more famous than Ahn Ki-Mo. The way she became one with her character gave me goosebumps, and I became curious as to what made her like this.

‘She’s really good at storytelling.’

Lee Ji-Hye remained consistent in her words yesterday, and Lee Ji-Hoo started treating me a bit rougher as if he was forcefully telling me that he wasn't interested in me...

According to the story that she had written, the little bit of sympathy he had for Lee Ki-Yeon would disappear, and a brief period of transition would follow as Lee Ji-Hoo struggled to deny his true feelings.

The changes happened within three days, but it felt like it happened in the blink of an eye. There were details unknown to me, but Writer Lee said that there wasn't a problem with the story.

Lee Ji-Ho seemed dissatisfied with Lee Ki-Yeon with his own color alone, as his behavior was even starting to taint her.

"What's the point of telling him, damn it? I need to at least get my act together," I complained.

"..."

"Excuse me, young master," I said.

"Shut up," Lee Ji-Hoo said.

"Well, you see—"

"I told you to shut up," Lee Ji-Hoo interrupted me.

There was a dull thud as Lee Ji-Hoo pushed me into a wall.

"What? Did you miss me?" Lee Ji-Hoo questioned.

'Someone stop her, damn it. We're here to work.'

"Young Master, what I'm trying to say is—"

"Well, it can't be helped," Lee Ji-Hoo said.

He revealed an evil smile and reached out to me with his dirty hand.

“S-Stop!” I shouted.

I resisted timidly, but he didn’t stop. His face no longer had that tinge of affection toward me, and his face was now filled with hatred and greed.

In the end, I stopped resisting and got ready to cry.

The unrelenting Lee Ji-Hoo looked at Lee Ki-Yeon quietly and took a step back. Lee Ji-Hye's facial expression as Lee Ji-Hoo was so profound that it was an expression that one could only see from actors with at least ten years of experience.

Lee Ji-Hoo breathed in ragged pants as if he was regretting his behavior.

He clenched his trembling hands and turned around.

It was such a perfect sight.

“Get out,” Lee Ji-Hoo ordered.

“What?”

“Get out, noona. Get away from me. I don’t want to see you right now,” Lee Ji-Hoo said.

‘You’ve gone too far, damn it.’

“ ... ”

Like Lee Ji-Hoo's heart, I heard items shattering into pieces behind the tightly shut door.

Clearly, she was still keeping up the act through method acting, even though I wasn’t there in the room with her.

I was genuinely starting to get scared of her because she was getting really immersed in her character. We had great synergy, so I was also getting immersed without realizing it. I had to be careful about that.

I needed to pull myself together and pay attention. One of us had to be rational.

'We also have an issue with the black market.'

If it weren't for Jillane the Gale or whatever that Ji-Hye noona had hired, we wouldn't have known that there was a black market in Colorado.

The Federation had never really said anything about it, so it had to be a tiny black market, or it could be a community that the denizens had built themselves. I had no idea what was being sold there.

However, the denizens' conditions...

'It doesn't seem that bad, so that's a relief.'

I climbed down the stairs and felt people looking at me. Rumors about Lee Ji-Hoo, who was equipped with many different items, had to have already spread because no one tried to pick a fight, unlike yesterday.

Our young master *did* send Jillane flying with one attack as well.

The adventurers were no different from yesterday.

They were still lively, and it looked like there weren't any issues at all. Colorado had always been like this. It was like this yesterday and the day before yesterday. It appeared like the Federation had never gone through those hardships.

All I could see was a city filled with dreams and hope.

I couldn't help but doubt the report that the Black Swan Guild had submitted about the Federation.

'I'm starting to think that the money we spent for the counseling centers was wasted.'

I could hear loud noises everywhere. Some were drinking rum in the middle of the day, some were working hard to join parties, and others were looking to see if there were decent quests to take.

"Do you have any decent quests left?"

"Hold on."

“We’re recruiting a priest who wants to party up with us. We welcome everyone who has a job that can provide the same value as a priest. Don’t be afraid to let us know if you do have that kind of job.”

‘Maybe the denizens of the Federation just have a stronger mind than the denizens of the other countries?’

The Federation's situation was not that great.

The Democratic Country had struggled a lot as well, but it was slowly becoming a better place.

“I’m still having a hard time understanding it...” I mumbled. Perhaps the people here just had a different mindset than the rest of the people living on this continent. Colorado had a ton of foreigners, and the city itself was giving off a strong teamwork-like atmosphere.

It would be safe to say that the city was populated by people who wanted to move forward from a difficult past.

I looked around and sat at an empty table.

‘Ah, I wonder if he’s going to eat.’

I went upstairs again.

“Young master, what would you like to...” I trailed off. I didn’t hear an answer, so I went back downstairs and sat down. I looked around, but nothing really caught my attention.

‘Maybe I should head outside.’

I decided to buy some bread at a local bakery. I'd go somewhere and just make an excuse about how I had decided to buy something that the young master would like. I wanted to look around the neighborhood, as I never really had the chance to do so.

I started walking down the streets, and the sight outside wasn’t all that different from the sight inside the adventurer guild. The only difference was that it was filled with adventurers getting ready for their expedition. People in small and large parties were preparing to leave the city.

They were stuffing their bags with necessary items, and some were shouting to catch the last train. They were either going on a hunt or going on a task to acquire raw materials.

And that was when I saw an interesting sight...

'Who are those people?'

I activated Mind's Eye to see if there was anyone useful among the crowd when a title caught my attention.

[Title - Potion Addict]

If it were just one or two people with the same title, I would have overlooked it, but that wasn't the case. Among the parties here, either half of them or even the entire party had the "Potion Addict" title. To make things worse, workers and ordinary merchants had this title as well, and my jaw dropped at the absurd sight.

I immediately started figuring out what was going on, and my eyes widened upon realizing the reason why this place was so lively.

Who was in charge of Colorado?

Wouldn't it be strange if the manager of this city wasn't involved in this?

- Ji-Hye noona. Noona?

-...

- Noona?

"I knew she wasn't going to answer," I mumbled.

'I knew it was too good to be true.'

Now that I thought about it, it was really strange that the city was *too* normal.

Even the denizens of the Democratic Country, who were blessed by the God of Sacrifice and Revival and had religion as the foundation of their mental health, couldn't easily forget the past hardships, so how could these people live an ordinary

life when they could be considered to be living in a remote place?

It seemed that the power of going undercover was finally showing its fangs.

"Huh? I think we're completely out... *Ah...* damn it... What should I do?"

"What do you mean? You need to get more. We have some time before we need to leave, so hurry and get more."

"Can't you lend me some?"

"I only have enough for myself, Malon. Weren't you told ahead of time that this expedition was going to take more than a week? If you don't want to hear the clan master nagging at you, hurry up and get some more... I'll cover for you."

"Got it. *Haa*, this is annoying."

"..."

"Damn it," Malon swore and walked away from his party members.

I saw people getting on a carriage with mysterious potions in hand, so my assumption was definitely correct.

I merged with the crowd and felt confident because no one recognized me.

Malon headed into a dark alley, but there obviously wasn't a black market in the dark alley. I was simply following him because I knew they had their own way of distributing those potions.

If the people in power in Colorado were really involved in this, then the process had to be really complicated.

I had a few catalysts with me, so dealing with anything epic-rank would be easy for me.

My Strength was lacking, but my Alchemy Summoning job was a Unique Epic job. Actually, I was physically capable of taking on Average-rank or even Rare-rank warriors. After all, I had received some lessons from Kim Hyun-Sung.

Malon was heading to a place that wasn't really that difficult to find. It made sense, as the potion seemed to be quite easy to access. It seemed that heinous crimes truly often took place in back alleys.

'Caught you.'

"One week... no, get me one month's worth," Malon requested.

"Got it. *Ah*, I'm sorry, but the price has increased a bit," the staffer said.

"Didn't you increase the price last month?" Malon asked.

"*Haha*, I'm sorry. It's high in demand, and since we're struggling with the supply..."

"I understand you want to make a profit, but it should still be priced reasonably. Everyone is doing this to make a living. Who would keep buying if they no longer have the money to buy?" Malon complained.

"We are fully aware of our customers' position," the staffer said.

"Anyway, thanks for this," he said.

"Thank you for visiting us. Also... please be a bit more careful next time," the staffer warned.

"What?"

"Looks like someone has been following you," the staffer said.

And that was when I felt something cold on the back of my neck...

"Who are you?" the voice asked.

"*Uh...* I-I-I... Well... you see... I ended up... I... didn't see anything," I stuttered.

I felt something covering my mouth, and I caught a whiff of a strong medicine.

They were definitely trying to make me lose consciousness, but weak medicine was ineffective on the fleshly body of the God of Sacrifice and Revival.

Of course, a sharp weapon was effective on me, which was why I was scared. My legs instantly became weak, and I thought it was better to pretend to fall down, so when I fell to the side, I felt a rough set of hands catching me.

- Noona... noona?

-...

'Looks like I've been kidnapped... what can I do here?'

“What the hell? She’s a slave.”

The guys that spoke were obviously scums of society.

CHAPTER 889

VACATION (7)

Thinking about it objectively, I was convinced that nothing would happen to me, which was probably why I felt kind of relaxed. I had a solid way of getting out of here immediately.

'I just need to summon Ha-Yan.'

The problem was that summoning Ha-Yan could bring about a Buster Call-level disaster.^[1]

I was already having a headache just thinking about how I was supposed to explain to her why I was a girl, and I didn't want Colorado to become a wasteland, either.

It was the same for Kim Hyun-Sung. If I were to give him a quest, he'd definitely come flying to me in under an hour, but how would I explain this to him? If I were to reveal to him that I was Lee Ki-Yeon, what would he think of me?

I also didn't want to taint those precious memories^[2].

Actually, the situation didn't seem all that bad because I needed to find the black market here, anyway. Once Ji-Hye noona discovered that I had been kidnapped, she'd definitely find a way to find me.

Playing the part was important, but safety was more important than that.

[Creating an Average-rank Forced Quest.]

[Noona, I think I've been kidnapped. (0/1)]

[An Average-rank quest has been delivered to Player Lee Ji-Hye. No quest rewards were declared, so Player Lee Ji-Hye will not receive a reward.]

'Damn it, she's not answering. Is she really not going to say anything despite receiving my quest?'

[Creating a Legendary-rank Forced Quest.]

[Do you remember that Gale something guy who said that there's a black market in Colorado? They caught me following them, and they're taking me away somewhere right now. It'll be problematic to call Ha-Yan or Hyun-Sung, so think of a way to find me. I'm starting to get scared. (0/1)]

[A Legendary-rank quest has been delivered to Player Lee Ji-Hye. No quest rewards were declared, so Player Lee Ji-Hye will not receive a reward.]

'She's really mean. How long has it been? Five hours?'

Naturally, I looked in the direction where Lee Ji-Hye was located.

- How could he get himself kidnapped just like that?!

'Is she mad? Did I ruin the plan?'

- You're a mind reader, aren't you? I'm going crazy. Lee Ki-Young, you're driving me insane...

The way she jumped on the bed and rolled around while hugging a pillow was indescribable.

'She's really... '

She got up and looked around. She opened the room slowly and walked out of the room while looking around. She was acting as Lee Ji-Hoo, who was looking for Lee Ki-Yeon. Lee Ji-Hoo's face darkened. He ran out of the adventurer guild and started running aimlessly down the street. He wasn't saying anything, but I knew what he wanted to say.

- Noona...

It was sad seeing him desperately trying to find his maid.

I thought his heartless eyes could never cry, but tears started welling in his eyes.

- Noona! Noona! Lee Ki-Yeon... Lee Ki-Yeon!

'This makes you look like an actual psychopath.'

She was rolling around in her bed just now.

'You're mentally ill.'

Why was she suddenly desperately looking for me...

Unfortunately, it was raining, and the rain that poured slowly started getting heavier, hiding Lee Ji-Hoo's tears. He was trembling as he clenched his fist. I watched Lee Ji-Hoo just to keep an eye on him, but I couldn't describe what I was watching.

- Noona... where are you? Damn it... Lee Ki-Yeon... where the hell are you?!

His face was filled with regret and resentment toward himself. He started running again, but he stumbled and fell to the ground.

For a moment, I was glad our vacation wasn't that long, but if we had a little more time... I couldn't imagine what kind of grand narrative would be created.

The madness of the villains I had met so far was nothing compared to the madness Lee Ji-Hoo was showing right now. From what I could see, Lee Ji-Hoo was showing true madness at the moment.

I couldn't keep watching, so I looked away. It was actually the perfect timing. It felt like the carriage I was locked up in had stopped moving. After I heard them moving cargo and pieces of luggage, I felt the carriage moving again.

A violent tremor ran across the carriage, and my figure trembled.

Boom!

Light started pouring into the dark carriage.

"Ugh..."

And I saw a grim prison...

"Heuuuk... heuk..."

I heard someone crying, so I looked around and saw other people.

They looked as if they had been sold off. There were two males. One looked like a gladiator, and the other was a good-looking fellow. There were three women. Two were members of the Other races, and one of them was an elf.

It seemed that these people didn't care about the continental law prohibiting the trafficking of humans and Other races. They'd probably be sold for a high price, as supply was low, and I was sure that they weren't the only things being sold.

'At least I came to the right place.'

I was just going to sit in the corner. I did that and started pondering about what was going on. How much longer do I need to stay here? As I asked myself that question, someone opened the iron door.

"Heuuuuung..."

"..."

"Heuuuuuuuuung..."

I saw a kid crying loudly.

"Shut up and get in there."

I heard a deep voice.

The kid moved stiffly into the carriage. Astonishingly, her face looked familiar to me.

'Isn't she Ha Yeon-Soo?'

The assistant who was always with Lee Ji-Hye.

It seemed that fairy magic was cast on her, as she looked like a child, but she was definitely Ha Yeon-Soo.

Mind's Eye even confirmed it for me, and I felt relieved knowing that fact.

I knew Ji-Hye noona wouldn't abandon me. Now that I thought about it, I felt like I

had seen Ha Yeon-Soo in Colorado. It turned out that I had a bodyguard all this while.

To be honest, I was kind of scared because the mood here was pretty dark, but I was feeling slightly stable upon realizing the truth.

“Excuse me... Miss Yeon-Soo? We...”

“Heuuuuung...” Ha Yeon-Soo cried.

“Miss Yeon-Soo, right now, we...”

“W-Who are you?” Ha Yeon-Soo asked.

‘You’re doing this too? Damn it.’

“I...”

“Where are we? *Heuk!* Please save me. I miss my mom and dad...” she begged.

‘Are you also going to make your debut as an actor with Lee Ji-Hye?’

“No, wait... This situation is—” Ha Yeon-Soo stuck to me like a cicada and cried her heart out. It was stupid of me to expect any help from her, as it seemed like Ha Yeon-Soo was just...

‘A bystander; she’s just a bystander, right?’

‘She’s not going to do anything unless something really dangerous happens, right?’

I was glad that we had a shield, at the very least, but I wasn’t really that happy about it.

“W-We’re not going to die, right? Right?” Ha Yeon-Soo questioned.

The actress that Lee Ji-Hye had trained managed to amplify the tension in the carriage with her comment.

And that was when the iron door opened once again...

Three men entered, and they looked around before staring at me.

“What do you think?” a bandit asked their comrade.

“...”

“Touching the product is against the rules, but...” replied the other bandit.

‘Bullshit. The moment you lay a finger on me, Ha Yeon-Soo will cut off your head.’

“Bring her,” said the mysterious figure with the bandits.

“Kyah!” I screamed.

‘Yeon-Soo, I’m in trouble. Look! This bastard grabbed my wrist.’

“Where should we take her?” the bandit asked.

‘Yeon-Soo. You’re not just going to watch, right? Shit, Yeon-Soo. Ha Yeon-Soo. What’s wrong with you? Don’t just watch.’

“Y-Yeon-Soo!” I yelled.

“K-Ki-Yeon!!!” Ha Yeon-Soo yelled.

‘Don’t scream my name. Help me.’

“Don’t take her away!” Ha Yeon-Soo shouted.

“Someone shut that kid up. Looks like you two got close pretty fast. How... nice,” a bandit commented.

‘Ha Yeon-Soo, you’re so mean. You really want me to activate Buster Call?’

I had no idea what was going to happen to me, so I seriously thought of summoning Jung Ha-Yan here, but I heard a different voice outside.

