

심판의 군주

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오늘도요 현대 판타지 장편소설
DONG-A MODERN FANTASY

Sovereign of Judgment

- 심판의 군주 -

**- Volume 12 -
Final Episode**

**-Author-
TodayAgain**

[Myoniyoni Translations]

Chapter 194

To Hope for the End

{I will go off to war soon. Flame-Hell will most likely follow after me. Keep up your loyal appearance. It's also good if you look like you have a lot of desires. Then you will be selected as his guard. Wait for the opportunity to kill him.}

It wasn't like Dark-Sound personally came looking for him.

Dark-Sound's voice whispered in his ear as he was walking down the streets of Alliance City, the night sky darkening.

"After killing Flame-Hell... What next?"

Choi Hyuk mumbled inwardly. He heard Dark-Sound's distant voice.

{After that... will be the start of a new era.}

Alliance City's sky was colorful. It was a dream-like sky that recreated the native skies of species in the alliance.

A section blazed with flames, while another was completely black, and one section was filled with brilliantly shining stars, making it look like a desert. There was even a frosty sky. While the sky was mainly recreating the native skies of the top four tribes, night had now arrived in the section that had recreated Earth's sky. The Big Dipper shined once in the dark sky.



{Earth's environment will be introduced to Alliance City.}

{An evaluation regarding whether earthlings will be appointed as a 'High-Ranked Warrior Species' will commence.}

{The galaxy that Earth was a part of and its solar system will be renamed 'Earth Galaxy' and 'Earth Solar System' respectively.}

{Restoration of Earth in the Earth Solar System, Earth Galaxy, Virgo Cluster, Laniakea Supercluster will commence.}

Choi Hyuk traversed through Alliance City.

Under the influence of the newly introduced Earth's environment, cherry blossoms grew densely and yellow forsythias peeked out between the buildings. If it wasn't for the aliens that crowded the streets, it would feel like he was on his way home after school as even the buildings were erected in Earth's style.

Following Choi Hyuk's footsteps, the warriors who were on the streets made way and saluted,

"For life and freedom!"

Choi Hyuk calmly walked down the path opening up in front of him.

He didn't look back.

{This is Flame-Thorn. You've probably heard her voice a lot before.}

Flame-Hell had an abundant beard while Flame-Thorn's cheeks were smooth. Although her clear skin composed of flames showed no signs of age, her imposing aura made her feel like a great senior. She had a human-like appearance but was also transcendent like the large figures of the Four Heavenly Kings in ancient temples. She gave off a different feeling compared to Flame-Rain, who was generally friendly.

Choi Hyuk bowed his head slightly before meeting their gaze.

'I'm finally at this point.'

In the immeasurably tall pyramid known as the 'alliance', Choi Hyuk had crawled up from the deep underground and was now looking up at its peak.

No one could disregard him as he had brought upon the Spring of the Great Universe for the first time in thousands of years.

He could now face them 'almost' as equals.

Flame-Thorn glanced at Flame-Hell as she smiled faintly.

{I'm the one who suggested designating earthlings as a high-ranked warrior species.}

Unlike Flame-Rain who always talked to Choi Hyuk in Korean, Flame-Hell and Flame-Thorn talked to him in their native tongue.

{I respect you, who has made exceptional achievements starting as a low-ranked species, and the earthlings.}

Flames blazed following her smooth hand gesture. It was their own way of expressing respect. It was a hand gesture he had often seen while leading the Flame Army.

{At this point, it's impossible to not reflect on Earth's recruit training method. We considered you simply as a species living at the border... Thinking about it now, it would be sufficient to call you a brother of the Flame Wing Tribe considering your appearance and potential.}

Flame-Thorn spoke slightly apologetically yet annoyingly. She observed Choi Hyuk's reaction after saying this.

Behind her smiling eyes, she coldly observed him to see if he held any grievance from the recruit training and how he reacted when she said, 'brother of the Flame Wing Tribe.'

"A brother of a great tribe... What an honor."

Choi Hyuk acted like a young warrior who possessed absolute confidence in his skills but also cared about the alliance's evaluation of him. He showed them what they wanted to see.

{Hahaha, making each other proud... It's a great relationship.}

Not only Flame-Thorn, but even Flame-Hell was delighted at Choi Hyuk's answer.

They didn't hide their pride as members of the Flame Wing Tribe. They possessed a thorough sense of elitism and speciesism. These traits were also decisive in why they separated from Flame-Rain.

Choi Hyuk secretly glanced around. There were six warriors guarding Flame-Hell and Flame-Thorn. They were surprisingly all transcendent warriors. Should he say that this was expected of people who stood at the peak of power and violence in the universe?

{We have decided to dispatch the Flame Army to the monsters' universe, which is under Flame-Rain's jurisdiction.}

The gentle mood slightly cooled. Flame-Hell observed Choi Hyuk.

{Only, I hope that Army Leader Choi Hyuk will remain with me. First, as my guard. We can discuss your next position slowly afterwards. Since I am planning on calling back the earthlings again... It might not be bad to create a new army centered around earthlings. Whatever the future holds, I promise you that I won't disappoint you.}

They were sending the Flame Army, which was renown as the most elite troop, to the monsters' universe to keep both Flame-Rain and Choi Hyuk in check. On the other hand, Flame-Hell strengthened his support base by keeping Choi Hyuk next to him.

Upon the miracle known as the Spring of the Great Universe, Flame-Rain's popularity shined throughout the universe. Flame-Hell's move to keep her in check and to bring Choi Hyuk, who was as popular as her, by his side wasn't a bad one.

{In the past, we weren't able to pay sufficient attention to you. For a warrior of your skills, you should have long since taken command of the battlefield. Luckily, there is a perfect opportunity for you as we'll be advantageous in the war against the monsters for a while. Look at the big picture now. Starting from the recruit training, there were probably many points that were difficult to accept up until now. Our alliance policy has a bit of a... heartless side to it as well. However, I'll take measures personally from now on. What I want you now is to grasp the inevitable actions of leading a 'war' rather than a 'battle' and personally change the field.}

Saying that everything would be different from the past, Flame-Hell praised and comforted Choi Hyuk with his words and gestures.

"Changing the field... Then what should I do next?"

Choi Hyuk directly met his gaze and asked. As if he had been waiting for this, Flame-

Hell replied benevolently as he stretched his hand out towards him.

{It's the exalted history you will forge. You too will become a wing of history. You will see a new world.}

Choi Hyuk courteously bowed his head and held Flame-Hell's hand.

However, he had different thoughts in his mind.

'Everyone's... thinking of the future.'

Flame-Hell was looking far into the future by keeping Flame-Rain in check, setting the Flame Wing Tribe in an absolute position in the alliance, and the winning the war against the monsters.

Like how he had lived for tens of thousands of years, he was also looking at tens of thousands of years into the future.

Dark-Sound and Flame-Rain were no different in this regard.

'It's okay if you don't assassinate Flame-Hell. Everything's changed now. Dark-Sound? It's fine to ignore him. If he keeps pushing you... Then I'll definitely protect you. Also, wait a little longer. I'll make this universe more worthwhile... and more loving. That's why... don't hate so much. Other things, and yourself as well.'

Choi Hyuk thought about Flame-Rain, who spoke confidently like a young queen with great consideration.

Choi Hyuk believed that she would bring forth a great future.

However, since the day Earth's fate had been determined, Choi Hyuk had never thought about the future. His fate didn't include the future.

"A new world... I can almost already see it."

Choi Hyuk smiled as he looked at Flame-Hell.



“Youngjin, kill Dark-Sound. It’ll be your final mission.”

Baek Seoin demanded as though he had left Dark-Sound’s death in his care.

As though he was handing Baek Seoin an item he had left behind in his care, Chu Youngjin nonchalantly replied,

“Yes.”

When the communication ended, Lee Jinhee grabbed hold of Baek Seoin.

“...Will it be possible?”

Would Chu Youngjin be able to kill Dark-Sound? Would Choi Hyuk be able to kill the 12 remaining Exalted Wings afterwards? Lee Jinhee thought things were proceeding too quickly. Couldn’t they proceed when they were more prepared? When they looked even further into the future? When they were more certain of their chances?

“Leader... seems like he’s being chased by something.”

Baek Seoin stopped in place and looked at her.

“While it may be meaningless to calculate the probability of winning... If we were to, it’d be less than 10%.”

He talked about this gloomy prospect as though it wasn’t all bad.

“It’s an unbelievably high probability.”

This wasn’t sarcasm.

The probability in which earthlings, who had been Consumables, could completely slaughter the most powerful individuals in the alliance was 10%. In some ways, this could be considered incredibly high.

“What if Youngjin gives up his mission? To be honest... It’s been a long time since we’ve

met.”

“Then we’ll wait for the next opportunity... or we’ll all die after being sadly discovered.”

Baek Seoin replied blandly.

Chu Youngjin could sleep.

The conversation from this morning kept lingering in his head.

While he had replied easily at the time, the ripples in his heart gradually grew larger as time passed.

Though he didn’t know why, various emotions entangled and murmured in his heart.

On nights he couldn’t sleep, Chu Youngjin would normally sit rigidly in his dark room. The thick darkness, in which he couldn’t even see his own hands, made it feel like he was abandoned in the vast ocean, and it also gave him the feeling of being enclosed in a coffin, unable to move a finger.

When he sat there like that, a sudden thought would cross his mind.

‘Must have been very scary.’

This wasn’t his own fear.

The girl who couldn’t step onto the Ring of Rebirth, where they killed each other, in the very end that fine afternoon.

Some disappeared after being killed by their colleagues, while she remained alone in the classroom after the others, who had killed their fellow students, had left. Her hair became disheveled above her trembling shoulders, and the sun cruelly shined its bright rays down on her.

Even though he hadn’t witnessed it, it was as vivid as a memory. What he couldn’t forget was the fear Lee Hyejin had felt that day.

“Kill him, huh...?”

It was sweet.

While humans were being slaughtered like bugs, those at the very top remarked that it was an ‘inevitable sacrifice’ before they continued on indifferently. And if someone stabbed and killed one of them at the peak and then mocked them? Just imagining it caused his mouth to fill with a bittersweet taste, akin to that of soju⁽¹⁾, and his heart began to thump furiously.

Someone once stated that revenge was an emotion of slaves. Fuck that.

However, once the bout of giggling madness passed, similar to sobering up, his chest suddenly felt stuffy. He couldn’t figure out why.

When he opened his door and left, he was in a yard filled with rectangular doors.

These rectangular doors stood like trees in this white space where it was impossible to distinguish the floor from the ceiling. The big ones were the size of buildings, while the smaller ones were the size of mouse holes. From wood to steel, there were doors made of various materials. This was the ‘Garden of Doors’ in which the ‘Event Horizon Troop’ resided.

Chu Youngjin quietly walked through this place. Walking in a white space after leaving his dark room gave him an unpleasant feeling for some reason.

After walking for a while, he came across a long bench amidst the doors. Gulp-sized drops of drinks that could be drunk at any time floated around it.

Shiro was sitting on the bench, unmoving, like a picture.

“Ah.”

She looked surprised when she saw him.

Chu Youngjin asked,

“Why aren’t you sleeping?”

“I naturally don’t sleep.”

“Then do you sit there every day?”

“No... I just had something on my mind. But why aren’t you sleeping?”

“It’s not like I really need sleep either... Let’s just say I had something on my mind as well.”

Chu Youngjin plunked himself down next to her. Seeing her, it felt like his complicated mind was calming down.

Looking straight in front of her, she opened her small, glossy lips and asked,

“Because of the grand scheme?”

“...I guess you could say that?”

Since Choi Hyuk’s plan of killing all the remaining Exalted Wings after killing Dark-Sound could also be considered a grand scheme.

“You’re going to be Dark-Sound’s guard on his expedition, right?”

The moment he heard her voice, his chest felt stuffy again. Yes, now he understood the reason. This cold girl, born as a weapon of war, Puppet Shiro. When she mentioned Dark-Sound, her voice was filled with affection. Chu Youngjin knew this.

“...Yeah.”

His reply was late.

Shiro looked directly at him as she said,

“While I probably don’t need to say this... Please take care of him.”

She smiled before swallowing a marble-like drink drop floating in the air.

She changed the subject.

“Once the expedition is over and Flame-Hell is killed, it’ll be the start of the real battle.

Not everyone will acknowledge the new rule, especially the Flame Wing Tribe, who might resist vehemently.”

Chu Youngjin noticed her eyes igniting with revenge. Strangely, this cruel emotion seemed to wash the stuffiness that filled his chest.

“After killing Flame-Hell... And the battle after that ends? What about then? Did you think about it?”

Shiro blinked at his question.

“After killing him...? I never really thought about it. I think I’ll only know once we get there.”

Chu Youngjin grinned. What she said was true. To first finish what you desperately wanted. Once you thought, ‘I don’t know what comes after,’ many things became simpler. Like how she was set on killing Flame-Hell, he too had decided to kill Dark-Sound. His current feelings, the tragedy that would ensue afterwards, those were all things he could think about then.

Chu Youngjin and Shiro sat peacefully without saying a word.

The world was already messed up from the first step.

The current sense of peace was deceptive since Choi Hyuk and he, Chu Youngjin, would smash everything apart in the end. This machine woman, who had stood by his side, would despair and rage because of him. Even though he knew this...

‘It’s good like this for now. When that time comes, I’ll deal with it then... Though I’ll probably not even be alive by then.’

The more irresponsible he became, the calmer his heart was.

Suddenly, Shiro opened her mouth.

“Now that I think about it... There’s something I want to do after this battle ends.”

“What is it?”

“Uhh... Umm... It’s a secret.”

Seeing Chu Youngjin laugh in a bland manner, Shiro added, as if making an excuse,

“No, I mean I’m not saying it’s confidential. It’s my own personal secret.”

Chu Youngjin blinked. Like the world hidden behind his eyelids, whether it was a secret or not, he wouldn’t be able to know what the future entailed.

“Yeah. Though I don’t know what it is, I wish you the best.”

It seemed she was somewhat embarrassed by his reply as Shiro stooped her head down.

{1} Alcohol popular in Korea

Chapter 195

Ripped Wings (1)

“This plan first came up... on the day Hyunsung died.”

Key individuals in the Berserkers were gathered around Baek Seoin. Naro, Lee Jinhee, Bae Jinman, Zero, representatives from both the Kundle Tribe and glass crabs, and lastly, Choi Hyuk.

They were gathered in the square inside Naro’s spaceship. The floor was made of glass, and below it lay narolings, who looked like they were made from kneaded marshmallows. The artificial light, which shined down from the high ceiling, diffused like a gentle fog as it shined on the cheeks and elbows of the dead narolings. It was a square as well as a cemetery.

They each sat on a square boulder as they listened to Baek Seoin. Around a hundred egg-shaped machines hummed as they rolled around them.

“That day, I thought about how we could bring the 13 Exalted Wings together in one place. About how we could we deal with those vicious warriors in one blow...”

Baek Seoin let out a big sigh.

“A method to gather the 13 Exalted Wings, who have never gathered since the founding of the alliance, in one place. Unexpectedly, I quickly found an answer. There’s an event in which they have no choice but to gather for. I became certain during Hyunsung’s funeral.”

“Don’t tell me...”

Bae Jinman’s voice was stiff. Baek Seoin immediately agreed.

“That’s right. A funeral. The funeral of an Exalted Wing at that. If Chu Youngjin kills Dark-Sound, there will be a funeral... and even if it’s for a moment, the remaining Exalted Wings will have to gather. However, there’s a likely chance that Exalted Wing Flame-Rain, who is in charge of the monsters’ universe, won’t be able to attend.”

Baek Seoin stealthily glanced at Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk sat quietly with his eyes closed.

Besides Choi Hyuk, the rest were seized with fear and horror, like people sticking their heads out the water.

{But... }

Whiiek!

The representative of the glass crabs who followed the Berserkers, 'Fragile', sounded scared. Using a blue, thumb-sized glass pebble as her home, her body trembled pitifully on top of the boulder.

"It is impossible to kill all the Exalted Wings gathered in one place. While Leader Choi Hyuk is strong, it'll be difficult for him to last even a minute in a fight against 12."

Zero spoke what the others were feeling as he calmly opposed.

However, Baek Seoin leisurely flicked his finger.

Whooong!!!

The machines scattered around the square emitted a noise and stood up at the same time. It felt like an unknown power was sweeping around them.

{My karma... is frozen?}

Moonmoon, the representative of the Kundle Tribe, noticed the situation and jolted up. His plump sausage-like body twisted around as he looked at his surroundings.

"These were the devices used to ambush Leader Choi Hyuk?"

Bae Jinman guessed correctly, yet even his voice was trembling.

"That's correct. 'Karma Suppression Devices'. According to the dragon race's analysis, you could call this the summation of the Armored Soul Tribe's technology. After

obtaining them, we were able to improve them for our goal with the assistance of the dragon race and the joint research of the glass crabs, Guardian Bae Jinman, and Naro.”

“Even still, can they suppress the karma of 12 Exalted Wings?”

Bae Jinman was still pessimistic. Baek Seoin didn’t falter.

“That’s why we called the representatives of the Kundle Tribe and the glass crabs.”

While Baek Seoin was always calm and logical, at the moment, his eyes were shining with madness.

“The leader has his own fight while we have our own. For the ‘Karma Suppression Devices’ to suppress all 12 of the Exalted Wings, we need an immense amount of energy. And, there are only two places that can supply that much energy in Alliance City.”

Lee Jinhee bitterly answered,

“...The Tower of Warriors and the Light of Eternity.”

“Yes. On the day of the funeral, we need to capture the Light of Eternity.”

The mood suddenly changed at those words.

Before, they were lost like people who were plunged in water, but once a specific goal and method was decided, their eyes shined with a murderous glint like Marine Corps preparing for a mission.

“What an honor. It’ll be the end of us if someone leaked this outside... To trust us this much.”

Moonmoon said while staring at Baek Seoin.

Whiiik!

Fragile of the glass crabs agreed with a whistle.

Baek Seoin smiled faintly.

“The majority of the Kundle Tribe and glass crabs left the Berserkers and stayed on Dragonic. However, doesn’t the fact that your two branch tribes have followed us until now mean that you have no regrets about losing your lives? You are also Berserkers. You are all great anti-socialists.”

While the situation wasn’t funny, they laughed.

After laughing together, their gazes gathered on Choi Hyuk as if it was decided beforehand. He hadn’t said a word throughout the meeting.

The alliance ruled the great universe, yet they recklessly planned on killing their top leaders in a single blow. The warriors attending the meeting decided that they would participate without any doubt regarding this plan despite the fact that their chances of death would be very high. Their gazes were quite serious.

The mood felt like he should say some firm words as the ringleader leading them to their deaths.

A strange expectation lingered in their gazes.

Choi Hyuk blinked before standing up.

“Are we done? Then rest well as you prepare for the battle. It’ll be our very last fight together, and we’ll have to use all our strength during the battle.”

That was all.

There were no words of encouragement or assurance nor a confirmation of his trust.

Yet, these words gave them a strange sense of relief and belonging.

Zero smirked. The others shook their heads in laughter.

Lee Jinhee had a sour expression as she mumbled,

“He’s never doubted us since he’s never taken care of us in the first place.”

Choi Hyuk was like that.

He didn't promise the Berserkers anything. He simply fought without looking back.

The Berserkers were more like a group of crazy warriors who followed him rather than an organization or force. On top of that, all the ones who would leave had already left. Only those with a high level of craziness remained. Even if he didn't do anything for them, they were swords that would follow behind him. Choi Hyuk had never doubted these swords.

As always, he simply took the lead without looking back.

"I guess we'll soon see the peak of madness."

Bae Jinman said as if refreshed while chuckling.



Dark-Sound's expedition.

An Exalted Wing personally participating in combat was a very rare incident. Dark-Sound's combat ability was passed on through records or heroic tales told by old warriors, one couldn't personally witness his splendor.

Warriors were curious.

The 14th Exalted Wing, Flame-Rain, and Choi Hyuk, who was 1st on the ranking of alliance warriors, had already proven their brilliant valor. Then what would Dark-Sound, who was always mentioned when discussing the strongest amongst the Exalted Wings, be like?

Would his senses have dulled since he had left the battlefield for so long?

Or would he be praised as expected?

Thanks to this unprecedented event, the mood of the alliance was heating up like a festival.

This monster subjugation plan, which started with high hopes, however, was unexpectedly dull...

...At least, in their universe.

“We’re changing our plans. After killing the demise-ranked monster and at our advance, the commanding monsters, including Kwe and Jae, all evacuated to their own universe. This is our chance. We’re going to chase them to their universe and deal a blow. The bigger the blow we deal, the longer the alliance will be able to prosper.”

When he couldn’t achieve the results he had hoped, Dark-Sound didn’t hesitate to attack the monsters’ universe.

This was a move expected of someone with the greatest authority in the alliance, and he displayed a fighting spirit no less than that of an active warrior.

“The monsters’ universe...”

Chu Youngjin mumbled as his eyes became more serious.

The monsters’ universe was completely different from the alliance’s. It wasn’t an endless vast and dark place with shining stars, instead, areas were twisted and folded. It was one of confusion, where worlds and various matter from other universes, such as a tree or ocean the size of a galaxy, mixed together like a dump. There were areas densely packed with larva-like Kahur Kabkuns.

It was a strange world, one of fear because it wasn’t as orderly as their own universe, yet it was also beautiful like a surreal painting that mixed together different sights.

After chasing the monsters down using the traces they left behind, they soon saw the retreating monster army in the distance.

Their goal was to annihilate them before other monsters noticed and swarmed them.

Dark-Sound revealed his true character in this battle.

“This place is currently my territory.”

There was a total of ten transcendent warriors following Dark-Sound, three of which were assigned as close guards, including Chu Youngjin.

“You three follow me while the rest of you scatter. We’re going to finish this in one blow!”

Accompanying his order, Dark-Sound’s white face dispersed like smoke.

The subjugation force let out a sigh of admiration.

Dark-Sound had completely hidden his appearance. A black darkness spread from the place he had been standing in.

The Dark Clan was known to be outstanding amongst the Dark Tribe.

They were pure-blooded, powerful individuals born from dark matter, which occupied 85% of matter in their universe.

The universe familiar to these warriors was contained in the darkness he created.

This darkness charged forward as fast as light.

It looked like this unfamiliar, strange universe was being devoured by their own.

This wasn’t simply a darkness. It was a weapon created by dark matter, Dark-Sound’s Weapon of Conclusion ‘Dark-Sound’s Darkness’.

The charging darkness covered and imprisoned the monsters. The relatively weaker monsters died as their limbs twisted like puppets solely from the pressure.

Dark-Sound's voice rang out from within the darkness.

{I caught the commanders! Guards, intercept the captured commanders! The rest of you scatter and kill them all! It's a battle of speed!}

Dark-Sound's attack was a wide-scale crowd control skill that the younger warriors hadn't ever heard of before. While it might not last very long, the monsters touched by this darkness either froze or moved extremely slowly.

The warriors rushed in and began their slaughter.

The three warriors who were initially guarding Dark-Sound were among them.

They ignored the monsters that couldn't move after being swamped in darkness and shot directly towards the four surviving brothers, Kwe, Jae, Lan, and Ryuk^{1}. They were quite far away from the main army, but none of them cared. Once the fight began, those who weren't at the transcendent level couldn't overcome the 'wall of laws', and the remaining transcendent monsters would be dealt with by the seven transcendent warriors.

In the end, the four brothers were caught and darkness ambushed them.

{I'll restrain them! Kill them!}

Dark-Sound did his best to restrain the four brothers. Caught by Dark-Sound, who returned to his original appearance, they flailed around in this darkness like beasts submerged in a swamp.

Dark-Sound's three guards had to kill them before he became exhausted.

The moment it seemed like everyone was charging in with the same goal, one had a different plan in mind.

Chu Youngjin bit his lips in the middle of this thick darkness.

The time had come.

Whether it was coincidence or fate, it was currently the best place and situation.

Wanting to successfully complete his grand scheme and become the new ruler of the alliance, Dark-Sound wanted a four-on-four battle out of his greed for achievements. Since the four brothers possessed strengths similar to that of Exalted Wings, Dark-Sound's side was at a disadvantage. However, because of this, their victory would fall solely on Dark-Sound if they won.

While it wouldn't be an easy battle, Dark-Sound was confident in his victory with the information he had obtained until now. With two warriors that placed in the top ten of the warrior rankings and Chu Youngjin, who specialized in close-combat, he was confident that they would win if he could restrain the monsters for a certain amount of time.

On the other hand, Chu Youngjin thought,

'No one will know what happened in the middle of the monsters' ranks.'

His gaze swept past Dark-Sound, his two guards, and the four monster brothers.

In this moment where they were all caught up by each other...

In this moment where they were all submerged in darkness...

As things balanced out one by one,

'I'll kill them all.'

'Chu Youngjin's Absolute' shined in a terrifying red light as it was unsheathed.

{1} Lan = 'Disorder', Ryuk = 'Kill'

Chapter 196

Ripped Wings (2)

Thump. Thump.

His heart raced with a determination that could smash the world.

