



**39 Legend of Sun Knight Volume 1: Part One**  
Original novel in Chinese by: [御我 \(Yu Wo\)](#)  
Translated by [Prince Revolution](#)

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## Chapter #1: In Training, Part 1- Vice-Captain

The skies had just brightened, and Elaro immediately woke up. For some reason, he was particularly sensitive to sunlight. The moment he felt the sun, he would wake up. It was the same, even on his days off, when he didn't have to wake up early. His teacher had even specially experimented before, shining a candle on him in the middle of the night. It didn't have the same effect.

Ultimately, Teacher concluded that he was a resplendent, sunlit type of guy. The moment sunlight shone on him, he would automatically have to sparkle a bit, so of course he would wake up.

Elaro didn't quite understand what his teacher meant. But out of every ten things his teacher said, there would be approximately two that he didn't understand.

*"As long as you've heard me, you don't have to worry about it too much. Otherwise, a serious guy like you would probably have his brains explode from overthinking. Besides, I even followed suit and forgot to choose a backup candidate!"*

*Followed suit...?* In any case, since his teacher had just said so, Elaro listened to his words, but didn't worry over it. Even though he abruptly realized just who had also forgotten to choose a backup candidate, well, he would "listen without worrying too much!"

Elaro was very satisfied with his habit of waking up early. He never overslept, and waking up early meant he could accomplish many more things.

He lithely turned and got up from the bed. When he took off his sleeveless shirt, an astonishing, x-shaped scar could be seen across his chest, the size nearly spanning its entirety. Although the scar was only a little redder and sunken than the skin surrounding it, with the healing abilities of the Church of the God of Light, for such a deep scar to remain, the injury at the time must have been very severe.

Elaro turned, lowered his head, and scooped up water from the basin to wash his face. On his back, there was actually another scar that spanned from his right shoulder to below the shoulder blade. The color was even darker than the x across his chest.

After a simple freshening up, he tidied up his appearance. As he had already finished ironing his clothes using a pot of hot water the previous night, and he had already polished his shoes, all he had to do was simply comb his hair a bit. Such a simple task always made Elaro feel a bit guilty.

Originally, he had thought that the Sun Knight should have a head of brilliant golden hair, so when his teacher had asked him to keep his hair long, he had agreed immediately.

*"Then, today I will teach you how to maintain your hair. It's much easier than applying facial masks. First, you must mix hair oil and a hair treatment cream that suits your hair, and you must wash your hair every day. On alternate days, you can just wash it with water, but on the next day, after you finish washing your hair, you must use the hair oil and massage your scalp completely. After that, boil another bucket of water, put a towel inside until it is warm, and then wring it*

*dry before wrapping it around your head. Repeat this three times, and then wash away the hair oil. After that, rub on some hair treatment cream, and your job is done... Ah, no, you must comb your hair a hundred times every morning too."*

*"Teacher, I've decided to cut my hair!"*

*Teacher looked troubled, but he murmured, "I don't think I've heard that the Sun Knight must have long hair... Very well."*

*Teacher really spoils me too much!* Elaro felt like he was slacking off. After all, Teacher maintained his hair like that too, yet he had chosen to keep his hair short because he wanted to slack off... *Speaking of maintaining hair, today seems to be the day for applying facial masks...*

Elaro's mood was immediately much less joyful than when he had just woken up. Turning himself into a lump of flour, steaming himself on a scorching summer day until he sweated all over, was really a waste of time. Plus, his body would be sticky, making it impossible to do anything other than sitting and staring off into space.

Originally, he had to apply facial masks twice a week, one more time than even his teacher, because his natural skin color was not pale enough. Luckily, he was still just a knight-in-training, and did not have a high salary. He was also growing taller and taller, so the amount of facial mask materials he used up was shocking. If he really were to continue applying facial masks twice a week, his teacher might even have to help pay for his materials out of his own pocket. Therefore, once his height reached over one hundred and eighty centimeters, his



facial masks were finally changed to once a week.

However, Teacher had a prohibition for him: he was not allowed to remain in the sun for longer than five minutes between ten o'clock in the morning and two in the afternoon. At all other times, he was not allowed to remain out for longer than fifteen minutes. If he surpassed the time, he would immediately have to apply an extra facial mask that very day.

Elaro had never had to apply an extra facial mask.

After he finished changing, he turned around once in front of the mirror, making sure that he was presentable from head to toe. Only then did he walk out of the room. He thought about the schedule for the day. Since he had to apply a facial mask, he would have to finish taking care of everything early. *Oh no, while applying the facial mask last time, the essential oils were almost used up. Is there enough for another facial mask, or do I need to spare time to buy more...?*

"Captain."

Two holy knights stood outside the room and seemed to have waited for Elaro for some time already. The moment they saw him, they respectfully gave him a knight salute and simultaneously called out to him.

If they were speaking about their positions, these two were actually both holy knights, while Elaro was only a holy knight-in-training. Even though he was the future Sun Knight, before officially assuming the position, he was still just a trainee. Logically speaking, Elaro should be

the one deferring to the other two, but his situation was truly too unique. No one would seriously consider Elaro a "holy knight-in-training."

As a matter of fact, Elaro, who had entered the Holy Temple at the age of eight, was even more experienced than many holy knights past the age of thirty.

Even so, his association with his own platoon members had been somewhat awkward in the beginning. His platoon members were all already official holy knights. Only he was still a holy knight-in-training, even though he was the Sun Knight-in-training. But still...