“Hyung-nim.”

“What is it?”

“They said to bring that woman there.”

“Who did?”

“They’re going to put her up for action today. There was something wrong with the necklace, which was supposed to be one of the main items today, so they needed something to replace it. We need to prepare her right away...”

“The seal is still on this woman... Do you not see the slave seal on her?”

“They said they’ll bring a mage and take care of it once the trade is complete. I received orders to take her away, so I’ll just take her with me. I also need to make her presentable on stage. The main event is going to start soon, so I really don’t have—”

“Take her, then,” a voice interrupted.

When I stepped out, I heard the bandit scream.

The subordinate clicked his tongue, and I knew what he was thinking, but I didn't think he screamed because he was angry.

Ha Yeon-Soo had to have killed him.

As expected, I saw red dripping down between the rusty iron door. I heard him gasping for air, but this idiot had no idea that his hyung-nim was already dead. He was just taking me somewhere in a hurry.

Soon, I found myself in a room that was way better than that place earlier. Moments later, several people appeared and crowded around me.

“She’s pretty.”

They started washing me with water.

“She’ll be an expensive one.”

They washed my hair and made me sit on a chair before I even realized what was going on. They were pampering me; it was like they were working on even the smallest detail.

Ji-Hye noona would probably like this kind of treatment. They were painting my nails and putting stuff on my face. They dried my hair, and I started noticing the

changes through the mirror in front of me.

Even I thought that I looked pretty decent. Actually, scratch that—I looked pretty.

“What should we have her wear, madam?” a maid asked.

“I think it’ll be better if there isn’t too much exposure. Get up,” the madam ordered.

“*Huh?* M-Me?” I asked.

“Who else?” she questioned.

I got up, and they started dressing me up.

“How... did all of you start... working here?” I asked.

“You think we’re working here because we want to? I don’t think this outfit will work... Drink some warm tea. Let’s put on the lipstick last,” the madam said.

“Madam, they want us to bring her out now,” a maid informed.

“Wait, let’s put some accessories on her,” said the madam.

“They said to hurry.”

It seemed like they had put some stuff on me, but I couldn’t see them myself. Eventually, they finished up, and I found myself sitting awkwardly in a waiting room.

I could hear someone's booming voice outside, and they seemed like the host of some kind of event. I felt like I was in a daze because things had happened so quickly.

- I’m terribly sorry, everyone. There has been an issue with the final item, Michaelaria’s Necklace, so we won’t be able to present it to you. We sincerely apologize for not being able to notify you in advance. This is all the fault of an inexperienced organizer.

The atmosphere was obviously bad. I was sure there were people who had come here just for that necklace, and they were in a bad mood after hearing that the necklace was no longer available for sale.

The crowd jeered. I wasn't sure about the size of this black market, but it seemed like there was even a proper protocol in place on the off chance that something went wrong.

- We've prepared another product to make up for this blunder.

I was pushed to the stage and...

“ ... ”

The hall instantly became quiet.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

Then, an explosion of voices reverberated right afterward.

“A hundred thousand—a hundred thousand gold!”

“Two hundred thousand gold!”

As I looked around the absurd scene, I saw a familiar face...

‘Why are you here?’

1. From One Piece. 📖

2. I think he's referring to when he became Lee Ki-Yeon and the events that happened around CH 451 📖

CHAPTER 890

VACATION (8)

I was a bit surprised when I realized that the hall was bigger than I thought. This was not enough information for me to deduce the size of the black market, but this place, which was definitely the main auction house of the black market, reminded me of Castlerock's black market in its early days.

The stage was really big, and the seats were filled. It was so big that I couldn't understand how they managed to create a place like this capable of accommodating so many people. My ears were hurting because there were too many scums screaming at once.

"A hundred thousand gold... A hundred thousand gold!"

'Why are you even screaming in the first place?'

"Two hundred thousand gold!"

They were ignoring auction etiquette and procedures. They just had to raise their finger or the sign in their hand, and the host would handle everything. However, this scene resembled more like a market rather than an auction.

"Two hundred and ten thousand gold! Two hundred and ten! Two hundred and TEN!"

"Shit... Two hundred and forty-thousand gold!"

It was strange paying so much gold for a servant. It was safe to think that something else was included with the main event item. Greed filled everyone's eyes.

'I really don't want to be sold to that particular guy.'

Eventually, the host started calming everyone down.

"Please calm down, everyone. Calm..."

“Two hundred and seventy thousand gold!”

“E-Everyone, please follow the established rules and procedures! Calm down and follow the auction procedures!” the host shouted.

“Three hundred thousand gold!”

I felt like I was staring at hell, and these people were great examples of human nature.

The old millionaire and the chubby higher-up were all screaming.

Even a noblewoman... Why, though?

I wasn't sure whether someone had ordered the host or if he had decided to do it on his own, but he decided to let this market-like atmosphere continue. He probably thought that this kind of atmosphere would help with the auction from time to time, as it was a big hit.

I felt out of place seeing them so immersed in the auction to the point that it appeared unrealistic.

‘Are they using a potion or something?’

This could be a type of illusionary magic.

I looked around, but I didn't notice anything.

‘There are so many crazy people here.’

I had several theories in mind, but all I saw were lumps of cancer. Obviously, the people participating in auctions like this weren't ordinary people. They were wealthy and powerful individuals. I was sure Ji-Hye noona knew most of them, as they made their wealth illegally.

‘Yeah, I knew there was something fishy about you. Federation, Federation, wait, you’re a senator of the Sacred Democratic Country. You’re all dead. And you... you... and... ’

‘Wait, why are you here?’

And that was when I saw a familiar face...

'Why is he here?'

I knew I wasn't seeing things.

We were in a hall full of crazy people, so a pretty calm-looking guy stuck out like a sore thumb. He was sitting quietly in his chair and was frowning for some reason. He sighed and attempted to stand up. The frown on his face allowed me to deduce that he had come here for the necklace.

He still looked wicked and cocky; it looked like he wasn't planning on changing out of that Chinese-style outfit. I was sure he owned several sets of that outfit. He still had that same old expression, and he looked like he was looking down on the people here as if he wasn't like them.

'You two-faced masked scum. Since you knew about the black market, why did you not tell me about it?'

"I heard three hundred and ten thousand gold! Three hundred and forty thousand gold! That was three hundred and forty-thousand gold!" "..."

"The price has gone up to three hundred and fifty-thousand gold! Anyone else? It's at three hundred and fifty thousand gold!"

The auction house was chaotic, and I heard voices everywhere. I was sure some of the people here were trying to pool their money together to purchase me, as they were too broke to purchase me without the help of their peers.

Meanwhile, a few cannon fodders came out and grabbed my wrist.

"Kyah!"

As soon as I screamed...

"I got three hundred and seventy gold! Wait, it's four hundred thousand gold now!"

Masked Scum Jin Cheong of the Republic unknowingly looked at me upon hearing my scream.

'Ah, shit. Come to think of it, you're pretty rich.'

Our eyes met...

'You know it's me, right? You've already realized that it's me, right?'

Kim Hyun-Sung's slow-wittedness was pretty rare, and Jin Cheong was especially quick-witted, so I felt like he had already noticed my true identity.

"H-Help me," I stuttered and collapsed. Then, I started crying as if I had given up on everything. I represented caution and innocence, so I couldn't endure the hideous desires and dirty gazes in this auction house.

There wasn't anything dirty about Lee Ki-Yeon, so I was simply scared because all of this was new to me. Naturally, I looked at Jin Cheong again with a look of anticipation, but...

'You bastard. How dare you ignore me?'

As if looking away wasn't enough, he even covered his face. He grabbed his stuff, and he looked like he wanted to leave as quickly as possible. He clearly showed that he didn't want to get caught up in this ridiculous situation, but...

[Creating an Average-rank Forced Quest.]

[Commander, why are you ignoring me? (0/1)]

[An Average-rank quest has been delivered to Jin Cheong. No quest rewards were declared, so Player Jin Cheong will not receive a reward.]

'Buy me.'

[Creating an Average-rank Forced Quest.]

[Have a seat. Let's make a deal. I'm in a really bad spot right now. Colorado might end up getting destroyed, so I'd appreciate it if you participate in the auction as soon as possible. (0/1)]

[An Average-rank quest has been delivered to Jin Cheong. No quest rewards were declared, so Player Jin Cheong will not receive a reward.]

Hurry.

[Creating a Rare-rank Forced Quest.]

[All right, fine. So you're just going to ignore me. I don't know why you're here in this black market... but you're going to regret it. I guarantee that you will. I'm not asking you to do it for free. I'll even declare a quest reward. Get up from your seat if you can. Do it. Did you stand up just now? Sit back down. Are you really leaving? Don't go. (0/1)]

[A Rare-rank quest has been delivered to Jin Cheong.]

[A quest clear reward has been declared...]

[A tea time with Father Lee Ki-Young (0/1)]

He could only ignore me for so long. He was acting like he couldn't hear me, or he had no idea of my identity, but I kept sending him messages, so he mumbled as if he was in a bad mood.

- Damn it. I remember telling you that I no longer wanted anything to do with you... did you not agree to it?

He had taken the bait.

- What the hell are you... You crazy bastard. Damn it! No wonder things weren't going my way today. Damn it!

[You keep saying that you don't want anything to do with me, but you're still using this private communication channel. (0/1)]

- What do you want? And why are you here looking like that? Actually, it's disgraceful for me to even ask that question. You have a pretty disgusting kink.

[It's a long story, Commander. Actually, I haven't been able to contact you because I've been so busy these days. Wait, I did contact you, but you ignored me. I was going to visit you, but I was so busy in Lindel. Anyway, have you been well? (0/1)]

- I was feeling great until you showed up...

[Ah! I can't explain all the details. Do you really think that I want to be here looking like this? I didn't even know that there was a black market here. But why are you here, Commander? Depending on your answer, things might become a bit... (0/1)]

- What I do is none of your business. At least, it's not as bad as you standing on that stage while looking like that. Anyway, all I'll say to you is that all of this has nothing to do with me. Are you done?

[No, we're not done. Just bid for me. I have a reason for doing this, and this isn't a request. (0/1)]

- You think your threat—

[It's a bribe. (0/1)]

-...

[I'll give you a decent position. What do you think about the current continent, Commander? Which direction... do you think our continent, the Republic, and the Sacred Democratic Country should take? Even a god needs the help of talented people to manage the continent... (0/1)]

- Stop talking nonsense.

[Anyway, we've started off on the wrong foot, but aren't we in the middle of building a great relationship? This is a cliché where our relationship improves after fighting the same enemy. I considered you my enemy when we first met, but not anymore. We're comrades. (0/1)]

- Bullshit.

[Hurry up and bid. Stop changing the subject. You don't want to regret this, do you? (0/1)]

Jin Cheong looked like he was gritting his teeth, but in the end, he sat back down as if he had no choice but to do so.

I knew he'd do that. I had no idea whether he had a change of heart or if he thought that he could get something out of this deal, but he made a great choice.

- I only want one thing, and it's no longer getting involved with you. I honestly don't think that you'll keep your promise, but if you're indebted to me, then make sure that I won't get caught up in a ridiculous situation like this again.

[A wise choice, but I'm telling the truth about giving you a good position. I'll send you the offer another time, so read it over and decide. *Ah*, the auction is almost over. Hurry. (0/1)]

"Four hundred and twenty thousand gold, everyone! This is great news. Just now, we've broken our auction house's highest record! We're planning on offering the buyer an option of their choice, and..."

The host held up two fingers.

"Now it's four hundred and twenty five thousand gold! Please note this product has yet to receive any training," the host added.

"Four hundred and thirty thousand gold!"

"Four hundred and forty thousand gold! Four hundred and forty thousand gold!"

Jin Cheong held up his sign, but no one noticed him.

Even the host didn't notice him, but how could the host notice him amidst the excited crowd?

Jin Cheong seemed to have realized that as well because he revealed an annoyed look before slamming his hand on the table in front of him.

BOOM!

The entire hall seemed to vibrate as mana pervaded the hall in the blink of an eye. I knew things weren't going to become dangerous, of course. Jin Cheong was just trying to make his presence known to the host.

As expected, everyone looked at him.

'He sure tries hard to look cool.'

I felt like Jin Cheong actually enjoyed acting. He stared at the host amidst the quiet

hall before murmuring, "Six hundred thousand gold."

Some of the members of the crowd had to pick up their jaws from the floor upon hearing Jin Cheong's declaration. The remaining members of the crowd merely stared at him, but it was like he had become the protagonist of this auction.

'He's seriously annoying. How much more annoying can he get?'

"Okay... okay... six hundred thousand gold... We got six hundred thousand gold," the host announced.

I felt kind of uncomfortable because it was like we were forcing everyone to give up, but I honestly wanted to deliver a heavy blow to them as well.

I looked at the chubby higher-up who had decided to participate in this auction, and he looked like he was questioning his finances, but at the same time, he looked confident that he could win this auction.

After a while, he raised his hands and shouted, "I'll pay six hundred and fifty thousand gold!"

"Okay, we got six hundred and fifty thousand gold!" the host announced.

'Hey, you beautiful noblewoman. Are you going to give up? I want you to become my master. I really want you to take me. I want to serve you and wake up in your arms.'

"I can't give up. I'll give seven hundred thousand—seven hundred thousand gold!"

"The auction price has increased to seven hundred thousand gold!" the host shouted.

Our Jin Cheong frowned, and it was all because of his rivals' actions.

I thought he was feeling embarrassed, which would actually make sense, as he had unleashed a powerful fatal blow, but the villain easily avoided it and punched him back.

I was sure his pride was hurt.

He was the Hero of Shadows and a great symbol of the Republic, so I was sure he was heartbroken by the fact that these strange people were beating here.

It was probably like the time when Kim Hyun-Sung was beating up Hee-Ra noona. The embarrassment was definitely amplified because I was watching him.

He wanted to look cool, but he was getting embarrassed instead, so I started laughing to myself. Since things had already come to this, Jin Cheong definitely thought that he could no longer retreat.

I was sure that this was more about his pride now rather than my offer and request.

“Damn it. I’ll offer seven hundred and ten thousand gold!”

‘Great job, gentleman with a mustache.’

"Seven hundred and twenty thousand gold!"

The beautiful noblewoman’s name was Sarubia.

‘I like you the most out of everyone here.’

"Seven hundred and fifty thousand gold!"

It was a mess.

The auction was heating up.

Everyone started shouting as if they had been possessed by something.

And that was when Jin Cheong's arrogant voice pervaded the hall.

“One million gold.”

“..”

“In cold hard cash...”

CHAPTER 891

VACATION (9)

'What kind of crazy bastard would spend a million gold on a servant?'

Everyone stared at him in shock and surprise.

If an actual lunatic ended up appearing, then the person next to them would return to their normal self.

Everyone was just staring at Jin Cheong.

The people here seemed like they were under control, and the auction proceeded despite that, but one couldn't say that a million gold was a reasonable price.

Although supply was hard due to the slave trade ban, this price was still unreasonable.

With a million gold, an Average-rank adventurer party could purchase equipment that would allow them to become a Rare-rank adventurer party.

Actually, they'd get more than that.

The people's reaction in this auction house was natural, as a million gold was just too high of an amount for a servant.

'The others were just pretending to be crazy.'

I was kind of surprised that Jin Cheong even had that much money, but when I thought about it, it wasn't actually that strange. He was the symbol of the Republic, and he was involved in many things, just like me.

Jin Cheong seemed to have realized that there wasn't anyone else willing to fight him anymore. Perhaps they thought of him as a lunatic willing to spend a million gold on a servant, and Jin Cheong's arrogant look did not help at all.

“Crazy...” I mumbled.

“Jin Cheong of the Republic. I didn’t know you were such a lady-killer.”

‘It had been a while since I heard that word. What year were you born?’

“I guess he’s human as well. He’s been pretending to be innocent and different from other people, but you know what? People like him actually have dirtier and more wicked hearts.”

Yes, Ms. Sarubia. I think you’re right.

“He’s known as the Hero of Shadows and the symbol of the Republic, but he’s actually easily swayed by his dirty desires...”

The people’s attitudes toward him changed drastically. Just now, they were all screaming, but now, they were jealous. Jin Cheong also found himself in a difficult situation because he had just spent a million gold.

Privacy was paramount for the members of a black market, and the public would probably not hear of the purchase that he had made today, but one couldn’t speak in absolutes.