Due to overextending his karma, his head ached and felt like it had been wrung like a dry throat, and his eyes felt hot.

Huu! Huu!

With every breath, he could see each of his enemies.

Dark-Sound would be the last one Chu Youngjin would kill as his restriction powers maintained this tense equilibrium of strength. He needed to leave him for last so that he could kill the rest, including the monsters and the witnesses.

He decided a monster would be his first target. He needed to kill one monster for the fight to be three warriors against three monsters. Also, the order would be from the weakest to strongest. Then his first target would be Kwe, whose support ability was more outstanding than its actual fighting power.

The unsheathed 'Chu Youngjin's Absolute' extended towards Kwe.

Even while it was flailing in Dark-Sound's grasp, Kwe was displaying blatant malice towards them.

Every time it cursed, its vigor, which even Dark-Sound couldn't completely restrain, shook and the attacks of the transcendent warriors narrowly missed or were deflected.

{You will be ripped to shreds! I'll rip your souls, stick them back together, and then rip them up again! I'll knead Dark Tribe members into mush and use them as a mold to

create new monsters, rip out the souls of Armored Soul Tribe members and revert them to slaves, and stuff the bodies of the Flame Wing Tribe members-}

“Shut up.”

Crunch!

Chu Youngjin’s red sword ripped through Kwe’s cursing mouth and shot out the back of its head.

Kwe’s eyes shook with shock before its head exploded and it died. It was no longer able to curse them again.

Kwe, who mainly used support skills, couldn’t be Chu Youngjin’s match as the trait of his sword, like its name, was ‘Absolute’ within a close distance.

{Amazing!}

{... Are all earthings’ fates so extreme...? They are so strong too... }

Dark-Sound’s guards, Armor-Blue and Dark-Soul, sighed in admiration.

{Let’s do it again. We’ll attack them so you look for an opening.}

{It seems like it’ll end quicker than I thought?}

As their optimistic hopes rose, Chu Youngjin did his best to catch his breath.

Huu! Huu!

It felt like his lungs were collapsing.

Dark-Sound restrained it, Dark-Soul and Armor-Blue attacked and lowered its defenses, and then he would be a good match against it. Yet, even after accounting for these factors, there was still a big difference in strength.

After launching that one attack that held all his spirit in order to make up that difference, he lost strength in his legs and his head rang.

Chu Youngjin gritted his teeth and gathered his dispersed karma again.

Bang!

He exploded the karma he had gathered. His karma swept over his entire body.

Grit.

His trembling fingertips regained their strength. His sword let out a creak.

Baang!!

His karma, which he had recovered faster than before, exploded once more, this time more powerfully.

Chu Youngjin's body shot forward. He bent his waist and shoulders to accumulate strength. He squeezed out all of his karma.

His second target was a monster as well. This time, it was Jae, who had lost its specialty, its mobility.

Baaaang!

Karma exploded from his foot to his waist, then shoulders and finally his upper arms.

The Weapon of Conclusion 'Chu Youngjin's Absolute' granted him absolute power within an arm's distance. The moment he swung his red sword, it accelerated once more as though it was alive. His body followed his sword's path.

Jae desperately tried to avoid his attack while flailing around, but it was for naught. The red sword precisely pierced its blind spot.

Smash!

While he slashed at it, it emitted the crushing sound. Jae's body was ripped in two from its shoulder to its waist.

{No... Way... }

Its body, which was completely destroyed by 'Chu Youngjin's Absolute', had no way of regenerating. Jae died with glaring eyes.

{Haha! Good job, Chu Youngjin!}

Maybe it was because he took out two monsters in an instant? Dark-Sound, who had been unable to speak a word as he restrained four monsters that were on the same level as him, expressed his joy.

However, Chu Youngjin couldn't hear him.

"Haaack! Keuk..."

He almost dropped his sword.

While he thought he was used to pain more than anyone else because he had always fought while bringing his body to its utmost limits, this pain was on another level.

The problem wasn't that he almost dropped his sword, it was that his shoulders and arms felt like they had been ripped apart.

'Chu Youngjin's Absolute' consumed more than his current strength. His limbs trembled, and he couldn't breathe as if he was being waterboarded. His head ached and felt so heavy that it kept drooping. Maybe it was his heart weakening as his body was, but he felt as pathetic as a dying bug.

After flailing through this pain, sleep suddenly washed over him. A sweet flood that numbed the pain dragged his body down.

"Keuu!"

Chu Youngjin abruptly raised his head. He forced his eyes open. The more he endured, the more painful it was, making his urge to drift in a sweet sleep for even a moment

grow. Nonetheless, Chu Youngjin stood enduring this.

{You did well. Rest for a bit!}

{When our junior is doing so much, we each need to kill at least one to save face!}

Dark-Soul and Armor-Blue ignited their fighting spirit.

Even if they excluded him, it would be a three-on-two fight. The situation became extremely advantageous for them. The two of them began to overexert themselves even further to put an end to this battle.

Chu Youngjin kept hold of his frequently slipping consciousness and observed the fight.

'A little... A little more...'

He waited for the final moment even as each passing second felt like an eternity of pain.

Dark-Sound's method of restraining Lan and Ryuk was intense.

His sticky, heavy darkness submerged their limbs and filled their throats. However, even this couldn't completely restrain them. While hiding his appearance, Dark-Sound revealed his pale arms and legs at critical moments to grab, rip, crush, and bind their limbs. This looked no different from a wrestling match in the mud. Lan and Ryuk struggled to get out of Dark-Sound's grasp while Dark-Sound used every ounce of strength to drag them into the darkness.

During this time, Dark-Soul and Armor-Blue battered Lan and Ryuk with their attacks.

They both used spears. As expected of guards of Dark-Sound, who possessed the

strongest restraining skills in the universe, they focused on attack rather than defense.

{We'll end it this time!}

{Heuaah!!}

Dark-Soul, who was ranked fifth in the warrior rankings, hid his spear within the darkness and precisely struck when he saw an opening. Armor-Blue, who was ranked seventh, rotated his spear like a power drill and rapidly and repeatedly stabbed his targets, trying to smash them apart.

{Kuah!}

{Grrk!}

Lan and Ryuk's screams echoed out. No one could hold back in this fight. The two of them struggled to live while Dark-Sound suppressed their struggles and Dark-Soul and Armor-Blue stabbed at them at full speed.

{This is the end!}

{Oryah!}

The intense battle was nearing its conclusion. Dark-Soul and Armor-Blue squeezed their remaining strength and launched fatal attacks at Lan and Ryuk.

This was the moment Chu Youngjin had been waiting for.

Grrrt.

Accompanied by the sound of tightly gripping his sword, as if to crush it, 'Chu Youngjin's Absolute', which had been relaxed, rose into position.

Chu Youngjin could tell that this was the moment of no return.

If he squeezed out his already messed up karma again, he couldn't revert it back. He couldn't recover it again. Also, the moment his sword pierced through Dark-Soul and Armor-Blue, he would no longer be a great warrior of the alliance but be known as its

worst traitor.

'Yeah. Finally.'

For some reason, there was a smile on his face. The final moment had finally arrived after fighting endlessly since Lee Hyejin's death. He might very well have lived through such a nightmarish life for this very day.

Rumble!

Slice!

{Keu... uk?!}

{Huh?!}

A red light swept through Dark-Soul and Armor-Blue, who had been about to kill Lan and Ryuk.

Armor-Blue's waist was completely sliced through, and while Dark-Soul twisted his body to avoid it, a black fog flowed out from the long wound on his side.

{Chu Youngjin?!}

Dark-Sound, who had been restraining Lan and Ryuk, shouted in confusion.

However, he couldn't move. Having been on the cusp of death, Lan and Ryuk seemed to have noticed this was an opportunity and, in return, restrained Dark-Sound.

{Chu Youngjiiiiin!!!}

While hearing Dark-Sound's shriek, Chu Youngjin rushed towards Dark-Soul, who hadn't died yet.

His vision was dyed completely red. His karma dispersed like sand and couldn't be gathered again.

He still didn't stop. If he couldn't gather and explode his karma, then he just needed to burn it up to cause an explosion.

It was normally an impossible feat. However, 'Chu Youngjin's Absolute', which was created as an absolute power to protect those within his grasp, granted him his wish of burning his life to squeeze out more strength. All the karma that made up his body boiled up. Hot steam gushed out from his entire body.

Rumble!

With his signature rumble, Chu Youngjin's sword shot towards Dark-Soul.

{Wait! Wait!}

Having already been inflicted with a fatal wound and unable to get in position, Dark-Soul tried to buy some time, but Chu Youngjin didn't give him the chance.

Pakang!

His first strike hit the tip of Dark-Soul's spear, moving it aside.

Jjok!

His second attack slashed down against the suddenly raised spear handle.

Kakang, slice!

His blade slid down the handle and cut Dark-Soul's fingers off.

Then he grabbed him by his collar.

{Kuak! No!}

He pierced his sword into his struggling neck.

{Keuk... Keuk... }

He twisted Dark-Soul's neck, which was releasing a dark fog, cut it off, and threw it

away.

{Chu Youngjin!!! Just why are you doing this?!!!}

Entangled by Lan and Ryuk, Dark-Sound could only bitterly scream.

Chu Youngjin looked at Dark-Sound and said with a voice hoarse from exhaustion,

“Since she died... Died a death... Worse than a dog’s”

Whirlwinds of rage and sorrow raged in his hollow eyes and then calmed.

{Ah... }

Dark-Sound was at a loss for words when he saw those eyes. There had been a time when he possessed such eyes.

He knew better than anyone because he had become a dog of Flame-Hell, who he hated the most, and had polished his grand scheme for an immeasurable amount of time for this resentment and sorrow.

That was why he understood Chu Youngjin’s reason.

That was also why he hadn’t know until now.

{Ha, haha... So I was mistaken. I... didn’t know.}

He was aware that Choi Hyuk and Chu Youngjin possessed an unimaginable amount of rage. However, his blunder was mistakenly believing their rage was similar to his.

He possessed a cold, calculated rage, one where he searched for the person responsible, took measures so that he wouldn’t lose everything after taking revenge, and acted like his mortal enemy’s slave.

Dark-Sound thought that Choi Hyuk and Chu Youngjin would be the same since they were tempered souls who had made it to the transcendent level.

{To think they would be so insane... }

Dark-Sound said in a dispirited voice.

He had a hunch regarding his fate.

Normally, he would be able to easily kill Chu Youngjin, but he was thoroughly exhausted after fighting against the four monster brothers. Even as they died, Lan and Ryuk clutched onto him as though they wanted to drag him down with them.

Above all, Chu Youngjin, who was steaming like he would melt away, was emitting such a powerful karma that he couldn't comprehend it.

{To think... This is the end.}

The long time he had spent enduring while thinking about his grand scheme seemed to pass by like a kaleidoscope. He recalled the alliance's discriminatory, cruel policies he agreed on so that he could earn Flame-Hell's trust and create his own force.

So the time I spent enduring created monsters like them.

Dark-Sound saw the red blade that slashed through Ryuk, pierced through Lan's head, and penetrated his chest. He couldn't avoid it.

Pscht!

The sensation was terrifying. It felt like his soul was being pierced.

Releasing a black fog, Dark-Sound asked.

{So you killed us all in the end... Okay... Now what?}

{Your funeral. Though that's not something I'll be doing... }

Dark-Sound understood the situation when he heard the word 'funeral'.

{Ke... ke... Crazy bastards.}

Slash!

Dark-Sound's bitterly laughing face was vertically split in two. 'Chu Youngjin's Absolute' slashed up from his chest and floated away. Chu Youngjin couldn't hold his sword anymore.

His limbs no longer trembled. Instead, he couldn't feel anything as though they had disappeared. Chu Youngjin's eyes, which could no longer move as well, reflected the dead Dark-Sound, whose body had turned into a black fog, and the monsters' slashed corpses.

The last thing Chu Youngjin's gaze landed on before his eyes went completely blurry was the various worlds piled in the monsters' universe.

This unfamiliar sight abruptly made him think that this couldn't be real.

While the karma and strength he had accumulated until now dispersed, in a semi-conscious state, Chu Youngjin's final thought was...

'A terrible nightmare.'



During this time, Dark-Sound's subjugation force achieved a great victory, and the 'wall of laws', where Chu Youngjin and Dark-Sound fought, cleared around the time they had almost completely annihilated the monsters.

{It is a great victory!}

Shiro, who was looking for Dark-Sound and Chu Youngjin with an excited voice, stood in place when she saw the center of what had been an intense battle.

{Huh...?}

Amongst the ripped and scattered corpses of the monster brothers...

Nothing moved.

Chapter 197

Ripped Wings (3)

Light-Maze collected Dark-Sound and his guards' corpses.

The three besides Chu Youngjin, at a glance, looked like they had died instantly, and Chu Youngjin was the only one who looked wholly intact. His body was still releasing hot steam. This was evidence that his karma still maintained its characteristics unlike the karma of the other three, which had lost all its characteristics, but it was melting away at a noticeable rate. If they were to assess him based on the alliance's judgment, he would be considered dead.

"Exalted Wing Dark-Sound... Exalted Wing Dark-Sound! Youngjin! Youngjin!!!!!"

Light-Maze had known Shiro for a long time, but this was his first time seeing her in such despair.

She couldn't even control her karma at a basic level. Having lost control in the monsters' universe, where gravity and space distorted at their whim, she couldn't even move forward, flailing in place. She desperately stretched her hand out, but she couldn't get their attention.

'Well... Exalted Wing Dark-Sound is dead.'

Light-Maze thought that he could understand her feelings.

Hadn't their long-time dream just disappeared like that? In an unexpected place, so fruitlessly.

On top of that, since Shiro was learning about the feelings of love for the first time, the hell she had fallen into was likely deeper and more painful than Light-Maze's own.

Light-Maze felt the many speckled lights that made up his body lose their motivation and slump down. They didn't want to do anything. They simply wanted to slump down

and sleep. Maybe it would a dream when they woke up?

Light-Maze bit his lips.

‘Keep it together.’

As Dark-Sound and his guards had died, he was currently the highest commanding officer. If they simply drifted in the monsters’ universe, all that would remain for them was annihilation. As the commanding officer responsible for everyone’s lives, he had to make a decision.

He desperately tried to think of a plan with his uncooperating brain.

‘It’ll be difficult to return to our universe right away. We currently don’t have the strength to open up a gate large enough to transfer an army of this size because everyone’s exhausted. Also... We don’t know when the monsters will chase us down.’

In the end, they had rest and reorganize in the monsters’ universe before attempting to return. They needed support if they were to return safely. When he thought this far, there was only one answer.

Light-Maze forced himself to make a decision as he shouted,

“We’ll head to Exalted Wing Flame-Rain’s stronghold! We’ll rest there and then return!”

The subjugation force was made up of elites among elites.

While they suffered a great shock, they returning to formation when they heard an order.

Shiro, whose eyes were completely hollow, followed the order and slowly joined the ranks. It seemed that, while it was impossible for her to act on her emotions, it was possible for her to take familiar actions such as following orders.

Light-Maze knew what he had to do.

“We’ll implement a karma concealment cover. Follow my pattern.”

He analyzed the surrounding energy pattern and created and released a karma pattern similar to it. Soldiers who comprehended his pattern would copy it. Their karma patterns would change accordingly to their surroundings like a chameleon.

When Light-Maze emitted his karma, the soldiers would copy it. This continued like an endlessly repeating camp song.

While this was a technique normally used to camouflage themselves from enemies, it currently wasn’t used for that. They couldn’t hide the karmalings’ difference in nature in the monsters’ universe with a simple karma concealment cloak.

His tactic was to have them focus on something familiar and repetitive so that they could momentarily forget their despair and sorrow. Fortunately, this seemed to have an effect as their slow-moving advance picked up speed.

That was how the subjugation force walked their path of return while carrying the four corpses: by continuing this song of suppressed karma. They looked like a funeral procession rather than the figures of soldiers returning from the battlefield.



{... }

{... }

14 of the stone plates on the ‘Brain’ were lit up.

No, as one of them didn’t light up until the end, only 13 stone plates were lit up.

{... }

Though quite a bit of time had passed since the start of the meeting, no one talked. It was a rare situation considering how the Exalted Wings always quickly made decisions.

It was as shocking as Flame-Rain’s report, who had hastily called for this meeting.

{Exalted Wing Dark-Sound has died in battle. While the members of the subjugation force believe that the battle against the four monster brothers ended with both sides facing defeat, no one witnessed this first-hand. I am personally investigating the specifics using the results from their autopsies. However, as the majority of their karma is already absent... It'll take likely some time to analyze the situation.}

A long silence hung in the air after her report.

Leviathan finally managed to speak. Flame-Hell, who had the duty to lead the meeting as the chairman, seemed to be shocked from losing his right-hand man, Dark-Sound, and was unable to speak a word.

{... Though we're taken aback as Dark-Sound's death was unprecedented... I think holding a funeral is right. I heard that you are investigating the situation... When will you be able to send his body?}

{... I already ordered the production of an identical copy. As we should be able to investigate through the copy, it should be possible to send the body once it's complete.}

{... }

The copy would be identical in both matter and karma. Obviously, this was impossible to do with living warriors as the fate of their soul was engraved in the universe and the karma created from it would be impossible to copy.

That was why creating a complete copy meant that Dark-Sound had died, his soul and fate completely scattered and the karma left in his body having lost its characteristics.

He had degenerated into an inanimate object that could be copied.

The 'Brain' became silent at this realization.

The one who broke the silence this time was Flame-Hell, whose voice was unstable. He seemed to have opened his mouth to uphold his duty as the chairman.

{To show proper respect for him, I think it's best if we all gather even momentarily and attend his funeral. As... the monsters' spirits have been broken, I think it'll be fine

if we took the time to do this.}

While everyone was agreeing to his suggestion with their silence, Armor-Desert added a condition.

{However, we cannot predict the amount of strength the monsters have in reserve. Didn't no one expect Exalted Wing Dark-Sound to fall in battle in this expedition?}

All the Exalted Wings knew about Dark-Sound's powerful restraining skill. They had also believed that they completely understood the four monster brothers from past battles. This was why they had assumed an easy victory. Yet, the result was Dark-Sound's death. There was a likely chance they had made an error in their understanding of the monsters' strength.

Perhaps this was why Armor-Desert's voice contained a hint of fear.

{Then... Let's have Exalted Wing Flame-Rain remain in the monsters' universe to keep an eye on the monsters' movements. If we do that, then it wouldn't be too much for the rest of us to gather for half an hour. Every Exalted Wing needs to make an appearance to comfort alliance members.}

Flame-Rain said in a firm tone though accommodating a part of Armor-Desert's suggestion. Each Exalted Wing was a hero and leader representing the key species of the alliance. Having them gather and speak words of harmony and weathering this crisis could greatly soothe the alliance's agitation.

{... }

This time, all the Exalted Wings expressed their agreement. Though this was the same agreement of silence as before, it felt heavier considering the situation.

Flame-Hell sighed as he said,

{Haaa... The monsters may be much stronger than we thought. I will annul the future subjugation plans, including my own, for now.}

The Exalted Wings who had prepared for the grand scheme alongside Dark-Sound felt a sense of futility at Flame-Hell's declaration. How hard had Dark-Sound worked for

this expedition, for Flame-Hell's assassination? Yet, everything had instantly gone up in smoke. Nonetheless, they soon shook their heads to erase this sensation. They currently couldn't imagine the monsters' strength. Now wasn't the time to confront Flame-Hell.

{We'll assign Choi Hyuk, who is first in the warrior rankings, to be in charge of Alliance City's security until the funeral.}

It was only obvious that Choi Hyuk, who held the highest position besides the Exalted Wings and was considered possibly stronger than the Exalted Wings after killing a demise-ranked monster, would be in charge of the security for such an important event.

No one opposed this.

This was the moment Choi Hyuk took command over Alliance City.

**

"Haack... Haaaa..."

Sweat dripped from Choi Hyuk's jaw.

His hair kept shaking due to his trembling legs, and whenever they did, beads of sweat scattered in the air.

'How many are left...?'

He couldn't tell. He couldn't even remember how many he had taken down. His karma had turned stiff, and thanks to this, his head felt heavy.

'One more.'

He avoided a wooden spear as he stabbed with his wooden sword.

"Keahak!"

A Berserker team leader, who was struck in the neck, let out a frustrated groan as he

collapsed.

“Haa... Haaa...”

His palms ached. His wooden sword almost slipped from his hand due to the lack of power in his grip.

‘One more.’

He had long since passed his limits. It would be nice if the only thought that filled his mind was taking down one more person, but a distracting thought couldn’t be erased from his mind.

Choi Hyuk had decided on special training when he discovered this thought.

Even though he was past the point of return as Chu Youngjin had died together with Dark-Sound, a hesitation still hid somewhere in his heart. Though it was very faint, it wouldn’t disappear, a whisper tugging on his mind. A lingering thought that hid itself when he cornered it but would stick its head out the moment he became soft-hearted.

‘Do I really have to end everything and does it all have to end?’

‘What about Flame-Rain?’

A wooden sword stabbed at him.

“Hup!”

Choi Hyuk avoided the stab aimed at his chest by twisting his body. His actions were needlessly big due to his bottomed-out stamina and wavering focus. Still, he succeeded in countering by slashing his sword as he turned around.

Pak!

Violently hit on his forehead, Baek Seoin tumbled on the ground.

Yet, that wasn’t the end of the attack. As if he had been waiting for this, Alexei, Lee Jinhee’s right-hand man, charged at him with three other team leaders. The team

leader charging from behind aimed for his right ankle, the one on the left aimed for his knee, and the one of the right targeted his elbow. Alexei raised his sword and swung down vertically.

There was no way to dodge.

This was checkmate as his karma had been exhausted long ago.

Choi Hyuk still didn't give up.

“Kuah!”

Baang!

Choi Hyuk stomped his left foot and leaped forward. He narrowly avoided the sword targeting his right ankle. He slammed his forehead against the bridge of Alexei's nose and stabbed the team leader aiming for his elbow before he could by extending his right arm. However, he couldn't avoid the sword targeting his left knee.

Crunch!

Choi Hyuk's knee bent at a weird angle. While falling, Choi Hyuk twirled his body and slammed his sword into the culprit's knee.

Crunch!

“Kuak!”

But anymore was impossible.

“It's 10 victories out of 10 matches, huh? Though it hurts my pride a little that it's one against so many... A win's a win, right?”

Lee Jinhee chuckled as she made an appearance.

Choi Hyuk menacingly swung his wooden sword even though his leg was broken, but he couldn't hit Lee Jinhee, who moved like the wind, with that. Lee Jinhee avoided his attack as though she was dancing before coming close and pushing him onto the floor.

Thud!

He felt dizzy. The ground felt like it was rolling. Writhing on the floor, Choi Hyuk said, “Your actions... felt like they held a grudge?”

“Of course they do. Do you know how many times I was beaten up by you...? Also, you’re a bastard who won’t even listen to a word I say.”

Lee Jinhee grabbed him by his collar and pulled him up. Choi Hyuk’s neck was pulled up.

Lee Jinhee seemed to be angrier than usual for some reason.

“So... You damn leader. If you’re not going to listen to a word I say... At least do it properly. If you’re going to die, kill them all before you do. Don’t die so clumsily like you are now!”

Crack!

Lee Jinhee’s wooden sword shattered and penetrated Choi Hyuk’s chest. Even though they were all suppressed at the no-star level, she displayed an amazing burst of strength to stab into his chest.

“Ah...”

It was so painful. Because it was so unexpectedly painful, Choi Hyuk fainted while thinking he might actually die. A face appeared in his mind when he thought that he might die.

.....

...

.

“Are you awake, leader?”

Baek Seoin woke him up.

‘..’

He felt like he had had a dream, but it evaporated as soon as he opened his eyes. For some reason, tears were dried up near his eyes.

Choi Hyuk raised his body. His wounds were already healed, and his sealed karma had returned. He felt calm. His resolve was pure without a single speck of doubt.

“Wouldn’t it be fine if the goal of your training wasn’t victory? Since the difference in level disappears once karma freezes... It’s impossible for you to take down 200 of the top elites, including the executives, in that state. Though... It’s great training for us.”

Choi Hyuk shook his head.

“I already told you that we can’t rashly assume the Exalted Wings’ strength. Even if we seal their karma, they are still Exalted Wings.”

“While that’s true... I’m only saying this in hopes that you won’t be so disappointed if you fail. One’s spirit is important in a fight, but I’m worried our leader’s spirit might be broken before the fight even begins.”

While he said this jokingly, Choi Hyuk felt a hint of sincere worry in those words. He smiled bitterly.

“Baek hyung.”

“Yes.”

“Flame-Rain. She’s the only variable. She can’t be allowed to attend the funeral under any circumstances.”

Baek Seoin’s eyes widened at the sudden change in topic, but he quickly replied in a

serious manner,

“Understood. I’ll set up additional measures.”

“Okay.”

Choi Hyuk brushed away his lingering thoughts with this.

‘It’s fine with this.’

It was now completely settled. No one could stop him. If Flame-Rain tried to stop him, he would kill her too.