"Sorry to keep you two waiting." Elaro smiled and said, "You didn't need to come so early."

"It wasn't too early." One of them smiled too as he answered, "We arrived only ten minutes before Captain came out."

*"Nag or Ice Cube, quickly choose one of them. I'll verify your choice immediately upon my return."*

As he recalled his teacher's instructions, Elaro couldn't help but look at the two of them one more time. *Nag and Ice Cube...*

The person who had spoken just now was Dili. His conduct had always been good-natured, he was easy to get along with, and he had good relations with everyone. On the other hand, Rhonelin was much more taciturn, the type to quietly complete everything asked of him.

As for which one of them was Nag and which of them was Ice Cube, it wouldn't even take ten seconds to figure that out.

Other than the difference in their personalities, their ages were also quite far apart. Dili was already twenty-five, while Rhonelin was only nineteen. Three years ago, when he had become Elaro's Sun Knight Platoon member, he had only been sixteen, yet he had already become an official holy knight. Although he had not broken the record of being the youngest, he truly possessed great talent.

The two of them were in a competition of sorts, and the situation was such that the other platoon members had even chosen sides. Seventy percent of the platoon members supported Dili, but the platoon members who supported Rhonelin all had greater ability. The competition between the two sides wove an undercurrent of turbulence among the platoon.

Elaro knew that this was completely his fault. Because he was unable to make a decision for the longest time, even Teacher had no choice but to command him to quickly choose a vice-captain...

"Captain?" Rhonelin asked hesitantly, but did not say a single word more.

Elaro returned to his senses and looked at Rhonelin, who was young yet possessed an indifferent demeanor older than his years. He commanded, "Report to me today's duties."

Rhonelin and Dili were both taken aback. Usually, Dili performed these kinds of tasks, but right now, the person Elaro was gazing at was



Rhonelin. He obviously wanted him to answer, so both of them detected that today was not quite like usual. They were somewhat able to guess that this had to do with their greatest concern.

"Yes!" Rhonelin finally dropped his habit of cherishing his words like gold, and began frankly saying, "The Twelve Holy Knight-Captains are out on a mission starting today. The duration is one week, so you must take care of the Sun Knight's duties for the week, leading the entire Holy Temple.

"The first job right now is to seek out Vice-Captain Adair and ask him what duties the Sun Knight has for the week, as well as receiving paperwork."

Rhonelin's answer was concise. Elaro nodded satisfactorily. Although he cherished his words like gold, he did not skimp out during times when he must speak. Usually, he never had to report on these matters, yet he was very clear about the details anyway.

Despite the situation, Dili was not worried. He believed that Captain would give him a fair chance to compete.

"Then, let us find Vice-Captain Adair."



In the distance, Elaro could see that the person they sought was currently commanding Ed and three other holy knights.

Adair, Teacher's vice-captain, always handled matters properly, no matter what they were. Even when all of the Twelve Holy Knights went

out on a mission together, with the entire Holy Temple full of dark eye circles from top to bottom, he could still maintain his unhurried manner.

The entire Church of the God of Light agreed that Adair was the best vice-captain in history. In fact, common folk from outside often made the mistake of believing him to be the Sun Knight himself. Of course, once they saw the actual Sun Knight, they would begin to repent for their foolishness.

The thirty-eighth Sun Knight was said to be the most perfect Sun Knight in history, and that was not such an easily earned title.

Elaro would always unconsciously compare his two vice-captain candidates with his teacher's vice-captain. However, he was a little discouraged to discover that Dili was great with people, while Rhonelin was great at completing his tasks. The two of them combined together would equal to one Adair, but unfortunately, he had no way of combining the two of them into one person.

"Elaro, you came at the right time." When Adair glanced up, he immediately saw Elaro. He smiled and said, "Before he left, Knight-Captain Sun wished for me to help support you. However, he did not explain the details. What did he ask you to do?"

Elaro shook his head and said, "Teacher did not specifically task me with anything—oh, right, Teacher wants me to..." He hesitated for a moment, remembering that Dili and Rhonelin were still standing behind him, but he still honestly reported, "When he returns, he will verify that I have properly chosen a vice-captain."

Adair was momentarily stumped. "You still haven't chosen a vice-captain?"

When he heard this, Elaro was a bit ashamed. Even more than that, he didn't want to turn his head to see what kind of expressions Dili and Rhonelin had. The two of them were probably still maintaining their usual smile and indifference. Although they were very different, their ability at staying unperturbed was equally good.

Adair patted Elaro's shoulder. "Since Captain has given a command already, then you only have a week left. Seize the moment! If you need anything from me, don't hesitate to ask."

Even though there was quite a big gap in their ages, their relationship was like that of friends. They had once collaborated together to deceive Captain/Teacher in the Demon King's Castle. Afterwards, they had received ruthless revenge together from Grisia, whose ability to hold a grudge far transcended a normal person's. It was inevitable that brotherly camaraderie would form from sharing these trials and tribulations together.

"Then, Big Bro Adair," Elaro was curious and asked, "How long did Teacher spend to choose you?"

When he heard this question, Adair began to think. A nostalgic expression appeared on his face. "About three—"

"Three months? I have truly been too ridiculous." Elaro was rather discouraged. Teacher had only spent three months and was able to



choose a vice-captain like Adair. Why was it that he had already spent three years and still couldn't make a decision?