The news of Jin Cheong, the Hero of Shadows and the symbol of the Republic, purchasing a servant for a million gold would probably become a hot topic. With a bit of exaggeration, ruining his life would be a piece of cake.

I was not sure about the others, but it could happen to him.

“Number 101 has offered a million gold... If there’s no one else who’s going to offer more, I will continue with the auction. Sold! Sold! Sold!” the host declared.

Jin Cheong stood up quietly, and he seemed to be annoyed because I could see him frowning slightly. However, he knew dropping the act now would be even worse. He was trying his best to remain calm as he left the room.

‘That bastard is really... ’

“Thank you for your great support. We will end today’s auction here. Thank you once again to all our customers,” the host said, ending the auction.

The people started swearing orange talking amongst each other as they walked out. It was obvious what they were talking about, so I didn't bother listening to them. It was a pretty interesting event, so I was sure many people would be talking about it.

They finished the auction by playing pretty classic music and showering everything with flower petals.

I was forced out of the auction hall, and it was probably to go through a few procedures. I ignored the gazes of the big guys, and we ended up in a pretty old-fashioned room. A woman, who looked like a staffer of the auction house, was sitting across from Jin Cheong.

"You're here."

Jin Cheong nodded while quietly drinking his tea.

"I'm sure you're surprised, sir. About the item's delivery..." the staffer muttered.

"I'll take her myself," Jin Cheong replied.

"We'll do as you say, but she has yet to receive any training. As we've mentioned, we'll provide you with some options for free. I recommend looking at the guide for the list of options rather than me explaining those options to you," the staffer suggested.

There were several options written in the guide, but I was not sure if they were even worth reading. Jin Cheong glanced at the guide, and then he closed the book as if he wasn't interested in it.

"I'll just take her right now," Jin Cheong said.

"I..."

"I know the seal on her has yet to be removed. I'm not going to ask for a discount or be nitpicky about it... I just want to get this over with as fast as possible," Jin Cheong urged.

"..."

"I'm telling you not to keep me waiting any longer," Jin Cheong added.

'He sure is acting pretty arrogant.'

I was sure the staffer was thinking the same thing as me. Anyway, he was basically the embodiment of desire who had just spent a million gold to buy a servant.

The staffer quickly got up from her seat and bowed. "We'll make sure to take care of the aftermath. You can stay here for as long as you like, and if there's anything you need, let me know."

"Enjoy your time," the staffer said before leaving the room.

"..."

"..."

"Damn it," Jin Cheong cursed.

"..."

"Are we done?" Jin Cheong asked.

"Accept your quest reward first. Don't they even offer tea here? Commander, press that call button and ask them to bring tea and clothes that I can wear," I requested.

"..."

"It's really been a while. Doesn't it remind you of the old days? I mean, we've met in an unexpected place again," I said.

"Stop the crap, and you don't need to worry about that quest reward. We're done, right? I—"

"Why are you in such a hurry?" I interrupted him, "Are you just going to leave me here? Are you insane? What if something happens to me..."

"You need to take me outside, at least, and I'm hungry. I need to eat something. If they offer Mirror Salmon here, I'll take..." I trailed off.

"..."

“...”

“About our deal...”

"You bought me, damn it, so you should take responsibility," I complained.

'Look at this luxurious room. I think it's more luxurious than my room.'

It had been a while since I stretched my legs. I sprawled out on the couch and started eating the snacks in front of me. I glanced at Jin Cheong and saw that he was looking at me with an annoyed look.

'I shouldn't push it. I think he's really mad.'

I was sure he was really annoyed to meet the worst guest possible during his vacation.

Lines existed so that people wouldn't cross them. If one crossed the line, one could end up in a bad situation. What was the point of Jin Cheong and I maintaining a new bond between us?

There was no point to it, so we simply decided not to cross each other's lines.

“Don't look at me like that. If I had made a mistake, then I sincerely apologize,” I said.

“I want to say that your existence itself is a mistake,” Jin Cheong said.

“...”

“And your apology does not really matter to me,” Jin Cheong added.

“Don't be so cold, all right? Since we're already here, we might as well talk about something meaningful. How long have you known about the black market? It seems like you've been using this place for a while now. Please tell me what you know,” I requested.

“...”

“I'm not trying to find fault with you here. I know that you can use this black market to obtain items that you can't obtain through ordinary means. Anyway, are you aware

of what has been going on in Colorado?" I asked.

"Colorado?" Jin Cheong asked.

"Yes."

"Dumbass. We aren't in Colorado," Jin Cheong said.

I went silent and started tapping on my thigh.

'Have I really traveled that far?'

I wasn't really looking outside at the time, but the journey was so short that it didn't make sense for me to be outside of Colorado. It wasn't like I was transported via a griffon or through a warp gate...

"It's true that you can reach this place using the warp gate in Colorado, but I don't know the exact location of this place," Jin Cheong said.

"How can you get here using a warp gate? Warp gates..."

'They were all installed by Ha-Yan.'

"I should be asking you that question. I'm sure there are many ways to do so. Someone could have stolen a warp gate's core, or there might be another powerful mage capable of installing warp gates.

"Personally, I think the former is more likely, but it's none of my business how this place was created. As you said, all I care about is getting the item that I want. Of course, I'm not happy with the atmosphere of this place..." Jin Cheong explained.

"Hm..."

"Based on your appearance, it looks like you were kidnapped from Colorado. What the hell are you up to that you're looking like that?" Jin Cheong asked.

"Ah, they were distributing potions there," I told him.

"What?"

“Wait, you don't know that? Dumbass,” I said.

“...”

“I believe it's a hallucinogenic potion that is incredibly addictive. I found more issues, but they're not worth mentioning because the top priority is the potion being distributed throughout the city,” I said.

'He doesn't look so good.'

I was just going to continue the conversation, but seeing him frown made me think that there was something bothering him, or he could be disappointed by the fact that he had yet to catch on to that fact.

Of course, there was also a chance that he was disappointed in himself because I called him "dumbass."

Regardless, I had to acknowledge the fact that I had been neglecting the continent.

I never imagined that one could get here using a warp gate, and it was also possible that the warp gate wasn't in Colorado. This black market was massive, so it might be connected to other places as well.

There were only a few warp gates, but...

“Does the Republic have a warp gate as well?” I asked.

“...”

Jin Cheong nodded lightly. Had there ever been a case where a warp gate's core was stolen? After all, I was pretty certain that only Jung Ha-Yan was capable of making warp gates.

Jin Cheong was probably right—someone had stolen a warp gate's core, or they had taken over a few warp gates unbeknownst to Jung Ha-Yan.

Based on the situation, there could be a few reactionaries at the Magic Tower. After all, Ha-Yan didn't install those warp gates by herself.

What were we supposed to do next? Investigate the Magic Tower?

'This is an issue that comes with becoming too powerful... '

We hadn't been able to identify any issues in places that were beyond our scope like Colorado.

"You didn't do anything despite knowing that?" I questioned.

"We're not *that* close. Why would I tell you that?" Jin Cheong retorted.

'You're being too nitpicky here.'

Knock, knock, knock!

When I heard knocking on the door...

"I brought the tea and food you request—"

'Take this!'

"C-Commander... P-Please! Please!" I exclaimed.

"What?"

"Ack! Mas... ter! Agh! Not there..." I screamed.

"You bastard! What the hell are you doing?!" Jin Cheong shouted.

"No more... Ahhhh!" I screamed.

"You lunatic! Shut up right now!" Jin Cheong yelled.

"Mmhm! Mmhm! Mmhm!"

'You should've treated me better instead of turning me into a joke. The ordinary Ki-Yeon is not so delicate that she'll have issues becoming the joker of Lindel.'

"I-I'll leave these... outside. I-I... hope you have a great time..." the staffer said meekly.

They were definitely stupefied by what they heard.

Jin Cheong frowned deeply, and I believed it was an expression that suited him the best.

CHAPTER 892

VACATION (10)

“You crazy bastard!” Jin Cheong roared.

“What?”

“You’re a lunatic... Shit! Shit!” Jin Cheong swore.

He became really emotional.

“These tragic incidents have been happening because you've been refusing to cooperate with me,” I said.

“...”

Jin Cheong's eyes were quivering, and it seemed that he was truly angry.

I felt like he was kind of losing his mind.

“Why so serious? How come you're still about your public image when you've been visiting this black market so often? I guess you're still obsessed with honor.” I pointed out.

“...”

“Well, it’s understandable that you’d be worried. Some people have been saying that you’re a lustful man, but they’re technically correct, as you've hurriedly purchased a servant when you're so busy that you barely have time to return to the Republic.

“You've allowed your desire to take over—like you’re a dog in heat...” I muttered.

“When did I...”

“You know that’s not what’s important, Commander. I’m sure the denizens of the Republic will love that news,” I added.

“That should be my line. You’re the Honorary Cardinal of the Sacred Democratic Country and the God of Sacrifice and Revival. However, you actually switched genders and have been spending time in a filthy place like this.

“I’m sure the people will be happy to hear that,” Jin Cheong retaliated.

“Don’t even think about playing games with me,” I warned.

The Joker of Linderl, Lee Ki-Yeon, would never stop nor compromise.

“So you have things to lose as well,” Jin Cheong said.

“Well, it really doesn’t matter. I don’t even think that they’ll believe you anyway... If you want to get involved with me that badly, then do it. Also, did I ever say that I wanted to fight? I was merely suggesting that we compromise and figure things out together.

“You know how I do things. This will be profitable for both of us. I’m not asking you to do anything difficult. I just want you to play along with me for a bit. You’re so close-minded. I know we started off on the wrong foot, but it’s all water under the bridge,” I explained.

It was true that we had an ill-fated relationship, but it was all in the past. Those times had become nothing more than just a part of our memories.

I had done all of this to help you grow—all this was training for the Hero of Shadows.

“You good-for-nothing...” Jin Cheong muttered.

‘Like the continent that has just started growing again, don’t you think that we should start growing as well?’

I cast a warm gaze at Jin Cheong as he stood up awkwardly.

“...”

One had to cast a warm gaze upon others for them to reciprocate the deed, but Jin Cheong’s gaze was pretty cold.

‘Is he trying to hit me?’

'Hit me if you dare. Ha-Yan will come immediately and hit you back.'

I had no idea what to say, but many different thoughts popped up into my head.

I was grateful that he was being rational, at the very least.

If he had lost his mind, he would've hit me by now. If he were to decide to beat me up, then I'd act like the weak and fragile Lee Ki-Yeon. I'd act like a rabbit trembling in its den—I'd act like a cornered Lee Ki-Young.

And that was when Jin Cheong sighed and said, "Stop the disgusting antics."

"Then..."

"I'll work with you, but there's a limit to it. Also, you need to offer me something that will match my efforts," Jin Cheong said.

'Does he not care about what happens anymore?' There was a high chance that realized that he wouldn't be able to avoid this. He was probably thinking about acting tough for a bit and taking care of whatever I needed him to do before I hurt his pride even more.

He was probably thinking of going home as fast as possible to enjoy a cup of tea. Of course, I was sure that he was thinking about how he was too unlucky today as well.

"All right, let's do that. Let's look around the market first. I want to see what kind of potion it is. *Ah*, bring the stuff outside in here," I requested.

"You..."

"What? Want me to go out there?" I questioned.

"I'll bring it in," Jin Cheong said.

"..."

"..."

"The food isn't bad."

Jin Cheong looked annoyed while staring at me as I ate.

Once I was done with my meal, I pushed the plates aside and changed clothes.

The clothes looked like a typical qipao. The only difference was that there was a slit on the side. I threw away the clothes that I was wearing earlier, and I felt like I was finally wearing proper clothes.

The black dress had gold decorations, and the fabric itself felt pretty nice to the skin.

I could tell that the black market was meticulous in their choice of clothing, and the reason they sent this high-quality clothing was that Jin Cheong was from the Republic, and they wanted to leave a good impression on him.

"I like it," I said.

When I expressed my satisfaction, Jin Cheong looked at me with confusion. Perhaps it was because I had been living on the continent for too long, but he looked at me the way a person would look at a foreigner eating kimchi.

I didn't say anything to him, but he seemed to have realized that I was ready because he left the room.

I had to follow him while maintaining a certain distance from him.

Obviously, many people were looking at us, making up assumptions about what had happened inside the room just now.

The maids responsible for maintaining the VIP room we were in earlier looked at me.

'It will be strange if I act too normal, so I'll act like I'm kind of tired. Cheong, I'm helping you with your image here, okay?'

"Do you know where they're sold?" I asked.

"I know where they sell potions that aren't sold to the public. It's probably *that* place," Jin Cheong replied.

"Not sold to the public... I'm curious since I'm an alchemist as well," I said.

"I'm sure you're already familiar with them. There are many potions with fatal side effects, such as berserker potions and curse potions. I heard that many people have been using them..." Jin Cheong explained.

"If it's a potion that will get rid of one's fear during battle, it's worth selling. Since I'm an alchemist as well, I've been researching something similar, but it wasn't worth it in the end.

"We can't keep relying on potions while hunting, and I'm sure it's being sold to adventurers who are too weak to live as adventurers," I said.

"You mean like the people of Colorado?" Jin Cheong asked.

"Yes. I knew there was something fishy. Have you been to Colorado?" I asked.

"..."

"Most of the people in that city are potion addicts. I think most of them have PTSD. The potions are only being distributed to Colorado, but who knows what will happen in the future? They might distribute them throughout the entire Federation and even the Republic," I said.

"That won't happen," Jin Cheong said.

"How can you say for sure? Those criminals are really systematic, you know? There are many moving parts—much more than you think. We even need to search the Magic Tower and question some of the Republic and the Sacred Democratic Country's key officials.

"I guess I've been looking at the bigger picture a bit too much. Have you been reading the messages that I've been sending you to your mail?" I asked.

"Do I need to answer that?" Jin Cheong asked.

"I've been busy trying to draw the bigger picture. As a god managing the continent, my focus is spread thin. Anyway, are you interested in *that*?" I asked.

"Not interested," Jin Cheong answered.

"I've been training people because I need help, but we need someone who can help

right away. Updating the natural laws of the continent, the dungeons, controlling the monster ecology and their population, and even coming up with quests and events..."

"There are so many things to do that I can't list them one by one, but I'm sure you'll be helpful. Help me, and you'll become qualified in no time... It's a win-win situation for both of us.

"Ji-Hye noona and I have been taking care of things somehow, but we lack manpower..." I explained.

"It hasn't been that long since I decided not to get involved with you any longer, you bastard," Jin Cheong said.

'But I'm sure he's interested... '

"..."

'He's a control freak as well.'

I was sure he felt anxious by the fact that things were happening in places that he couldn't see. He was pretending that he wasn't a control freak, but I was very certain that once he was alone, he'd search his mail frantically for that message.

'I think it's best to delete those messages full of swear words or the messages I sent as a joke.'

Jin Cheong had cast a spell that separated us from the people outside as we conversed, but many people were still looking at us. It seemed that the news of what had transpired in the black market had already spread, as some people were staring at Jin Cheong with disgust.

Of course, I also saw people smiling at Jin Cheong, and there were even some bold enough to approach him.

"Excuse me, Commander. I'm sorry, but—"

"I'm Hedler from the Federation. If you have time, I'd like to talk—"

"I heard you got a nice servant."

“If you don’t mind, I’d like to invite you to my place sometime. I’d like to show you my collection—”

The majority of them wanted to share their hobbies with Jin Cheong, and I was sure he wanted to tell them that he was different from them, but no one would believe him. He seemed to have realized that fact because he ignored them all and walked away.

I knew we were in a massive estate, but the place was bigger than what I imagined.

It was like a mall with restaurants and a variety of shops people could enjoy.

There were gladiator fights, slave markets, and monster trading shops as well. There were so many things to see that I couldn’t look away. There was also an exchange shop for stolen goods and even an illegal casino.

“You visited that place often, right, Commander? You probably went there to play games. Have you heard people say something along the lines of ‘put your life on the line if you don’t have the chips to pay or offer one of your hands as payment’?” I asked.

“ ... ”

“Remember the game we played when we first met? Does that casino have that game?”

“ ... ”

‘They must have it.’

“You talk too much,” Jin Cheong said.

“Ah, that must be the potion exchange shop.” I pointed out.

They were displayed pretty well, and I didn’t feel like I was in a black market at all. I activated Mind’s Eye and looked around quietly.