He felt the thought that stubbornly lingered in his mind be plucked out. He understood that he had changed.

Whatever the result, he would soon die. In return, he would be able to kill everyone.

He stood up and said,

“Then let’s begin the 11th mock battle.”

Chapter 198

That Day (1)

“Will it be possible? I think they’ve already changed their minds...”

“It’s possible. I know because I have come in contact with their hearts under the pretext of giving them buffs. Even if they left, they are Berserkers.”

“But... Haa. If you think so, we’ll do it. I believe in you.”

Baek Seoin eventually gave in while scratching his head.

“Don’t worry. They also unconsciously know that this fight will come. Also, they know that they can’t avoid it.”



“Living here? You won’t believe me if I described it to you and it won’t be enough just looking at it. You need to experience it to know. It’s so great it’ll shock you!”

Handke seemed many times brighter than when he was a Berserker.

“Ah, have a glass of whiskey.”

Ting!

He opened a whiskey bottle filled with golden liquid and tossed it into the air. Glass plates appeared in the air to catch and serve the whiskey bottles. Not a single drop of alcohol was spilled.

Various alcohols from Earth were already lined up in the air and on the table.

Bae Jinman and Zero raised their glasses in a slightly flustered manner. The whiskey bottle tipped on its own, giving off a pungent scent, and poured well-aged liquor into their glasses.

“Try it. You’ll probably be surprised.”

Handke raised his glass boastfully. Leah smiled subtly beside him.

Although only two years had passed since he had left the Berserkers, even at a glance, they could tell that he had adjusted well to his new life in the monsters’ universe.

Gulp.

When they took a sip, fiery liquid spread throughout their bodies. Their bodies heated up as if they had drunk hot water, and their taut karma relaxed.

“Good, isn’t it? Haaa... There’s no need for drugs like Water Fog now. Apparently, karma engineering has advanced, making it possible to easily suppress or scatter one’s karma. They can also heat your body while making you lose control over your karma. This is the result of that.”

Handke recklessly emptied his glass and exhaled, releasing a fragrant, cool alcoholic scent. With his mind becoming fuzzy, he chuckled happily.

“This is a precious liquor to me. Have you heard of it, Fate’s Salute?! I only brought it out because you are my welcomed guests.”

Handke was magnanimous and childish like an upstart from the countryside who had gotten rich in the city. Looking at him, Bae Jinman sipped his glass.

It was definitely good.

Better than any alcohol he had tasted on Earth.

It also made him slightly tipsy.

“Suppressing karma, you say...?”

Handke quickly continued when he heard Bae Jinman mumble.

“That’s right. Apparently, it was jointly developed by the Armored Soul Tribe and the dragon race. Oh, right, the glass crabs played a part as well? Ahahaha. Well, there’s no way you’d know. Since I’m familiar with the Berserker lifestyle, I know you don’t have time to learn about stuff like this.”

He wasn't ridiculing him with ill intentions. He simply felt sad that his close friend was still suffering. Unable to directly tell him to take up this lifestyle, he had to go about it in a roundabout way.

Handke was the only Berserker executive who was of similar age to Bae Jinman. His only close friend. Bae Jinman could keep a cool smile on his face only because he knew his friend's intentions.

However, he looked at Zero sitting awkwardly beside him and chuckled like a villain because he found the situation funny. It seemed even Zero, who was always incredibly formal, also found this funny as he grinned.

Know about karma suppression?

Did he just ask this to Berserkers?

"Of course, we know about karma suppression."

"You do?"

"Of course, we know it very well."

"...Damn it, then that's probably a combat skill."

Handke turned his head away like he had lost his appetite for the alcohol. Baek Jinman chuckled once more.

"But... This place is the monsters' universe. Isn't it the very border of the front lines? I'm surprised that the mood is more casual than I expected."

Zero stopped grinning and directed his cold gaze towards the alcohol and food lined up in front of him.

Leah replied,

"It's the princess's policy. In some ways, it's nothing new. During the recruit training or when we visited the supply stores while we were low-ranked warriors, it was dreary and warlike wherever we went... But, how was Dark City or Alliance City?"

“...Free and abundant.”

Leah shrugged.

“That’s it. Karma is born from the feelings and will emitted by souls. While you might get stronger quickly if you’re pushed to the extreme... There’s a limit. Souls get exhausted too. That’s why it’s more effective to live casually, experiencing various feelings and experiences that let your soul rest during times of no combat. The princess simply opened this right only granted to the top species to more people. Of course, results are most important on the battlefield, and our results are one of the best in the stronghold.”

“You look happy.”

“Overseer Richard and I solely dreamt of the survival and prosperity of humanity. Here, humanity is polishing their foundations for survival every day and is prospering... Of course, I’m happy.”

“I don’t know about that. Overseer Richard’s will that I remember told us to follow Leader Choi Hyuk.”

The good mood shattered as Zero looked directly at Leah, who had raised her head slightly.

A chilling breeze suddenly flowed between them.

“Hey, you’re ruining the mood. Whatever Overseer Richard’s will was, I’m sure it wasn’t for the two of you to be growling at each other.”

Handke scolded them as he refilled their glasses. Leah and Zero awkwardly looked away.

“Yeah, so what brings you here? There’s no way the leader gave you a break. Isn’t he incredibly busy as the person in charge of Alliance City’s security? Because of Youngjin’s funeral? Well... Even though we aren’t Berserkers anymore, we still ought to do what we should. I have... been thinking about this a great deal.”

As if his vigor and happiness were lies, Handke and even Leah became immersed in a

depressing mood. This was unusual in Bae Jinman's perspective. The executives who stayed beside Choi Hyuk didn't show such a serious reaction to Chu Youngjin's death. Even Lee Jinhee, though she was gloomy, didn't look like she was openly cherishing Chu Youngjin's memory. This was because a battle like that was awaiting them as well. Chu Youngjin had simply gone slightly ahead of them.

In the end, sorrow and depression were for those who remained.

'Does that mean such emotions aren't for those who would accompany him in death?'

Bae Jinman found this clear difference in emotions interesting. Those who were determined to die might actually be more relieved as though they were being released from their prolonged suffering.

'But... Why am I here? Though it is a dangerous mission...'

Bae Jinman shook his head at his heart, which was becoming more complicated, as he downed a glass of whiskey.

Swoosh.

As he became drunk, he spoke what was on his mind.

"Keeu... You're right. This isn't a break. I came because I have work. To be honest, I came for the final battle."

"Final... Battle?"

Seemingly aware of the unease behind those words, Handke and Leah became rigid.

"You know, right? What the final battle is for our leader."

There was a moment of silence. Realizing something, Leah shouted,

"Do-do-don't tell me, Youngjin-!"

Both Dark-Sound and the four monster brothers suffering a defeat was currently the biggest mystery in the alliance. However, this would be possible if Chu Youngjin swung

his sword in the other direction!

Handke seemed to sober up instantly.

“What... What the hell? Then don’t tell me Dark-Sound’s funeral is... No, but, is it okay to say something like that to us? What are you going to do if we spill the beans?”

Taken aback, Handke lowered his voice. Bae Jinman shrugged.

“What can we do? We came to ask for your help.”

Handke’s eyes widened.

“This is treason! It’s risking our species’ safety!”

Bae Jinman stood up and moved his face close to Handke’s. Then, as if growling, he said,

“Do you think Choi Hyuk will care about something like that?”

“But... But...!”

Even when Leah hesitated, Bae Jinman coldly cut them off.

“If you don’t want to, don’t. Why don’t you just go tell Exalted Wing Flame-Rain?”

“There’s no way we would!”

Handke shouted in anger.

Bae Jinman smiled.

“You and Ms. Leah. Think about it carefully. What this truly means for humanity? If you slip up, do you think Choi Hyuk will just end things at that? Won’t the alliance encounter a terrorist so outrageous they’d think that the mutts of the universe^{1} were tame in comparison? Also, when that happens, the alliance won’t be able to trust humans again.”

“What the hell...! Also, if the Exalted Wings are gone, what about the war against the monsters...!”

Leah said in a suppressed voice. Bae Jinman shook his head.

“No, once the purge is complete, our leader will head to the monsters’ universe. He will kill the monster queen.”

He said with certainty.

“This war will end a few days from now.”

Handke asked with a confused look,

“Even if it’s our leader... Is that even possible?”

Bae Jinman smiled kindly.

“You know our leader. You won’t believe what you hear, and it’s not enough to look. He’s someone you must personally encounter to know.”

Thump.

“Ha... Haha.”

Handke laughed because he found it funny how he was persuaded by those words. He felt his heart was childish for racing right away.

Flutter.

Zero threw a letter at a dazed Leah.

“This is...?”

Leah knew what it was just by looking at the paper. Her eyes wavered.

“It’s Overseer Richard’s will he left for our leader.”

At his nonchalant words, Leah bemoaned as she buried the letter in her chest.

“...Unfair.”

She mumbled quietly.

Berserkers.

They had no questions for fighting.

They had experienced constant victories by following behind Leader Choi Hyuk.

They were well aware that, even if they quit the Berserkers, they would have to fight at least once as Berserkers again.

Perhaps they had accepted this final battle with no regards for the alliance or humanity the moment they joined the Berserkers.

“Damn it... Bring out the other alcohol. I needlessly gave these damn bastards my good liquor.”

Ignoring the venting Handke, Bae Jinman shamelessly poured himself another glass.

“What’s wrong with that? It’s liquor you might not be able to drink again if we mess up.”

“You old geezer!! Only learning bad stuff from the Berserkers!!”

“Puahaha!”

Bae Jinman burst out laughing. He couldn’t even remember the last time he laughed so hard.



The preparations were proceeding smoothly.

The funeral would be held on the first floor of the Tower of Warriors. They secretly hid and installed devices under the pretext that they were setting up the defensive line used during Dragonic’s defense battle around the location the Exalted Wings would

gather at.

They also dispatched plenty Berserkers and Kundle Tribe members at the 'Light of Eternity', which was the gate leading to the Flame Wing Tribe's homeland and the main power source sustaining Alliance City, under the guise they were preparing for all circumstances.

"It almost makes me wonder if it's okay to do this."

Baek Seoin smacked his lips at their blatant preparations.

However, he also knew that no one would think something would happen in Alliance City where 12 Exalted Wings were gathered. Maybe if the monsters charged in at full force? A conspiracy? They didn't even consider something so reckless. It was something only a crazy person would attempt.

While the most important element in their plan was the fight that would break out on the first floor of the Tower of Warriors, there were other variables outside of that. First was the 'Light of Eternity' from which they would draw the power necessary to power the karma freezing devices. Rather than being part of Alliance City, this place was more like a district directly under the Flame Wing Tribe's authority. Even if Choi Hyuk, who was in charge of the security, tried, he wouldn't be able to drive away the prideful Flame Wing Tribe warriors protecting this area. Rather, they ridiculed him by saying, "Why did he dispatch such useless people here? Isn't Leader Choi Hyuk underestimating us too much?"

Likewise, the security on the first floor of the Tower of Warriors would be filled with the Exalted Wing's direct guards. Though they might be allowed to escort them on their way to the Tower of Warriors, the Berserkers were not allowed inside.

"So it's my turn now."

Lee Jinhee stretched her body.

Her mission was as important, no, in some ways more important than Choi Hyuk's. This plan wouldn't work without her.

Another short sword besides 'Lee Jinhee's Vow' also hung from her waist. It was a beautiful short sword with a geometric pattern on it.

"Occupy the Light of Eternity, extract its power source... Pierce through the security at the Tower of Warriors and install this repeater..."

She mumbled while tilting her head to the left and right.

"Saying it's easy. But it'll be bustling with transcendent warriors."

However, her expression was filled with confidence contrary to her words.

As they needed an immense amount of power to silence all the Exalted Wings, they needed to directly install a specially-made repeater in the gathering area of the Exalted Wings.

It was a difficult run where she would have to open and shove her head inside the maw of a tiger.

"Lee Jinhee with 13 years of parkour experience. Beginning the most extreme run of her life!"

Raising her hand up high, Lee Jinhee whistled as her eyes turned serious.

She got in position like an athlete and glared at the Light of Eternity, which rose up like a pillar.

Before they knew it, it was the day of Dark-Sound's funeral.

{1} Blue Manes from before

Chapter 199

That Day (2)

Currently, Choi Hyuk was with the Exalted Wings on the first-floor hall of the Tower of Warriors.

Dark-Sound's body floated in the center of the hall. The skilled experts of the alliance dressed his body to look more dignified than when he was alive. His flesh, which became mushy once his karma left, was mixed with expensive metals to make it smooth, and they ground and sprinkled jewels of darkness to recreate how the darkness around him would always suck light in. Geometric patterns created by mixing materials that symbolized the key species of the alliance were laid out around him, and when you looked at him from afar, these patterns looked like a giant wing covering his body. The wing wasn't simply a decoration. You could indirectly experience records of Dark-Sound's battles, fate, and life when you perked your ears at or connected to the spread patterns.

His body, which was restored without sparing rare materials, was more of a beautification than a restoration, and it was more like a statue of a god than a body.

All of the Exalted Wings gathered here today used the native language of the Dark Tribe to show respect for Dark-Sound.

“The Wing of Governance. Dark-Sound...”

Flame-Fog, who was usually quiet, seemed immersed in his emotions today.

“Even thinking about it now, I think this was the right choice. It isn't just a funeral. It will set a precedent and may be written down in history.”

The Exalted Wings henceforth gave titles to each other (Dark-Sound received the title ‘Wing of Governance’), and they decided to make his body into a statue and enshrine it on the first-floor hall of the Tower of Warriors.

In the future, warriors who visited the tower would have their minds engraved with the great cause, 'A United Alliance', when they saw past Exalted Wings who laid down their lives, and they could experience the records left behind by them so that they could possibly try to comprehend their level.

However, the reason Flame-Fog was so emotional wasn't just because of this.

"We should have done this when King Flame-Sky died."

He was considered neutral as he maintained his silence when Flame-Hell and Flame-Rain opposed each other. However, they all knew that a part of his heart always possessed respect for Flame-Sky.

"No, rather there shouldn't be another sacrifice like this... Exalted Wings aren't existences that come into being like how the monster queen creates monsters."

Flame-Thorn, who was close to Flame-Hell, pointed out.

"Though I agreed to this because there has already a sacrifice... I still think that it is best if we make sure a sacrifice like this doesn't happen again. From the beginning, it made no sense that an Exalted Wing would personally lead an expedition. We need a manual that will allow us to fight powerful monsters without sacrificing Exalted Wings. While it might sound cruel, we need to think realistically. No matter how many normal warriors are sacrificed, it is still better than a single Exalted Wing dying."

This was a discussion that had been ongoing since their meeting at the 'Brain'. A discussion about what measures they should take if a similar situation occurred.

"Now, let's stop talking about that."

Flame-Hell cut her off.

"Warriors have already gathering in the square. The funeral will start soon. God knows how long it's been since we've all gathered in one place... Let's stop talking about such things for now. Let's talk about what Exalted Wing Dark-Sound was like when he was alive and think about how saddening it is to lose such a great individual."

A solemn mood hung in the air.

Choi Hyuk, who stood upright in a section of the hall as the one in charge of security, swallowed the anger that surged in his heart when he saw them like that.

Choi Hyuk felt his insides twist like a teenager going through puberty who felt like everything was wrong with the world.

The decisions they made at the 'Brain' frequently led entire planets to annihilation. They appointed entire species as Consumables without a sliver of sympathy and pushed them into battlefields they couldn't return from. These decisions occurred so frequently that they didn't need justifications such as 'it was inevitable' or 'a small sacrifice for the majority'.

Choi Hyuk knew the details behind their decisions better than anyone else. He had never forgotten them.

'Kill. Only then can you kill.'

Those who couldn't kill were abandoned like trash or, sometimes, were 'recycled' like Chu Youngjin's girlfriend, Lee Hyejin. The alliance wasn't heartbroken at these sacrifices. Simply a more hellish battlefield awaited those who survived.

These sacrifices were considered so obvious that they weren't given an apology or cherished.

On the other hand, the Exalted Wings felt various emotions when faced with Dark-Sound's death. Some were scared, a few were sad, and others were angry. This was likely because his death was the 'death of an equal'. The terrifying fact that it could have been them made them emotional.

'A case that can never be allowed to happen and one that is inevitable.'

Choi Hyuk thought about the difference between the two cases. Who were the majority? Who were the minority? Didn't that all depend on the losses they would suffer? The Exalted Wings wouldn't have suffered any losses if the earthlings, a species on the border, were annihilated. So if people disagreed with their decision, they could virtuously say that 'it was inevitable'.

However, if he wanted to make them realize that they should never have done that... As expected, there was no other way besides personally engraving it into their flesh and bones. Once under unbearable pain, they would end up looking back on their actions, asking themselves if they had been wrong.

Choi Hyuk closed his eyes while imagining their screams.

Gulp.

He swallowed his surging emotions once more.

It was the last time.



“The monsters aren’t making any particular movements.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. Recently, the independent troop ‘Frontier’ risked their lives to investigate deep into the enemy territory. They reported no monster activity anywhere.”

“That’s good.”

Flame-Rain nodded.

The independent troop ‘Frontier’ was a troop composed of warriors who had left the Berserkers. As top elites in Flame-Rain’s stronghold, they were trustworthy.

Flame-Rain relaxed her tense shoulders.

“Huu... It’s hard, isn’t it?”

“No.”

Her adjutant, Camilla, replied immediately, but her complexion clearly showed signs of exhaustion.

Camilla, who was the Sovereign of Paradise and an overseer of Earth, followed Flame-Rain to the monsters' universe and had gained enough experience to be promoted to her adjutant. She strengthened her position in the stronghold as her trusted adjutant. Her authority was similar to that of a chief presidential secretary's^{1}.

Camilla, who had dreamed about earthlings' prosperity and happiness, steadily created a foothold to realize her dream.

Of course, she had to handle an immense workload to do so.

"I understand. Restoring Deus, which was completely destroyed, is already a huge task, yet we have to stay on full alert since Exalted Wing Dark-Sound passed away like that... It must be tough for you. It's normally something I should be doing... Sorry, please work a little harder."

Flame-Rain patted Camilla's shoulder. When she did, Camilla's expression, which she tried hard to keep firm, became misty. Resignation and fear reflected on her face.

"Wow! What's this? Was it that tough for you? Hmm... Should I assign some personnel to you?"

Camilla was never one to show it even if things were tough so Flame-Rain was shocked when her eyes looked gloomy.

Camilla shook her head. She was well aware that Flame-Rain had it tougher than her. She could easily tell by how her flames blazed limply and had lost their liveliness. She had no intention of showing a weak side of her just because work was tough.

Her gloominess was because of another matter.

"That's not it. Rather... I just feel that something's strange. Has anything been discovered from the investigation?"

"What the heck? Were you worried about me?"

Flame-Rain leaned into her chair.

"Rather than a discovery... It's regarding Chu Youngjin."

“The warrior who passed away... Chu Youngjin?”

“Yeah, he isn’t dead yet.”

Camilla’s eyes widened.

“Ah, of course, he’s considered dead by the alliance’s diagnosis, but he’s not dead yet in my perspective. My flames can reignite a completely extinguished wick. Of course, if there is even a tiny part of the wick remaining that is. That’s why I’m thinking about it.”

Flame-Rain lowered her eyes and tapped her long finger against her cheek.

“Choi Hyuk. If I think of that damn bastard, I want to save him. Since he’s a warrior he’s been with since the beginning of the recruit training, it’ll bother him even if he acts like it doesn’t. I don’t want to make his difficult life even harder. And what about the woman of the Armored Soul Tribe who comes to me and cries? I want to save him. That’s what I personally think... However, as an Exalted Wing, I should give up this uncertain treatment and wake him up right now. You see, I need to hear his testimony.”

“His testimony?”

“Yeah. Regarding a third-party.”

“A third-party...”

“After looking at the corpses, it looks like they were all injured by one person. It doesn’t make sense for everyone to be killed by a single person in a four-on-four fight. That means someone might have intruded on their fight midway. My duty is to figure out who that person is, what his or her skills are, and why that person left without laying a hand on the rest of the subjugation force... Also, how Chu Youngjin was able to avoid that person’s attack.”

Camilla’s expression became darker. However, lost in her thoughts, Flame-Rain didn’t notice this change and continued,

“But if I wake him up, he’ll definitely die. I also can’t waste my strength on a treatment that could take a hundred or even a thousand years or may not even be possible... But it’ll be no different from abandoning my duty if I don’t attempt it... Haaa. Also, how can I do that to Choi Hyuk and to that Armored Soul Tribe woman?”

Flame-Rain sighed with a face that seemed to have aged ten years.

White smoke exhaled from her mouth. For her, who possessed pure flames, to exhale smoke, it seemed she was under a lot of stress.

Gloomily looking at her, Camilla seemed to have decided on something as she tightly shut her eyes before saying,

“Maybe there isn’t a third-party?”

“Then, you’re saying the culprit is among Kwe, Jae, Lan, and Ryuk, who all died there? I don’t think so...”

“No, I’m talking about Chu Youngjin.”

“Huh?”

“Chu Youngjin is the only one without any injuries. Couldn’t Chu Youngjin have killed everyone?”

“Ehhh...? But his level is...”

“You previously mentioned that his cause of death wasn’t certain, correct? Perhaps he burned up all his karma... His cause of death has never been reported before.”

“I guess?”

“What if he wasn’t injured by something? What if he broke down from squeezing out all his strength?”

Flame-Rain bounced up from her seat. However, she still didn’t believe her.

“But... But why would Chu Youngjin do that? He doesn’t have a reason to.”

Chu Youngjin was now a transcendent warrior who represented the alliance. His future would be filled with glory so why would he do such a thing? To suddenly assassinate Dark-Sound? This would cause him to obtain nothing and lose everything.

Camilla steadied her breath.

Yes, logically, it didn't make sense. There wasn't any evidence either. This 'leap in logic' she was currently talking about could destroy everything she had accumulated until now. However, Camilla still felt very uneasy. She couldn't bear not speaking of it as the alliance, which sustained the universe, could collapse and the earthlings could be marked as the most traitorous species at a single misstep.

"Exalted Wing Flame-Rain... How much do you know about the Berserkers, about Choi Hyuk?"

Flame-Rain gave Camilla a look asking what she was talking about all of a sudden. Nonetheless, Camilla continued firmly,

"Though I don't know what you think of Choi Hyuk... we earthlings called him the Demon King. Have you... never witnessed the endless rage he possesses? A rage that wants to burn the entire universe to cinders."

Flame-Rain's eyes wavered.

She completely reorganized the information she had collected until now, clearer and simpler than her previous hypothesis. The result pointed towards an unbelievable truth.

While it was absurd, the thought that Choi Hyuk, that crazy bastard, could really do it crossed her mind. The damage was too severe for her to ignore this small possibility.

"Don't... Don't tell me... that this crazy bastard...?!"

Flame-Rain jolted up from her seat.

She pondered over it while pacing precisely ten steps. Then she decided.

"Ah, I don't know. Even if I take responsibility for this... I can't leave things as they are. Assemble an army immediately! We head to Alliance City!"

Her current actions could deal her a heavy political blow, but Flame-Rain decided to act.

"Yes!"

With a complicated expression, a mix of resignation and conviction, Camilla replied in a firm, low voice.

{1} Highest-ranking employee of the Blue House

Chapter 200

That Day (3)

“What? Who’s going where?”

On the first floor of the Tower of Warriors, Dark-Sound’s body and the 12 Exalted Wings were gathered in a hall the size of a basketball court. The somber mood broke out into a commotion at the sudden news.

“Why is Exalted Wing Flame-Rain coming here?”

“She’s bringing her army? She observed some rebellious activity? What’s rebellious? What? She doesn’t know?”

“She simply talked one-sidedly without giving a proper explanation and hung up... I don’t know who’s calling who rebellious. Is she going to overrule the matter decided at the ‘Brain’ on her own?”

This situation was so bewildering that they didn’t know what to do even after pushing their subordinates to contact others and discuss the matter.

“Shouldn’t we regard this as high treason?”

“What is she trying to do on the day of Exalted Wing Dark-Sound’s funeral...?”

“What do you mean high treason?! It’s not like she’s forcing her way here, she notified us in advance.”

“In advance? She just said what she wanted. What is it if not a sudden attack for saying something then leading her army here?”

“Your words are harsh!”

This was a delicate matter. The general in charge of defending their border declared that she would ignore orders and lead her army to the headquarters. She also justified her actions with an abrupt ‘rebellious activity’. Just looking at the situation, it was

undoubtedly an act of treason, which was also why the Exalted Wings couldn't believe it.

"I mean... Isn't the power currently gathered in Alliance City too high for a revolt...? Leader Choi Hyuk, did you notice any activities that could be considered rebellious in Alliance City?"

"None."

Choi Hyuk feigned ignorance.

However, he smiled bitterly in his mind.

'As expected... Flame-Rain, did you figure it out?'

Notifying them in advance instead of coming abruptly and not revealing the specifics while declaring 'rebellious activities' made it seem like perhaps Flame-Rain was sending him a warning, telling him not to act rashly.

'It's too late.'

All preparations were complete, and he had already resolved himself.