"It was three minutes!" Ed burst out laughing to one side. His personality had not changed much, even after he turned forty.

"Three minutes?" Elaro's eyes widened. Even Dili and Rhonelin, who were behind him, had astonished expressions on their faces. Adair smiled wryly.

"At the time, Captain..."



"Ah! It must be the God of Light's benevolence that has brought each and every brother to Grisia's side, allowing us to become closer and even more inseparable brothers. Let us join hands to bring forth an even more beautiful future for the children of the God of Light."

Adair was so excited, he couldn't hide it. He exchanged a few glances with the holy knights next to him and discovered that they had also inadvertently raised their chests and chins high, proudly accepting that this was the Sun Knight that they were going to serve!

"Grisia." The current Sun Knight Neo smiled as he said, "Go and nurture your camaraderie with your platoon. Your teacher must visit the palace today. You don't have to come with me."

"Yes, Teacher. May sunlight accompany you the entire way."

After Neo left, only the future Sun Knight and the twenty or so future

Sun Knight Platoon members remained. Grisia still wore a smile, but the Sun Knight Platoon members were all extremely nervous, afraid that they would leave a bad impression on the future Sun Knight. Among them, Adair could be said to be the one who was able to maintain his composure the best. He was even able to sneakily observe their future captain, discovering that his bearing was much more unperturbed than everyone else's on the scene. This inevitably caused him to feel respectful toward him. Compared to the current Sun Knight Neo, this kind of bearing could be said to be much more amicable.

*He should be a captain who is easy to get along with.* Adair finally relaxed a little.

"May I ask, which among our holy knight brothers is most blessed by the God of Light when wielding a sword?"

Grisia suddenly asked them this, but because no one had been prepared, and his speech was quite punctilious, no one understood him right away.

"Excuse me, but could you repeat that, sir?" Adair asked fairly naturally. Everyone else widened their eyes, awed by his courage. Grisia didn't mind, and he repeated his question.

Adair understood now, but just in case, he still asked, "May I ask if you are inquiring which person among us is the strongest, sir?"

Grisia, the future Sun Knight, now stared fixedly at Adair with eyes that were practically as blue as the sky. This made him, who had

already relaxed, become nervous again.

However, the other person only asked, "Could I ask for this holy knight brother's name?"

"You are too courteous. I am Adair."

Grisia nodded and said, "Holy knight brother Adair, pleased to make your acquaintance. Henceforth, I must trouble you to be my vice-captain. Let us spread the God of Light's radiance and glory together." "Huh?" Adair was stunned. Even though he was quite confident about his own abilities, and had considered fighting for the position of vice-captain, he... he didn't think that he would be able to win the position within three minutes!

The other platoon members were also very astonished, especially those who had been wanting to strive for the position of vice-captain.

"Brothers, please follow me this way. Today, the sunlight is resplendent, the perfect opportunity to bathe in the radiance bestowed by the God of Light. If we continue to detain ourselves indoors, we will truly waste the God of Light's generosity."

Seeing Grisia's continual smile, Adair suddenly felt that maybe he had relaxed far too early.



"My fellow brothers, please jump off."

Grisia turned around and smiled as he gave the order to his platoon.

Adair blinked and looked at his surroundings. This was the top of a cliff. Even though the elevation wasn't all that high, they would definitely get hurt badly enough after jumping off that they wouldn't be able to crawl back up. Yet the command that they had just received was "jump off"?

He thought he had heard wrongly.

With even Adair thinking this way, the other members bore expressions that were even more stupefied. They wondered if they had already gone hard-of-hearing, despite being so young. However, when they looked around, everyone else was just as confused. It couldn't be that they had all hallucinated together, right?

Naturally, everyone looked toward Adair, as he was the only one to have spoken with Grisia up until now.

Since everyone was staring at him, Adair could only ask again, "May I ask—"

However, Grisia waved his hand and repeated himself, "My fellow holy knight brothers, please jump off the cliff immediately."

This time, none of them could convince themselves that they had hallucinated as a group, but now they were even more confused. They never thought that their first command from their future Sun Knight would be to jump off a cliff!

*Preposterous!* In response to this kind of command, Adair only had this thought, and it was also accompanied by fury. He squashed his anger,

saluted, and then said, "As a holy knight, please forgive me, but I cannot accept a suicide mission."

Grisia revealed a slightly puzzled expression. "Are our holy knight brothers so weak in constitution? I believed that this height would not hinder any brother. Under the protection of the God of Light, at most, there will only be slight injuries."

*So he knew that no one would die from this?* But even if they would only be injured, Adair still could not accept jumping off a cliff and getting injured for no reason. "Jumping off is no problem, but please tell us why!"

At this time, Grisia had already stopped smiling. He said indifferently, "There's no reason."

This answer astonished everyone even more. His words following that were even more frustrating. "Jump off. This is an order."

At that moment, Grisia only looked at Adair. Clearly, he was singling him out.

Adair had always been exalted among his peers, so he of course would have some pride and arrogance. Under the current circumstances, where no one dared to speak out, only he dared to go against Grisia. "This order is too unreasonable. Please forgive me that I cannot—"

Abruptly, Grisia waved his hand, and a humongous icicle appeared in the air, knocking Adair and sending him flying. He had been standing very close to the edge in order to check the height, so once he was

sent flying, he fell directly off the cliff. While he was falling, he thought he saw his captain reveal an impatient expression, and vaguely, he heard this:

"I told you to jump, so jump! Shut up already, you failure of a vice-captain!"