Meanwhile, I saw Jin Cheong talking to the staffer who walked forward to greet him.

“I’d like to meet the alchemist who’s distributing potions throughout Colorado. If you

have these potions in stock, I'd like to take..."

'He's doing well.'

I checked some of the potions with Mind's Eye...

'Hm... '

'Can I assume that this is the third-rate version of that hallucinogenic potion? They must've gotten a ton of information from the potion that was being distributed throughout Celia a long time ago.'

I looked at Jin Cheong while tapping my thigh.

The masked scum walked up to me and said, "They don't seem to have any information about the alchemist. Anyway, did you find what you were looking for?"

"I did," I answered.

"What's the plan?" Jin Cheong asked.

"There's no plan. I found a sample, so let's just blow it up," I replied.

"..."

"..."

"How come you suddenly became a man of justice? I thought you weren't really interested in black markets," Jin Cheong asked.

'Man of justice, my ass.'

"I just need to know what's going on," I said.

Just then, I heard a commotion outside.

"The warp gate!"

"Shit! What's going on?! The warp gate has been blocked."

“I’m sorry, everyone. There’s an ongoing issue with the warp gate. It will be stabilized soon...”

'Nice.'

“How dare you try to dirty my things.”

'Nice.'

“...”

“I need to go back now... Damn it...”

“Stop pushing. Please stop pushing!”

“The monster is running rampant! Security! Security!”

“Aaaahhhh!”

I smiled at the sight.

The Hero of Shadows realized what was going on and stared deeply at me.

“Crazy bastard...” Jin Cheong mumbled.

CHAPTER 893

VACATION (11)

Masked Scum Jin Cheong shook his head at the chaotic sight.

“Did they block the warp gate?” Jin Cheong questioned.

I didn’t answer because the answer was pretty obvious.

Han Sora had basic control of the warp gates. In addition, no matter what kind of core was stolen at the Magic Tower, we had control over which one to close and open.

Normally, we’d have all of them open, but in this case, it would be best to have them closed. After all, we could make the evil bastards here suffer.

I looked outside and couldn’t help but think that the situation was pretty interesting.

The entrance and exit had been sealed, so there was pandemonium.

The staffers of the black market told the people that they were handling it, and it was nothing more than a small hiccup, but monsters that were locked up were running rampant, so who would be able to remain calm?

‘The effects of the potion must be pretty good.’

“Kyaaaaaaaaaah!”

Fear was spreading, and I was sure that the gnarly scene unfolding before everyone was quite confusing to them.

I cast a spell, and a small fire appeared at the tip of my finger.

I climbed up a chair and raised my finger up at the ceiling, activating the fire alarm spell.

A shrill alarm echoed, and flickering red lights came to life along with a gush of water.

Alarm bells rang everywhere, but there was nowhere to run.

I could hear the screams of the frightened people along with the roars of monsters.

Swoooooosh.

“Rooooooooooar!!!”

“Accccck!”

“Shit, what’s going on?! What is this?!”

“Run, damn it!!!”

“Kyaaaah!”

“Move! Move it!”

“Please calm down, everyone. Follow the emergency procedures of the market! In emergencies, we are—”

“Where are we supposed to go? Where?!”

“Where are we supposed to go, you crazy bastards?!”

‘They wouldn’t know that.’

Even the staff had no idea where they were supposed to seek shelter, so a few people formed groups and just started running away toward the warp gate. However, an explosion occurred from the warp gate, making them scream and run away from it.

“Help! Help me... damn it!”

Running around in groups like that meant that they would most likely trip and get crushed to death. The situation was so chaotic that some even whipped out their weapons to protect themselves.

“Ahh!”

“Move, you fools!”

“Shit!”

The powerful figures were being protected by their bodyguards, so they were in a better situation, but I was very certain that dying here would be a better outcome for them.

“Lady Hennerys!”

“There you are,” Lady Hennerys said.

“I think it’s best if we combine our guards.”

“Okay, but... why is this suddenly happening...” Lady Hennerys asked.

“Surviving is the top priority.”

“R-Right, let’s do that,” Lady Hennerys stammered.

It seemed that the crowd thought that the safest place here was the place where the powerful figures were gathered.

“Help us!”

“Help!”

“Stop them! Make sure they don’t come in!”

“Ahhhh!”

“These bastards stabbed me! Damn it! They stabbed me! You bastards!”

“Push! Push, damn it!”

‘Things are about to get messy.’

It hadn’t even been ten minutes, but it already felt like we were in hell.

Jin Cheong looked around the chaos and said, "It's a bad hobby."

"I wouldn't go that far. They're just getting punished for betraying the light and surrendering to their desire. You reap what you sow. *Ah*, I'm telling you this just in case, but you need to protect me. Ah, I should also get some potions as well.

"There are a few potions that I would like to analyze. Do you remember seeing anything decent among the stolen goods? If possible, I'd like to get some of those as well. I might even be able to get some gold. Just how much is all this worth?" I said.

"..."

"By the way, everything here is my loot. Actually, it's not mine... the Continental Protection Management Committee will be taking them away... I trust that you understand. It will be used to fund the development plan of the continent," I added.

"I'm not even expecting anything," Jin Cheong said.

"I'll be sure to pay you for protecting me," I told him.

"..."

"How about a hundred thousand gold?" I offered.

"..."

"Kyaaaaaah!"

I flinched upon hearing a roar while I was in the middle of gathering as many potions as I could. Fortunately, Jin Cheong quietly stood in front of me, and I felt kind of relieved at the sight.

He raised his arms, which were as long and as sturdy as a sword, and rushed toward the monster. A radiant light erupted, pushing the monster back.

Boom!

The monster struck a distant wall, and Jin Cheong dusted off his clothes.

He had simply dealt with an Epic-rank monster, so I found his actions and pose to be

quite a bit exaggerated. However, I was convinced that his pose and actions were to show me that he was protecting me, so I simply nodded at the sight.

"I'll make a playground for you, Commander. The black market wasn't part of my plan... but I don't think it would hurt to have one. I just need to make sure that you can have fun with it, right? You know what they say about losing your card," I asked.

Jin Cheong was walking confidently despite the chaos.

He wasn't doing much, but I heard consecutive explosions and saw the villainous bastards and monsters flying away.

"What's next?" Jin Cheong asked.

"We need to find the manager. Capturing them alive is the best, and we'll ask them to lead us to their strongbox," I replied.

"Looks like it won't take long," Jin Cheong commented.

"I hope so," I said.

"Commander! Save me. Please... Please save me!"

"..."

"Go away," Jin Cheong said.

The majority of the people here were figures whom Jin Cheong didn't want to become friends with, so he didn't bother helping them. Our situation was kind of unrealistic; there were screams everywhere, along with gory scenes.

Amidst the chaos, Jin Cheong and I were the only ones who were calm.

I actually found it amusing how we were walking around casually while looking around as if we were taking a stroll in our backyard. It was so unreal that it felt like we were in our own world.

"Ahhhh!"

"It's the gladiators! Damn it!"

I wasn't sure how they were freed, but the locked-up gladiators were outside, swinging their swords randomly.

Some of the black market's staffers were adventurers, but I was sure Ha Yeon-Soo had already taken care of them. As for the slaves, we could just save them later. Anyway, the flickering lights were turning off one by one, and the place was soon plunged into darkness, which made some people run rampant.

"Kill them! Kill them all, damn it!"

Some of them charged into the shops as if this was their one and only chance to make it big. I swept my gaze across them and noticed that they all had unique habits that were quite dangerous.

Now that I thought about it, only those full of greed would visit a black market, so it wasn't strange for them to take advantage of the chaos for their own gain. These greedy psychopaths definitely thought that this was their opportunity to get rich, and even the staffers thought the same. As expected, I saw people fighting over items.

"Let go, you bastard!"

"It's mine, you bastards! Don't come close! Stay away, damn it!"

"How disgraceful," the Hero of Shadows mumbled.

"They're the staffers of the black market. If they were honorable people, do you really think that they'd even come here? *Ah*, I'm not saying that you're like them.

"I'm sure you have your own reasons for coming here. *Ah!* The bandits are coming this way. We'll be running into them soon." I pointed out.

The bandits' goal was obvious, but they had grouped up faster than I thought.

"Leave that woman behind, Commander of the Republic," a bandit suggested.

"..."

"If you agree to this request, we'll keep you safe. I'm not sure how this happened, but the place suddenly became a battlefield, and we need to be able to protect ourselves.

We'll include you in our group, but leave that servant of yours behind... we will keep her entertained for you," the same bandit said.

"Know your place, you fools," Jin Cheong said.

'He's charismatic and arrogant.'

"We outnumber you, and I don't think you can handle so many monsters when you're just a strategist in the rearguard. This is a win-win situation for both of us, so let's keep it at that, shall we?" the same bandit suggested.

"The only thing you have are numbers, so don't cross the line," Jin Cheong warned.

"If you really want to be punished that badly, then we'll have no choice but to accommodate. Boys!" the same bandit roared.

Boooooooooom!

Jin Cheong waved his hand, and a few bandits were blasted away.

'They're dead.'

"Ahhhhhh!"

"D-Damn it! Run!" a bandit shouted.

Jin Cheong extended his hands out toward the bandits, and I heard a noise reminiscent of a gunshot. I saw something hitting the back of the bandits' heads. Jin Cheong had probably cast a spell against them, and he made quick work of them.

A few bandits managed to escape, but the majority of the ignorant bandits were killed.

Jin Cheong frowned, looking like he had wasted his energy.

He was probably thinking that he had wasted his mana on them.

"Cockroach scums," Jin Cheong mumbled.

"You're pretty strong, Commander," a man complimented him.

“It was just the basics,” Jin Cheong said.

“And you’re still annoying,” the same man added.

‘So many people are coming here in droves...’

“I’ve been waiting for this moment, Jin Cheong! You bastard!” the man roared.

People with a personal grudge against Jin Cheong appeared from out of nowhere.

It seemed that they wanted to avenge themselves after losing against Jin Cheong in the latter’s own game.

“It’s him! Bring me his servant!”

I saw some of the auction participants earlier.

“Who are you?”

When the story was about to reach its climax, Lee Ji-Hoo finally appeared.

‘Ah... damn it.’

“Young... Master?” I muttered.

“Noona. Is that you?” Lee Ji-Hoo said.

Moreover...

“...”

Kim Hyun-Sung appeared at the crossroads.

‘Wait, why are you here?’

“Miss... Ki-Yeon?” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

Jin Cheong stared at Lee Ji-Hoo and grimaced as if he had gotten himself caught up in a ridiculous situation.

Meanwhile, Ji-Hye noona smiled upon seeing an unexpected figure.

Kim Hyun-Sung had no idea what to do.

The four of us ended up stumbling upon each other as if it were destiny.

It was like a memorable scene one would only see in soap operas.

- Lee Ki-Young, you bastard! What did you do this time?

'Play along. Just. This. Once.'

- Oppa, this is really awesome. I can't believe this is happening. Is this really a part of your plan? Did you prepare this gift for me? You even called Kim Hyun-Sung. You're so romantic. Are you proposing to me right now?

'How is this romantic? Just stay quiet and stop crying. You look so agitated, Ji-Hye noona.'

"Why are you..." Kim Hyun-Sung muttered.

'You shut up, too, Hyun-Sung. I told you to go make money, so what are you doing here, man?'

CHAPTER 894

VACATION (12)

I wanted to yell at Kim Hyun-Sung and ask what the hell he was doing here because I was curious as to why he was here when he was supposed to be out there making money. However, I couldn't say that right now.

The turn of events was so sudden that my mind blanked out.

'Ah, damn it.'

Obviously, Kim Hyun-Sung was surprised as well—more surprised than me.

Putting myself in his shoes, I was sure this situation was like a dream for him.

He only had a few precious memories, and one of those was the precious memory of that night, which ended on a bad note. In the end, all he had left was a shoe.

It was funny to see so many emotions painting his face, but this wasn't the most ideal situation. To make things worse, he looked like he didn't notice Jin Cheong or Lee Ji-Hoo at all.

It was like he was trying to decide what to say while staring intently at me.

'This is bad. Isn't our plan ruined now?'

I had to think of a way to fix this.

"You scum. Who are you..."

"..."

Jin Cheong wasn't even thinking about answering. He was really shocked as well.

- Lee Ki-Young... you scum. What the hell is going on?

'I don't know either, damn it. But I'm sure you have an idea. Isn't it obvious?'

"Noona... are you okay?" Lee Ji-Hoo asked.

- Shit! What kind of ridiculous situation did you shove me into, Lee Ki-Young?
Answer me!

"I'm asking you a question, noona," Lee Ji-Hoo said.

'You two need to stop pressuring me. I can't think straight, and you're making it worse for me.'

Lee Ji-Hoo was on the brink of exploding, and his passionate acting made the situation even more realistic. I could see that he was worried about me while we were apart. He was nervous and anxious; his breathing was uneven as well.

He was completely immersed in his role.

Lee Ji-Hoo was playing the typical male protagonist regretting his actions while worrying about Lee Ki-Yeon. The desperation on his face made the other actors become immersed in their roles as well, and I took a step back without realizing it.

I wanted to apologize to *him*. I wanted to tell him that my *precious thing* had been taken away by this man and that I was no longer the Lee Ki-Yeon whom he was familiar with...

We weren't apart for that long, but to stay on schedule, we needed to condense the story. I suffered for two to three months because of this scum, and I thought Ji-Hye noona actually liked that setup because of the many emotions on her face.

- Lee Ki-Young, you bastard!

Jin Cheong went mad upon realizing that his assumption was correct.

[Creating an Average-rank Forced Quest.]

[I'm really sorry, Commander. Please forgive me just this once. I really came here with Ji-Hye noona on vacation, but the situation became bad. I'll grant your wish later as long as it's within my power. You don't have to do anything; just act like you normally would. (0/1)]

[An Average-rank quest has been delivered to Jin Cheong. No quest rewards were declared, so Player Jin Cheong will not receive a reward.]

- I...

[I'm sincerely asking for your help right now. It seems like I'm playing around, but I'm really desperate right now. It's really important. *Ah*, how about this? We agreed to work with each other. (0/1)]

- I don't remember agreeing to work with you, but...

[I know you want to work with me. You're annoyed about letting me handle all of it, but you're also annoyed about the fact that many things are happening without your knowledge.

[People like us are really sensitive to things like that. I will help you work in your desired position.

[You'll get a lot of support, and I'll make sure that you'll get to take on as many solo projects as possible. Basically, you're guaranteed to get those projects. Anyway, do I just need to get the Republic off your back? (0/1)]

-...

[Interested? I know you are interested. It's not even a difficult request. Just act like you normally would. You don't have to do anything in particular. (0/1)]

'Actually, it's better if you don't say anything.'

This wasn't the right timing to transform the Hero of Shadows into the main protagonist. He just had to maintain that arrogant look and condescending look, and Ji-Hye noona would get the scene that she wanted to get.

I didn't hear any answer from him. I wasn't sure whether he was thinking about it or if he had decided to do what I wanted him to do, but his face told me everything. He looked so much like a villain that he didn't even need to say anything.

"Come here, noona," Lee Ji-Hoo said.

"..."

“Y-Young Master...” I stuttered.

“Come here,” Lee Ji-Hoo repeated.

Jin Cheong was stopping me from going to him.

“I-I’m... sorry. I...” I paused.

“I told you to come here,” Lee Ji-Hoo said.

There was a subtle hostility in the air, and I was sure that Kim Hyun-Sung had realized something. I wasn’t sure what kind of story he was imagining right now, but he had definitely realized that two men were fighting over a woman.

Since he had already realized that, then I was sure he was thinking about why I was here.

Kim Hyun-Sung finally spoke, “I don’t know what’s going on, but...”

“ ... ”

“I can’t just stand by and watch,” Kim Hyun-Sung continued.

‘No, you can just, Hyun-Sung... ’

Kim Hyun-Sung looked at Jin Cheong, but I couldn’t imagine these two talking to each other. As expected, the two didn’t say anything despite the strange situation.

They could have asked each other what they were doing here, but they were maintaining an awkward distance as if they were seeing each other for the first time.

Perhaps this was better because if those two ended up getting involved, the situation could get worse.

“It’s up to Miss Ki-Yeon to decide where she wants to go because she doesn’t belong to anyone. I don’t know what kind of relationship you have with her, but...” Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

“ ... ”

“Miss Ki-Yeon,” Kim Hyun-Sung called out to me.