"No... I think it's been a bit noisy outside for a while..."

Leviathan, who had been silent, said as his brows wriggled. As an enormous dragon, he currently covered his body in the fourth dimension, laying his body out throughout the hall. Because he was covered in a higher dimension, the walls weren't damaged when his body passed through them.

When Leviathan pointed out the commotion, the other Exalted Wings noticed it as well. The racket was picking up speed as it approached the Tower of Warriors.

"What is going on? Leader Choi Hyuk?"

Flame-Thorn demanded an explanation. Her eyes narrowed as if she was warning him.

Choi Hyuk smiled. If they noticed the commotion, then it was already too late. Lee

Jinhee was faster than anyone gave her credit for.

‘The moment’s finally come.’

Sling.

He unsheathed his sword.



Lee Jinhee closed her eyes and controlled her karma.

She had originally thought that karma was a special, extraordinary ability. She had believed it was an external power that took root in her body, but she was mistaken.

As her rank increased, karma permeated into her cells, and now, it even absorbed the cells themselves. Karma was her body.

Controlling karma meant that she could control even the tips of the hairs on her body.

Her calm figure resembled a metal object inside a powerful magnetic field rather than a living being. She didn’t move a muscle when she stood still, yet her entire body reacted without wasting even the tiniest bit of energy when she began to move.

Opening her eyes, she saw her target. There was a total of 16 warriors from the Flame Wing Tribe protecting the Light of Eternity. 15 of them were high-ranked warriors while the one leading them was a highest-ranked warrior.

Lee Jinhee’s goal was to end it without giving them the chance to scream. It would be best if no one knew about the rebellion until they activated the karma freezing devices.

“Whew... We’ll go in immediately.”

Whoosh!

Her smooth thighs exposed beneath her shorts became taut. Feeling hot, she stared in front of her. Instead of a kicking the ground and jumping, this was more like the gathering of willpower.

Lee Jinhee took a deep breath and then exhaled.

“Hu!”

Bang!

Accelerating to her top speed instantly, her body shot through the air.

Space rippled in front of her like a sonic boom erupting from compressed sound waves when a jet exceeded the speed of sound.

The space ripples were like a shell left behind by her sheer speed so the situation had already concluded by the time the Flame Wing Tribe warriors noticed.

“Huh?”

“Something just...”

The warriors tilted their heads, but the head of one of them dropped as his neck had been sliced at an angle.

The warrior beside him opened his mouth in surprise as his head split vertically in two.

The other warriors turned around and kept a distance from them, but before they could completely turn their backs, their bodies fell apart in various pieces.

“What...?!”

Pscht!

The warriors who had avoided this calamity as they were further away, were stabbed to death before they could open their mouths in shock. The Berserker team leaders who followed Lee Jinhee were able to easily take their lives because Lee Jinhee had caught their attention.

Claang!

The only warrior who blocked her short sword was the highest-ranked warrior in charge of protecting the Light of Eternity. He had a flustered expression as though he had only blocked her attack out of reflex.

Thud.

The corpses of the slaughtered warriors fell to the ground after he blocked her short sword. The corpses burned up as they were strewn on the ground as though a Molotov Cocktail had been thrown. Only then did the highest-ranked warrior come to his senses and attempted to shout.

“A revo-...”

Slice!

He slumped to the floor before he could even finish.

‘Lee Jinhee’s Vow’ shined in a brilliant white light, and he couldn’t deal with Lee Jinhee’s speed which used her Sword of Vow’s limitless power. With only his lower jaw intact, everything above his upper jaw was sliced off.

Blaaze!

The place Lee Jinhee stood was blazing with flames from the dead warriors, and her five loyal team leaders, including Alexei, stood around her.

“Haa... Ha...”

Panting, she tightly gripped her trembling hand. Even though she had borrowed the strength of her Sword of Vow, she still sliced ten high-ranked and one highest-ranked warrior in an instant. Overwhelmed with exhausted, she felt like was about to faint.

Her karma, which had been well-controlled, extended out on its own, her legs shook, and her shoulders trembled. Her legs felt so heavy that she felt as though they were melting onto the ground.

She needed to rest, but Lee Jinhee squeezed out more strength.

Kiing!

‘Lee Jinhee’s Vow’ became brighter, and Lee Jinhee used this strength lent by the sword to forcefully steady her breath.

“Huu.”

When she turned around after letting out a short breath, a report immediately arrived.

“The link has been established.”

She wasn’t the only one who moved at full speed. During this short period of time, glass crabs surrounded the Light of Eternity and began to stack glass pebbles in a complicated pattern. This arrangement was set up to extract power from the Light of Eternity.

Lee Jinhee glanced down at the other short sword hanging on her waist. The patterns that densely covered the short sword shined as they received the power extracted from the Light of Eternity. Soon, the patterns fell away from the surface of the sword like holograms and twirled around her.

Lee Jinhee nodded.

She glanced at the Berserkers, Kundle Tribe members, and glass crab surrounding the Light of Eternity for the last time. These warriors who were dispatched under Choi Hyuk’s authority as head of security were assigned to defend the Light of Eternity until

their revolt concluded so that the karma freezing devices wouldn't lose their power source.

“Hu.”

Exhaling once more, she left without saying farewell. The five team leaders followed behind her, but the distance between them grew instantly.

The path to the Tower of Warriors was crowded. Due to the excessive number of people, warriors sat on rooftops and some even floated in the air as they waited for the funeral.

Since it was impossible to avoid their attention, Lee Jinhee decided to move more quickly. She charged at full speed, stepping on rooftops and sometimes even on air.

“Huu... My body feels heavy.”

The karma of the many warriors gathered here pressed down on her body. She didn't notice it when she moved at a moderate pace, but the pressure increased as she gained speed.

“Huh? Who's that?”

“Isn't she Director Lee Jinhee of the Berserkers? Is it something to do security?”

People noticed Lee Jinhee's fleeting appearance as she rushed over their heads.

The majority just let her be, but the highest-ranked warriors of the Flame Wing Tribe were a little different.

“Huh? Wait! Isn't that the Light of Eternity?!”

The problem was the repeater, which was shaped like a short sword, dangling from her waist. Constantly receiving power from the Light of Eternity, the repeater released streams of enormous power. The Light of Eternity was a power originating from the Flame Wing Tribe's homeland. These warriors, who prided themselves for being the sole possessors of such power, couldn't disregard the Light of Eternity's power emanating from Lee Jinhee.

“Hey! Wait!”

Flame Wing Tribe warriors flew over from every direction and stopped her.

“Why do I sense the Light of Eternity from you?”

One said coldly as he obstructed her path. When she looked at these meddlesome fellows stopping her, she realized that each and every one of them seemed to be highest-ranked warriors. The type of warriors who believed themselves to be intrinsic to the alliance.

“Hup!”

Obviously, Lee Jinhee didn't plan on replying. Without slowing down, she stomped down with her foot. Bearing her will, her karma ignored inertia and changed directions. Lee Jinhee zigzagged vertically and rushed past the Flame Wing Tribe warriors.

“Huh?! Block her!”

The warriors shouted.

Other warriors in the crowd leaped up one after the other.

“What is it? What's going on?”

Warriors from other tribes stretched their heads out to look at the sudden commotion as they whispered to each other.

The Flame Wing Tribe warriors were proud of being members of the Flame Wing Tribe, more than their rank or position. When a few famous warriors shouted to chase Lee Jinhee, other warriors who didn't know what was going on jumped on the chase.

Flames erupted amongst the noisy crowd. Various colored flames spread out like a net and blocked the white stream of light flying through the air. However, this stream of light didn't stop and zigzagged around the flames. More flames surged up whenever she did, and sometimes, they fell after exploding intensely.

“What’s going on...? Fireworks...?”

The warriors who weren’t aware of the situation were taken aback, their mouths agape.

“Haa, haa...”

From the Light of Eternity to the Tower of Warriors, Lee Jinhee traversed this not-so-short distance in an instant. Even when faced with the Flame Wing Tribe’s obstruction, she flew in the air at such a speed that those watching could only describe it with a ‘Whoosh! Bababaam!’

She was already gasping for breath when she began to see the Tower of Warriors. As she didn’t possess the power to deny other people’s karma like Choi Hyuk, the karma emitted by the other warriors put a burden on her. Having charged her way through the massive crowd at full speed while being blocked by the Flame Wing Tribe, she was as exhausted as a swallow that had forcefully pushed its way through a typhoon.

There were still a few persistently chasing Flame Wing Tribe warriors behind her.

Glancing at them, Lee Jinhee gritted her teeth.

“I consumed a lot more stamina than expected... But this is the end.”

Lee Jinhee looked at the Tower of Warriors with shining eyes. The Exalted Wings were gathered there. It was the place currently concentrated with the most military power in the alliance.

The security guards were at least at the highest rank, and those who stood protecting the entrances were at the transcendent level.

Just standing there, they made her feel like a vast galaxy separated her from the door. No matter how outstanding she was as a highest-ranked warrior, transcendent warriors were on a different level. If they were whales, possessing fates acknowledged by the great universe, she was simply a sardine.

However, even a sardine could ascend if it leaped through the dragon's gate^{1}! No... Was it a salmon? Moving on...

A thrilling smile hung on her lips.

“Let's go!!!”

'Lee Jinhee's Vow' shined brightly. This Sword of Vow, which was created from her vow that she wouldn't die before Choi Hyuk, could open a path to Choi Hyuk regardless of the situation. She saw a thread-like line passing through the entrance. Choi Hyuk was inside, and if Choi Hyuk was there, even transcendent warriors wouldn't be able to stop her.

She felt hot. Having squeezed her karma beyond its limits, her ankle and thighs felt like they had evaporated. The entrance, which had seemed a vast distance away, appeared in front of her as though it had been compressed.

“Hmm?!”

Having felt something, the transcendent warriors moved. They swung in the air as their blades brushed past Lee Jinhee.

Even transcendent warriors couldn't stop Lee Jinhee as it looked like she had been compressed into a dot and was being sucked through the entrance.

Jjoong!!!

The shockwave that exploded behind her flung the chasing Flame Wing Tribe warriors away.

Baaang!

Lee Jinhee smashed through the door and then rolled on the floor.

She saw Choi Hyuk who had just unsheathed his sword with calm eyes and then the Exalted Wing's dumbfounded expressions. When she saw their faces, she recalled the

peaceful day on which the recruit training had abruptly started. She didn't know that such rage had been hidden within her.

'We killed each other. We were killed by the suddenly appearing monsters without being able to resist. Yeah, these damn bastards. Now it's your turn.'

She raised the short sword shining with mysterious patterns up in the air before stabbing it into the ground.

Kiing!

A powerful energy spread from it and activated the karma freezing devices, which had been installed beforehand.

"Touchdown, you bastards!"

She shouted fiercely as she stood up.

{1} From what I can tell, 'leaping through the dragon's gate' originated from Chinese mythology, and it refers to how one can become successful if he or she is persistent. Here, Lee Jinhee forgets that carps are the ones featured in this story.

Chapter 201

That Day (4)

“...Huh?”

Flame-Thorn made a noise reminiscent of a sigh or a shout. Her flames hissed and swayed in ridicule.

Rather than being angry, her reaction showed that she was taken aback. It had been a long time since they had participated in real battle, and people would normally bow their heads and wait for orders. The Exalted Wings were so unfamiliar with and taken aback by this current situation that they didn't know how to react.

They didn't even notice the presence of the Light of Eternity, which the highest-ranked warriors on the streets recognized. Familiar with safety and authority, they momentarily paused when faced with an attack despite possessing amazing computing capacities. By the time they thought, 'Ah, is this a fight?', they were in no state to enter conflict.

The first one to react was not an Exalted Wings but the Tower of Warriors.

Crrrk.

While the first-floor hall looked like a normal building for symbolical purposes, the Tower of Warriors was in actuality an enormous accumulation and whirlwind of past karma weapons. As soon as the karma freezing devices activated, the smooth walls solidified with weapon fragments before crumbling down.

“Keuk!”

Leviathan, who windingly laid his body around, passing through walls, crashed into the Tower of Warriors when he lost his karma. Every time he wriggled his body in pain, the tower would crumble even faster.

Kiing!

All this time, the energy output of the repeater Lee Jinhee had stabbed into floor gradually became larger. No one could block this enormous flow of energy once it started. The Light of Eternity, which maintained the entire city, continuously flowed into the repeater. From there, it powered the karma freezing devices hidden throughout the Tower of Warriors, which made strange noises as it covered the entire city.

Whiiik!

Whiii!

Every time the glass crabs whistled, various towers built by the glass crabs shined in a blue light as they spread the karma freezing device’s power out. These glass towers had been set up under the guise of increasing the city’s defenses for the funeral.

The karma freezing devices dropped the levels of all warriors near the tower to the no-star level. While the devices’ effect lowered as you moved towards the edge of the city, even if you stood at the very edge of the city, it would be difficult to use power beyond that of the three-star level.

The fight between the Exalted Wings, Choi Hyuk, and Lee Jinhee became as cruel and primitive as the ‘Throne Game’, which took place in the gymnasium.

“Just why?!”

“Choi Hyuk? Are you crazy?!”

Some were curious while others were shocked, but they soon didn't have the leisure to be. The Tower of Warriors had already begun to collapse, and they raised their blades to kill them.

Thud! Thud!

The Tower of Warriors gradually collapsed and crumbled as broken weapon fragments rained on the floor.

The weapon fragments sprinkling from the tower made people become dizzy when hit by them.

Choi Hyuk drew his sword at the Exalted Wing closest to him, Flame-Thorn.

Kaang!

Flame-Thorn took out a handgun as long as her forearm and blocked his sword. It normally was a 'Gun of Conclusion', which shot karma, but currently, it was no different from a hard rod.

Choi Hyuk chased after Flame-Thorn, who was pushed a few steps back from their exchange.

Not recalling his extended sword, Choi Hyuk pushed her gun down and twisted his blade to pierce her throat. Sparks flew out where his sword and her gun clashed.

“Euk!”

Flame-Thorn turned her head to dodge Choi Hyuk's attack again. Choi Hyuk's hand shot out after her head and eventually grabbed her hair and tugged it towards him.

Crunch!

“Kaak!”

His abruptly crashing knee shattered her face. Unable to maintain her flames due to

the karma freezing devices, Flame-Thorn's body had become hard and smooth like a vase and warm like a heated floor. Dark red watery liquid smeared on the floor. Choi Hyuk grabbed her collar and attempted to stab her throat.

Puk!

However, Armor-Desert charged forward with his shoulders in front and slammed into Choi Hyuk's stomach. As if being flipped up by a charging bull, Choi Hyuk's body floated in the air before rolling on the ground. Weapon fragments narrowly missed where he rolled.

Rushing at him while deflecting the weapon fragments, Armor-Song swung his hand, which had turned into a blade, at Choi Hyuk.

While the start was good, the situation was disadvantageous for Choi Hyuk and Lee Jinhee.

Choi Hyuk couldn't plant anyone on his side in the hall as the Exalted Wings' guards were personally in charge of the first-floor hall's security.

This meant that Choi Hyuk and Lee Jinhee had to fight two-versus-twelve, maybe even more, until the Berserkers dispatched outside the tower could make their way in.

Clang! Claang!

“Whooah”

The Square of Warriors was in complete chaos. Three concentric circles were engaged in a free-for-all.

Choi Hyuk, Lee Jinhee, and the Exalted Wings were in the very middle. Around them, the highest-ranked and transcendent warriors, the personal guards of the Exalted Wings, made up the first concentric circle. Outside of that were the Berserkers and Kundle Tribe members dispatched as security. They were doing their best to prevent the Exalted Wings from escaping while making their way through the Exalted Wings' guards to support Choi Hyuk. Finally, the last concentric circle was made up of

warriors who had gathered for the funeral. Having noticed the change, they attempted to push past the Berserkers and Kundle Tribe members. These crowded warriors were stabbed and hit to death, and some even fell and were eventually crushed to death.

Whish!

Sensing a chill on his neck, Choi Hyuk ducked down as Armor-Desert's blade-hand brushed past his hair.

Whoosh!

While he avoided his blade-hand, his body was suddenly lifted into the air and he saw the ceiling raining with weapon fragments. Armor-Desert had grabbed Choi Hyuk's waist and tackled him down while he had momentarily looked away. While he was being flipped backwards, Choi Hyuk pressed down on Armor-Desert's head while raising his sword.

Thud!

Kiririk!

“Keuk!”

The heavy impact from being crushed by a bulky, solid machine-human rang out from his spine. Armor-Desert wasn't completely fine either. The moment Choi Hyuk fell on his back, he had extended his sword and slashed it between Armor-Desert's neck and shoulder.

The tough Armor-Desert didn't even groan, but his body was honest. Electricity sparked from Choi Hyuk's slash, and he lost strength in his arm, which was holding Choi Hyuk. Choi Hyuk slammed his elbow onto his head and wriggled out from his grasp. When he looked up, he felt a chill on his forehead. Armor-Song was close. His hand had turned into a matte black sword and was stabbing towards his forehead.

Baang!

Just as Choi Hyuk twisted his body the best he could in order to stab back, Armor-Song was slammed by Leviathan's tail and flung into the distance.

Of course, Leviathan didn't do this to help Choi Hyuk.

Writhing in pain, he roared like a beast,

“Kuaaaaah! Choi Hyuk! Why?!!”

Once karma froze, Leviathan's gigantic body worked against him. From the start, it was impossible to sustain his body without karma. His bones and muscles were crushed, and his dark blue body rippled severely.

Thud! Bang! Thump!

Leviathan had no choice but to be hit by the falling fragments as his body was too large. His body was tough even without karma, but the falling karma weapon fragments were also tough and sharp. His strong dragon scales cracked and shattered like worn wooden boards.

Red blood splattered like rain, drenching the hall.

Leviathan couldn't recover his senses due to the pain and simply struggled and flailed around. Of course, his struggles were like a tidal wave to the Exalted Wings, Choi Hyuk, and Lee Jinhee, who had all likewise lost their karma.

Lee Jinhee avoided the writhing Leviathan, stepping on a puddle of blood, and jumped up into the air. Behind her, Dark-Resentment's sword slightly brushed against her calf while Flame-Fog's burning hand burnt the tips of her hair from the front as she hastily ducked her head.

Lee Jinhee was surprised by the heat.

“Isn't your karma sealed?”

“I control my own karma weapon.”

Even though he had no reason to reply, Flame-Fog frowned while replying to her question. His wrists were densely covered by white and blue string bracelets. The long

threads from the bracelets fluttered above his wrists and hands, creating flames.

It looked like Flame-Fog felt proud of being able to create flames using his karma weapon in this situation. Taking a neutral stance between Flame-Rain and Flame-Hell, he was a proud warrior who took his training seriously. He was currently incredibly angry at Lee Jinhee, who left a scratch on the tip of his nose during a surprise attack.

“I don’t even care about your reason... I’ll give you a gruesome death.”

Flame-Fog charged at her while saying such chilling words. Dark-Resentment quietly followed behind him.

Thud!

Leviathan’s massive tail fell down behind her as she stepped back. At this moment, she had nowhere to dodge. She gritted her teeth and ran forward while swinging her short sword. She deflected the flames, however, a blade sliced her side and half a shield fell on her shoulder before she managed to roll on the floor. Ignoring the pain, she jumped up in order to observe the situation.

Blood, Leviathan, weapons falling from the tower, and warriors fighting like hell. It was complete chaos.

She suddenly heard a noise behind her.

“Charge!”

While it would have been great if they were Berserkers, it wasn’t a language from Earth. The Exalted Wings’ guards began pouring into the hall. They had been busy stopping the Berserkers from pushing in from the outside, yet it seemed they judged settling the inner situation was more important even if they overexerted themselves as ten transcendent warriors joined the fray.

“Daaamn it!”

She looked like she was about to cry as she shot forward again. When she used all her

strength thanks to the chilling possibility that she might die, she was able to jump past Dark-Resentment and Flame-Fog without any injuries. She stepped on Flame-Fog's head while she was at it before grabbing and climbing over Leviathan's shaking tail.

“Tsk!”

Flame-Fog raged as he chased Lee Jinhee, crawling on Leviathan.

Just as he was about to climb over his tail, Lee Jinhee charged at him like a beast on all fours and stabbed his chest. She didn't completely climb over and instead clung and hid in a blind spot while waiting for an opportunity. Her hands were dyed red after having clung onto Leviathan's shattered scales.

Crack!

Lee Jinhee enjoyed the pain riding up her arm in recoil.

When she pulled her sword out at an angle, Flame-Fog rolled down like a piece of trash. Normally, his body would turn into flames as he died, but as his karma was sealed, he slammed onto the ground like a porcelain doll filled with liquid, shattering and spilling liquid everywhere.

She avoided Dark-Resentment and the ten personal guards, who were chasing after her, and began running again. An agonizing pain ached from the scratch left on her calf by Dark-Resentment. Her regenerative ability disappeared when her karma froze. Her bloody calf felt like she was wearing a tattered red knee-high sock.

‘I can't die first...’

Biting down on her lip, Lee Jinhee jumped over Leviathan's body. Right below her, she saw Armor-Song fighting Choi Hyuk.

She immediately flung forward and stabbed her sword into the back of Armor-Song's neck.

Kiririk!

Even though the impact of her fall was added to her full-strength blow, her sword only

penetrated halfway.

'Damn it... So you're a machine-human, is that it? Tough even without karma.'

Instead, she rolled backwards after being hit by Armor-Song's aggressive arm swing.

"Peh."

Lee Jinhee spat out a glob of bloody saliva before standing back up. It felt like her ribs were broken as cold sweat ran down her spine and her legs gave out from the stinging pain. It might have been fortunate that she wasn't slashed by a sword.

Using the opening Lee Jinhee made for him, Choi Hyuk flung himself at Armor-Song. Armor-Song's body had already been dented and now an electric current flowed from the injury on the back of his neck. In the end, Choi Hyuk's sword almost sliced his head off.

Flame-Thorn had been repeatedly stabbed by Choi Hyuk and was dead in a pool of watery liquid.

Armor-Desert squirmed on the floor as there were holes between his neck and shoulder and through his knee.

Armor-Song had just died after having his head almost sliced off.

Flame-Fog died from being stabbed in the chest by Lee Jinhee.

Light-Walk and Light-Path couldn't maintain their figures once their karma froze, scattering as individual speckled lights, and ended up being crushed by the falling fragments and drowning in a pool of Leviathan's blood.

Leviathan no longer seemed to have the strength to struggle as he growled and stopped moving.

In the short while since the fight started and the hall fell into a state of chaos due to Leviathan's writhing, seven Exalted Wings were either killed or gravely injured.

Flame-Hell, who climbed over a now still Leviathan, had a dumbfounded expression as he observed the current situation. With an enraged face, he warned,

“If you surrender now, I’ll spare your lives.”

The five surviving Exalted Wings and the ten additional guards surrounded Choi Hyuk and Lee Jinhee and were slowly closing in on them. Even though they all didn’t have karma, as transcendent warriors, they were experts in combat.

“Ha!”

Yet, the one who snorted out of reflex was Lee Jinhee.

“Do you know what pisses me off the most?”

It seemed Flame-Hell wasn’t serious about letting them surrender as he didn’t answer her and simply pulled their encirclement closer.

Lee Jinhee smiled fiercely.

“It’s that you guys don’t even know what you taught us.”

They had fought fellow classmates and colleagues to the death on a peaceful day. People who had gone shopping had to fight monsters to survive. After being named Consumables, they were tossed into a battlefield with a 1% survival rate.

From the start, she didn’t consider something like this as a crisis.

As if infected by Lee Jinhee’s smile, a fierce smile hung on Choi Hyuk’s lips as well. His smile was more exaggerated and crazier than Lee Jinhee’s.

“There’s no karma here. The ones who should be trembling are you.”

Lee Jinhee declared.

“Kill. Only then can you kill. Isn’t that right?”

Choi Hyuk responded as he wielded his sword.

Lee Jinhee swung her sword as well.

“Director!”

Alexei led two other team leaders, who had also followed her from the Light of Eternity, as they burst into the hall. There were originally five, but two had died while trying to force their way past the guards.

Without a sliver of hesitation, blades tangled and bodies clashed once more.

Chapter 202

That Day (5)

The two team leaders and Alexei were only the start. Not long after, Baek Seoin, leading the main force of the Berserkers, forcefully pushed his way through the guards' defensive line. After that, everyone fought mixed together, disregarding battle lines.

Choi Hyuk slashed the guards blocking his path again and again as he chased and killed the Exalted Wings. Stepping on their corpses, he would look for his next target.

Due to the warriors pushing the Berserkers from the outside, the battlefield slowly became more confined and cramped. Corpses were pushed and piled together, and weapon fragments fell down and embedded themselves in them. Warriors pushed and pulled on top of the hill of weapons and corpses as they targeted their enemies. Covered in fragments, blood, and fluids, they now looked like strange lumps fighting each other.

“Haak! Haaak!”

Rough pants shook his ears. He could no longer tell if those breaths were his or others, or if the world itself was growling at them.

The world of red, blue, yellow, lumpy, hard corpses and fluids was wet, sticky, and prickly.