Adair leaned against the mountainside, gasping in deep breaths. Even though he had prepared himself to land, and had even rolled to lessen his injuries, he had still fallen for a long distance. He hadn't been able to prevent himself from getting hurt. His right leg was pretty much broken, and his back was killing him, not to mention all the countless small injuries he had, like the scratches that he had received.

Just as he wanted to rest for a bit, and then walk back slowly, he heard another loud noise. Unexpectedly, another holy knight had just fallen. His strength was obviously not as good as Adair's, so he had received far worse injuries than him.

Another loud noise sounded as another holy knight fell. He landed very close to the previous knight, and had almost fallen right on top of him, scaring him so much that he immediately tried to scramble to the side. However, because of his serious injuries, he couldn't crawl very fast at all. Then, more people fell down.

Seeing this, Adair paid no attention to his leg injury. He rushed forward to drag his comrades to the side of the mountain one-by-one. This worsened his injuries even more.

He was more or less done. Adair watched as the last person fell down. This time, he didn't rush forward to drag him, since no one else would be falling. Also, all those large movements had injured his leg so much that he was shaking from the pain. He dropped to the ground, unable to stand up any longer.

"AH!"

When he heard the loud scream, Adair raised his head. A large shadow had just fallen on top of that last person. Good thing that only the person's legs had been squashed. If the shadow had fallen completely on that person, Adair was afraid that he would have spat blood right then and there.

Once he got a clear look, he realized that the "large shadow" was actually Grisia. *He also fell off the cliff?*

Just as everyone was still stunned and couldn't make sense of the situation, a large amount of holy light flashed before their eyes. Grisia stood up as if he had never been hurt, and the person who had been squashed so severely by him also stood up. His movements were very smooth, not at all like someone who had fallen off a cliff and had also been so severely flattened.

*What powerful healing magic!* Adair was quite awed.

Grisia walked over, looked around, and tossed a few Moderate Heals at them. Then, he said, "Brothers, please rise and follow me."

No one's injuries were mild. This kind of healing magic was like



throwing a cup of water at a fire, but they were holy knights, who were the most durable. Those who could make it into the Sun Knight Platoon were even the best of the best. They would be able to stand up, if they really put their hearts into it.

Everyone slowly stood up one after the other, including Adair. Because he hadn't been prepared when he was knocked flying, while everyone else jumped out of their own volition, plus he also had to drag everyone afterward, Adair's injuries were the severest out of everyone's.

But when he received the command, he didn't say a word. He got up and followed Grisia. However, he didn't think that they would return to the top of the cliff.

"Please jump." The same command was given, but this time, the only recipient was Adair.

Adair was momentarily stunned. He didn't know why he was being targeted. At this time, the people by his side whispered, "All of us jumped by ourselves just now. You should hurry up and jump too. Jump, and everything's solved!"

Hearing this, Adair turned his head to look at everyone and discovered that they all wore the same accepting expression. It was evident that they had all jumped off the cliff by themselves.

This discovery swayed Adair a bit, making him feel like he was the odd one out... He clenched his teeth and replied, "No!"

After receiving this refusal, Grisia's expression didn't change. He calmly said, "My holy knight brothers, as you are members of the Sun Knight Platoon, you have already sworn to the God of Light that you would be loyal to me."

Adair angrily said, "I will be loyal to you, but I cannot accept as absurd a command as jumping off a cliff!"

Grisia knitted his eyebrows together. After he waved his hand, another icicle appeared. This time however, Adair wasn't completely unprepared. His ability wasn't low, so of course he could dodge one icicle... but dodging an entire sky of icicles was another story altogether.

Adair looked at the numerous icicles, his heart pounding. He knew he had no more room to dodge, but he still didn't want to jump off. He dodged a few more icicles; in the end, he was still knocked off the cliff. He experienced falling off the cliff once again and lay sprawled across the ground, his injuries worse than last time's. On top of the impact from landing, he had also been bruised by the icicles. Exerting himself just a bit more when breathing would cause his chest to contract in pain. This time, he had probably broken his ribs, and his leg injury from before hadn't healed yet either, so now he was hurting all over. Suddenly, there was a "thump" and warm holy light enveloped Adair, causing him to feel much better all at once. However, in the next moment, a head of golden hair entered his sight. Although resplendent without comparison, it was like a black cloud had taken over Adair's mood.

"My holy knight brother, please stand up and return to the top of the

cliff.” The same demand came. The matter wasn’t over yet.

Adair stood up again. Although his injuries weren’t light, he had landed with a proper stance, and his body was well trained from years of practice. Even though he had fallen twice, he hadn’t received any critical injuries. Moreover, there were also the healing spells, and he was also a stubborn person, so when he heard Grisia’s words, he didn’t speak a single word before standing up. He followed behind Grisia and returned to the top of the cliff.

Then, he fell again, climbed up once more, fell again...

Although healing spells were cast each time, they were not enough to completely heal the injuries. After continuous accumulation, they were getting worse and worse.

He could no longer tell how many times he had fallen. Every time he was knocked down, his inner resentment toward Grisia grew even more.

As he lay on the floor, he heard a “thump,” letting him know that the other person had also followed him down. He would once again receive the command of standing up and climbing back up. He prepared himself, clamping his teeth together in preparation of climbing back up. However, this time the command was slow to come. Adair could not help but turn his head to sneak a glance.