Anyway, it was better to send Kim Hyun-Sung away because this was just too dangerous. I cast a longing gaze at him, and my expression spoke volumes.

In the end, I chose to run away.

‘I’ll retreat for now.’

It was for a good reason.

Lee Ki-Yeon didn’t want to be with Jin Cheong when she had indescribable feelings for Lee Ji-Hoo. It was the same for Kim Hyun-Sung. As for Jin Cheong, he didn’t have to do anything other than standing and smiling wickedly while staring at Lee Ji-Hoo.

Would the scene become more realistic if I ran away because I couldn’t stand being here any longer?

With that in mind, I turned around and ran away.

[Creating an Average-rank Forced Quest.]

[Buy me some time. I’m not asking for much. I just need a moment. Take care of them for me. You don’t even need to worry about Kim Hyun-Sung. I’m sure he’ll go away soon. (0/1)]

[An Average-rank quest has been delivered to Jin Cheong. No quest rewards were declared, so Player Jin Cheong will not receive a reward.]

They disappeared from my line of sight when I turned the next corner. I heard them calling out my name, but I quickly opened my hand mirror and sent a message.

- Mr. Hyun-Sung, can you come here real quick?

Obviously, the sender was the God of Sacrifice and Revival.

The sender was God Ki-Young, who had a solid bond with Kim Hyun-Sung.

- It’s kind of urgent, and I have many things to tell you... Come to think of it, I think I was kind of harsh. I’d like to apologize over dinner. I made a reservation at a nice

restaurant, and I want to know how you've been doing as well. It's been a while since we've seen each other.

I was running so fast that I was running out of breath, so I found it really difficult to send those messages. I couldn't see Kim Hyun-Sung, but I wasn't sure whether Jin Cheong was doing a good job buying time or if the former had simply read my message.

There was a chance that Kim Hyun-Sung had yet to read my messages, but I thought about the worst-case scenario, which was the possibility that Kim Hyun-Sung might not have received my messages, so I decided to send another message.

- Also...

'I'll end it there. I have to make him curious to make it more effective. He'll probably come right away once he reads my message. Our Hyun-Sung won't betray Light Ki-Young just because he has fallen for Bitch Ki-Yeon.'

I ran so frantically that I had no idea where I was right now. One thing I was sure of was that my surroundings were still a mess. There were screams everywhere, and I could see people running in all directions.

There was chaos around me.

And that was when my hand mirror vibrated in my hands.

'He's here.'

- I'm really sorry, Mr. Ki-Young.

"What?"

- I have no words other than that I'm really... really sorry. I'd like to go to you right now, but something urgent came up... I can't tell you right now, but it's really urgent. I'll make sure I get to you within three hours. I'm sorry. I'm... really sorry.

- What?

'What the hell are you doing?'

'How dare you betray me when I've done so much for you?'

- Okay. Good luck. ^^ Looks like I've been bothering you. ^^

'Fucking' bastard. Will you still not come after seeing this message?'

- You're not bothersome at all. I'm actually really happy that you contacted me. I'll return once I'm done with my task here.

Kim Hyun-Sung probably had no idea why I sent that emoticon to him.

Perhaps I had to be a bit more straightforward because that was the only way he'd understand me.

I picked up my hand mirror again, but I had to put it away because I saw Kim Hyun-Sung running toward me. It wasn't easy mixing in with the crowd. All I could do was keep turning corners and widening our distance—no, I couldn't even do that.

I decided to just get ready to cry.

As expected, I felt someone putting their hand on my shoulder.

I looked at Kim Hyun-Sung with eyes filled with tears, and he flinched upon seeing my tear-stricken face.

I smacked his hand away, and his hand fell weakly on his side. I finally realized where we were. I pulled at my clothes to adjust them, but I inadvertently put too much strength into my hands, so I tore them apart, revealing the slave seal.

The seal told everyone that Lee Ki-Yeon hadn't been living an easy life.

"Miss Ki-Yeon?" Kim Hyun-Sung called out.

'I'll slap him for now.'

Smack!

"Ah..."

"How much more are you going to make me miserable?" I questioned.

“...”

“Do... Do you still believe that I don't belong to anyone?” I asked.

“...”

“Are you disappointed because this isn't the reunion that you wanted?” I asked.

“...”

“Are you disappointed because of how much I changed?” I asked.

'I'll corner him for now because he can't do anything once he's pushed into a corner.'

“Do you think I'm a stupid woman?” I asked.

“...”

“Why did you appear before me? *Heuk...* Why... Why?!” I grumbled.

'Take one more slap for no reason.'

Smack!

CHAPTER 895

VACATION (13)

Humans often activate their inner superhuman strength whenever they were in danger, and Lee Ki-Yeon was in that kind of situation. My acting was beyond method acting. My unexpected slap and the tears in my eyes spoke volumes.

Basically, Lee Ki-Yeon was feeling ashamed for showing this side of herself to someone she thought she had a precious bond with, and she resented that person for showing up at such a bad time.

The explosion of Lee Ki-Yeon's pent-up emotions was amazing.

'Let me slap him again.'

Smack!

Honestly, I was convinced that my hand was hurting more than Kim Hyun-Sung's cheek.

Perhaps it was because of the complicated emotions coursing through me, but I didn't feel any pain at all.

"Why! Why did you appear before me?! Why?!" I shouted.

I was going to start hitting him. I started hitting him lightly while crying, and I eventually started swinging my hands as if I were having a seizure.

And that was when Kim Hyun-Sung grabbed my bloody hands and looked at me quietly.

"Heuk... heuuuk... heuuuuuuk..."

'Let's collapse like I've consumed all of my emotions and strength.'

He awkwardly placed his hand on my shoulder and patted me.

This was the best he could do to comfort me.

Typically, the male lead would hug the other party at this point, but it seemed that his past blunder was telling him not to cross the line.

In the end, all he did was comfort me warmly.

Sometimes, staying silent was more helpful than trying to address the issue.

Kim Hyun-Sung's current look comforted Lee Ki-Yeon. Since I was in character, I didn't dislike him at all. After all, he was the only person I could lean on right now. However, I had to pull myself together.

'All of this doesn't matter anyway. You jerk. How can you do this to me... '

'You have a lot of explaining to do later. You better think of a good excuse. I must've been going too easy on you lately. Do I have to be on the brink of death again for you to come back to your senses?'

Obviously, I could forcefully understand him. We were in a dangerous situation, and this place wasn't exactly safe.

Kim Hyun-Sung wouldn't just stand idly by when someone was in danger. Moreover, a meal with Lee Ki-Young wasn't really an urgent matter.

Since Lee Ki-Yeon was in danger, Kim Hyun-Sung probably thought that this was more urgent. I couldn't exactly forgive him for it, but I could understand him.

If I were in a dangerous situation, I was sure he would come running to me right away, after all.

'He's definitely going to do that.'

This was a competition between situations rather than between Lee Ki-Young and Lee Ki-Yeon. To make matters worse, there weren't any warp gates available for him to teleport to where Lee Ki-Young was located, anyway.

'But why the hell is he here? Which warp gate did he take that he ended up here?'

I had no idea how many minutes it had been, but Kim Hyun-Sung was still waiting for

me to calm down. I was waiting for him to say something, but he was too slow to realize that. It was nice that he wasn't saying anything, but he was being too quiet and cautious.

"I'm sorry, Guild Master of Blue," I said.

"..."

"..."

"Are you feeling better?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

"Yes. I... showed you my ugly side. I shouldn't have screamed, and... I shouldn't have taken my anger out on you..." I replied.

"I don't think that way at all. It wasn't an ugly side at all..." Kim Hyun-Sung said.

Kim Hyun-Sung was still being cautious.

It was like he was showing that our ancestor's wise words, "look before you jump," were applicable to the current situation as well, as he was really cautious with his words.

He looked anxious like he was worried that he'd end up making a stupid mistake in the face of the woman he had met for the first time in a while. He could also be anxious because he had to leave in three hours.

'The plan has been canceled, anyway, so if it's the latter, then don't worry about it. I don't think we'll be seeing each other for the time being.'

"That's not true," I said, smiling dejectedly.

"Do I... look like an idiot?" I asked.

"No..."

"I'm pathetic... for leaving like that... for disappearing without saying anything... and I look pathetic now that we've met again, right?" I asked.

I didn't think I looked that bad as I stepped backward and got ready to cry. I spoke

with a voice mixed with self-deprecation and regret. It was random, but about three percent of my voice was flirtatious, and it wasn't strange, as that was just the kind of person I was.

"I know you have some feelings for me," I said.

Kim Hyun-Sung didn't deny it.

'All right, so you're going to abandon your brother.'

"..."

"..."

"What happened?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

'It's probably best if I tell him so that things will become a bit more dramatic.'

"So..."

I spoke quietly about the things that happened after we parted ways in Rift Land as well as some things he didn't know about Lee Ki-Yeon.

Our surroundings were chaotic, but the space we were in was quiet. I squatted down in the slightly dark space and started recounting to Kim Hyun-Sung. He didn't say anything and merely listened to me. I started from very trivial stories to...

"I worked as a staff at an inn, and it was kind of rewarding. *Ah*, I also worked as a receptionist at an adventurer guild for a short time. It was really fun. Of course, I heard news about the Blue Guild while I was working there," I said.

Making up stories here and there to match the story wasn't that hard.

It wasn't like Kim Hyun-Sung could do some fact checking, anyway, and I was more knowledgeable about the continent compared to him. He smiled lightly at the mundane parts and pitied me when I told him about the unfair situations I had been in.

"And that was when I realized that I left my shoe..." I said.

"I still have it. I tried to give it back, but..." Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"Really? *Hehe*," I giggled.

I even made jokes from time to time, but the important fact here was that he still had my shoe.

Eventually, I got to the main story, and his expression became serious. It was the story about how I met Lee Ji-Hoo, and how I had gotten the slave seal after falling for a trap like an idiot. The story also included the reason I started working as a maid at Lee Ji-Hoo's place...

Kim Hyun-Sung was not saying anything, but I could tell that he was angry because this wasn't exactly the nicest story out there.

I told him how I ended up in a black market, how I ended up getting sold for a million gold, and how I ended up in the hands of the Commander of the Republic. My story made him clench his fist.

'Jin Cheong, you're in big trouble now.'

"That was two months ago," I said.

"..."

"But why are you here?" I asked.

I cast a suspicious gaze at him to make him think that I was suspecting him of visiting the black market for the same reason as Jin Cheong.

Obviously, Kim Hyun-Sung looked really shocked.

To be honest, Lee Ki-Young was more curious about this than Lee Ki-Yeon.

'Why the hell are you here? Are you doing something bad behind my back? You didn't know that this black market existed until now, right? If you've really been hiding its existence from me, then I'll be disappointed.'

"Do you..."

“I-It’s nothing like that, Miss Ki-Yeon,” Kim Hyun-Sung stuttered.

“Then?” I asked.

“..”

“I feel like I’ve been talking about myself too much,” I said.

“I received a request,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“A request?” I asked.

“Yes. I found out about this place a few days ago. I can’t tell you the details, but it’s regarding the guild...” he answered.

‘Ah, does this have to do with building a new branch?’

“So...”

‘Look at him hesitate... ’

“Did that friend of yours make the request?” I asked.

“That’s right,” Kim Hyun-Sung replied.

Although Kim Hyun-Sung didn’t give me the details, I could tell that it was the request I had made.

‘This guy... ’

Perhaps he was trying to make up for the insufficient guild funds.

He probably thought that raiding a black market would be more profitable than raiding a dungeon. There was a warp gate at the Republic, so it would make the Republic wary of black markets once this black market was shut down.

It seemed like he was trying to sell the funds and stolen goods that he would get from getting rid of this place to earn some money. He had successfully infiltrated this black market, but the warp gate suddenly closed...

'Is that even right?'

It was highly likely that my assumption was correct. However, it was best to ask him the details as Lee Ki-Young since this was a guild secret. He couldn't tell the details to Lee Ki-Yeon, as she was technically an outsider.

"The issue you've discussed with me must've gotten resolved." I pointed out.

"That's right. It's all thanks to you. Mr. Ki-Young..."

"So it was Father Lee Ki-Young. I mean, the person you mentioned back then..." I said.

"..."

"..."

"Yes."

"What kind of person is he?" I asked.

"He's someone who's precious to me," he replied.

'But you have the guts to abandon me?'

"He helped me become the person I am today, and he has been supporting me all this while. I don't have enough words to describe it all... but he's a close friend," Kim Hyun-Sung explained.

'But you ignored me. How dare you? I even sacrificed myself for you.'

"I'd like to introduce you to him, but..." Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

"..."

There was a moment of silence, and Kim Hyun-Sung finally decided to keep talking when the silence became too long. He was trembling slightly, so he seemed to be getting ready to make an important statement.

As a response, I got into a slightly serious pose.

“Excuse me... Miss Ki-Yeon.”

“Yes?”

He was definitely gathering his courage to say that.

“If you don’t mind...” Kim Hyun-Sung paused.

“Yes?”

“Why don’t you come to the Blue Guild?” Kim Hyun-Sung suggested.

‘You’re funny. You have no right to bring Lee Ki-Yeon to the guild. You’ve never been interested in recruiting people.’

I thought it was a slightly impulsive statement.

“I’m sure we can resolve the issues you’re having, and I’m not saying this out of pity or because of the situation you’re experiencing. It’s just... I think Mr. Ki-Young will like you as well. There are other reasons, but anyway... W-Why don’t you come with me?” Kim Hyun-Sung stuttered.

“...”

“I normally don’t make this kind of offer... but I feel like I need to say something...” Kim Hyun-Sung added.

“You told me the same thing last time. You said you normally don’t do this... but you felt like making this offer today for some reason. It must be a typical statement you make when flirting with girls,” I said.

“T-That’s not true,” Kim Hyun-Sung said, immediately denying it.

I wasn’t sure whether it was true or not because Kim Hyun-Sung seemed to be acting on impulse. He probably said it unconsciously. Honestly, he definitely wasn’t sure about his own feelings toward Lee Ki-Yeon. He had beautiful memories of her, but those memories weren’t enough to define a person.

I was certain that his offer was out of impulse, but it definitely contained some pity and a bit of his feelings.

'Yeah, I get it, but you know... '

"I'm sorry," I said.

"What?"

"I'm really sorry, but I can't go with you," I answered with a sad smile.

"..."

"The young master—I've fallen in love with Lee Ji-Hoo," I confessed.

Kim Hyun-Sung had yet to confess, but he had already been rejected.

"I don't understand it, either..."

"..."

"But love comes in many forms," I said.

'That was a great line.'

Kim Hyun-Sung's eyes quivered intensely.

'Deserved.'

CHAPTER 896

VACATION (14)

Kim Hyun-Sung looked like there were many things he wanted to say.

I had no idea if Lee Ki-Yeon was truly his first love, but it was an undeniable fact that he had a crush on her. Since he had offered her to go to the Blue Guild together, he was probably imagining a lovey-dovey future between him and her.

‘That won’t happen, man. Lee Ki-Yeon has Lee Ji-Hoo.’

The memories of that precious night made Kim Hyun-Sung have feelings for Lee Ki-Yeon, and his suggestion just now was probably his way of confessing his feelings to her. He was uncomfortable about being straightforward, so I was sure he was uncomfortable as well when he said that.

He was never the type to say something so bold, so he was really being courageous right now.

I felt an electrifying tingle running down my spine. He seemed like he was unsure of his feelings, but I felt an unknown sense of sadness from him. His one-sided crush had ended before it started, and I had to say something to end this once and for all.

“Yes, I love the young master,” I confessed.

Bitch Ki-Yeon was already Lee Ji-Hoo’s servant, so his identity as the Guild Master of the Blue Guild and the Sunset Swordsman didn’t matter at all. Skills and appearance weren’t the most important things in the world, after all.

“I-I see,” Kim Hyun-Sung stuttered.

“I’m sorry for saying this to you despite being the Guild Master of the Blue Guild,” I said.

“No, I...” Kim Hyun-Sung paused.

'Don't deny it. I need to really make it clear. You were already rejected even before your confession. He has to know the harsh reality.'

"I'm not *that* slow-witted, you know," I said.

"What?"

"I knew your feelings..." I told him.

'But you had no chance from the start. You understand me, right?'

I really had to make sure that he'd know...

I had to be straightforward with him, or he'd come up with his own conclusion.

I had to make it clear that I was rejecting him.