Though almost all the karma in his body was frozen, the reason why he, an earthling, could survive in this unfamiliar and distant universe was because the karma that made up his body had already changed it. His bones and muscles remained the same even under different environments, and sufficient energy was supplied to his veins.

However, it seemed he had reached his limits now. It hurt.

No matter how big his breaths were, what entered his lungs wasn't oxygen, and his

joints creaked under Alliance City's gravity as it became more and more unbearable. His body had reached its limit like the collapsed Leviathan, whose body was too much to handle without karma.

Still, Choi Hyuk moved to kill.

"Haa... Haa... Got you."

Choi Hyuk revealed his teeth and raised his sword. Covered in various fluids, all that stood out were his shiny teeth.

"St... Stop. Just why? Why?!"

His body was short but rough-looking. His height and width were the same length. Unsited for his muscular build, his arms trembled as he raised his hammer. He was the only one amongst the 14 Exalted Wings who didn't have his own species. The only Exalted Wings who didn't belong to the top four species were Leviathan and the 'Blacksmith' in front of him.

He was the sole survivor of his species, and he introduced himself as the 'Blacksmith', saying he had no name after losing his species. As the top blacksmith in the alliance, he was accepted as an Exalted Wing as a symbol encompassing minor forces under the banner 'One Alliance' and for being a political pushover with no force of his own.

He was the 'Blacksmith', who silently raised his hammer for the alliance while bearing the pain of his past.

Even during final moment, what he raised was not a weapon but a forging hammer. Regret, fear, and dejection filled his heart.

"Th-there's no need to kill this blacksmith as well, is there?!"

He pleaded to Choi Hyuk, whose eyes and teeth were all that stood out.

Choi Hyuk mocked,

“Why are you asking me that? This is a game you guys started. After making species that were living fine on their own kill each other... Why? As the Blacksmith, do you not know? You didn’t participate in that decision?”

“That... That’s because there was a reason! The earthlings weren’t the only ones! Isn’t the entire universe in a war right now?!”

“Then I probably have a reason too.”

The ‘Blacksmith’ swung his hammer and Choi Hyuk swung his sword.

Thump!

Exhausted, Choi Hyuk couldn’t avoid the hammer. He simply curled his left arm and pressed it against his ear, receiving the strike fully on his arm. The impact shook his head and his bones ached in pain.

Pscht!

Still, the sword in his right hand precisely burrowed into the Blacksmith’s bulging chest. Feeling the sensation of ripping flesh, breaking bones, and drawing blood, Choi Hyuk grabbed his sword at an angle and pulled it out. Blood gushed into the air with a ripping sound.

The Blacksmith slumped down with powerless eyes.

Choi Hyuk looked down at his corpse and mumbled,

“Now... Is Hell the only one left?”

Everyone was dead.

Choi Hyuk had personally killed Flame-Wind. A loyal subject of the old king, he was always in favor of Flame-Rain, which was why he had also treated Choi Hyuk favorably. Yet, in reality, he didn't have any influence, having been kept in check by Flame-Hell. Unable to believe Choi Hyuk's betrayal, Flame-Wind died, cursing him before worrying about Flame-Rain and then mumbling her father, Flame-Sky's name.

The sword expert, Dark-Resentment, and the close-combat expert, Dark-Tooth, were killed under the combined attacks of Alexei, the two team leaders, Lee Jinhee, and Baek Seoin. Alexei died during the fight. The boy who joined the Berserkers at fifteen because he admired Lee Jinhee. Nicknamed Lyosha, he was closer to being Lee Jinhee's personal soldier than a Berserker. He saved Lee Jinhee, who was in danger due to exhaustion, by receiving Dark-Tooth's fist at the last moment. Put romantically, love was what killed the boy. Besides that, his death wasn't special. This battle was far too intense for a middle-ranked team leader to handle. This wasn't limited only to Alexei as most Berserker team leaders fell in battle.

Choi Hyuk heard Lee Jinhee's cry.

Only Flame-Hell overcame this crisis, sometimes hiding and sometimes assassinating skilled Berserkers to survive. However, the battlefield was slowly closing in. He wouldn't be able to find a place to hide or escape on top of the hill of corpses and weapons.

Just as he thought this, Flame-Hell showed himself on his own. He crawled his way up the mountain of corpses and weapons and stood at the top where everyone could see him.

'He made it easier for me.'

Choi Hyuk dragged his heavy feet and walked towards Flame-Hell.

Their gazes met. Flame-Hell was above and Choi Hyuk was below.

Looking up, Choi Hyuk saw the Tower of Warriors, still maintaining its structure, as broken karma weapons fell.

Flame-Hell revealed his teeth as he smiled. His smooth face, which was difficult to differentiate between that of a middle-aged man or a youth, was contorted like an old man's due to the bloody battle and malice.

“Choi Hyuk! And all you insects! The moment of your judgment has come!”

Madness shined in his eyes.

Whoong!

The shattered and dull karma weapons of the dangerously standing Tower of Warriors slowly realigned. They possessed a faint golden light. Following this, the scattered karma weapons on the ground and in corpses began to rise.

Murmurs erupted on the battlefield.

“But karma was frozen?”

“Wasn't karma frozen?”

“What about the frozen karma?”

Various questions left warriors' mouths.

Flame-Hell's body trembled as if he found this thrilling.

“If you are a truly great warrior and if you are a warrior who knows your own fate and soul, you will be able to squeeze out a little strength from your karma weapon in a world devoid of karma! Also, I am the chairman of the Exalted Wings! The entire Tower of Warriors is no different from my karma weapon! Now I will retake control!”

Accompanied by his ringing declaration, a portion of the fallen karma weapons flew back up and joined the Tower of Warriors.

While its strength was incomparably weak compared to normal, a strength unimaginable in this situation where karma was frozen swept through the Tower of

Warriors.

“Now, it’s too late. Choi Hyuk and you trivial insurgents. As a filthy bunch of ash, turn to ash like you belong!”

Thinking about how he shouldn’t accept groups without roots and would have to investigate their qualifications more strictly when rebuilding the alliance, Flame-Hell spread his arms.

Exhausted and seemingly in despair, Choi Hyuk replied while standing rigidly in the middle of the mountain of corpses.

“Ah, really?”

Grkk.

His body twisted with a terrifying sound. Squeezing out all his strength, he poured it into ‘Choi Hyuk’s Denial’ and pointed it at the sky. Around the blade, a black snake of emptiness opened its maw, seemingly ready to devour everything.

“Wh-what? Your karma?”

“The words you said just now, did you forget them?”

Just as Flame-Hell recalled his words about great warriors, souls, and so on...

Puhwaaak!

Choi Hyuk swung his sword and the Tower of Warriors, which had just began operating, scattered like sparks. He ‘denied’ its magnificent power and the spent-up weapon fragments fell down to the ground.

Flame-Hell hastily dodged the falling fragments before rolling down the mountain of corpses. Coincidentally, what he saw when he stopped rolling were Choi Hyuk’s feet.

Choi Hyuk turned around and said to the Berserkers near him,

“See? The special training was worth it. I told you we could never know what the Exalted Wings would do.”

Flame-Hell trembled in shock.

“You, you crazy... Just what did you do? Even if you used the strength of your karma weapon, how could you...!”

Then, as if he realized something, his eyes widened. He realized something facing death.

“Crazy... It became your fate... Does your soul possess ‘denial’? Do you know what kind of power that is? You’re going to die! Soon, even your soul will be denied!”

Choi Hyuk lowered his sword, aiming it towards Flame-Hell, without much emotion.

“Aah, I already threw away such foolish thoughts long ago. I only have a few days left.”

“Keuk!”

At the frightening killing intent, Flame-Hell unconsciously retreated back. He had never imagined that he would die.

The Flame Wing Tribe was the strongest tribe in the universe, and he, born of the highest nobility, had never been in a situation where his life was at risk. He had also fought countless battles, but they were all battles that he would inevitably win. To him, fighting battles he could win was a source of pride, and it was proof of his shining strategic decision-making ability.

When Flame-Sky died while possessing immense power, he had inwardly clicked his tongue.

Yet, for the first time in his life, he was in front of the god of death’s blade. A death god who had climbed up from the depths of hell.

“Just why?”

He asked in despair.

“Choi. Mi. Yeon. You don’t know who that is, right? My mother. Who passed away

during the recruit training. That day, I vowed to kill and kill until the day I killed all of you.”

“Revenge? You did all this just for revenge...?”

It seemed his pride was hurt as this was all because of revenge. His eyes were filled with enmity and madness.

“That was appropriate for Earth! Inhabitants who hadn’t awoken karma, who pushed all the killing to the minority as the majority lived in their false sense of peace! An underhandedness that persecuted the weak when you were so powerless you couldn’t hunt a beast! A selfishness that thought first of personal benefit even in situations where you needed to work together! And a cowardice, so much so that it was rare to find anyone willing to sacrifice themselves! You know it as well! Weren’t you an executive of the alliance? What can we do with a species like that? You were destined to be annihilated by the monsters if it wasn’t for the alliance! The alliance didn’t always use methods like that. To species of value, we assigned them non-combative missions too! It was the case for the Speckled Light Tribe and the Seo Tribe in your galaxy! But the earthlings? There was even a method where you could have escaped the ‘Ring of Rebirth’ without killing anyone! Yet, you guys killed each other on your own!”

Flame-Hell swore as he recalled the report he received several years ago. Choi Hyuk’s gaze was cold.

“And who are you to judge the earthlings, to judge me? You were mistaken. And it’s time to pay the price.”

‘Choi Hyuk’s Denial’ was aimed at Flame-Hell’s neck.

“Wait! Wait! Flame-Rain! Flame-Rain’s on her way! If that happens, do you think you’ll live? Hostage. Take me as a hostage!”

Flame-Hell made a last-ditch effort.

Choi Hyuk was cold.

“Do you think you have value as a hostage to Flame-Rain? Also...”

He glanced at the sky. With karma frozen, Alliance City’s sky simply reflected the dark, murky universe. There were only a few stars. It was peaceful.

“Flame-Rain won’t come.”

With this chilling remark, ‘Choi Hyuk’s Denial’ harvested Flame-Hell’s neck.

The 13th head fell and rolled on the ground. Flame-Hell’s eyes remained glaring fiercely.

Choi Hyuk and the Berserkers stood motionlessly as though they were offering a silent prayer to the avengers of Earth who fell along the way. Shadows were cast beneath their feet from the faintly shining Light of Eternity.

It was strange and quiet.

As if they had a premonition, those who were intensely fighting outside the tower slowed before coming to a halt. One after another, they glanced at the tower which was turning into a pile of weapon fragments before fixing their gazes on it.

‘The fight has ended.’

They sensed this.

Choi Hyuk climbed up the mountain of corpses and weapons with exhausted steps before looking down and shouting,

“As of this moment, the 13 Exalted Wings excluding Flame-Rain are all dead.”

The shock on everyone present was almost visible. A few actually lost their balance and faltered.

What was going to happen now? What about the war against the monsters? Did Flame-Rain not know of this situation?

With no one to answer, these questions burst out from here and there like cracks on a thawing ice rink.

Choi Hyuk gave them the answer they wanted,

“And I, in second place in the alliance ranking, will now go kill the monster queen.”

Choi Hyuk was ranked first amongst the warriors, fifteenth overall, and currently, with only Flame-Rain left, he was ranked second. But... what did he say?

“The alliance is facing a crisis. If we drag things on, the alliance will be annihilated by the monsters. The only method is launching a sudden attack on the monster queen right now and killing her. If we kill her, the monsters are just beasts, nothing to worry about.”

“And who was the one who created this crisis?!”

“Who was the one who killed all the Exalted Wings?!”

The raging crowd shouted.

“So? It’s already done. I’m the only transcendent warrior left.”

Silence abruptly hung in the air.

Well, if Choi Hyuk deactivated the karma freezing devices right now, all the warriors gathered here wouldn’t be a match for him.

“I am going to kill the monster queen now. I’ll probably die there. It won’t be so bad for you. But, after that? If you aren’t confident in dealing with the war against monsters, then follow me. Support me in the final battle.”

While brazen, he was the only hope for the despairing warriors.

Choi Hyuk looked up at the sky and thought for a moment before saying,

“Yeah, for your life and freedom.”

There was a great commotion. Though enraged, this was the undoubted acceptance of the warriors of different affiliations and species.

Someone raised their voice and asked,

“What about Exalted Wing Flame-Rain? Does she know about this?”

Choi Hyuk smiled as he said,

“Flame-Rain is currently busy. She’s going to open up a path for us.”

‘Open up a path.’ As he said this, Zero, who was dispatched to the monsters’ universe, was dying. Holding his deteriorating body, Guardian Bae Jinman wailed,

“Why? Why? Why did you?!”

Bae Jinman had lived on while being thoroughly exhausted life. Although he was prepared to die during the final battle, he was dispatched to the monsters’ universe instead of the Tower of Warriors. Still, he stood as the vanguard, prepared to die, though he had never done it before. Yet, Zero saved him and was dying in his place.

While dying, Zero forced himself to take deep breaths and said in a calm voice,

“Isn’t this the final battle? When the war ends, blade-carriers like me will be useless, but healers like you should continue to live and help rebuild the world. That’s... (Haa) Overseer Richard’s desire. He dreamed for the survival and prosperity of earthlings.”

Dispatched to Flame-Rain’s stronghold, their duty was to invade deep into the enemy territory and flock monsters to the stronghold.

The stronghold appeared and disappeared constantly throughout the monsters’ universe and dealt blows to the monsters. When its precise location was known, the monster queen dispatched a large army. Even after Handke and Leah had successfully baited the monsters and returned, Zero and Bae Jinman remained as vanguard in order to bait even more monsters, notifying the monsters of the fleeing stronghold’s location in real-time.

As a result, Flame-Rain, who was about to advance to Alliance City, was caught up in this, the monsters near the monster queen were sent to the border, and Zero, who was Richard’s right-hand man, died.

Although Choi Hyuk didn’t know about Zero’s death, no, though he predicted it when they were dispatched, he calmly ended his speech,

“Then I’ll consider this as all of you participating in the final battle.”

There was no other choice.

These warriors who were caked in blood from trying to kill each other not long ago raised their swords as allies.

The alliance’s final assembly of the strongest elites. That was what people later called them.

Chapter 203

That Day (6)

They gathered the scattered warriors and hastily created troops.

They decided to leave the corpses alone as they didn't have time to spare.

A mountain of corpses was also discovered at the Light of Eternity. This was proof that the Berserkers and Kundle Tribe members had laid down their lives to defend the Light of Eternity.

They didn't have a moment of mourning. As they would lament with their lives.

{I'm deactivating the karma freezing devices. Prepare for the shock.}

An announcement went live from the broadcasting device and a storm of karma swept over them.

Those who had obtained enlightenment during the intense fight and those who had accumulated retribution by killing those much higher ranked than them instantly reached the highest rank and transcendent level. The scattering karma of the dead and the surging newly obtained karma mixed together to create a storm.

After this gale swept over them, they all felt awkward.

While it was welcome because it would be useful in the final battle, there were some who felt empty or sad because it didn't feel like their own strength for some reason.

The Sword of Vow 'Lee Jinhee's Vow' used the power of the transcendent level to transform into the Sword of Conclusion 'Lee Jinhee's World'.

The Sword of Sentiment 'Baek Seoin's Premonition' became the Sword of Conclusion

'Baek Seoin's Stronghold'. Always saddened about how his Intuition only protected his life, Baek Seoin's wish of protecting others was forged.

Lee Jinhee and Baek Seoin were the only ones among the Berserkers to reach the transcendent level, but before they could express their emotions of reaching the peak of the alliance in strength, their jaws dropped when they saw Choi Hyuk.

"Wh-what the hell? Leader? Is he even human?"

"...Huh."

It was so shocking that Baek Seoin, who was always respectful to Choi Hyuk, couldn't help but say, 'Huh.'

Although the highest-ranked warriors couldn't sense it, the transcendent warriors could see the mighty flow of fate surrounding Choi Hyuk.

Choi Hyuk's fate of denying everything in his path had been achieved when he took down all the Exalted Wings, who maintained order in the alliance. His fate was so overwhelming that it could be called more of an incarnation of the great universe than its will.

Would a god among gods look like that? Even the karma of transcendent warriors seemed to bow in front of him.

'Denial' became his soul itself and the Tower of Warriors, which had turned into ruin because he denied it, became his flesh and bones, in other words, his karma.

Could Flame-Sky, who was at the peak of the transcendent level and the strongest warrior in history, be able to face off against him? Everyone shook their heads inwardly. There was no way that was true. 'That' couldn't be categorized as a warrior. Wasn't it more appropriate to call him a 'phenomenon'?

Grrk.

Choi Hyuk clenched his fist. He could clearly sense the universe hanging from his five

fingers.

'In my current state, couldn't I deny even the universe?'

However...

Falter.

Choi Hyuk almost collapsed from the dizziness pounding his head.

Karma didn't stop flowing. Even though he had obtained god-like powers, it continued to surge.

Blood almost ripped through his veins as it circulated and pounded his head, and the surging energy heated his body. His vision became blurry and it became difficult to breathe.

"Huu..."

Still, Choi Hyuk managed to hold onto his knee and straighten his body. Though he only moved slightly, his hand felt hot like it was on fire and so strong that he almost smashed his own knee.

'This isn't a power I can control.'

Choi Hyuk realized this.

Denial had already encroached inside him. The moment he couldn't rein it in, he himself would be denied. His insides were already a mess as the blood that filled his head, nose, and stomach repeatedly regenerated.

Although it was godly, it wasn't his. Although he could wield it, he couldn't put it down. A single slash. That was the amount of time granted to him.

Choi Hyuk collected his breath as he looked at the surprised Baek Seoin and Lee Jinhee. Though he was previously taken aback by the sudden changes, he was used to it now. He would be able to move for now.

In a calm voice, he only said what was needed,

“I can’t use my strength until I reach the monster queen. You two need to open up a path.”

Lee Jinhee and Baek Seoin understood without needing a detailed explanation. The moment he used his power, which was like holding the entire universe in his hands, it would explode immediately like the Big Bang which created the universe and could no longer be stopped or used again.

“W-wait. Then leader... No, never mind.”

Having a hunch regarding the future, Lee Jinhee was about to hastily ask Choi Hyuk, but she swallowed her words in the end. She knew as well. No matter what, Choi Hyuk was going to die, and that was his fate.

However, if Choi Hyuk replied to her question ‘Are you going to die?’, she felt like it would no longer be reversible. In the end, Lee Jinhee swallowed her boiling emotions. It hurt like her stomach and esophagus were being burned. Enduring the pain, she gritted her teeth.

‘Just watch. I vowed, didn’t I? I won’t watch you die before me.’

Her eyes shined with a blue light.



“I finished our mission. I’ll join you.”

Guardian Bae Jinman was waiting for them when they crossed over to the monsters’ universe. Choi Hyuk had told him to stealthily join them at the rendezvous point if he became a transcendent warrior, but even Choi Hyuk didn’t know he would actually come.

Though he didn’t see Zero, he didn’t say anything.

He simply announced his final order.

“It’ll be a lightning-fast battle. No one will fall behind. If you do, you will continue to advance while killing the monsters. Today will be the day of the complete eradication of the monsters.”

The warriors advanced towards the heart of the monsters’ universe.

It was similar to falling into a confusing dream.

Worlds possessing different laws were ripped away and spread around in this surreal world.

A gigantic tree that looked like the home of fairies and a metal skyscraper that looked like someplace the Terminator would jump out from connected together like a work of Escher. The third, fourth, and fifth dimensions all tangled together at the same time, making it difficult for one to figure out what was up and what was down and whether they were even standing at all. It felt nauseating as though they were on a rollercoaster.

Nightmares, meaning monsters, were hidden in this dream-like world.

The only reason why they didn’t lose their way was thanks to the karma they had brought over from their own universe.

Facing the monsters’ universe, which twisted and bent as if saying this chaos was its order and law, the warriors raised their own order. They pushed back the space-time as if it was a jungle and advanced while picking up speed.

Like how you would fall from walking through a cliff painting on the floor in the movies, there was a sense of disharmony amongst the scenery they walked. It clearly showed that they were unwelcome guests in this universe.

Choi Hyuk was very well aware of where the monster queen was, having led the reconnaissance team previously.

The army took the shortest path and the monsters, weakened from chasing Flame-Rain’s stronghold, couldn’t stop them. The various worlds in this universe gradually brightened as if they were expecting to be released from this nightmare of being

crushed and violated.

However, the army soon scattered. The army, which had been traveling like a comet, became as thin as a shooting star and as small as an ice pellet. Like how rocket boosters would fall away from rockets, weaker warriors fell behind and each began their own lonely battle in this unfamiliar universe.

The ones who remained until the end were the small number of transcendent and highest-ranked warriors.

What they faced was a cocoon as big as the Sun which spread its nervous system throughout the universe.

The cocoon pulsed like it had a beating heart and its nervous system flickered as though it was firing neurons.

The heart and the brain of the monsters' universe, without a doubt, it was the monster queen.

“But how is that a queen? It’s just a monster lump. Why did they call it the queen from the beginning?”

Lee Jinhee grumbled.

“That’s not the queen.”

Shocked by Choi Hyuk’s words, Lee Jinhee looked at the cocoon again and felt its overwhelming presence.

“That’s not the queen? If that’s not the queen, then what could possibly be the queen?”

“...The queen is inside it.”

Choi Hyuk said while grimacing. His chest was rising and falling quickly along with his fast breathing.

He hadn't participated in a single battle all the way here. Simply holding onto his explosive strength and maintaining a speed where he wouldn't fall behind was difficult enough.

Lee Jinhee's eyes narrowed.

"Meaning we have to slice it open?"

She took action. Since Choi Hyuk wasn't in any condition to command, Lee Jinhee took command all the way here.

"Baek hyung. Guardian. Please guard the leader and enter. Baek hyung can sense danger and Guardian can heal. Now, the rest of you will slice that monster lump open! If you can, follow the leader in since we don't know what's waiting for us inside."

The warriors stood at the front. There were three transcendent warriors including Lee Jinhee. Ten highest-ranked warriors. They looked quite unmatched against this gigantic cocoon that was comparable to a demise-ranked monster.

The air was tense.

They thought that this could be the end.

"Lee Jinhee."

Baek Seoin called her. When she turned, her short hair fluttered, contrasting the monsters' universe behind her.

"What?"

Hearing her blunt reply, such empty farewells like 'See you on the other side', 'Don't die', 'Thanks', or 'I actually...' disappeared from his mind.

As if trying to help her relax, he lightly asked,

"Ah, I'm suddenly curious. What's the skill of your Sword of Conclusion?"

"...I don't know."

Lee Jinhee turned her body away as if trying to hide her sword.

Her vow to protect her friends became stronger and was now complete. Her sword would find its way towards anyone precious to her, even if a dimension lay between them. That was 'Lee Jinhee's World'. Her precious friends were her world. And since one of them was Baek Seoin...

'He'll be surprised if I say something so fluttery.'

Lee Jinhee couldn't say it even if she died. Since Choi Hyuk was insane, it didn't matter, but wasn't Baek Seoin a crafty guy?

Still, seemingly less tense than before and moving more fluidly, Lee Jinhee stared at the pulsing cocoon. Her flesh and blood felt as tense as a drawn bow.

Just then, she shouted,

"Let's go!!"

The gigantic cocoon spread its tentacles like wings as it faced Lee Jinhee. Warriors followed behind her.

There was a sudden flash. The tentacles devoured them like a tidal wave. Screams erupted.

Although Lee Jinhee told the warriors to follow Choi Hyuk in if they could, it didn't seem like that would be possible. Baek Seoin clenched his fist at this tense battle.

After a tense, nightmarish period of time, Lee Jinhee slashed a part of the cocoon. Drenched in blood and slashing the tentacles shooting towards her, she shouted,

"Now!"

Baek Seoin held Choi Hyuk and Bae Jinman, who weren't as mobile as him, under his arms. At some point, Choi Hyuk's body began getting worse rapidly.

“Then.”

He shot forward.

The warriors blocked the tentacles targeting them with their lives.

Leaving the blood-soaked Lee Jinhee, who was grinning as she kicked a tentacle away, when he entered the cocoon, it felt like he was diving into water.

Chapter 204

That Day (7)

The sight inside the monster lump was completely unexpected. It wasn't made of flesh or blood inside.

It was completely filled with a silver fog. Rather than a monster queen's dwelling, it was like a beautiful and shiny fairy queen's abode.

Although the moisture in the air was fresh and pleasant when inhaled, after a little bit of time, they became dizzy and felt yucky in their stomachs.

Silver cocoons rested in every place that shined beautifully, but inside of each were ferocious monsters.

"This is..."

Baek Seoin said in a trembling voice.

Far into the fog, he saw a shining lake. A coiled body, with skin shining with a white, gentle glow, floated in the center of the lake. Every time this lifeform, whose body stood out as it ignored concepts of space and depth, took a breath deep enough for its soft fur to sway, ripples would spread out on the lake and shake the silver fog. The silver cocoons, which likely contained monsters, also exhaled at the same time.