Grisia knelt on the ground, his entire face beading with sweat, his expression downright ugly.

Adair suddenly realized that the other person had always been jumping down with him, and then he had kept casting healing spells to heal two people. *Just how many times has he cast Heal?*

Grisia reached his hand out to wipe away the sweat. When he stood up, he was already wearing a smile on his face, and Adair quickly retracted his gaze. Following that, he heard the expected, "My holy knight brother, please stand up."

Adair silently stood up, once again returning with Grisia to the top of the cliff. The other people had not left. They had stood there the entire time. Although they were just standing there, their expressions were actually not much better than Grisia's or Adair's.

Watching two people jump off the cliff from morning until night, and the people at war their own captain and vice-captain at that, really made all of them feel that they were about to have a nervous breakdown.

"Please jump."

This time, before Grisia made a move, Adair finally had a different reaction. He asked in bewilderment, "Why must I obey as absurd an order as jumping off a cliff?"

He had thought it through. Each time he fell, Grisia also jumped with him, and he had even had to cast healing spells. Therefore, Grisia was actually receiving even more damage than Adair was! At first, he had thought that since Grisia was the future Sun Knight, he did not mind the toil, but from what he had just seen, that was evidently not the

case.

Grisia looked at him, trying his hardest to conceal his exhaustion, but his appearance still betrayed him. "How do you know this is an absurd order?"

When he heard this, Adair's fury rose again. "How could telling us to jump off a cliff be a normal order?"

Grisia fell silent for a moment. He turned to face the front and quietly said, "If you're not even willing to jump off a cliff that you won't die from, then in the future, for the sake of the greater good, if I commanded you to take the other platoon members, or even the entire holy knight army, to carry out a suicide mission, would you be willing to do it?"

Adair froze.

"I am soon to become the Sun Knight, and you all are soon to become my Sun Knight Platoon. I do not want to curse myself or you, but for the sake of the Church of the God of Light, it is not impossible that sacrifices might have to be made.

"When it comes time to give such a command, I might not be able to privately tell you the detailed contents of the mission. I might have to tell you in front of all the other platoon members, or even the entire Church of the God of Light. But there could be times, like now, where I can only give 'a completely absurd order.'"

Grisia paused for a moment and directly stared at Adair, saying, "What

I need is a vice-captain who is willing to carry out all orders, no matter how absurd they are.”

After he finished speaking, he stood straight, returning to his original stance and his original volume. He sighed regretfully, “Perhaps Adair is indeed not suitable for being my vice-captain. I will choose someone else.”

Grisia turned, originally intending to leave. He had truly spent too much energy and almost couldn’t stand anymore. However, at this time, he suddenly heard the others shout Adair’s name in surprise. When he turned his head, he was just in time to see Adair’s figure vanish off the cliff’s side.

*Heh!*

“You pass.”



“I suppose that was what happened.” Adair smilingly finished telling his story, and he also understood why his captain wanted him to help Elaro. He most likely wanted him to tell this story.

The three of them, Elaro, Dili, and Rhonelin, finished listening to the story in a stupor. Elaro understood his teacher’s true personality very well, but the other two did not have such an understanding of him. They practically couldn’t connect this story with the Sun Knight they knew. Would the most perfect Sun Knight in history actually command someone he had just met to jump off a cliff?

Even though the result was quite profound, the course of events was simply unimaginable to a normal person.

Seeing their expressions, Adair couldn't help but feel that telling this story had probably been a waste of time. No matter what, a second Sun Knight who would use 'jumping off a cliff' as a test would probably not appear again for a long time. These past events would not help Elaro much.

"Elaro, you should just follow your own way of doing things."

Elaro currently had his head lowered as he pondered. Only when he heard Adair's words did he look up, smiling as he said, "I understand what Teacher means now."

"Oh?" Adair was quite interested as he asked, "So what does Captain mean?"

He did not expect Elaro to stare right at him and say, "I think Teacher means that if the most defiant one in the past could become the most obedient one now, then there's no reason for me to hesitate. I should just make my own choice."

Adair began smiling wryly.

Elaro turned to face his two vice-captain candidates. He no longer had any hesitation on his face, only gentleness and resolve. And while his expression may have been gentle, his manner was incomparably determined.



"I have made my decision. My vice-captain will be Dili."

Rhonelin's heart plummeted, but he tried his hardest to control his expression. He didn't want his captain to feel guilty from seeing disappointment on his face. Elaro was that kind of person. He didn't want to treat anyone around him unfairly, and thus had not been able to make a decision for the longest time.

"And Rhonelin."

Rhonelin raised his head to look at his captain.

Astonished, Adair said, "Two? That's against the rules."

Elaro's expression was rather relaxed, as if he had let go of several burdens. He smiled as he said, "Does the entire continent know that the Sun Knight can only have one vice-captain?"

Adair blinked, but then smiled as well. "They don't seem to know. It's just one of the usual practices of the Holy Temple."

"Teacher always says, 'Other than matters that the whole continent knows, you can do as you please with everything else. I'm about to retire anyway.'"

Dili and Rhonelin were both stunned. *The current Sun Knight would actually say something like that?*

According to what they knew, the Sun Knight was mature, graceful, and earnest. Even though his manner was very gentle, and you could

always receive his forgiveness as long as you repented, he was still the Sun Knight, so the populace would not dare to be too casual with him.