It was better to take the initiative in a situation like this.

I was caught off guard by the fact that Kim Hyun-Sung had confessed when his feelings toward me weren't really that significant.

However, he had already confessed to me. I just had to make it clear that I was rejecting him so that he would understand the cold reality.

"I'm sorry, but I can't accept your feelings, Mr. Hyun-Sung," I apologized.

'This was a nice build-up.'

It was so magical. He was probably thinking that he just got dumped after making the confession of a lifetime.

'I shut him down good.'

However, I needed to give him hope, as that was how one could "manage" people.

"If I had met you a bit sooner..." I mumbled.

It was a typical line, but it was enough to touch anyone's heart.

“W-Would I have been in a healthier and loving relationship?” I stammered.

Kim Hyun-Sung looked sad. Humans were easily influenced by emotions and moods.

A great example of this was the fact that whenever one was talking to someone in a dark, isolated space, one would start feeling emotions that one had never felt before.

Obviously, Lee Ki-Yeon’s acting skill was spearheading this situation.

My pitiful face, teary eyes, seductive lips, slightly red cheeks, and trembling hands and feet could easily activate anyone’s instinct to protect. The mood was so good that it made me feel like I was in a melodrama.

‘I’m sure it’ll make even a monk’s heart race or make even a psychopath’s heart race.’

Kim Hyun-Sung was falling for it as well without realizing it.

Lee Ki-Yeon shed another beautiful tear.

How come I couldn’t meet Kim Hyun-Sung sooner?

Why was it that I had to experience this kind of love? Why was I so dumb and silly? I could be in a healthier and loving relationship, so why was it that I had to listen to the voice in my heart? Why couldn’t I accept the Guild Master of Blue’s feelings? I...

‘Please comfort me.’

“Miss Ki-Yeon...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

‘I need you to comfort me. Hug me tight. Hug me really tight. Please. Please hug me.’

I was like hypnotizing him. Kim Hyun-Sung seemed to be wondering how he could comfort me while looking at me as if I were the most pitiful woman in the world. How could he stand still when the woman was aggressively hinting at him to hug her and comfort her?

Kim Hyun-Sung stretched his hands out and tried to hug the woman in pain, but...

“Please don’t do this, Mr. Hyun-Sung,” I said.

'That won't work, man.'

"Please... Please don't do this any longer. Don't... make my heart waver... any longer," I begged.

'Bastard.'

"I-I'm sorry. I just..." Kim Hyun-Sung paused.

"..."

You got dumped again without even confessing. Hyun-Sung, you should be careful when you start meeting women in the future. How are you going to survive this harsh world when you're so clumsy?'

'You won't look charming by behaving like you're willing to give everything you have like a fool. If you stumble upon a gold digger, I'm afraid you might end up giving her the Blue Guild. I should really get him and Hye-Jin together as quickly as possible.'

"That wasn't my intention. It just seemed like you were asking to be comforted..." Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"You're a good person, Mr. Hyun-Sung..." I said.

"That's not true. I'm not a good person..." Kim Hyun-Sung denied.

"The woman whom you will love will definitely be happy," I added. This kind of line was pretty effective when it came to "managing" people. Moreover, instilling useless hope was my forte.

"That's..."

"Give that warmth to the person who truly needs you," I said and stood up.

'If possible, give it to Hye-Jin. I still have some stocks of her.'

Kim Hyun-Sung nodded slowly with a face that told me that he had realized something.

He still looked sad, but his emotions seemed to have become bittersweet.

“I think I understand what you’re saying, Miss Ki-Yeon,” he said.

“...”

“So what will you do now?” Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

“I should return to the young master,” I answered.

“...”

“It was nice seeing you, Mr. Hyun-Sung,” I said.

“Excuse me... M-Miss Ki-Yeon,” Kim Hyun-Sung called out.

Kim Hyun-Sung grabbed my hand, but he quickly let go of it with a surprised look on his face.

I was also taken aback by what he had done.

Of course, I didn't think that he was being stubborn, as he knew that Lee Ki-Yeon wouldn't change her mind. He was probably trying to end this in his own way. I was not sure whether that'd end this relationship or lead to a new relationship, but he looked pretty serious as he stared at me.

“I might be saying something unnecessary here, but...” Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

“What?”

“And you might not even want it...” Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off again.

“...”

“But I want to help you somehow,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“What? What do you—”

“It's not because I want something... I don't have any other intentions, either. I-I just feel like I need to do this...” Kim Hyun-Sung interrupted.

“You're kind. I... feel like I'm being rude toward you,” I told him.

“That’s not true. Honestly, I still don’t know... what kind of person you are, and I don’t know what kind of feelings I have for you... but I at least want you to be happy. This is the one emotion I’m sure of,” Kim Hyun-Sung explained.

‘Shit. Is this guy being serious?’

‘Even though this love cannot and won’t come true, you actually still want to make her happy? Are you saying you’re going to cheer on us two from afar? Did you receive some kind of script from Ji-Hye noona? Are you the second lead of this melodrama?’

I started wondering whether Kim Hyun-Sung was a paid actor or not, but there was determination in his eyes. He was never the type of person to care about other people, but he cared a lot about Lee Ki-Yeon, so I was very certain that he had feelings for her.

I became even more confident in my assumption when I remembered how he had abandoned his brother for her. To make matters worse, he looked like he didn't regret that decision at all, and it was proven by how he was staring at me with a solemn look.

I would hit him if I could, but I couldn’t find the right timing, as we were moving too fast.

He was taking his crush back to his love rival.

If Kim Hyun-Sung were a bit weaker, he would look more noble.

He was like a knight protecting his princess from every possible danger.

Knights were sacrificial figures, and despite the sad reality that the princess and the knight couldn't be together, the Sunset Swordsman of the Blue Kingdom was giving everything he had to protect the innocent princess.

Things would be too easy if the monster was too weak to the extent of dying in just one hit.

I was sure that Lee Ji-Hoo was definitely thinking of the same thing as me.

The Sunset Swordsman’s struggle...

Despite knowing that they would eventually part ways, Kim Hyun-Sung still decided to sacrifice himself for the heroine.

'I'm sure he would be popular no matter where he is.'

First of all, he was handsome.

If the world had a popularity contest, he'd always be at the top.

The battered and bruised knight soon arrived in front of the prince.

'That's another novel right there.'

"Noona?" Lee Ji-Hoo said.

"Young Master..." I answered.

"Noona... noona..." Lee Ji-Hoo repeated.

"Yes, it's me, Young Master. It's Lee Ki-Yeon," I said and started crying.

Our reunion earlier wasn't touching, but this one was different because Lee Ki-Yeon had finally realized that she loved Lee Ji-Hoo.

No matter what kind of hardships she would go through, and even if the young master ended up hating her, Lee Ki-Yeon was resolved to overcome any obstacles. Wouldn't it be fitting to say that the Sunset Swordsman had taught her to think that way?

Kim Hyun-Sung and I had a short adventure, but it was a journey that took about five months. This time, there were many parts that had to be shortened due to the time constraint.

Anyway, Lee Ki-Yeon was afraid to look at Lee Ji-Hoo, who had just been humiliated by the scummy and horny Jin Cheong. However, Lee Ki-Yeon only took a moment to compose herself before bravely stepping forward.

"Young Master, I—"

"Don't say anything, noona," Lee Ji-Hoo interrupted.

'Lee Ji-Hye, your emotions are really... '

"Don't say another word," Lee Ji-Hoo said.

"But..."

"I realized it when I got separated from you," Lee Ji-Hoo added.

"..."

"I finally realized... just how precious you are to me... And it was such a straightforward feeling. I don't care what kind of person you are. I love you... Lee Ki-Yeon," Lee Ji-Hoo confessed.

My hesitant steps were no longer full of hesitation as I moved even faster.

"Y-Young Master..." I mumbled and started running while crying at some point. I ran out of breath, but I ran desperately as if I wanted to be in his arms as soon as possible. I almost fell to the ground, but I recovered my balance and ran with all my might.

Lee Ji-Hoo did the same and was running from the other side toward me. I glanced at him and noticed that his face was covered in tears.

I couldn't see any traces of his playful side, and he looked like a mess.

He wanted to fulfill his one and only desire, which was to embrace a certain woman.

His desperation was telling me how hard he had worked to get this far.

And that was when the two people finally met and hugged each other tightly to seemingly affirm their love for each other...

'I can't believe I'm doing this.'

It was kind of fun, though.

It would have been more fun if Kim Hyun-Sung hadn't said his next words while staring at Jin Cheong with a slightly sad face.

“I’ll pay for her freedom, Commander of the Republic.”

“..”

“One million...” Kim Hyun-Sung offered.

‘What?’

“No, two million gold. Is that enough?” Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

‘You bastard... ’

“Miss Ki-Yeon... please be happy...” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

‘Kim Hyun-Sung, you jerk... You’re someone who’d happily give everything you have to a fox. You can still give some money to your brother who sacrificed himself for you, right? You still have money for me, right?’

‘If you don’t, then it’s really over for us. Got it?’

- *Hahahaha!* Thanks for the gift, Lee Ki-Young!

Jin Cheong's delighted voice made me seethe inside.

CHAPTER 897

VACATION (15)

'I'm so angry.'

"I'm so annoyed, damn it," I said.

"What are you so annoyed about?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"..."

"I guess it's pretty obvious," Lee Ji-Hye said.

'Jin Cheong, that bastard.'

I got angry again when I recalled his delighted voice. I was sure he was more happy about backstabbing me than getting money. He was clearly mocking me. His behavior was strange, and I was sure he had laughed out loud on purpose to provoke me.

Even if that wasn't his goal, he still obtained two million gold, so he was definitely happy about that. It was an unexpected boon, so he was definitely on cloud nine right now. I gnashed my teeth when I remembered how he thanked me.

'No, Kim Hyun-Sung is more problematic than him. What kind of crazy bastard hands over two million gold because of someone he had met long ago? Where did you even get that money from? Did you write an IOU or something? Weren't you going to give me the profits you've earned from the black market?'

I had no idea how much gold they had stored here, but two million gold was a ridiculously large amount.

It'd be a different story if Kim Hyun-Sung managed to sell all the stolen goods here, but there was no way he could do that. In addition to the one million gold that Jin Cheong had paid the black market, there was still the remaining one million gold. I couldn't help but wonder where he had obtained that amount.

To make matters worse, the money was supposed to belong to the Continental Protection Management Committee, so it felt like I lost double the amount, making me feel even more bitter.

'Jin Cheong isn't the problem. He's the root of all evil.'

I was sure that if Jin Cheong wanted to get more, he could have gotten more than just two million gold.

I wondered how he was going to complete the quest that I had given him and why he even did that without thinking it through.

'The fox—I mean, that fox was me, but I really wanted to hold a hearing.'

"I guess Kim Hyun-Sung is still a man in the end. He looked at Lee Ki-Yeon as if she was someone special. He's a good person, and it's proven by the fact that he's cheering her on..." Lee Ji-Hye said.

"..."

"It was fun, right? Let's end this on a good note," Lee Ji-Hye said.

'Well, we can't end it on a good note.'

"It's not like we didn't profit. We resolved the potion addiction crisis in Colorado. Of course, there are still many things that we need to handle," Lee Ji-Hye said.

"What's going to happen afterward is more important. In less than a week, there will be an uproar from the people complaining about their addiction.

"I need to declare Colorado as a special management region and track the distribution route of the potions. Han Sora will take care of the Magic Tower. I think it's best if we leave Lindel alone.

"Jin Cheong had also promised to take care of the Republic side. We should consider restoring the Federation to its original state as our top priority," I suggested.

If one only looked at the results, then it looked great. The only problem was the financial loss. Designating a place as a special management area was expensive, but how could the Honorary Cardinal of the Sacred Democratic Country leave the addicts

to suffer?

The Federation was famous for being broke, so they'd obviously request funds from the Committee.

Even quick maths on the cost of a rehabilitation center, a counseling center, and a living assistance system for the Adventurers of the Federation and Colorado said that the amount would be astronomical.

Obviously, *I* wouldn't pay for all of this, but the Committee's funds were closely tied to me, so I felt bitter about this incident.

'Kim Hyun-Sung, you jerk.'

"Are you sure there's one at the Magic Tower?" I asked.

"Yeah, there's a warp gate there, so it's pretty obvious. One just has to fall, and they'll fall one by one like dominoes. If we let the Black Swan Guild handle it, it'll only take a few days," Lee Ji-Hye answered.

Fortunately, we could confiscate the assets of the villains. However, it didn't change the fact that Kim Hyun-Sung was still a jerk.

"By the way, you look good, Ji-Hye noona," I said.

"Of course. It feels like I enjoyed my vacation for the first time in a while. Yeon-Soo was there to record, so I can watch it every day," Lee Ji-Hye said.

"What did she record?" I asked.

"Everything. Once the video is edited, it'll be pretty fun to watch," Lee Ji-Hye answered.

'Everything?'

"..."

"..."

"Anyway, I'm going to spend the rest of my vacation with Yeon-Soo. My staffer

worked really hard, and it resulted in a great piece. I need to make sure that Yeon-Soo gets to make great memories as well, as it would be the reward for her hard work.

"Ah, now that I think about it, aren't you supposed to meet Kim Hyun-Sung? You have less than thirty minutes left. What are you going to do?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"I wasn't planning on meeting him anyway. Ah, I should send him a message," I said.

Sure enough, I had already received a message.

I wanted to write something nice, but I couldn't do it.

- Mr. Ki-Young, where are you right now? I'm almost there.

'He's not even apologizing to me.'

- I need to cancel our plan today. You seem busy... take care of your work. ^^ I feel like I'm bothering you when you're working so hard. ^^ You're so busy that you can't even contact me, right?

- That's not true. I have my reasons for not contacting you back... I was actually going to contact you, Mr. Ki-Young, but there was a pretty important matter...

- But you did not contact me. You seem busy right now, so you can just stop replying, Guild Master. I believe you'll do a great job at the task that I've given you, as you've been working so hard. ^^;;

'You still can't tell?'

- I'd really appreciate it if you could send a performance report by tomorrow, Guild Master. I would like you to focus on the budget, in particular, Guild Master.

'I'm angry. I'm actually angry.'

Kim Hyun-Sung had to be disciplined.

I realized that I had been going too easy on him.

I knew he was slow-witted, but he'd definitely understand what I was trying to say

here, right? I specifically called him "Guild Master," so he'd definitely realize that something was wrong.

It was proven by the fact that he didn't reply right away.

I was sure he had finally realized that the emoticons I sent in my first message weren't my way of expressing my kindness to him.

As expected, my hand mirror started ringing. I was sure he wanted to talk over the phone, as he had no idea what to say. Of course, I didn't answer his call.

My hand mirror rang a few more times, but I didn't answer him.

- Please stop calling me, Guild Master. I can't talk on the phone right now.

- Mr. Ki-Young, there's something that I really want to tell you today.

'He's getting impatient.'

- Please call me later.

I couldn't even smile, as I already knew what he was going to say. He was probably going to explain his situation, say that he needed to save someone in danger, and make excuses. I'd have to compliment him if I were to hear him out, so it was better not to respond to his calls.

- How about focusing more on your task rather than talking about useless things?
^^;; I'm kind of busy right now.

"It's pretty obvious. I'm sorry. I'm sowwy... blah, blah, blah," I said.

- If I insulted you in any way... I'm really sorry.

'Sorry, my ass.'

- I got you a gift. It's Michaelaria's Necklace. I wanted to give it to you in person... If you can make some time for me...

Kim Hyun-Sung even sent a picture of it. For some reason, the name sounded familiar.

'It's that item.'

The final item that was supposed to be sold on the black market. It had a pretty simple design. I didn't like it, but it was definitely an excellent item, as it was being sold in an auction house.

'I can probably sell this to Jin Cheong.'

He seemed pretty sad about it, so I could probably sell it to him for two million gold.

If its effects weren't bad, I could equip it myself.

It wasn't so bad, but I wasn't happy about the fact that he wanted to meet me. He'd probably go on and on about how sorry he was. I felt bad, but I needed to discipline him.

Of course, I was still going to accept the necklace.

- I'd appreciate it if you could just mail the necklace. I don't want to see you right now.

- Okay... I'll send it right away.

- If you have nothing else to say, I'll be signing off, Guild Master.

- Excuse me, Mr. Ki-Young...

- Yes?

- There was an unavoidable reason why I had to be late to the place you invited me.