Choi Hyuk came out from under Baek Seoin's arm and stood holding his sword.

Although it was his first time seeing her, he was certain that this lifeform with surprisingly soft fur was the monster queen. He was emotionless even at the prospect of killing something so beautiful.

“Please wait.”

Baek Seoin grabbed Choi Hyuk’s shoulder as he prepared to launch forward. Cold sweat dripped from his chin. Baek Seoin’s Intuition, which could detect danger to his life, activated. Ignoring his body which screamed not to walk forward, he took the lead.

“It’s still far away. I’ll escort you to a distance where you can kill her for sure.”

The shining lake was shockingly cold. Baek Seoin lightly soaked his hand in the water before saying that there weren’t any problems. Then he began walking on it. Ripples spread out from Baek Seoin’s steps. Bae Jinman supported Choi Hyuk as he had lost control of his karma and couldn’t even walk on water.

Splash. Splash. Ripple.

The sounds of their splashing footsteps and rippling water shook the silver fog.

Bae Jinman seemed to have felt something strange.

“I feel like we’ve become adventurers in an unknown world.”

The monster queen lit the world with a faint light like the moon, and those ferocious monsters were asleep in their soft cocoons. Though it was a new world, the fog possessed an air of malice and as they walked through it, their bodies tensed as though they were looking for a treasure or hunting a dragon. Bae Jinman thought about Indiana Jones and War of the Ring^{1} he had read in his youth. An adventure filled with danger and excitement.

The shining lake was quite suspicious, but nothing happened. Was the monster queen truly asleep? Bae Jinman spread his karma out to carefully read his surroundings. As a support type, he had obtained various skills when he reached the transcendent level. Before, he could connect to his allies’ minds and use skills like ‘Get up!’ to imbue them

with courage. Now, he could examine the monster queen's thoughts and read fragments of her memories.

Like Gandolf who told stories of the past, he told Choi Hyuk, who was leaning against his shoulder, the fragments of memories he saw. Choi Hyuk wasn't particularly interested in it, but he closed his eyes and let him be as he was already having a hard time controlling his rampaging karma.

"The queen of the monsters... is an evil influence of demise. She was born as a tool when a world's fate reached its end and was faced with demise. She deceived the world with her divine beauty and led everyone to their demise at the decisive moment."

Splash, splash. After taking a few steps, he continued,

"Since she had fulfilled her mission, she would have died and disappeared, but she awakened a desire for life. A type of mutation. In order to survive, she looked for and brought demise to other worlds and extracted their fates. She also brainwashed still arriving fates of demise and used them as dimension attacking weapons. Those were the demise-ranked monsters we encountered."

Ah, so that was how it was. Thinking about it while leaning on Bae Jinman's shoulder, Choi Hyuk found this story interesting.

Splash!

Baek Seoin, who was leading in front, seemed to have taken a wrong step as his foot submerged into the water. Ripples spread out. He stood still. It wasn't because of Bae Jinman's story.

Baek Seoin's back was drenched in cold sweat. As if sighing, he said,

"Ahh, is it here?"

He didn't have the capacity to listen to Bae Jinman's story. Warnings squeezed his head without rest. Although he had stepped on the boundaries of life and death a few times, he had never felt such a powerful warning before. Its meaning was clear.

'I'll definitely die if I take another step.'

From the pain that gnawed on his entire body, he wanted to throw it all away and run. Baek Seoin glanced at the monster queen still quite a distance away before glancing at Choi Hyuk who was leaning against Bae Jinman. Choi Hyuk, who was taller than Bae Jinman, was being dragged along with his feet submerged in the water.

He felt conflicted.

Was the danger he felt coming from the monster queen herself? Or was there something else? If the monster queen was personally going to move, then Baek Seoin didn't have to fight, but if there was something else, then Choi Hyuk could not be allowed to fight.

He was sweating cold sweat even now.

Standing still, Baek Seoin thought about it before shaking his head in the end.

'What are you thinking about? At times like this, you have to act with the assumption that there's something else. The final trap activates the moment you are about to get your hands on the treasure.'

He turned around and said,

"Guardian, I'll leave the leader in your care. Also, leader, I pray for your good fortune."

Smiling, he took a step forward. Without even seeing what happened, he scattered his karma in all directions.



To Bae Jinman, Baek Seoin's back suddenly seemed as large as a giant's.

The karma released by a warrior determined to die covered Choi Hyuk and Bae Jinman in a sphere.

Ting, ting, ting! Pscht! Thud! Crrrrk!

Reflecting sounds, sounds of something piercing and breaking. It was terrifying.

The fog seemed to shake as black objects shot up from around them. The peacefully swaying cocoons they had passed and had yet to pass all ripped apart and monsters burst out of them. As larvae, they were used as one-use ranged weapons.

Choi Hyuk shut his already closed his eyes tighter. He knew that this wasn't the attack of the monster queen herself. That was why he had to endure it.

Sounds of something breaking and ripping continued like a rain shower before suddenly stopping.

"Cough..."

Baek Seoin spat blood.

Choi Hyuk barely managed to open his eyes as he saw Baek Seoin's arm covering his right. Though the attacks were shot at a transcendental speed, the Sword of Conclusion 'Baek Seoin's Stronghold' predicted and reflected all of them away from Choi Hyuk and Bae Jinman as it now lay broken and Baek Seoin's arm was twisted at a strange angle. Three peculiar spears made of crushed monsters were embedded in his elbow. No, his entire body was covered in countless monster-forged spears, making it difficult to tell if it was Baek Seoin or a new type of monster.

Splash!

Baek Seoin lay on top of the lake. With his stomach bleeding his severed insides, he laughed hollowly as he floated on the water face up.

“Is this how I go...?”

It seemed he could no longer see as his eyes couldn't focus.

He opened his dry lips and said with a cough,

“Go. (Cough) Go. Leader... There... isn't anything dangerous left... (Cough)”

However, as if nailed in place, Choi Hyuk couldn't take a step forward.

The lake shined in a red light, dyed with Baek Seoin's blood. Choi Hyuk's eyes wavered.

He was okay when Alexei died and considered Zero's death within circumstances.

Would Baek Seoin be different? But he was. When he saw Baek Seoin dying in front of him, Choi Hyuk could no longer maintain calm. He was someone who had aided him throughout his long, difficult journey. If it wasn't for him, nothing would have been possible.

Though he had to move, though he needed move and though he would move, he couldn't move his feet right now.

“Why... are you looking at me like that? It doesn't suit you.”

Would a flame blazing for the last time before it died out be like him? Baek Seoin's face looked peaceful for some reason. His voice was calm as well.

“I'm fine. You're the one who saved my life anyways... I'm repaying that favor. Ah... Right... Lee Jinhee. I still owe a lot to her... The day we first met her, she saved my life... Once this was over, I wanted to give the rest of my life to her... Like how I followed you without question all this time... I wanted to do... whatever it took for her dream... Ah, that... That's... a shame. A shame... a shame... truly...”

His calm voice quickly began to die out. Baek Seoin's speech became gradually became slower like someone on anesthetics and his eyes closed.

In his final moment, Baek Seoin suddenly opened his eyes and glared at Choi Hyuk.

“Go, Choi Hyuk.”

He said in an impolite speech.

“You know, right? I did as much as I could for you...”

Then he closed his eyes.

...

After a moment of silence, Bae Jinman’s exhausted voice spoke.

“He fell asleep.”

“...So... In the end, his fate... What?”

Bae Jinman shrugged his shoulders while supporting Choi Hyuk. Thanks to that, Choi Hyuk’s body moved up and down. It felt like drowsiness was escaping him.

“He fell asleep. As a healer at the transcendent level, he won’t be able to die easily in front of me. Though it will take a while for him to recover completely.”

Choi Hyuk gave Baek Seoin a sharp gaze. Looking at it now, he saw a golden light lingering inside Baek Seoin’s ripped stomach.

“Then... The reason why Baek hyung’s face became calm was the ‘light before the sunset’^{2}...”

“Yes, it was because I began my healing. After that, it was because he was sleepy.”

Haa.

Choi Hyuk’s shoulders drooped as he got off Bae Jinman’s shoulders.

His submerged feet stood firmly on top of the water.

He looked at Bae Jinman.

“Guardian, thank you until the very end.”

“I truly thank you as well.”

After looking at each other for a while, Choi Hyuk took a step forward.

Thudd!

Even though it was a light step, the lake split and created a path. As soon as his suppressed karma began to release, he couldn't stop it.

Choi Hyuk gazed at the monster queen floating in front of him.

She was awake from the start.

Her fur was as soft as a fox's. A fine crack ran up her gently curved back, and then she opened her red eyes. Eyes possessing an unmatched wickedness opened on the peacefully sleeping divine's back.

Her vigor was overwhelming. Since she was a 'phenomenon', no, the universe itself since long ago. Yesterday, he would have thought, 'How could I defeat something like her?' and groaned, but it was currently wary of Choi Hyuk's power.

Choi Hyuk's lips hung crookedly.

“Apparently, you're a mutation that desires for life?”

Grrrk.

He tightly held his sword handle like it was almost about to break. The monsters' universe was clutched in his grasp as it shrieked. The silver fog became dyed black.

“That desire, I’ll deny it.”

Choi Hyuk shot forward.

‘Choi Hyuk’s Denial’ devoured the monster queen.

The world became dark and peaceful.



“Wooooaaah!”

Slicing the tentacles crowding and chasing her until the end, Lee Jinhee suddenly lost her balance and faltered when the universe suddenly rocked.

‘Euah, I’m going to die. I’ll die.’

She quickly raised her head in case she would be hit by a new tentacle while she lost her balance. She saw the enormous cocoon burst and run amok.

“Wh-what?”

While she was taken aback, the world rocked once more.

“Retreat! Retreat! We need to leave! We’ll return to our own universe!”

Flame-Rain shouted at the top of her lungs. The monsters that had crazily chased after her stronghold suddenly became more frenzied as they started killing each other and committing suicide.

That wasn’t all. The entire universe shook. It squirmed like a stomach ready to vomit.

Sensing an ominous vibe, she ordered her warriors to retreat to the stronghold.

“The process to open the gate has begun! It’ll take an estimated one hour!”

“That’s too slow!”

She screamed.

The squirming universe seemed like it would crush them at any moment.

“...Did he win?”

A warrior who followed Choi Hyuk but fell behind and fought on his own mumbled as he saw the monsters become frenzied.

The world shook like it would collapse, but he didn’t care. He had already joined this fight, determined to throw his life away.

“Still... He saved us.”

The war that had begun even before his grandfather’s grandfather was born had finally ended.

“This damn world will face its demise.”

The warrior mumbled, full of emotion, as he saw the collapsing universe. A faint smile hung on his lips.

Just then, the universe covered them. Accompanied by an unpleasant squirming sensation, they couldn’t see anything.

When they opened their eyes again, they had returned to their own universe.

{1} From what I can tell, the author is referring to an early translation of the Lord of the Rings

{2} It’s referring to how the sky suddenly brightens before it sets.

Chapter 205

Closing (End)

The fog was dyed black, and even this black fog was devoured by his sword and disappeared.

The world kept getting smaller and smaller following the path of 'Choi Hyuk's Denial' which devoured even space itself.

Soon, the blade was devoured by denial and the perceivable world disappeared.

This world where one's sacrifice was 'inevitable'. Yet, this same damn world repeatedly asked, 'Why are you doing this?' after doing so. Directed at this world, Choi Hyuk's Denial completely extracted his soul and shot it out as though he was ascending into the heavens.

Killing everyone. Devouring everything.

Only 'denial' was left as it pointed at the remaining universe and roared.

"Yeah, yeah, eat that."

Choi Hyuk said as if he was coaxing a beast as he continued to swing his sword, of which only a handle remained.

The monster queen's desire for life, which had become a universe onto itself after consuming countless of others, was devoured like a slender deer as it was denied.

Splash!

Choi Hyuk fell into the lake.

{... Ahh!}

{Heuu... How... }

{Kuaaah!}

...

...

When he woke up after fainting for a moment, the still living monster queen was going insane. Its divine appearance had disappeared without a trace, and instead, a wrinkly, furless beast was rolling in the lake shrieking.

{Aahhhh... How can this be! Ridiculous. For a regular lifeform that isn't even a demise-ranked monster to possess such power... So this is my fate... No! What am I saying! I'm not dead! I won't dieeee!!}

This was what its telepathic messages meant if he were to translate it.

The monster queen, who had waited for an intense battle against Choi Hyuk, found it unfair that it had fallen from one sword strike. No, was this retribution?

{It's fair... For what I stole to be stolen from me... What has to come to end must end for new life to be born... I know that but...

{I was aware of it! Your sickening fate! I refuse! Forever! I'll... probably never be able to steal it from you, right? Euaahhh! What am I saying?}

The monster queen resisted and resisted but couldn't overcome Choi Hyuk's Denial in the end. Her long-time desire for life disappeared after being denied, and having lost that desire, she began to die as predicted on her birth.

"Really... You suffered a lot. Now rest."

Exhausted, Choi Hyuk lay down in the middle of the lake as he saw the entire process.

{I don't know. I don't know... But for this to be the end, I'll accept it. Yeah, so you were my end.}

The monster queen, who had revealed her fiendish obsession with her hideous body, seemed to have now given up as she writhed, submerged in the lake. The red eyes on

her back looked exhausted as they closed like those of someone dying of old age.

She slowly submerged into the lake when, at the last moment, she suddenly raised her head and stared at Choi Hyuk. Even as her chin, nose, and the top of her head submerged in the lake, she ridiculed him in her pitiful appearance.

{My end... Ha! Poor fellow. Your brilliantly shining soul is going to die with me... Still, since my life was long and yours was short... I win... }

“What’s this dead person saying?”

Choi Hyuk clicked his tongue. Though, after he said that, his mouth felt bitter for some reason.

{... }

Thuud!

The moment the monster queen ceased to exist, the universe became frenzied. The various fates she had devoured from other dimensions began to explode. The universe was collapsing.

Choi Hyuk barely managed to open his eyes and look to where Bae Jinman and Baek Seoin were before dropping his head.

Although he knew they had yet to escape, he wasn’t worried. For some reason, he instinctively understood what was going on right now.

From the beginning, the fates that filled this universe were all from different worlds and were different in kind. When the monster queen, who mediated these fates, disappeared, the universe lost its laws and order. The released fates crashed into each other, attempting to assert their own nature, but none of the fates gave up on this universe. Although they had come from different worlds, they now wanted to acknowledge this one as their own.

“They are fighting on such a grand scale.”

The shaking would continue until these fates acknowledged each other’s existence

and found their place, meaning until new laws and order gained control over this universe. Also, it would spit out the fates from other worlds that had no intention of participating in this struggle. The warriors would return to where they came from.

That was why Choi Hyuk relaxed as he watched the battle of titans. He didn't even have the strength to lift a single finger anyways.

The karma of denial had completely consumed him now. His body was disappearing from the inside. He no longer had the strength or will to sustain himself.

Watching the collapsing universe as he died was more emotional than he thought.

Becoming teary, memories flashed through his mind like a kaleidoscope.

His childhood and the first time he killed a person. The searing pain he felt when he saw his mother's tears. Also, the days he spent acting like a fool. Still, the time he spent with his mother was his hearth. Even as a child, his mother looked unfortunate and weak to him. She smiled and told him it was okay and cried alone at night. When he pestered his mother to buy him something, she felt even more tormented than him.

Yes, his dream was to be an architect then. Influenced by his mother, who was a designer, he wanted to become someone who created. Though he was now the best destroyer in the universe.

However, in the end, all he truly wanted was to protect his mother, who had lived honorably without any sins like Superman. Despite only being a normal person, she had always bought Choi Hyuk the items he pestered her for after a month of asking and cried the next night, and had suffered through a lot of hardship as a single mother.

He recalled the teasing writing on the gymnasium window he had kicked while frightened and concerned for his mother.

Yes, get angry.

And angrier.

Kill.

Only then can you kill.

Even thinking about it now...

“Ah, fucking bastards. Yeah, and that’s how I killed all of you.”

Choi Hyuk laughed manically.

He had killed everyone. The Exalted bastards and the monster bastards. He had killed every last one of them and inflicted unforgettable wounds.

He felt refreshed and then sorrowful. He felt sorrowful now.

He recalled Jung Minji. She was the only woman who shined in his grey world besides his mother. He recalled the emotions squirming in his stomach when he heard she died like trash.

He didn’t know he was sad then since rage consumed him. He felt sorrowful only now. He had only been a high schooler.

He recalled Chu Youngjin, Richard, Zero, Alexei, and the mountain of corpses he had killed. When he thought about how his mother, Jung Minji, Chu Youngjin and the others precious to him might be pitifully thrown in that pile, he felt sorrowful again.

He felt sad about the potential that they and perhaps he himself might have had.

Choi Hyuk would now lie in the mountain of corpses he had piled up.

He felt vexed as he recalled how the monster queen had said, ‘I win...’

Damn it, those damn bastards.

One person's life could be more important than the entire universe to someone...

Whether it was a human or an alien, why couldn't they understand this through words...?

That was why Choi Hyuk made them understand.

While setting himself on fire in the process.

"Alexei... Was his nickname Lyosha? Now that I think about it, he was quite an amiable guy."

He had always followed Lee Jinhee around.

"Well, you're better than me since you protected the person you wanted to protect. That's better than revenge."

If you were going to set yourself on fire anyways.

The universe was now shrinking. Spitting out all the different fates, it gathered only those that it would include. The world which couldn't exist without laws stopped functioning and closed down. The endlessly shrinking universe became a single egg, and the fates inside it mixed together and became one.

The fates shaking inside the egg couldn't decide on a criterion. They drifted before burrowing into Choi Hyuk's body. Under the waterfall of fates, even his fate of denial was swept away and dispersed. While he stopped ceasing to exist for now, there wasn't a fundamental difference from his previous state.

He would soon forget his memories and even the fact that he was Choi Hyuk and would melt and disappear in this universe.

Sensing his impending death, Choi Hyuk lay down and thought about the funeral.

How Lee Jinhee firmly said that they had to do it when he found out about his mother's death in Marronnier Park. The magical moment when awakenees who had lost hope and ostracized each other began comforting each other.

The warmth of Lee Jinhee's hand when she held his.

It might have been then.

The moment when Choi Hyuk's rage, which surged without a target, decided on the 13 Exalted Wings. The moment he hoped for the regeneration of the rest of the world after the demise rather than mutual destruction. The moment a crack opened up wide enough for him to open his heart to Flame-Rain. Although he didn't know about the Exalted Wings or Flame-Rain, it was that day. It was all thanks to the strange funeral on that day.

Thank you.

Choi Hyuk mumbled then forgot that memory.

Everything was being swept away and disappearing into the darkness.

While he couldn't remember it well, he thought that he had lived a not-so-bad life.

He was happy to have met everyone.

If there was another life, he hoped to meet them again.

While mumbling this, he forgot about who he wanted to meet. He didn't even have time to think about whether they wanted to meet him again or not.

...

He could no longer remember anything.

Only thoughts like 'I did it' and 'I did enough' floated in his mind.

No, that was what he thought, but for some reason, he clearly recalled a girl as though she had been engraved into his cornea. The girl's hair would sometimes be long and, at other times, short. She had flames blazing splendidly in the air. She overcame all misfortunes and had stars in her eyes. A 'glory' that brilliantly bloomed within the 'denial' that had wiped everything to nothingness.

Though he forgot her name, he could be at ease because of her.

It was because he knew she would be able to regenerate the shattered world.

With a glory that would never extinguish.

When he thought about her, rather than feeling sad or being filled with regret...

He felt at peace.

Perhaps, his endlessly burning rage was now looking for a place to rest while recalling a certain glory.

Sensing the swirling fates sweeping his last remaining bit of consciousness away, he closed his eyes.

He turned his body to the side and curled up. He fell asleep.

And didn't wake up.



As expected, was life a mosaic of mismatched fragments? One where you didn't know what would be added next.

Even Choi Hyuk, who felt sorrowful as he lay atop a mountain of corpses, curled up peacefully like a child in the next moment.

Even the monsters' universe, which devoured worlds, reverted into an egg and prepared for a new beginning.

As though all the desperation was an illusion, the entire universe suddenly became peaceful.

Etching a new life.

Waking up the next day, people realized...

That there was no longer an alliance or monsters.

None.

-Sovereign of Judgment End-



An emptiness without a sky or ground.

In a place with nothing, a woman's voice rang out.

Choi Hyuk, Choi Hyuk, can you hear me?

Of course, there was no reply.

Was it not time yet...?

I'll come back. Stay well.

Chapter 206

Flame-Rain

“...Was this your decision? Choi Hyuk.”

Flame-Rain knew everything when she saw Alliance City, which was now a mountain of corpses.

Blaze.

Her transparent flames burned the bodies. Not even a speck of ash remained.

In front of the corpses burning from her transparent flames, she looked up at the sky. She looked for the section of Earth's sky in Alliance City's sky, which was a plethora of skies from various species' homelands.

“I won't resent you for this, but, Choi Hyuk, why did you go so far...? Huh? Choi Hyuk...”

Her voice was weak as though she was pleading for a response.

“Ah...”

Shiro, the battle puppet who chased Flame-Rain around, begging her to save Chu Youngjin, had also figured everything out as she stood next to Flame-Rain in front of the blazing flames.

Chu Youngjin had assassinated Exalted Wing Dark-Sound.

She felt like all the stars in her universe were being sucked into a gigantic black hole.

Her expression gradually blanked as she collected herself. Her eyes were the eyes of an emotionless machine. Even her gear heart, which had malfunctioned ever since she became close to Chu Youngjin, recovered its steady beat.

No, it occasionally stopped with a clunk.



The news of the deaths of the 13 Exalted Wings and the extinction of the monsters' universe was spread throughout the great universe. Choi Hyuk was the one who killed the 13 Exalted Wings and the one who slew the monster queen. Also, Choi Hyuk was likely dead.

Flame-Rain moved quickly as she arrested the Berserkers, Kundle Tribe members, and the glass crabs who joined Choi Hyuk in his plan. A trial was held, and she invited those with a grudge against them to act as jurors.

Esteemed families of the Flame Wing Tribe, Armored Soul Tribe, Speckled Light Tribe, and the dragon race gathered. Their rage was fierce and heightened.

Lee Jinhee, Bae Jinman, Baek Seoin, Leah, Handke, Moonmoon, and Fragile were tied up and kneeling in the middle of the courtroom. Flame-Rain watched as curses rained down on them. As she tolerated their criticisms, they became even fiercer and relentless. There were even strong opinions that they needed to punish the rebellious species, the earthlings, as a whole instead of just Choi Hyuk's accomplices.

The mood changed when transcendent warrior Mack, who attended as a representative of the dragon race, spoke. She had also been caught up in the disaster when she attended Dark-Sound's funeral and had subsequently become a transcendent warrior.

Her rage was chilling, and she swore at Choi Hyuk's kneeling accomplices.

"Even... Even though Choi Hyuk is a hero for ending our war against the monsters, we cannot forgive him for killing Exalted Wing Leviathan."

All the species attending agreed with her.

They were like Choi Hyuk in some ways. Though they acknowledged that his contributions were enormous, at the same time, they couldn't pardon the fact that he had killed those dear to them. As a member of the dragon race, who were known for greatly cherishing members of their race, there was nothing more to say.

However, Mack's speech continued.

"But, our dragon race owed him a great debt. Also, Choi Hyuk, the person responsible for this situation, has died in battle. Following this, the dragon race will offset our debt and resentment with his death... and forget about this. The earthlings, Kundle Tribe members, and glass crabs will, like before, interact with us as friends. This unforgivable resentment..."

She tightly closed her eyes before opening them calmly and declaring,

"I will consider the curses and reproach spoken today in this courtroom as repayment. This is our dragon race's will. Then..."

The courtroom bustled with murmurs.

After concluding her speech, Mack stood up and was about to make her leave. Flame-Rain's hand gesture, however, sat her back down.

"I heard you clear. I think your heated heads have cooled down a bit now... I will now listen to other suggestions besides curses and criticism."

"But! He killed Exalted Wing Flame-Hell, Flame-Thorn, Flame-Fog, and Flame-Wind! He is the enemy of our species!"

Dissatisfaction erupted from a section of the Flame Wing Tribe.

However, the other Flame Wing Tribe nobles who noticed the change in mood kept their lips firmly shut.

"However, he saved the alliance. He accomplished something those 13 Exalted Wings couldn't. He was a great warrior."

The one who said this was a noble who had been in the Flame Army led by Choi Hyuk.

"You! You dishonorable, traitorous-!"

There was an intense reaction, but his voice was soon buried under the shouts of smaller species, who had been silent until now.

“The war has ended! Is there anything more important than that? They committed sins, but they made an even larger contribution!”

“Hasn’t the alliance always made sacrifices for the great cause?! Are some sacrifices okay but others not?!”

Their voices erupted like a storm.

“Yo-you...”

The representatives of the noble families expressed their anger at the trivial warriors’ opposition. Yet, voices even they couldn’t disregard joined the fray.