Adair saw their expressions and smiled faintly. He turned his head and said, "Elaro, since you've already chosen your vice-captains, there are some matters that you should let them know. On one hand, it will help lessen your workload, and on the other, this way they won't be caught unprepared when they become the official vice-captains of the Sun Knight in the future."

"Okay!" Elaro looked at his two vice-captains, growing more and more satisfied as he looked at them. He smiled as brilliantly as the sun.  
"Finally, I don't have to be secretive and can let you know everything!"

Seeing their captain's bright smile, Dili and Rhonelin suddenly had the feeling that they might not really want to know that so-called "everything."

## *Chapter #1: In Training, Part 2-Judgment Knight*

"Dili, take the work documents back for me first, and sort them out. If it's something simple and indisputable, you can correct it yourself and stamp our seal on it, without showing it to me."

"Alright." Dili heaved a sigh of relief.

In the past, even if he corrected all the documents, Elaro would go through them again. Therefore, every time the Twelve Holy Knights left on a mission together, the work documents would pile up like a mountain, and Elaro would have to work late into the night before he could sleep. The next day, he would still wake up at the "sight of dawn." It was impossible for him to get more than a little bit of sleep.

"Rhonelin, lead the other platoon members and begin practice. Make sure that they become proficient at the sword skills they learned last time. I will test them next week. If anyone fails..." Elaro frowned, but could not think of any punishment. He only said, "Everyone must pass."

"Yes, sir," replied Rhonelin, nodding. He did not worry about failing to complete his mission. Elaro had always required his platoon members' swordsmanship to be of a very high caliber, so they were all quite skilled. It was a natural fact that everyone would complete this mission. Having given them their assignments, Elaro watched the two men leave with quick, but unhurried, footsteps. They even exchanged several words, which showed how much their relationship had improved as compared to before. Elaro nodded, feeling very happy with his final decision.

Next, he decided to go check on the other knights-in-training, especially Shuis, whose workload was no lighter than his—the Storm Knight had always been his teacher’s best assistant. After that, he would have to return and correct work documents together with Dili.

When he finalized his plans, Elaro turned around. He was going to check on his remaining companions, starting from the farthest one away. If memory served him right, Judge should be in the storehouse, taking stock of the donations from the branch churches...

“Knight-in-training Elaro.”

Elaro stopped walking when a holy knight, who was almost forty years of age, called out to him. He was a member of the Judgment Knight Platoon.

“Yes, sir.” Smiling, Elaro greeted, “Good morning, Sir Senior Holy Knight.”

Seeing Elaro’s calm smile, the holy knight relaxed and, with an apologetic expression, said, “Sorry to bother you once more, but Hungri has gone out of control again.”

Elaro frowned. He asked, “Is it very serious? Where is Vice-Captain Vidar?”

“The criminal is near death’s door... The vice-captain left to patrol the nearby areas in the city with the platoon. It is our platoon’s turn this month. Only another knight and I were left behind to guard the

Judge's Complex. He's currently trying to persuade Hungri to stop, while I came to contact you."

*Since the problem is this severe, why doesn't this guy look the least bit flustered?* This discovery did not make Elaro feel relieved, instead, he became even more worried and immediately said, "I see, then we should make our way there quickly!"

Elaro's footsteps were fast and hurried. He was so tall that one of his steps was the equivalent of one and a half steps of other people's. Therefore, it did not take him long to reach the Judge's Complex. Logically speaking, he was only a knight-in-training. Before he entered the Judge's Complex, he should first give his reasons to the two holy knights stationed at the door, who would then report to a higher-up. Only when he had received permission was he allowed to enter the complex.

However, throughout Elaro's more than ten years as a knight-in-training, the rules of a knight-in-training had never been applied to him.

He hastily entered the Judge's Complex, not even sparing the time for a greeting. The two holy knights to his left and right only sighed in relief, with no intention whatsoever of stopping him.

*How can this be called persuasion...?* Elaro helplessly looked at the Judgment Knight Platoon member who was supposedly "persuading" Hungri. If occasionally saying "Don't hit the vitals," could be considered persuading, then he was indeed "persuading" him.

With his back turned to Elaro was a person whipping a criminal with a metal chain and shouting, "You damn bastard! If I don't beat you so badly, that even your own mother doesn't recognize you after this, I will change my name to Reallifull!"

"Hungri," said Elaro, who was alarmed and horrified at the scene before him. The criminal tied to the punishment rack was covered in blood, and the screams that he made were as weak as a kitten's. It was clear that he did not even have the energy to scream in pain anymore.

The person holding the metal chain turned around. His face was as sinister as a devil's, and his imposing aura was shocking. Only when he saw Elaro did he relax his fearsome expression. Following that, he instantly turned into a sixteen or seventeen year old teenager. Although he was glaring fiercely at Elaro, his large eyes, oval face, and soft, peach-colored lips made him look like a little girl throwing a tantrum...*Cough! I meant, little boy!*

Elaro looked at him with a disappointed expression.

Seeing this, Hungri felt a pang of guilt. He understood that he had lost control, and that, if his teacher had been here, he would definitely have been scolded harshly... No, if his teacher had been here, there would have been no chance of him losing control at all. His teacher would definitely not have allowed such a thing to happen, and he would not have dared to go berserk in front of his teacher either.