- I'm telling you this because I'm in an avoidable situation right now. ^^;;

- I'm sorry, but...

I didn't reply to his last message and messaged someone else instead.

Soon, I heard a voice outside.

"Mr. Ki-Young? You have a guest."

“Tell them to come in. Actually, I’ll head out,” I answered.

“Okay.”

When I walked out, I saw a face I hadn’t seen in a while.

“Have you been doing well?” I asked.

He hadn't dyed his hair, so he still had blond hair. Perhaps it was because of the influence of mana, but his appearance hadn't really changed. He was smiling at me, so I was sure he was happy about the fact that I had messaged him.

Judging by his flushed face, he had to have run here the moment he received my message.

'This is what I'm talking about... This is more like it.'

“Am I late, hyung? I’m sorry. I was in the middle of training...” Rafael said.

“It’s fine, Mr. Rafael,” I said.

“I-Is something wrong?” Rafael asked.

“It’s nothing serious. Do I need to have a reason to contact you?” I questioned.

“Not really...” Rafael replied.

'Yeah, I've neglected you too much. I also understand that this is too sudden.'

“I contacted you because I wanted to catch up over a meal. I was wondering what you’ve been up to these days... and I have a favor to ask as well. I’d like to talk to you about what's happening on the continent these days. Are you available?” I asked.

“Yes, I’m available, hyung,” Rafael replied.

“Can you... make a reservation at *that* restaurant?” I requested.

“A-actually, I know a better place. Let’s go there, hyung,” Rafael suggested.

“What?”

“It’s actually dinner time... and I thought something like this might happen...” Rafael said.

“How about we take a picture?” I suggested.

“What? But that's so sudden...” Rafael questioned.

“Let’s take one together, Mr. Rafael,” I said.

“Ah... okay.”

I felt like we took a pretty good picture. I ignored Rafael’s awkward smile and immediately posted it on Benigoa Net. I rarely made posts, but I immediately logged into my personal account and soon uploaded the picture.

I was curious about the comments that the people were going to make. It had been a while since I posted on Benigoagram, so I decided to post the picture with the following caption.

[It’s been a while since I met the Gray Warrior.]

'It's pretty good, but obviously, I didn't stop there.'

[#I don’t care anymore #With my lovely little bro #An overdue outing #Restaurant #Honorary Cardinal and the Gray Warrior #Holy Sword Warrior # Rafael #Goodbye stress #Finally free #We understand each other #Unbroken promise #A sincere friend]

In addition...

[#A new friend]

'I really needed to discipline him. Seriously.'

CHAPTER 898

HOLY SWORD WARRIOR AND THE HONORARY CARDINAL (1)

[Jung Ha-Yan likes your photo.]

I knew Jung Ha-Yan would like my photo first. I thought she was with Han Sora right now and was investigating the Magic Tower with her, but it seemed that this was important to her as well.

Jung Ha-Yan had to be on her hand mirror after making Han Sora handle the majority of the tasks. It had only been one second since I uploaded the photo, but she had already reacted to it, which was exactly what I expected from Jung Ha-Yan.

[Cha Hee-Ra likes your photo.]

[Jo Hye-Jin likes your photo.]

Cha Hee-Ra's account was being managed by her guild, so they had to do this to show that she had no issues with me. Hye-Jin always had her hand mirror with her, so of course, she'd react quickly to my photo.

'Is today her day off? I wonder what she's doing right now.'

I wanted to invite Jo Hye-Jin out, but Kim Hyun-Sung would probably despise me for it, so I decided against it. In addition, Rafael was actually more effective when it came to it.

Rafael talked nonstop, and I nodded nonstop at what he was saying. I glanced at my hand mirror and saw that many people were liking the photo. It was happening so fast that I couldn't check every single notification, but I saw most of it thanks to Mind's Eye.

It seemed that Park Deok-Gu, Ahn Ki-Mo, Kim Ye-Ri, the guild members, Oscar, and even Father Basel had Benigoagram accounts.

Clearly, Father Basel wasn't falling behind the trends these days. Lady Marilyn, Senator Caitlyn, the executives of the Republic and Federation, the Vatican, and even Other races liked the photo.

The photo that I had just posted spread like wildfire on Benigoa Net, and I was sure that Kim Hyun-Sung would soon see the post. Moments later...

[Kim Hyun-Sung likes your photo.]

He finally saw it.

[Kim Hyun-Sung has unliked your photo.]

'He must've misclicked.'

My account could see through everything.

I was sure he had misclicked while scrolling through his feed. It was pretty obvious. He probably tapped on it again upon realizing that he had liked my photo, but he had no idea that I could see what he was doing.

Was he that obsessed with his hand mirror?

And that was when I heard a voice beside me.

"How... have you been doing, hyung?"

"..."

"Things are pretty much the same. I've been spending the majority of my time working, but I still make sure to enjoy some breaks from time to time. I've been doing some reading and praying as well," I answered.

I couldn't tell him that I had a chaotic vacation with Ji-Hye noona.

"You're simply... amazing. B-But... please focus more on your health," Rafael requested.

I just smiled quietly.

“You don’t have to worry too much,” I reassured him.

“...”

“I’m taking care of my health more than anyone. I’m not working as hard as you think I am. Of course, I know I shouldn’t be acting like this since the continent has yet to recover, but I’m human as well... I tend to become lazy from time to time,” I added.

“Hahaha...”

Rafael was laughing, but there was a hint of sadness in his laugh.

It seemed like he was thinking that I could never be lazy.

“I mean, I’m spending time with you right now, right?” I questioned.

“Yes, you’re right...” Rafael answered.

“I’m enjoying myself because it’s been a while since we’ve seen each other,” I said. I wasn’t really enjoying myself. He wasn’t really fun to be around. It was fine to see him once in a while, but I didn’t want to meet him often.

Fortunately, our meeting happened so suddenly that we had many things to talk about. I was also curious about how Rafael was doing these days.

The Holy Sword Warrior’s party was a competent party of the continent. They were less valuable than Kim Hyun-Sung, Jung Ha-Yan, Cha Hee-Ra, and me, but they were gaining a ton of attention. That was probably why people were looking at us.

‘But I knew this would happen... ’

“Today is pretty bad, though,” I mumbled.

“What?”

“It’s nothing, Mr. Rafael,” I replied.

‘It’s really bad.’

It was the same whenever I went out with Kim Hyun-Sung, Jung Ha-Yan, or even Park

Deok-Gu. People would look at us because heroes of the continent and popular adventurers were like celebrities here, but I felt like today was especially bad.

It felt like everyone was making it obvious that they were staring at us. Some even blatantly took photos. I also noticed a few reporters among the crowd.

'Rafael must be more popular than I thought. Has it really been that long since I last saw him?'

I felt like they were going to release an article about this.

I opened my hand mirror again and saw an article on the main page.

I knew this was going to happen...

[Honorary Cardinal and the Holy Sword Warrior's Lindel Outing - Reporter Kim Sung-Kyeong from Lindel Daily Report]

There were countless comments, but I did not need to read them.

It wasn't that difficult to deduce what those comments were like.

I was sure the netizens were going crazy right now, thinking about the reason why I decided to summon the Holy Sword Warrior to Lindel. Of course, they were definitely speculating about my political intentions as well, and there was also a chance that they were assuming that I'd recruit Rafael's party to the Blue Guild, as we were in alliance.

[A Conflict with the Sunset Swordsman? The Blue Guild Has Yet to Released an Official Statement - Reporter Kang Yumi of Lindel's Political Department]

'What the hell is this?'

Was the "new friend" hashtag too stimulating? Anyway, they were blowing things out of proportion to get people talking.

[Unidentified ID: I knew this was going to happen. I don't want to say this, but when you look at the guild master's past behavior, it's understandable. He even left for the Republic for no apparent reason.]

[Lindel Villager: You're right... It's symbolic to have a branch in the Republic, but that's all there is to it. The timing is kind of strange, too.]

[Nature Lover: Please take the article down. It's such a ridiculous article.]

[Lindel Villager: This isn't the first time they released an article about them having a bad relationship... Don't you remember the rumor about Father Lee Ki-Young possibly moving to the Federation a long time ago? At this point, isn't it reasonable to make that kind of assumption? Of course, I'm not doubting their relationship. I'm just suggesting that we think about that possibility.]

[Nature Lover: I'm telling you this as a guild official, but that's not true at all. I'm going to make an official request to take down the article, so think what you want.]

[Unidentified ID: You probably can't talk about it *because* you're a guild official. The fact that he's meeting the Holy Sword Warrior right now...]

Of course, this wasn't that bad, as this would help discipline Kim Hyun-Sung.

He'd definitely be able to read this article since it was on the main page. I was certain that many thoughts would pop up in his head, and he'd soon realize the gravity of the situation.

It seemed that the situation was more serious than I thought because Miss Kim Mi-Young even decided to call me. I simply told her that she didn't need to do anything. I just told her to announce that there weren't any issues and that the rumor was going to disappear soon.

The stock price would fall slightly by doing that, but...

'I'm sure they'll take care of it.'

"I'm sorry, Mr. Rafael. Something came up..." I said.

"It's fine, hyung. Is there anything you want to eat?" Rafael asked.

"I'm not sure. You can pick something for me," I told him.

"Ah... okay. I'll order something for you... Would you like some wine?" Rafael asked.

"I think I'll have a cup of wine," I replied.

"Okay."

'You don't need to think so hard about it.'

Rafael thought hard and long before ordering the most ordinary thing on the menu, which was the course meal.

"I heard a celebrity is operating this restaurant. They're an adventurer specializing in fire magic... and they opened this restaurant the moment they retired. Marian told me about this place," he said.

"Marian... you're talking about the Miracle Priest," I said.

"That's right."

"By the way, how's the party..." I asked.

"They're looking for a dungeon," Rafael replied.

"A dungeon?" I asked.

"Yes."

'Interesting.'

"That is a bit unexpected..." I said.

"Do you think so?" he asked.

'That's because a party like yours doesn't really go out there to look for dungeons. Purchasing the entry rights to a dungeon or participating in raids through commissions are the best ways to go about entering a dungeon; they save you a ton of time, too. You don't know that?'

Finding a dungeon was difficult, and they were often found by accident or by tracking down the root of an anomaly in a region. It was like finding a needle in a haystack, and it wouldn't be any different for Rafael's party.

Rather than having the party waste time on useless things, it would be cheaper to hire a professional tracker.

This was a widely known method, so the fact that they had decided to find the dungeon themselves meant only one thing...

'They have a lead.'

'They don't want others to know about it, too.'

"Do you—"

"It's actually top secret, but I can tell you," Rafael interrupted.

'Our Rafael is nice.'

"Hold on. Do you mind if I take photos of the food before we talk about it?" I asked.

"Of course, hyung," Rafael replied.

The food came out at the perfect time. I immediately uploaded the photos of the food to Benigoagram. I saw Jung Ha-Yan liking those photos in the proverbial blink of an eye before I could even close my hand mirror.

"Actually, we found a strange monster near Lindel," Rafael said.

"..."

"It was a *really* unique monster; we couldn't find it in any bestiary. We couldn't take a photo of it, too, as everything happened so fast," Rafael added.

"What did you do with its corpse?" I asked.

"It disappeared as well..." Rafael replied.

"What?"

"More specifically, when Marian placed her hand on it, it turned into dust, which appeared like it was made out of light and disappeared. We have no idea how, but even more interesting was that the monster wielded holy power," Rafael answered.

“Holy power?” I questioned.

“Yes. It definitely wielded holy power. Marian and I both felt it. At first, we thought it was just a variant monster, but as time went on...” Rafael trailed off.

“I see.”

“Marian started having dreams,” Rafael continued.

“...”

“Someone was talking to her in that dream. She found herself in a pitch-black room, and someone was asking for her help... someone was asking for Marian's help to get out of that pitch-black room,” he added.

“...”

“...”

‘This is definitely foreshadowing.’

At this point, it wouldn’t be a bad idea to let the party look for it.

The situation was clear, and if the monster's level was high, then the dungeon had to be a high-ranking dungeon as well.

Actually, a dungeon had already popped up in my mind the moment I heard Rafael's words. As one of the continent's managers, Ji-Hye noona and I had a list of all the dungeons on the continent...

‘But the problem is that we can’t release it.’

Rafael had probably found leads to that dungeon...

‘The Mole Saint's dungeon... ’

It was the dungeon that Benigoa herself had updated, and the dungeon that the Vatican had decided to conceal underground.

[Unranked Dungeon]

[Mole Saint's Cozy Sanctuary]

I checked the information of the dungeon that had popped up in my head before turning to Rafael and saying, "It's not going to be much... but I think I can help."

CHAPTER 899

HOLY SWORD WARRIOR AND THE HONORARY CARDINAL (2)

“Are you... going to go into the dungeon with us?” Rafael asked.

“I’m not sure. I’d like to if I have the time... but I can’t promise anything... For now, I think finding that dungeon is the top priority. I think it’s best if we adjust our plans later since we both have work to do...” I suggested.

“Ah...”

‘He looks really sad.’

“But I’ll think about it as positively as possible since it’s your plan,” I added.

“You don’t have to... Please do what’s comfortable for you...” Rafael said.

His expression was different from his words, but it was fine. I was interested, after all.

“No, it’s an issue. A monster capable of wielding holy power... that is just bizarre. As you said, it’s highly likely that it’s the reason behind the anomalies happening in the nearby regions. Even if we don’t go into the dungeon together, I think it’s best to investigate the ecology with experts... There are too many strange things going on for it to be just a variant,” I suggested.

“You think so?” he asked.

“Yes. I think it’s best to investigate the place where the monster was first found. Is your camp there?” I asked.

“Yes. We made camp at the place where we first discovered that monster,” Rafael replied.

'Should I go now?'

I was quite free once I was done eating with him, and the camp had pretty good scenery. I would certainly be able to capture excellent pictures if we set up a campfire there.

On top of that, we could make stew, drink beer together, and talk about random things.

I'd have to post that on Benigoagram. Even if we weren't going for that reason, it was a place I had to go at least once because I couldn't just tell him that the dungeon was located below the Vatican.

The dungeon was top secret, and it wasn't something I could tell him even if I wanted to do so. It was an unranked dungeon, after all. It wasn't even an Average or Rare-rank dungeon.

I could overstep my boundaries if I wanted, but using cheats more than necessary as an administrator would make the system think that I was a delinquent. The most I could do was drop him hints and help his party find the dungeon through normal means.

"How about we go together?" I suggested.

"What? Really?" Rafael asked.

"Yes. It's kind of late, but I think it'll be fine if I just take a look. If you have room, I could maybe spend a night," I answered.

"What?"

"If... you don't like the idea..." I paused.

"N-No, that's not the case... P-Please wait a moment. I need to make preparations... I need to make a call," Rafael stuttered.

"..."

Rafael quickly took out his hand mirror and called someone. I couldn't really hear him due to the barrier, but it sounded like he was shouting. I was worried because it

seemed like they had different opinions, but I saw him nodding quietly in the end.

'But how should I let him know about this?'

It'd be problematic if the system told me that giving hints was cheating.

The guild's investigation would be faster than Rafael's party, but I didn't really like that.

Obviously, Rafael would say that he was fine with it, but the Holy Sword Warrior party wasn't part of the Blue Guild. In other words, it would appear like the guild was stealing the party's hard work. I didn't want to do that, as there was no need to cause unnecessary conflict.

"I think it's best if we leave after dessert, hyung," Rafael suggested.

"Okay, Mr. Rafael. *Ah*, can I bring a few people with me?" I asked.

"Yes, if that's what you wish... Are they from the Blue Guild?" Rafael asked.

'I'm sure he's worried.'

"They're not from the guild. I know what you're worried about, but you don't have to worry, Mr. Rafael. I don't know if this will make you feel reassured, but the ownership of the dungeon will definitely belong to your party..."

"No, it's nothing like that. It's not because of the ownership of the dungeon... Honestly, that doesn't even matter. I could give it to you if you need it..." Rafael paused.

"*Haha*, I appreciate the offer. I'll do my best not to put you and your party members in a difficult situation," I reassured him.

"You don't... need to be *that* considerate..." Rafael said.

We talked as we proceeded with our meal. They weren't really important conversations, but they were good enough to pass the time. Soon, his hand mirror vibrated again, and he brought up the topic once again.

"Let's get going, hyung," Rafael said.