“From the beginning, the alliance’s goal was for our survival and freedom in the war against the monsters. They have achieved this goal. Who can punish them?”

They were transcendent warriors from minor tribes.

They accounted for roughly 30% of the approximately 100 transcendent warriors, but as the majority of the transcendent warriors from the noble tribes had died during the funeral, they were currently a force to be reckoned with.

“...I agree. He had cleared his sins before he died.”

On top of that, the warriors from the noble tribes who had reached the transcendent level after surviving through the funeral also joined in. Since they had fought side-by-side in the end, there was a strange comradery between them.

When the strong ones joined in, no one opposed anymore. A dissatisfied silence hung in the air.

Flame-Rain stood up. She gazed at the few Flame Wing Tribe nobles who couldn’t contain their rage and blazed with flames and the other members of the noble tribes who felt the same way.

“I heard all your opinions. But, I didn’t simply gather you all here today for this trial. Rather, the trial was an excuse.”

The crowd was taken aback.

Flame-Rain stood on the platform and arrogantly looked around her.

“First, I will introduce myself again. I am the queen of the Flame Wing Tribe, Flame-Rain.”

She referred to herself as the queen. Even dissatisfied figures were shocked as they looked up at her.

Transparent flame wings spread out behind her back. Flames that could purify all evil quietly blazed.

At her terrifyingly brazen words,

Jolt! Drrk!

A commotion arose in the courtroom. All the Flame Wing Tribe members present stood up, even the ones who had expressed their dissatisfaction before. An endless sense of awe and emotion overwhelmed them.

Cheers erupted in the courtroom.

Glory to the queen who has returned!

To other tribes, this was a ridiculous change in attitude, but this was natural for the Flame Wing Tribe.

Born with the birth of the universe, the Flame Wing Tribe’s monarchy wasn’t simply a product of culture. It was something engraved in their very souls. The one who possessed the most pure and beautiful flames was the queen they would lay their lives down for, and Flame-Rain was undoubtedly a queen, whether they looked at it from her origin or her current flames. No, she was the queen. Flame-Hell had hidden this

fact. To this tribe who had only now realized this, this trial no longer held much importance.

The other tribes felt left out and tense as they faced this moment of endless grandeur and exclusivity.

An uproar erupted from all sides.

Flame-Rain had traversed from frontline to frontline throughout the great universe because of Flame-Hell's wicked schemes. She was a friend and a hero to all the tribes in the alliance. She, who had always been 'our Flame-Rain', suddenly felt unfamiliar to them.

Flame-Rain calmly said,

"Also... The alliance hasn't dispersed yet. Currently, at this moment, I declare, as the only living Exalted Wing, that the alliance will cancel out the crimes and contributions committed by Choi Hyuk and his subordinates. I will consider that the traitor, Choi Hyuk, has already served their punishment. The trial ends with this."

Those who had been kneeling were brought to a stand and their chains burned and disappeared. Although there were many who were still dissatisfied, they kept their mouths firmly shut, perhaps because they saw the power of those siding for their acquittal.

"Finally... the alliance, having reached the end of its reason for existence, will be disbanded. The war has ended. I respect all of you who have worked hard for the alliance and pray that those who laid down their lives may rest in peace."

She bowed her head in silent tribute.

The crowd, perplexed by the sweep of decisions, bowed their heads and participated in the silent tribute without realizing it.

'Really? So easily?'

Though some people thought this, who could say otherwise when the only Exalted Wing said so?

Raising their heads after the silent tribute, they still felt perplexed.

While they had expected it, they couldn't help but be in disorder after actually hearing about it. What was the point of their acquittal if the alliance no longer existed? People would personally attempt to get revenge, and the universe would be in anarchy.

What would happen to the universe?

Was Flame-Rain acting for the benefit of the Flame Wing Tribe?

Flame-Rain opened her mouth as if to comfort those in a state of confusion and fear.

“Now, let me, Flame-Rain propose something as the queen of the Flame Wing Tribe. While the war with the monsters has ended, our survival and freedom are still at risk. Knowing each other's existence, species may start killing and enslaving each other. Which is why I am proposing a new species coalition. The coalition will mediate conflicts between species and will work for the prosperity of the universe as a whole. We will take measures so that we can be prepared for invasions from other dimensions, which may occur at some point. However, this coalition will be completely different from the alliance. First, we will not interfere with the internal affairs of species'. More people will also participate in the making decisions. There will be no discrimination between tribes, and most importantly, there will be no such thing as 'Consumables'”

As expected, she hadn't changed. It felt like her each and every word was being nailed into their minds.

“Who will join?”

She asked.

“I will join.”

“I offer my sword.”

The transcendent warriors who had sided with Choi Hyuk's party scrambled to show their intentions of joining.

"The dragon race will join you as well."

"The 104-quasarlings will also join."

"...I'll return to the Dark Tribe and review this optimistically."

Species with a clear system of command decided to join on the spot while species that didn't promised to discuss it. The number of species joining this coalition would undoubtedly increase in the end. With Flame-Rain at the helm, no one could disregard the coalition's influence. Also, she mentioned the possibility of an invasion from other dimensions.

Everything proceeded smoothly like a script.

The dissatisfied group understood they were an absolute minority.

She was the strongest warrior in the universe. A queen who had proved her purity through Flame-Hell's trials.

The universe was on her side.

Flame-Rain's gaze landed on Lee Jinhee, Baek Seoin, Bae Jinman, Leah, Handke, Moonmoon, and Fragile, who all stood in the middle of the courtroom.

"And what about you?"

The current mood made it difficult to refuse. They bowed slightly and replied,

"We will join."

Handke then bitterly added,

"If you pay well..."

Flame-Rain nodded and then closed her eyes.

‘This is something I’ve been dreaming about my whole life... But it’s so easy. Choi Hyuk. Did you think it was fine if you just paved the way for me and disappeared?’

She suppressed her surging emotions.

‘Like how you achieved your goal in life, I will too. Even without you.’

She recalled her dream she had even before meeting Choi Hyuk. A universe where all species coexisted peacefully and prosperously.

Opening her eyes, she took her first step.

“With this, I officially declare the establishment of the Great Universe Coalition.”

This was the moment the Flame Wing Alliance ceased to exist and the Great Universe Coalition was born.

Lee Jinhee was appointed as the commander of the knight squad, which represented the coalition’s military strength, and Baek Seoin became her vice-commander out of his own will.

Bae Jinman traveled throughout the universe as a healer of the coalition and saved those who were dying.

Leah became a diplomat in charge of trade in technology between species and contributed to the prosperity of earthlings.

Handke became a researcher organizing the coalition’s karma skills for a while before quickly resigning. He later returned to the restored Earth and lived happily as a local influence.

Moonmoon and Fragile raised the statuses of their species as members of the coalition.

Though conflicts arose everywhere, no one crossed the line.

When conflicts couldn't be easily resolved, duels were used to settle grudges under the coalition's approval. Duels could only be requested by those who insisted they were victims, and as even weaker forces won a significant number of duels, it was difficult to act unjustly without care.

Even Lee Jinhee, who held a public position, received a few duel requests, but she won every one of them and left her challengers alive.

Some called these duels 'Choi Hyuk's Rule'.

Earthlings from the past might see this as uncivilized, but this was civilized for the universe, which had experienced an even more uncivilized era.

Later, people would call the period of time Flame-Rain was the first chairman of the coalition as the 'Era of Glory'.

{Epilogue – Flame-Rain End}

Chapter 207

Chu Youngjin

A while after the coalition was founded.

Flame-Rain was incredibly busy. There were many species she had to go around, comfort, and gain support from.

Her office was almost always vacant.

In her spare time, Flame-Rain would come back to look at the overdue files waiting in her office while clutching her forehead.

Today, the battle puppet, Shiro, was waiting for her.

The flushed face of a woman in love was no longer present as she watched Flame-Rain enter with an emotionless silver face. She couldn't tell how many days she had been waiting here.

"...It's been a while? What's the matter?"

Flame-Rain didn't know much about Dark-Sound and Shiro's relationship. All she remembered were the past days where Shiro clung to her and asked her to heal Chu Youngjin. She thought she had given up because she didn't see her for a while, but she already felt a headache coming.

"Chu Youngjin."

Shiro opened her stiff lips.

"Please heal him."

As expected, Flame-Rain clenched her forehead.

Chu Youngjin. He was someone that weighed on her mind. However, she couldn't save him now.

"I already told you. He's already considered dead by the karma medical examination. All I said was that I, not as a karma medical practitioner, think that he could be saved... I have no idea if I really can save him or how long it'll even take. Sorry... But I don't have to the spare time to do that."

Flame-Rain said objectively.

Her expression didn't change as Shiro said once more,

"Please heal him."

It was as if she didn't hear her refusal.

Her request stabbed at Flame-Rain's heart. Chu Youngjin, he was Choi Hyuk's comrade. When she thought this, she also wanted to save him. However, she couldn't, at least not right now.

Flame-Rain closed her eyes then nodded.

"...Okay, I'll save him because he's been weighing on my mind. I promise. But I can't right now. I'll do my best to heal him once the coalition stabilizes."

Shiro shook her head.

"Then it will be too late."

Though she didn't know the specifics, she could tell that the chances of success would drop as time went by even if Flame-Rain took special care.

Flame-Rain sighed. She really didn't want to say this but...

"You know, right? That he's the worst rebel who assassinated Dark-Sound. The reason why we were able to bury the issue with the Berserkers was because he, and other key individuals, died. But you want me, the chairman of the coalition, to save him while abandoning my duties? Maybe later, but I can't do it right now because of my political

position. Really... I don't have the energy to spare."

Flame-Rain said pitifully as if she was pleading her to stop.

Shiro closed her cold eyes and then opened them.

She asked herself why she wanted to heal Chu Youngjin. Was it for revenge? No, that wasn't it. Then...

"I don't have anything to lose anymore. If he dies, then I..."

Shiro's eyes became grim.

"I'll become a terrorist."

Flame-Rain's jaw dropped.

It wasn't that she couldn't bear it if he died or that she would die as well, to say that she would become a terrorist... 'As expected of a battle puppet.' While thinking this, Flame-Rain had a headache.



When he opened his eyes for the first time in a long time, the first thing he saw was Flame-Rain's inhospitable face.

'...Princ... ess?'

Although he moved his lips, his voice wouldn't come out of his parched throat.

"You're awake? You're awake. I'm finally free from that damn woman. Congrats on surviving. Camilla will explain the situation. Now I got to go since I'm busy."

Flame-Rain hurriedly left as though she was done after seeing him wake up.

'Just... what... '

He had definitely died. Yet, he was alive.

Camilla calmly started speaking,

“Even though she acted like that, she suffered a long time without sleep trying to save you. She also has a lot of political burdens as well. Be grateful.”

‘Be grateful?’

He felt a surge of anger. He couldn’t live. He thought he could finally rest, yet she wanted him to start his damned life again? Also, above all!

If he survived, how was he supposed to see Shiro’s face again...

He had thought he had smoothly gotten away, but he was captured. Yet, she wanted him to be grateful?

Even though he wanted to express his rage, he couldn’t move his tongue, let alone his fingers.

“Flame-Rain personally ignited a flame in your extinguished soul. She also replenished your spent karma with the Flame Wing Tribe’s Flames of Beginning... To be honest, rather than a treatment, it’s more accurate to call it a recreation. This is a miracle only possible through Flame-Rain. Currently, you are part Flame Wing Tribe member and part earthling. It’s like you were reborn. Your level has completely disappeared. You aren’t even a lowest-ranked warrior... Maybe at the 1-star level? Perhaps it’s due to the fragments of your already destroyed soul, but it won’t be easy for you to reach your peak level again. It’s still lucky that you kept your memories. Ah, you remember me, right?”

‘Camilla...’

While his voice didn’t come out, Camilla seemed to have read his lips and smiled.

“You have to work hard on your recuperation.”



Meals arrived at constant intervals, but he couldn't eat.

He couldn't live like this. However, he couldn't die now either.

Yet, there was nothing for him to do while alive.

When one didn't have a direction in life, time felt heavy and dark like the depths of the ocean. Unable to breathe and crushed by the pressure, he felt like he would die soon without trying. If he died like this, wouldn't it... be a completely worthless death?

'Why did she save me?'

His resentment surged multiple times a day.

Uncertain of how many days had passed and how many meals he missed, Flame-Rain scolded him after seeing how he was curled up on his bed.

"Are you crazy? If you die like this, I worked hard for nothing! And Shiro, that bitch, will probably shout up a storm saying that she'll become a terrorist! What are you telling me to do?! No, Shiro, that bitch, why hasn't she shown her face after begging me to save you?"

His mind jolted.

'Shiro did? Why? Did she not know I killed Dark-Sound? There's no way...'

Even though he tried not to listen to Camilla while he lay in bed, he heard her.

Though it didn't matter now, the 13 Exalted Wings were killed as well as the monster queen. Choi Hyuk had died in battle as a rebel and a hero. He succeeded.

The only one who didn't die when he was supposed to and was crumpled up like this was him.

There was no doubt Shiro knew as well.

What his final mission was.

He had killed Dark-Sound, who was no different from her father, with his own hands. Yet, why did she save him?

Thump.

He couldn't stay lying down due to the stuffiness in his chest. He didn't know how much time had passed, but Flame-Rain, who he thought was mumbling next to him, was no longer there. His room was dark.

Clothes Camilla had picked out for him were hanging on the hanger. He got up and then grabbed and wore some.

Staggering, he went outside, grabbed someone and asked,

“Shiro. Where is Shiro, the highest-ranked battle puppet?”



Shiro was living in the ‘Garden of Doors’ in Alliance City. It was the place the now disbanded ‘Event Horizon’ Troop lived in.

She didn't know what she was thinking. She didn't know what to say or what she would hear.

However, like a crazy person, she floundered in front of the ‘Garden of Doors’.

She stood at the front gate. Her face was somewhat pale.

She came out with her things, seemingly ready to leave far away, when she froze after seeing Chu Youngjin.

Her pale cheeks flushed, seemingly in anger.

“...Shiro.”

“Stop. Go back.”

She said while suppressing her anger.

“Shiro, I-“

“Go! Go back!”

She screamed with a red face.

“How brazen are you to come find me? Why? Did you think I forgave you because I saved you? Are you crazy?!”

It wasn't her usual, formal manner of speech. She couldn't contain her emotions and shouted.

But, rather than these things, her 'Did you think I forgave you?' stabbed his heart.

He tried to speak, but his voice wouldn't come out.

'No, of course not...'

Yet, he did. Although he didn't know it until just moments before, now it was clear. Coming to find her while unsure why, he did... hope that she might have forgiven him.

As soon as he realized this, he felt even more pitiful.

How... pathetic was he?

Chu Youngjin lowered his head.

Shiro's words stabbed into him like nails.

“Don't misunderstand. The reason why I saved you was because bastards like you shouldn't have a peaceful death. Do you think I'll allow you to have an honorable death?”

Her eyes were filled with malice. It was a gaze she had never shown him before.

“Go back. If you come looking for me again, I’ll really kill you.”

She turned around and entered the ‘Garden of Doors.’

Chu Youngjin stood frozen in place before quietly returning.



“Hey, Chu Youngjin. Pull yourself together! I heard you’re not eating and recuperating?!”

Lee Jinhee and Bae Jinman had come to visit him.

They broke through the door and came in even though they were informed he didn’t want visitors.

Although Lee Jinhee was in a frenzy, Chu Youngjin stared at the ceiling and didn’t say a word.

‘I’m exhausted...’

He thought.

Even though things were like this, he didn’t want to die so worthlessly while being a burden. Yet, his hands wouldn’t move. Now that he thought about it, he had forced his body to move since long ago.

When Lee Hyejin died, his heart had already been crushed but he continued to fight to repay Jung Minji, who had saved her.

When Jung Minji died, he really didn’t have any attachment to the world, but he got up again and continued to fight to get revenge on those who played with Lee Hyejin’s death.

It was a long battle. It was so long that he lost his reason and a strange woman named Shiro ended up standing by his side. However, he threw that all away in the end. He had thrown everything away and ended it like he originally planned... Yet morning

arrived for him.

It was tiresome and pathetic.

‘Shiro... You might have really taken the best revenge...’

Puk!

Lee Jinhee swung her fist at the blank-eyed Chu Youngjin.

“This is why the young ones are so... Hey. High schooler. You first-love-crazed bastard. You did enough for your girlfriend, yet you’re still going to act so wimpy? Live a little. Your first love isn’t everything. Even though it feels like there’s nothing right now, things will come. Why there’s even that machine woman who saved you!”

She mentioned Shiro in the end.

Chu Youngjin mumbled,

“Dying like this... is probably her revenge.”

Puk!

Lee Jinhee kicked him this time. Her shin slammed into his chin and neck and shook his brain. As he was currently weak, fallen to the 1-star level, even her playful kicks were fatal.

Chu Youngjin collapsed on the floor and looked up at Lee Jinhee with a swollen lip.

“Yeah! I heard you guys caused quite the drama in front of the Garden of Doors or something! After being rejected there once, you’re going to crumple up and die? Hey, you crazy bastard. If you’re a crazy bastard, act like one. What crazy bastard gives up after being rejected once? If you’re sorry, repay her by living. You’re good at following people, aren’t you?! Like how you followed Jung Minji! Like how you followed Choi

Hyuk! Go follow her! Repay her with your life!”

Lee Jinhee grabbed the meal tray left in the corner and scooped a spoonful.

“Are you not going to eat? Do you want this nuna to open your mouth and feed it to you?”

She seemed like she would actually force-feed him, yet Chu Youngjin slapped her outstretched hand away. It seemed he even used his karma as there was a low rumble.

Examining his gaze, which had become sharp as in the past, Lee Jinhee grinned.

“Now you look a bit more like your normal self. I’ll visit again. I’ll kill you if you aren’t eating and recuperating.”

She briskly walked out of the shattered doorway.

Bae Jinman awkwardly looked at her disappearing figure before whispering in Chu Youngjin’s ear.

“That miss. She’s still at the ‘Garden of Doors’. I asked around... It seemed she was originally going to leave Alliance City? But after you came, she’s still staying there... If I were to give you some advice as an adult... Don’t make her wait too long. She doesn’t know her own feelings right now either.”

Bae Jinman patted his shoulder and then left.

“...Just what is everyone thinking?”

Chu Youngjin sat vacantly for a moment before suddenly wolfing down his meal. He put on some clothes and headed for the Garden of Doors.



He opened the door and went in. The doors erected in rows stood like trees in the ‘Garden of Doors’ Inn. Today’s concept seemed to be the currently trendy ‘Earth style’

as snow fell from the sky.

He found Shiro on a bench.

“...Didn’t I tell you I’d kill you if you came looking for me again?”

She said coldly.

“Then kill me.”

He shrugged.

Shiro’s eyes sparked.

Puk!

Chu Youngjin’s eyes sparked as well.

Shiro was a highest-ranked warrior. He couldn’t even see her move. His mouth was in tatters.

“How can you kill me like that? You know I fell to the 1-star level, don’t you? How weak was your punch just now?”

He brushed himself off and stood up like it was nothing.

Her gaze was malicious.

“Do you... think I won’t kill you?”

“Then kill me.”

Her shoulders trembling, she turned around as if she was leaving. He said to the back of her head,

“If you can’t kill me, take responsibility. Since you saved me. I’ll come every day.”

Shiro’s eyes wavered when she heard his shameless declaration.

“Yoou!”

Puuuk!

As though the next moment was edited, Shiro, who was standing far away, suddenly stood right where he was while Chu Youngjin was stretched out on the snow.

“Get up.”

He couldn’t tell if she was growling or speaking coldly.

He innocently stood back up.

Thud!

He got hit again and rolled on the floor.

“Get up!”

Puk!

He was hit whenever he got up.

Chu Youngjin tried his best to endure without falling back, but he couldn’t help but fall and roll on the ground due to their sheer difference in strength.

Puk! Puk! Bang!

Unsure of how many times he was hit, Chu Youngjin attempted to get up but couldn’t put strength in his limbs. He fell back when he tried to get up again and again. In the end, he flailed around on the snow. The blows he had suffered had long since exceeded the limits a 1-star warrior could endure.

Though Chu Youngjin couldn't see it, Shiro's face had become tearful at some point. Her emotionless face was now nowhere to be seen. Her face was flushed. It looked like tears would fall on her white and red cheeks at any moment.

Her lips trembling, she said,

“If you come again, I'll definitely hit you to death.”

‘Since I didn't die, I'm going to come tomorrow.’

Chu Youngjin wanted to reply, but he could speak after being hit so many times.

Step. Step.

He heard her footsteps as she walked away.

Step. Ste- ...

She suddenly stopped.

Without looking back and her shoulders trembling, she shouted loudly,

“Really! Do I have to worry about you dying from being hit by me?! Go recuperate!!”

As if she was taken aback by her own words, she panted and then fled to her room.

Chu Youngjin lied there blankly before smiling.

“Is life... worth living?”

White snow landed on his swollen cheeks. The cool feeling on his cheeks felt good.
Like her.

He had been a high schooler.

When his heart died.

As expected... Broken hearts were healed through love.

{Epilogue – Chu Youngjin End}

Chapter 208

Choi Hyuk

There was nothing but not.

He was lying down but standing up. He was here but over there as well.

Every different kind of emotion flooded him at the same time until there was nothing in the end.

He continued to dream.

At some point, an annoying fellow appeared.

The fellow used strange things like 'words'.

He kept ignoring her until he couldn't endure it any longer and ended up using 'words'.

Go! Don't come back.

Right? You're awake, right? I knew you were.

He pushed the happy fellow away and dreamed again.

However, the fellow kept coming back tirelessly.

...

You came again? Leave me alone...

What are you saying?

Just who are you? I'll kill you if you keep waking me up.

Who's going to kill who?

Arg! Leave me alone! I want to rest.

Bear with it for a bit longer. You can't sleep too deeply.

Why are you doing this?

Do you not remember who I am?

Who are you?

Who do you think? The one you couldn't kill.

This...!

Anyways, just stay put. It'll come soon.

What?

The time. And the person you've been waiting for.

I don't have anyone I'm waiting for.

You do.

Ha... Then tell that person to come quickly. Stop waking me up constantly.

Bear with it for a bit longer. We're almost done.

Do you know how many times you've said that?

Hey!

Hey!!

Did that fellow leave again?

Haa... Waking me up when I'm about to fall asleep again and again...

I'll kill you the next time you come!



They observed a ripple in the monsters' universe's emptiness that day as well. It occurred once every few years or decades. It was proof that Choi Hyuk's consciousness was still active.

Waking upon signal, Lee Jinhee shook her head as if to shake away any residual drowsiness and raised her sword. Frost fell from it. Her frozen stiff joints screamed from sleeping so long, but she was already used to it.

The Weapon of Conclusion 'Lee Jinhee's World' shined faintly.

As long as her friend was there, her sword would lead her to him no matter how many dimensions she had to cross and even if that place didn't exist yet.

Whoong.

There was literally nothing in the place she arrived in. Her faintly shining short sword floated in this place where even darkness didn't exist. Wary of this light, the concept of 'darkness' came into being temporarily.

"Choi Hyuk! I'm back."

Lee Jinhee always loudly called out to Choi Hyuk.

However, his reaction was different from before.

-Lee Jinhee...

He definitely called her by her name.

“Huh?”

Lee Jinhee’s eyes widened with surprise. Her pupils trembled within teary eyes.

“You... Choi Hyuk? You remember me?”

-Go back. I’m grateful you haven’t forgotten about me, but it’s no use. This universe is about to be born. And once it does, the ‘me’ that is talking to you right now will disappear.

“Wow... It’s really Choi Hyuk.”

-Everything had already concluded back then. I died that day. You’re talking to the dead right now. The only one who’ll be unhappy is you if you keep calling out to a dead man. Forget me and go live your life.

When the soft voice attempted to persuade her, a single tear landed and dripped down her cheek without her realizing it. It truly, truly had been a long time. So long that even she found it difficult to believe.

With a firm determination, she said,

“No, I vowed that you will definitely not die before me.”

-No, I already told you! I'm already dead!

Choi Hyuk's calm speech suddenly became childlike as though he had become a different person.

"Huh? What are you doing?"

-Ah, I give up. This didn't work either. I said it because I suddenly thought of it... I thought it would work... Ah, this is so annoying!

At a loss for words, Lee Jinhee clicked her tongue.

"Haa... This is depressing. You got my hopes up for nothing. Anyways, you're doing good. It seems that you're at least recovering fragments of your memory. We're actually really close so bear with it for a while longer."

-Hey! Hey!

-Gone again?

-You left early today... I'm bored.



"Choi Hyuk, wake up."

The annoying fellow woke him up yet again.

-Go. You're going to leave soon anyways.

“Playing hard to get? Get up. It’s time.”

-Time?

However, the one who replied wasn’t Lee Jinhee.

“Choi Hyuk.”

The moment he heard her voice, the void universe squirmed.

Blazing transparent flames. A friendly, kind-hearted person who wasn’t suited to her position.

-Huh? What?? Who are you? Why do I know you?

The voice was taken aback.

Lee Jinhee smirked.

“Why are you acting like that when you even remembered me?”