Although he understood this, when he saw Elaro's disappointed expression, he could not help but yell angrily, "Do you know what he

has done? Do you know just what terrible crime this f\*\*king a\*\*hole has committed?"

"No, I don't." Elaro said, calmly. "I only saw you doing something you shouldn't be doing."

Hungri was taken aback. Although he knew that he was in the wrong for losing control, he wasn't planning on admitting it. "Judging criminals has always been the Judgment Knight's responsibility!"

"But have you ever seen Knight-Captain Judgment lose control? Although he looks frightening when interrogating criminals, the moment he turns around, Knight-Captain Judgment will regain his cool. He shows his rage only to make criminals confess the truth, not because he has lost control of his emotions. This is what you told me yourself. Am I wrong?"

Hungri fell silent for a moment. He neither admitted his wrongdoing nor continued arguing. Instead, he described the criminal's felony.

"This criminal tortured and murdered at least three women. He then used his position as a grave-keeper to secretly bury the bodies in freshly dug graves, only covering them with a thin layer of soil. After that, the women's corpses were horribly crushed under the coffins buried above them! All the evidence points to him, and he even confessed to his crime."

After saying this, Hungri glared at the criminal viciously.

"If he has already confessed, why are you still hitting him?" Elaro



hoped that Hungri wasn't thinking of personally punishing the criminal.

"I suspect that two more missing women were also done in by him. However, he wouldn't loosen his tongue, and insists that those two had nothing to do with him."

Hungri did not wait for Elaro to continue probing. He knew exactly what kind of questions Elaro would ask, so he took the initiative to explain, "The timing of the two women's disappearances is the same as when these other crimes were committed. Furthermore, there are many things in common between them and the three women this man murdered. In general, criminals who torture their victims also tend to choose their prey selectively, so we can find many similarities among the victims."

When he had heard all of this, Elaro nodded. He was glad to hear that Hungri was not beating the criminal on a whim.

"There's no longer a problem, right?" When he saw Elaro's face, Hungri knew that he had won. "Then, I will continue carrying out the Judgment Knight's responsibility."

Elaro turned to look at the criminal's injuries. He said, "His wounds are too severe. You cannot continue hitting him. If you beat him to death, those two women's whereabouts will forever remain a mystery."

Upon hearing this, Hungri hesitated. Elaro was indeed correct. Also, if the criminal really were to die, Teacher would probably hang him up on the punishment rack and beat him half to death. However, this criminal was just so loathsome, that Hungri was a little unwilling to let

up. As he hesitated, wondering what to do next, Hungri looked at Elaro and suddenly had an idea.

"Since you're here, why don't you use your healing magic on him? Then, I can start beating...I mean, interrogating him all over again." Hungri quickly corrected himself. He knew that Elaro was most concerned that he couldn't differentiate work from personal affairs. To sum it up, Elaro was very similar to Hungri's teacher, so much so that sometimes Hungri wondered whether the Judgment Knight's student was himself or Elaro.

When the criminal on the punishment rack heard that the interrogation would continue, before Elaro could respond, he quickly yelled, "I'm not guilty! It's those women's fault for seducing me..."

Hungri's expression turned grave and his whip lashed out so quickly that Elaro had no time to stop him. The whip landed on the criminal's face and tore out half of his lip so that he could not speak further, and could only make "ooh ooh" groaning sounds.

Angry, Elaro said, "Hungri!"

"Is this kind of person worth forgiving?" Hungri hmphed coldly. "You have no idea what terrible state those women's corpses were in! If you saw them, then you definitely wouldn't want to stop me!"

When he finished talking, he looked at the other knights present. Although he didn't say anything, his intent was clear. He wanted anyone who didn't agree with him to step forward and say so.

Elaro also looked toward the others. Most of the knights standing off to the side belonged to Hungri's platoon. Only two were members of the current Judgment Knight's Platoon. But even they were silent and did not openly disagree with Hungri. In particular, the platoon member who was supposed to be "persuading" Hungri looked dissatisfied—dissatisfied with Elaro.

The current situation pleased Hungri, who looked at Elaro with an air of defiance.

Elaro only said calmly, "That's enough for today. If something bad really were to happen to the criminal, I'm afraid that Knight-Captain Judgment would be furious."

The moment the name "Knight-Captain Judgment" was mentioned, everyone fell silent. Elaro couldn't help but praise the Judgment Knight's authority. *Just how much longer will it take for me to reach this level?*

"Hmph!" Hungri hurled his whip aside and yelled angrily, "That's all for today's interrogation. 'Throw' him back in his cell for me!"

When he heard this, Elaro wanted to say something to stop Hungri. He knew very well that Hungri's "throw him back" definitely did not mean "send him back," but literally "throwing" him back. In addition, when he saw the looks on the surrounding holy knights, he realized that they would probably be very happy to "throw" with a little more force than necessary. However, they were already unhappy with him, so Elaro was worried that he would not be able to persuade them not to do so.

He hesitated for a moment, but couldn't relax in the end. Thus, he kept an eye on the holy knights as they brought the criminal back to prison. Only then did Elaro prepare to leave the Judge's Complex and continue with his own work.

Before he left, Hungri had already started interrogating a second criminal. This criminal had probably not committed a serious crime, as he was interrogated normally instead of being tied to the punishment rack. Seeing this made Elaro feel a lot more relieved.