“Ah, okay. Could you tell me the coordinates?” I asked.

“Of course,” Rafael replied.

After seeing the coordinates that Rafael sent me almost immediately, I walked and saw a green griffon. I was actually going to ride Whitefall, but the griffon had two saddles, so I immediately took out my hand mirror.

“Could I take a picture...” I asked.

“Sure.”

[With Mr. Rafael’s Green Griffon]

[#Nighttime flight #Departure #New Beginning]

This would be good enough.

“Hold on tight,” he said.

“...”

I thought it would be an uncomfortable flight, but I was mistaken.

I noticed that we were getting farther away from Lindel.

After some time, I saw a forest and lights everywhere.

A party had probably come out for an expedition. They looked like Epic-rank adventurers, and they were sitting in front of a campfire. I assumed they were discussing their future plans or their plans about the expedition tomorrow.

Even though it wasn’t anything special, it was a sight that one would see in a fantasy novel.

Their tattered and simple tents reminded me of the old days as well.

‘That’s a must.’

Unlike these camps, the camp over there was really eye-catching.

'Isn't that a little too fancy?'

It was really big. If I were to exaggerate a bit, I'd say that I was looking at a castle or a small village. The large tent covered a vast area of the clearing, and the lamps revealed luxurious items that reminded me of glamping^[1].

I had to ask because of the griffon...

"Is it that place?"

"Yes. It's a bit simple, but..." Rafael paused.

'You call that simple?'

"I had to put in some work in case you felt uncomfortable," Rafael confessed.

'In that short period of time?'

"I don't think they finished building it... Looks like we're kind of early," he said.

"You didn't need to do that. I'm worried that I caused trouble for your party," I said.

"It's fine. We weren't making any progress anyway, and I'm sure the party members will be happy to see you, too," Rafael denied.

'That's what you think... '

I was sure his party was unhappy to be caught up in all this from out of nowhere.

They were happy that I was going to help them, but no one would be happy about building a camp during their break. To make matters worse, they were going to take down the camp anyway, so this was basically pointless.

At most, the camp would last only a month. They also didn't have staffers to build the camp, so I was sure these top adventurers were finding it hard to stomach the reality that they would have to build the camp themselves.

In other words, this wasn't practical at all. They had decided to build a camp to create a resupply point closer to where they assumed the dungeon was located, but this fancy camp was just too much.

This fancy camp was just a distraction. Actually, if this camp was a smokescreen, then it was pretty successful. After all, who would think that Rafael's party was here to investigate a possible dungeon upon seeing the fanciness of their camp?

Everyone would most likely think that some rich adventurer like Lee Ji-Hoo was here to have fun, and they wouldn't care about the party afterward.

The camp was so fancy that it was worthy of being posted on Benigoagram. I was convinced that it would appear in a camping magazine or something. Perhaps this was the reason he had raised his voice earlier.

The griffon descended slowly amidst my silly thoughts.

His party greeted me upon landing.

"It's been a while, Father Lee Ki-Young."

"It has, Mr. Lee Joo-Hyuk. Have you been doing well?" I asked.

The hunting dog was still as charismatic as always.

"Hello, Father Lee Ki-Young. I'm so happy to see you."

"I'm happy as well, Miss Marian. I heard you've been struggling a lot," I greeted.

"No, it's really nothing," Marian replied.

Marian, the Miracle Priest.

"Hello, Father Lee Ki-Young."

I didn't really remember the remaining members, but it would be best to greet them one by one by reading their information using Mind's Eye. It felt like the party had grown pretty big while we hadn't seen each other.

I could see unfamiliar faces, and I decided it was better to get them to like me by saying their names and titles rather than ignoring them outright.

"Ah! I heard a lot about you. Aren't you Neina, the Gray Mage?" I asked.

“H-How did you...” Neina stuttered.

“I really wanted to meet you in person... I can’t believe we’re seeing each other like this. I never imagined you’d be in the same party as Mr. Rafael. Actually, the Blue Guild was going to contact you, but it looks like we were late,” I told her.

‘See? She’s going crazy about it. She’s smiling so brightly.’

“I’ve visited many camps so far, but I’ve never seen a camp this stylish,” I said.

I decided to compliment their hard work and act like a commoner to gain their favor.

This tactic wasn't going to work on everyone, but parties used to living in the wild instead of in a clan house or guild house liked compliments like this. They really liked it when I told them that it reminded me of the old days.

I looked like a weak person who wouldn’t even lift a finger to help when it came to something like this, but look at their faces. They definitely thought I was different.

“I’ll do it, hyung,” Rafael offered.

“It’s fine, Mr. Rafael,” I told him.

“It’s because we’re feeling really uncomfortable, Father Lee Ki-Young. We’re really grateful that you’re here...” Rafael said.

“I was worried that maybe I was being too nosy. I’d like to say this just in case, but the Blue Guild has no intention of taking your achievements...” I reassured them.

“O-Oppa.”

‘This... timing is bad.’

“O-O-Oppa...?”

“Isn’t... that Miss Jung Ha-Yan?”

Neina, the Gray Mage, spoke while her eyes sparkled.

“Is that really Miss Jung Ha-Yan?” she questioned.

“Y-Yes. Hello,” Jung Ha-Yan greeted and bowed.

I saw Han Sora standing beside her. I was happy to see familiar faces in an unfamiliar place, but why did she have to appear now? I definitely didn't contact them. I looked at her as if I was demanding an explanation, but she looked away from me.

“I-It's dangerous for children to come here alone. I-I-I came as their main guardian,” Jung Ha-Yan explained.

‘What's so dangerous about this? They have no chance even against weak adventurers... ’

And that was when I saw children walking out from behind Jung Ha-Yan and Han Sora...

Cherubim, Dominions, Thronus, and Seraphim.

“Hello, Father.”

They all greeted and bowed toward me at the same.

I smiled awkwardly toward Rafael's party.

“These children are here to help.”

“I'm Thronus.”

“I'm Dominions.”

“I'm Cherubim.”

“I-I'm... Seraphim. I-I look forward to working with you...”

1. Glamping is a portmanteau of "glamorous" and "camping," and describes a style of camping with amenities and, in some cases, resort-style services not usually associated with "traditional" camping. 📖

CHAPTER 900

HOLY SWORD WARRIOR AND THE HONORARY CARDINAL (3)

The children had long grown into Epic-rank adventurers. Actually, Cherubim and Thronus were strong enough to be considered Legendary-rank adventurers.

Meanwhile, Dominions was exceptionally talented in many fields. Ji-Hye noona had been teaching her many things, so she was a bit better than Cherubim and Thronus overall.

Cherubim was the so-called party leader, but Dominions was contributing a lot to their decisions. As I expected, Seraphim showed the least amount of growth, but he was competent as well. Their race wasn't human, so they grew and learned fast. Sometimes, they'd act childish, but each child was different from the other.

'Cherubim is all grown up.'

The first child would often mature first, so I felt like Cherubim had matured a lot, and it was probably because he felt responsible for Seraphim.

Regardless, I wanted to applaud him for the fact that he was helpful to me.

Even though they were fundamentally designed to crave the love of their creator, Cherubim's self-restraint was pretty high. I realized that when I saw him greeting me quietly while looking down at the ground.

Meanwhile, Thronus had always been struggling to hide his true feelings. He didn't behave all that differently from Cherubim, but the way he looked at me was different.

His face was kind of flushed, and his eyes were telling me that he was craving my affection. It was like he was telling me to look at him, to talk to him, and to compliment him. Although they had no memories of their past life, it wasn't like their soul had changed, so I was sure his soul was affecting his personality.

Surprisingly, Dominions was the most aggressive one.

'But I think she's doing that on purpose.'

Perhaps it was because she resembled Ji-Hye noona, but I couldn't read her at all. It was like she knew how she needed to behave to receive affection and love. Obviously, I didn't hate it. She actually looked cute, and I wanted to pinch her cheeks whenever she puffed them. She was just so different from Seraphim.

Lastly, the blond-haired child greeted me, but I couldn't tell whether he was crying or smiling. He looked cute whenever he stuttered like Ha-Yan, but I still couldn't get myself to like him. For some reason, he always looked dispirited. He'd smile forcefully whenever our eyes met, but I'd look away from him intentionally.

"You mean these children?" Rafael asked.

"Yes. They're reliable, so you can trust them," I answered.

When I gave the signal, a pair of wings spread from Cherubim's back. The remaining children showed their wings as well. The light coming from their tiny wings briefly illuminated the dark camp.

"Ah..." Marian gasped and quietly clasped her hands in disbelief.

I had an idea as to what they were thinking.

"T-They're angels. H-How... should we greet..."

"You don't have to be so formal. They're just ordinary children right now," I told them.

"But..."

"Marian, stand up. Think about the reason why their existence has yet to be revealed to the continent..." Lee Jo-Hyuk muttered.

The Miracle Priest stood up.

The truth was kind of different, but I understood why he thought that way. The God of Sacrifice and Revival pitied the baby angels and wanted them to grow like other

human children.

'That's what you're thinking, right?'

"Looks like we got caught up in something ridiculous," said the hunting dog, but it was like him to say such words. He probably thought that the situation was so bad that even angels had decided to show up. I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea to resolve the misunderstanding a bit, but I decided to give them some time to think for now.

"I brought the children here so that they can experience many things. They've been spending the majority of their time learning, so they rarely have the chance to go outside... Of course, I hope what I'm thinking doesn't happen..." I explained.

"I knew it... Rafael, what's your plan now?" Lee Joo-Hyuk asked.

"It doesn't change the party's policy," Rafael replied.

"Just as I expected," Lee Jo-Hyuk remarked.

'Looks like they're misunderstanding the situation, but it's in the right direction. Well, I'm not sure if this can even be called a misunderstanding... '

Obviously, I didn't want the continent to be in danger either.

It was also a really big assumption to think that people's daily lives would be ruined by an unranked dungeon.

The Rift Museum was an unranked dungeon and was quite dangerous as well, but today's continent was different from the continent at the time.

I had no idea what was going to happen in the dungeon, and I also had no idea how to clear it. However, I thought it was possible to clear it.

'I think I need to look into this as well.'

If the Holy Sword party was not enough, we could make the Blue Guild join the expedition. Our first task was to find the dungeon before it affected the Sacred Democratic Country. The children, who understood the system and were sensitive to holy power, would definitely be helpful to this expedition.

“Then... what do we need to do now, hyung?” Rafael asked.

“You’re the leader of the party...” I pointed out.

“Ah...”

“But if you need my advice, then I’ll tell you this...” I trailed off.

“Okay.”

“Relax. It’s already late today and it doesn’t matter if we start tomorrow,” I told him.

Everyone was too tense.

“How about we talk over some rum?” I suggested.

“Okay!”

It felt like it suddenly turned into a family camping trip. Many people immediately sat around the campfire and of course, Jung Ha-Yan sat on the left side. She came here as a guardian, but there was no way she was going home at this point.

“O-Oppa... o-over here,” Jung Ha-Yan said.

Han Sora sat next to her and Seraphim sat next to Han Sora. Cherubim sat next to Seraphim and Thronus sat on the right side of me. He had been wary of me since he came here, but he seemed to have won the meaningless battle for a seat.

Rafael was sitting across from me, but since there were a lot of people, he seemed far away from me. He seemed kind of sad about that, but the overall mood wasn’t bad. We started chatting with each other as the fire of the campfire crackled.

Of course, we were talking about the past.

“T-T-This... reminds me of the past. Right, oppa...” Jung Ha-Yan asked.

“You’re right,” I said.

‘I’ve been thinking about that for quite a while now.’

“T-The tent was really small... back then... *Ah!* I-I went to the mall with Sora recently,” she said.

“Really?”

“I-I thought this would look good on you, so I bought it... D-Did you bring it, Sora?” she asked.

“Yes, of course,” Han Sora replied.

Obviously, Jung Ha-Yan was the most excited out of everyone here.

We hadn't been able to spend that much time together recently, not to mention spending time like this. Honestly, I was having fun as well. Spending time with the children like this wasn't so bad, and we seemed like a real family.

It had been a while since I thought of Yul-Ha, but it would be nice if she were here. Wait, perhaps she wouldn't like this place.

“We haven't been able to spend time like this. So many things have been happening these days...” I said.

“I-It's okay... I-It can't be helped. Many things are happening, and I-I've been really busy as well. A-Also! T-Try this!” Jung Ha-Yan offered.

“You should try it, too,” I said.

“Okay...”

“I-I want to go on an adventure like we did a long time ago. S-Since everyone is busy, maybe you, me, and S-Sora can go... M-Maybe we can go to that magic spot... once everything is over...” Jung Ha-Yan suggested.

“Miss Jung Ha-Yan, how about... taking Sera with us... as well?” Han Sora suggested.

“*Ah!* O-Okay. S-Sera as well...” she agreed.

I had no idea why, but I started patting Thronus' head.

He moved a bit closer to me like he was asking for more head pats.

“Father...” Thronus said.

“Yeah?”

“It’s nothing...” Thronus replied.

‘Maybe he has no idea what to talk about with me.’

“How’s your training these days? Come to think of it, I don’t think we really talked about your last quest. Of course, I read all of your journal entries...” I said.

“Master went to the Republic, so Miss Cha Hee-Ra has been training me,” Thronus replied.

“You’re doing well,” I complimented him.

“It’s nothing. I’m just doing my job,” Thronus said.

He was trying to talk in a mature way, but he was wriggling his fingers in an adorable manner, which meant that he wanted me to compliment him.

I could easily deduce his thoughts. I had no idea about what our topic was supposed to be, so I decided to say things a son would want to hear from their father, and it was pretty effective.

When our eyes met, I grabbed his hand and sincerely said, “I’m proud of you.”

‘This... ’

“I love you, Thronus.”

‘And this... ’

“I-I... love you as well, Father,” Thronus said.

‘We’re raising them with love. I should have called our first and second child.’

“What about me? What about me, Father?” Dominions chimed in.

I patted Dominions’ head as well, even though she was sitting a bit far away.

I told her the same thing, and she smiled brightly at me. At this point, I would say we were doing well acting like a happy family. The Holy Sword Warrior party definitely felt the same way because they were smiling warmly.

And that was when Rafael said, “Hyung.”

“Yes, Mr. Rafael?” I answered.

“What are you going to do about the children’s training while we’re here? We’ll probably have to stay here for quite a while...” Rafael asked.

“It might be kind of tiresome, but Lindel...”

“If it’s okay with you, I can take care of them during my spare time,” Rafael offered.

It wasn't a bad idea at all. I couldn't say for sure about the others, but I could trust him.

Rafael had also become a Transcendent, so it wouldn't be a bad idea to learn from him.

Rafael was an expert in his exclusive gray magic, and he was also quite skillful at strength manipulation. The children would definitely learn a lot from them, and I was sure Cha Hee-Ra and Lee Ji-Hye would tell me to accept his offer if they were here.

It was a great idea, and I also believed that both angels and human beings had to keep learning forever.

“I should be the one making that request,” I said.

“Really?” Rafael asked.

“Yes. Looks like you’ll be busy starting tomorrow. You need to find the dungeon and train... *Ah!* I’d like to participate in the training once in a while. Do you mind?” I asked.

“That’d be great, hyung,” Rafael replied.

The mood was great.

“In that case, I’ll join, too. Are you okay with that, Father Lee Ki-Young?”

‘You’re a great candidate as well, Joo-Hyuk. You’ll get along with Cherubim.’

“Sure.”

The atmosphere became a bit warmer. Earlier, there was tension between their group and our group, but now, everyone was getting along. Seraphim was still in Han Sora’s arms, while Cherubim was talking to Lee Joo-Hyuk. Thronus and Dominions were talking to the party along with Jung Ha-Yan.

“I think it’s best if we put the children to sleep...” I suggested.

“Ah, I’ll take them, sir,” Han Sora offered.

It was already late, so we sent the children to sleep so the adults could talk.

I took pictures, uploaded them to Benigoagram, and before I knew it, it was 3 a.m. It was late in the night, so people became emotional and started talking about the continent. They started talking about serious topics, too.

Even I was getting drunk in the late-night feelings.

Bzzz.

My hand mirror vibrated. I opened it and immediately frowned.

[I drank...]

The lengthy post started with those words.

‘You should have done well while you had the chance to do so.’

It was Kim Hyun-Sung’s first-ever post on Benigoagram.

‘You’re terrible. Just terrible... ’



PDF by: traitorAIZEN