-It’s different. I only recalled it. I didn’t feel any emotion. But you... Why... Who are you?

“Wow, how nice of you.”

Lee Jinhee pouted as if she was upset.

Flame-Rain had a subtle smile as she stepped forward.

After hearing that Choi Hyuk was alive from Lee Jinhee (though whether this was living or not was up for debate), she had waited a long time for this day. Enough to reach the end of one's life, enough for one's youth and dreams to have faded away. Until the dead universe was reborn. Until the era of the coalition, which was established after the alliance, changed. She was now older than what Flame-Hell had been. Such a long period of time had passed that Chu Youngjin and Shiro had reached the end of their lifespans and were now gone forever.

However, in a manner a seven-year-old would speak, she said,

“Because I want to become your friend.”

The universe squirmed once more at her words.

-Flame... -Rain?

Flame-Rain's smile grew, but her voice was still nonchalant.

“Well, you can call me that, but what's the point of names now? That's from my past life.”

-Past life...?

“During the war, you did your best in your own way and I did my best in my own. Now we need to brush it all off and live our next life. In our next life, let's become closer friends.”

He suddenly recalled various memories. A sword, fresh blood, corpses, and a girl with petite hands who approached him. Ahh, were these the memories of the man known as Choi Hyuk?

The voice became more bitter.

-But I'm not the Choi Hyuk you knew.

“And I'm not the Flame-Rain you knew.”

There was nothing in this universe, yet it seemed like their gazes were locked on each other.

The voice sounded frightened.

-But this universe will be born. No one can stop it. I have to partake in it and have no choice but to be dispersed into nothingness. It has already been decided since long ago. Now go. You are making me sad.

“That's why I came. We researched and prepared a lot.”

Flame-Rain raised her Sword of Conclusion 'Flame-Rain's Glory'. Flames blazed above it. Flames of glory.

The voice naturally understood. Though he had long since forgotten the concept of karma, if it were those flames, that power, then it would be able to trigger the universe's birth instead of him. Yet, he also knew...

-But if you do that, you'll-!

“Lose my power. Maybe even my body. Forever. But it doesn’t matter. Didn’t I tell you? This is all from my past life.”

Flame-Rain said jokingly while raising her sword.

“Then shall we start? In Earth’s fashion.”

Flames of glory raged around her. Not leaving even a tiny bit out, she contained them all into her sword.

Raising the brilliantly blazing glory, she said,

In the beginning,

“Let there be light.”

Riip!

Her sword stabbed into the air. It was a world devoid of anything, yet her sword pierced through and embedded itself in it.

-Ah... It’s begun...

A blurry shadow appeared in front of ‘Flame-Rain’s Glory’. Though he was slightly short, Lee Jinhee thought he was definitely Choi Hyuk.

When the shadow placed his hand on the sword, ‘Flame-Rain’s Glory’ turned into flames and melted away.

The brilliant flames, which shot forth endlessly with the ‘Glory of Creation’, surrounded the shadow, and then dispersed into the universe. Like dark clouds fading in the sky, the emptiness melted away to reveal a vaster universe beyond it.

The universe, which was enclosed in an egg after Choi Hyuk killed the monster queen, was opening once more. Its shell was cracking and a new world unfurled its wings from within.

“Haa... It was a life without regrets.”

Flame-Rain closed her eyes as if relieved. Having squeezed out even the karma that made up her body, her body was dispersing as sparks.

Before her hand disappeared, Lee Jinhee tightly held her hand and whispered,

“Don’t worry, they said the calculations were precise.”

When she heard her, Flame-Rain’s still-remaining lips fluttered before smiling.

“I’m not worried. I told you. It was a life without regrets.”

At this time, flames covered everything.

Like a boat drifting in a storm, only Lee Jinhee watched the birth of the universe by relying on her white short sword.

First, a galaxy was created. The brilliant galaxy was so vast that it could be seen from anywhere in the universe, and each bend was splendid.

Fragments of stars appeared around the galaxy. Lee Jinhee called them ‘fragments’ because they were completely different from the stars in her universe.

First, they weren’t round. They had edges, were curved and simple, yet were also beautiful and modern (though this was an outdated concept). One by one, or sometimes in groups, they made their appearance. There were some that orbited each other like Earth and its moon, and others that simply floated next to each other.

Some stars were desolate while others had green land and blue oceans. A small star,

in particular, looked like one the Little Prince^{1} might live on, having blue oceans and green ground.

The first lifeforms were born and soon after spread throughout the universe. Various colored plants grew thick, and in some cases, stars were so close and trees grew so tall that their branches intertwined.

Various species that resembled humans in appearance were born, and as soon as they did, history was created. Although the universe had only just been born, hundreds of millions of years of history had been established as though it was normal when a universe was created.

Sometimes fighting and other times competing and cooperating with each other, these species flourished and climbed the steps of the great galaxy that could be seen anywhere in the universe. Connected between stars, these species climbed up the helix stairway that followed the galaxy upwards. Between each step was a glorious city and temple.

In their mythology, a god and a goddess had created the world. Apparently, they had gone on a long journey after creating the world.

“Huuu...”

“Ah...”

The god and the goddess who had left on a journey returned.

Glittering flames left over from the creation of the world gathered together to form two figures.

Though they looked like high schoolers in puberty, they were Choi Hyuk and Flame-Rain without a doubt. They were wearing the normal clothes of the just-born species.

“Oh, you’re here... That’s good.”

The birth of the universe had been marvelous, but Lee Jinhee could finally let out a sigh of relief after watching the process with a nervous heart.

Flame-Rain greeted Lee Jinhee.

Seemingly still finding his body awkward, Choi Hyuk touched his entire body.

After examining himself for a long while, he finally raised his head.

He wasn't a god but a human. One belonging to this universe.

He had fulfilled his duty of awakening the universe, he was now simply a member of it.

He was Choi Hyuk but not at the same time. Memories of his intense past were faint as though they really were from a past life.

Flame-Rain was right. This was his next life. One where he and Flame-Rain had just been born.

Like an embarrassed boy in puberty who didn't know what to do, Choi Hyuk asked,

“Uh... What do we do now?”

The great galaxy was shining behind him.

It was a galaxy where souls belonging to this universe returned to once they died. Souls who lived a life of regret would gather there, sit around and drink alcohol together while talking about the things they hadn't accomplished as though they were talking about someone else. One by one, they returned to the world, forgetting what should be forgotten and keeping what should be kept.

There might have been an afterlife in the universe they had inhabited in the past, but if there was a difference, it was that no one knew of its existence there while everyone knew about it here. This was quite a significant difference.

Whoever imagined and made this... Flame-Rain thought that it was a very cute view of the world.

As if she coincidentally happened upon Choi Hyuk, she acted surprised. Then she took a step towards him, raised her head, and stared directly into his eyes.

“Wow, to meet each other here. Since this is quite the coincidence... How about a date?”

She linked her arm around Choi Hyuk’s while smiling.

Choi Hyuk awkwardly folded his arm and, as if hesitating, said,

“The-then should we?”

Excited, he took a step forward.

His previous life had gone awry since the very beginning.

After reaching the end of his misaligned life,

After going around and around,

A completely new world lay in front of them, who had finally met again.

{Epilogue – Choi Hyuk End}



Lee Jinhee was taken aback as she saw the two disappear, embracing each other like tied barley bags.

“Yes, yes, you probably have no interest in me. Yes, then good luck you two. The unwelcome guest will be taking her leave now.”

She grumbled before crossing dimensions.

“Damn it... And who was it that repeatedly hibernated for such long periods of time...?”

Finding it unfair, her voice echoed throughout the newly born galaxy.

{1} The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Chapter 209

Lee Jinhee and...

A fighting addict.

Severe PTSD.

These were the words that described Lee Jinhee.

Was it because she was the most soft-hearted amongst the Berserkers? When the rest of them brushed off their pasts, she couldn't.

Since she was knight captain of the coalition, it would have been nice if she took a step back on the battlefield, but she always stood at the very front, roaming through the battlefield. She hadn't rested nor had she take personal time off. If she didn't fight a bloody battle each day, she couldn't sleep thanks to her nightmares.

While the coalition was calm when dealing with those who wanted to resolved things with words, they didn't tolerate criminals and groups that suppressed other species. Whenever an incident broke out, the wrongdoers would encounter a blood-soaked Lee Jinhee.

{Euak! Wait! Wait! I was wrong! I surrender! I surrender!}

"You should have said that before meeting me."

Pscht!

Her mission was to enact mercy.

Shaking off her bloody sword, Lee Jinhee sighed. Battle after battle.

Even though a lot of time had passed, it felt like a single long day. A battle that continued since that day.

The only time she took some time off was to visit that sleepyhead who wouldn't listen to a word she said.

“Lee Jinhee...”

“Oh, Baek hyung?”

Lee Jinhee revealed a faint smile when she saw him.

Baek Seoin was in quite a hopeless state. Although he became a vice-captain to support her, but regardless of his intentions, she was a wreck. She couldn't sleep if she didn't fight and fought when she wasn't asleep. Though she was alive, she didn't have a life. Even though he wanted to help her, she wouldn't give him a single opportunity.

“Huh? Wait. You!”

Baek Seoin hurriedly approached her and held her cheek.

Blood flowed from her nose. It wasn't from an injury since there weren't any enemies strong enough to even touch her. If she got a nosebleed from getting hit, then that in itself was a serious problem.

Tak.

Lee Jinhee pushed Baek Seoin away.

“Ah, this? I've been getting them for a while now. It's annoying.”

Lee Jinhee wiped the blood dripping from her nose as though it was nothing. However, Baek Seoin's expression didn't relax. For a powerful transcendent warrior to get a nosebleed for no reason... That wasn't possible.

“You... Did you go there again?”

The monsters’ universe Choi Hyuk was slumbering in.

Lee Jinhee was the only one who could enter that completely closed off universe. The power ‘Lee Jinhee’s World’ possessed was astonishing because it allowed her to enter worlds that hadn’t even been born yet, but this miraculous feat placed a burden of similar magnitude on her. Even if she only visited for a moment, she would be in pain for an entire day. Then she returned to the battlefield without sleeping. This had been going on for decades now. Her body had already reached its limit.

“It’s nothing.”

Lee Jinhee turned away as though she found it mildly annoying. However, her head faltered and her knees bent as she collapsed on the floor.

“Lee Jinhee!”

“Uh... Why am I...?”

She fainted after flailing around for a moment.

“Lee Jinhee!!”

Baek Seoin’s scream pierced through the chaotic battlefield.



It’s my first time seeing something like this.

Her karma has declined so much that it’s difficult to believe she’s a transcendent warrior. It’s about to crumble as though it has been eroded for many years.

She needs to be absolutely at rest. At this rate... She won’t last long even if she is a transcendent warrior.

When Lee Jinhee opened her eyes, Baek Seoin, who had been dozing off, jolted to his feet.

“You’re awake?”

“Yeah... What’s this?”

Lee Jinhee blinked her eyes as though she couldn’t understand the current situation before attempting to get up. Baek Seoin hastily laid her back down.

“You fainted! All of a sudden! Stay lying down. They told me you need to rest.”

Lee Jinhee frowned when she heard his words.

“I fainted? Then what about Choi Hyuk? Did he wake up during this time? I need to go see him. If I don’t keep waking him up and starting conversations, he’ll completely melt away!”

She struggled to get back up, but Baek Seoin forcefully kept her down.

Her resistance was so weak that it brought a tear to his eye. He shouted,

“Stop! You can’t go there anymore! I’ll talk to Flame-Rain. She’ll understand since she has lamented repeatedly about how groundless it is to try to awaken Choi Hyuk though the birth of the universe.”

“What are you saying? No way. Then Choi Hyuk will die!”

“Who’s worrying about who! Your body’s a wreck! If you keep pushing yourself too hard to enter the monsters’ universe... You’ll die!”

“Die...?”

“Yeah! Die!”

Baek Seoin’s words made her think intently.

“Hmm... If I die, there won’t be anyone to wake him up...”

“Even now you’re-!”

Baek Seoin was at a loss for words.

Unconcerned, Lee Jinhee was simply lost in her thoughts.



“What...? Hibernation?”

“Yeah, hibernation.”

Baek Seoin massaged his temples when he saw Lee Jinhee reply like it was nothing.

“For how long?”

“Hmm... A thousand years? Ten thousand years? Maybe even hundreds of thousands of years? I don’t know since it’s a matter of the monsters’ universe being reborn. Well, I’ll go visit you often whenever I wake up. I have to ridicule how much you’ve aged.”

Lee Jinhee innocently continued as though she didn’t notice Baek Seoin’s complicated thoughts,

“Thinking about it, it’s not a bad idea. Always fighting or getting nightmares if I don’t... Rather than living like this, hibernating is better. I’ll be able to sleep well, won’t I? When I receive a signal that Choi Hyuk’s consciousness is active while I’m in hibernation, I’ll wake up and go visit him. My body will recover while I’m asleep. Yup, it seems like a good idea.”

“What about it is good...”

As if giving up, Baek Seoin asked,

“Why are you going so far to do this? You did as much as you could for Choi Hyuk. Isn’t that right? You’ve been through a lot... You should live your own life now!”

His seemingly calm voice surged at the end. He couldn’t help it because this single-minded woman was so frustrating.

Lee Jinhee looked depressed as she looked out the window.

“You know, Baek hyung... I can’t help it. I don’t know about other people, but it seems like the fight that day hasn’t ended for me. It’s still clear in my mind. The corpses that filled Alliance City. The monsters’ universe. How you and Choi Hyuk brushed past me.

You fought to aide Choi Hyuk and Choi Hyuk fought to end everything... But that wasn't the case for me. I fought to protect my friends. That's why my fight hasn't ended yet. My life stopped there. Until Choi Hyuk returns... I can't take a single step forward."

Baek Seoin could tell how sincere she was by how lonely she sounded.

'I shouldn't stop you anymore if that's what you truly want.'

Baek Seoin made his decision.

After letting out a sigh, he lightly said,

"Okay then. I'll do that too."

"What? Why would you?"

Seeing this damn woman widen her eyes as though she didn't know why, Baek Seoin still continued to speak lightly,

"There won't be anyone you know left when you wake up from your hibernation. You won't be able to make friends as an old woman either. It's so sad that I should at least be there to play with you."

"What the heck are you saying?"

While she thought his words were strange, she didn't try to stop him. No, in fact, she might have felt grateful and welcomed his idea.

Baek Seoin slept continuously while Lee Jinhee woke up and then hibernated repeatedly.

She would immediately go into hibernation once she visited Choi Hyuk and had reported it to Flame-Rain. That was the only way she could heal her collapsing body. The only time Lee Jinhee and Baek Seoin met each other again was when Chu Youngjin and Shiro passed away.

Never recovering to his peak level, Chu Youngjin grew old and died. He looked happy and peaceful. When he passed, Shiro, who was always by his side, lied down next to him and stopped functioning on her own.

Lee Jinhee and Baek Seoin fully awoke after an immense period of time. It was after Choi Hyuk and Flame-Rain successfully created their world.

It was only then that the madness that had previously engulfed her began to wane and her time start flowing again.

As expected, the new world she woke up in was unfamiliar, and she didn't know anyone besides Baek Seoin and didn't have anything to do either.

“Yeah... That's why I waste my time here so much. Not because of you.”

Lee Jinhee grumbled as she chewed on a pickled radish.

“Huh? What did you say?”

Choi Hyuk, the fried chicken restaurant owner who had been passionately venting his feelings, tilted his head.

“It's nothing. Continue.”

Although she told him to continue, his words come in one ear and out the other like she had been doing until now. He talked about how Flame-Rain would also ignore him on occasion, asked if he did something wrong, wondered if he did, and asked her for her thoughts and hints as a woman... Listening to his clichéd speech was boring.

‘Still, he now fries chicken quite nicely.’

Chewing on the chicken, which was crispy on the outside and moist on the inside, she recalled the day Choi Hyuk declared he would open a fried chicken restaurant.

For that Choi Hyuk to open a fried chicken restaurant... Lee Jinhee felt like she had met an alien disguised as Choi Hyuk, but Choi Hyuk was full of enthusiasm. ‘Earthlings

open fried chicken shops when they retire. Since it's like I've retired, a fried chicken restaurant is perfect!' She rebuked by saying that he was reborn rather than retiring, but no words would get through to Choi Hyuk, who had become as emotional as a middle schooler after being reborn. Though she didn't know where he read what to fantasize about opening a restaurant so much...

Either way, the first fried chicken Choi Hyuk made was pitiful to no end.

Yet it became sensational.

Lee Jinhee couldn't contain her laughter when she saw the inhabitants of this universe buying such awful fried chicken as they made their way up and down the mystical stairway that surrounded the galaxy.

'Well, if it's this guy, even pupae^{1} would have been a success.'

Although they weren't as powerful as they were in the past, Choi Hyuk and Flame-Rain were special. They were existences that received the attention and love of this world.

"Jinhee nuna! Nuna! Lee Jinhee! Are you listening to me?!"

"Yeah, I am."

"No, so what I'm saying is she shouldn't say stuff like that no matter what! To suggest breaking up! How could she decide that by herself!"

Choi Hyuk vented.

Lee Jinhee was about to say something but shut her mouth when she saw his ferocious expression.

'Ah, right, he was the craziest guy in the universe. His temper hasn't changed.'

Deciding not to agitate him further, she poured him a beer to cool him off and change the topic.

"Ah, did you know? I had a dream yesterday? It was a dream where I lived a normal life. No alliance or monsters. It was a dream where I eventually gave up parkour, got a

job, and worked like a dog before I died. It was my first time dreaming about something so boring... Still, I felt like it was a shame when I woke up. My parents and my lame friends were there... Choi Hyuk, do you have anyone you think about? Before all that happened?"

When she asked this, Choi Hyuk, who had been flaring up like a child, suddenly calmed. This was Choi Hyuk. Not the Choi Hyuk of the present, but Choi Hyuk of his past life. Although he didn't act his age because he had turned into a child, inside this childlike Choi Hyuk remained the Choi Hyuk from the past. That might be why she kept coming here. He was her dear friend whom she could talk about that time with.

"For me..."

Choi Hyuk's eyes grew dim as he remembered the past.

"Jung Minji. The Crazy Knight King. You knew her too, right? If I think about it... I'm curious about her. If our normal lives continued, how would she have lived? Even if I don't know, it must be amazing...? Maybe her cursed sympathetic ability might have improved...? Would she have found someone she truly loved...?"

Seeing Choi Hyuk immersed in his own emotions, Lee Jinhee's jaw dropped.

"What? You miss your first love already? Are you crazy? Does Flame-Rain know about this?"

Choi Hyuk looked like he had just woken up. His serious attitude from just moments ago was nowhere to be seen.

"No! Who says she was my first love?! Also, Flame-Rain and I are done! That's what she said! That we should break up!"

Lee Jinhee smirked.

"How laughable. Do you think that's something you can just end because you want to?"

Do you know how many times Flame-Rain talked about stopping the entire plan while you were asleep? Since she said it like her world was ending, I thought she was serious and wondered if that would be my final hibernation. But when I woke up again, she would keenly ask about how you were. She's that type of person. Although she may seem like an exalted queen on the outside, if it's a matter that concerns you... Haaa..."

Lee Jinhee talked about how sick she was of it, but Choi Hyuk's eyes shined.

"Re... ally?"

Reenergized, he stood up from his seat, left Lee Jinhee there, and abruptly opened the fried chicken restaurant door.

Although he no longer possessed the same level of strength as he did in the past, they had a lot of convenient skills as they were loved by the universe.

For example, when he opened the door...

Thud!

"Oh, you came?"

The place beyond the door would be his destination.

Flame-Rain faced Choi Hyuk, who had rushed in, like nothing was wrong.

"Ah? Uh... Umm... That's... S-so-"

When Choi Hyuk awkwardly tried to apologize, Flame-Rain quickly went up to him and said,

"Wait. You're trying to apologize right now, aren't you?!"

Then her soft lips covered his.

Through her lips, her warmth spread throughout his body. His sad heart completely

melted away.

After a long kiss, Flame-Rain said,

“Apologies like make me cringe... Anyways, since you came looking for me first, I win, okay?”

Her expression read, ‘Ah, good thing I endured it. I won as expected.’

Various emotions filled Choi Hyuk’s heart.

‘What’s this? This beautiful yet shameless lifeform...’

He chuckled before revealing a smile that seemed to reflect all the time that had passed as he replied,

“It feels like we’re normal lovers like this. Fighting over nothing. Then making up.”

“We are normal lovers, stupid.”

He kissed her lips as she babbled about how he didn’t know that yet.

As expected, it was electrifying.

As though their lips had never separated after they had their first kiss.

{Epilogue – Lee Jinhee and... End}



After seeing those two like that in front of the door, Lee Jinhee had a bitter taste in her mouth as she left.

“Damn it... Singles like me should all roll over and die.”

When she saw the stairway and the unfamiliar inhabitants making their way up and

down it, she felt a little lonely.

“Lyosha...”

Apparently, those who died in this galaxy could meet again and share their feelings. Though it was cruel, this dreamlike story didn't apply to those who died outside this universe.

She repeated the name of the boy who had died for her a few times as she stood still, cherishing his memory. Her small head looked frail in front of the vast universe.

Yet, when she raised her head after a brief moment, her sorrow was nowhere to be seen, instead replaced by the desire of an old woman.

“As expected... I should have eaten him up when he grew up...! He was quite the decent man later on, wasn't he?”

She tried to change her mood, but she only felt more miserable.

“Ha... What am I saying? Am I crazy?”

Shaking her head, she crossed over to the coalition's universe.

Dirik! Dirik!

She received an urgent call as soon as she returned. It was Baek Seoin.

As soon as she answered him, she saw his face full of urgency.

-It's an emergency! Come quick!

His urgency made her question if she was still the knight captain or not.

“Wh-what is it? What happened?”

-I'm bored! Let's go watch a movie. How about <Knight of the Gale, Lee Jinhee> which

was released after you went into hibernation? An ancient movie! Though it was a failure, the mysterious movie became an unprecedented hit thanks to your dedicated fans!

Sparks ignited in Lee Jinhee's eyes.

"What? You good-for-nothing!"

You slept straight through it, but I woke up from time to time! Don't you know that I'd be your senior if we were to count the number of meals we've had?

Ah, yes, yes, Jinhee nuna. So what should we eat today?

I don't know! Since Baek hyung is my junior, you lead the way!

Ah, yes yes.

{1} Korean street food – boiled or steamed silkworm pupae.

Afterword

Though it makes me emotional, the story I have clung onto for around a year has finally concluded.

I sincerely thank readers from Munpia, Joara, and Bookcube who have accompanied me on my releases. It was thanks to you that I was able to end this story.

1.

Not many people died in my previous novel, Dimension & Business... But, for some reason, I have received various forms of slander for being called SlaughterAgain since the start of this novel.

However, despite the countless suspicions that poured in, I wrote this story with the clear aim of having a happy ending since the beginning. I received tons of criticism thanks to the unclear ending of my previous novel...

Yes, living is already tough, isn't it a good thing if stories have happy endings?

Though the concept I had when I started writing Sovereign of Judgment was 'bloody action scenes', 'scheming amongst sovereigns', and 'love for humanity'...There are parts I'm satisfied with and many more that I am not. I felt that the part where the story went from being a survival game on Earth to the alliance's outlook of the world was especially a shame. I had a hard time in the middle since I couldn't continue the 'scheming amongst sovereigns'.

Still, I am very happy since I think I wrote a satisfactory ending.

2.

It was a very difficult time for me during the early stages of writing this novel.

While recovering from my surgery due to problems regarding my rear end, my dear friend departed from this world due to leukemia on April 24. She was a kindred spirit, very pretty, and 30 years old.

One of my friends departed last year, and now this year... Due to circumstances, I couldn't contact my friends very often.

It was heartbreaking.

As you know, I am an expert at late releases so I didn't reveal my circumstances at the time when I went on a hiatus because I felt they would only be excuses.

If my readers who have accompanied me this far could pray for her, I will be forever thankful.

3.

I am thinking about a concept for a new story.

It's a story about a magician. I think it should be considered a fusion fantasy more than a modern one, but it'll be fun.

I am planning on releasing it sometime in March or April 2017.

While it's brazen of me, I hope that you enjoyed my previous project and will enjoy the new one I will be writing as well.

To my readers who have accompanied me through Choi Hyuk and the Berserkers' struggle, I once again bow my head in thanks.

Then, until next time!

Translator's Afterword.

It's been a great journey. I cannot describe how much I appreciate all the support you have given me while translating this project. When I first began this project, I couldn't even imagine finishing it, yet here we are, 210 chapters of Sovereign of Judgment completely translated.

I would like to thank my editor, Obelisk, for helping me out since the early releases of the project despite his busy schedule. He was one of the two who reached out to us, offering to help edit our chapters. This was before we were officially recruiting at all.

I plan on solely translating Top Management for the time being. Top Management has been my side project for a while now, and the novel has unfortunately been on hiatus at 216 chapters. I hope that the author returns before I catch up.

Once again, thank you all for accompanying me this far! Hope you enjoyed the ride!



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