Usually, Hungri was very serious about his work. It was just that he often became *too* serious, as he was too passionate when interrogating criminals. This gave the Judgment Knight a huge headache, so every time he had to leave for a mission, he would specifically instruct the platoon members to watch Hungri, and to find Elaro immediately if they couldn't stop him.

No Judgment Knight Platoon member dared to disobey the Judgment Knight's orders, but they could choose to act quickly or slowly. Whenever an unusual case was involved, for example a molester or child abuser, the Judgment Knight Platoon members would be especially reluctant to obey orders. As a result, they would drag their heavy feet and dilly-dally so that they moved forward at a snail's pace. Before he left, Elaro looked at Hungri for a moment and couldn't resist nagging, "Don't go overboard again." However, the other party only rolled his eyes at him. Feeling a little helpless, Elaro left.

Indeed, he still couldn't do anything. If he hadn't used the Judgment Knight's name, he probably wouldn't have been able to stop them just

now.

Elaro felt extremely discouraged. He was already twenty-three years old, but he still couldn't successfully convince others to follow him. At his age, his teacher was already a fully-fledged Sun Knight. The difference was just too great...

"Big Bro Elaro."

Elaro raised his head and saw Shuis walking toward him with his head of striking blue hair. A few female clerics just happened to be passing by, so as the Storm Knight-in-training, Shuis had no choice but to look in their direction. However, the look that he shot at them couldn't be called a wink. Instead, it was more like a fierce glare. Still, the female clerics were not scared of him at all, and were even whispering things like, "Hee hee, he's so cool."

Seeing this situation, Elaro heaved a sigh of relief. With Shuis's icy personality, for him to wink flirtatiously at a woman... He simply didn't understand what "flirtatious" meant. However, with the perfect looks inherited from his father, it didn't matter what kind of expression he gave them. Even if he threw a knife at them, there would still be women waiting at the receiving end!

Since that was so, did it matter even if he didn't know how to wink flirtatiously? This was actually how Elaro had previously defended Shuis. At the time, he had even painstakingly asked his teacher for help.

*"Don't ask me to correct any work documents for a year!" His teacher*

*gave him his condition.*

*"Teacher, it's wrong for you to do that. Those work documents are your responsibility. You have already given so much of it to Big Bro Adair and the Storm Knight..."*

*"Speaking of Storm, I remember that he did choose a backup knight."*

*"...Half a year."*

*"Eight months. I can't go any lower than that... Okay, seven months! Stop looking at me with those super disappointed eyes!"*

For those seven months, Elaro was so busy, there were several times when he even fell asleep while applying his facial mask. Then, when he woke up, he realized that it had hardened and he had turned into a stone statue—dried facial masks were so hard to clean.

But Teacher's methods were really very effective. He found Shuis a rival and brought along a bunch of female clerics. The rival would wink flirtatiously at the clerics, and Shuis would give them whatever look he felt like giving. As it turned out, even if Shuis were to throw a knife, it was far more effective than a normal person's wink. Therefore, Shuis safely passed the test in the end.

*But that rival Teacher found was really... Elaro recalled that man with a crooked face and slanted lips who still dared to flirt with the female clerics. I wonder where Teacher found such a person.*

At this moment, Shuis walked up to Elaro and stopped in front of him.

He was only fifteen this year, and because of his youth, he couldn't be said to be handsome yet. But he definitely had lovely features that had no comparison. They could be attributed to his handsome father, Awaitsun, and his beautiful mother, Alice.

As he looked at Shuis's face, Elaro suddenly felt worried. If Shuis became more and more handsome, in less than three years, besides "stopping Hungri from killing criminals," his job would additionally include "stopping Shuis from kicking to death annoying women who wouldn't let go of him."

"Big Bro Elaro?" Shuis stared back at Elaro, puzzled. He couldn't understand why Elaro would frown as he looked at him.

Elaro quietly tossed his baseless speculations aside and smiled, saying, "What's wrong? Do you need my help for something?"

Shuis shook his head. With a faint smile, he said, "I saw you here, and came to greet you." He glanced behind Elaro, and with a dissatisfied expression, asked, "Did you just go to the Judge's Complex? What did Hungri do this time?"

It was not surprising that Shuis had guessed correctly. This road led to the Judge's Complex, the prisons, and one of the knights' dormitories. The place that Elaro usually went was the Judge's Complex, and the situation of him being notified to go and stop Hungri had already been happening for a few years now.

Elaro remembered the first time their teachers had left for their biannual mission after Hungri had started practical training in the



Judge's Complex. That was also the first time he had rushed into the Judge's Complex and prevented Hungri from killing one of the criminals. When the Judgment Knight had returned and found out, he was so angry that he had confined Hungri for three whole months and entreated Elaro to watch Hungri properly.

"Hungri, he..." Elaro said hesitantly, "Maybe I'm the one at fault."  
Shuis was stunned for a moment. He then quickly declared, "That's impossible! Big Bro Elaro is always right."

"But the members of the Judgment Knight Platoon seem to agree with Hungri. If it's like this—"

"Then, they are all in the wrong!" Shuis did not falter at all.

Elaro could not help but smile wryly. As usual, Shuis supported him unconditionally. Although this made him feel extremely touched, he was still rather worried. What if he had really erred? He did not think that he was in the wrong, but then, why was everyone on Hungri's side?

Shuis said coldly, "Hungri can't distinguish between work and personal interests. He's bad tempered and does not act like the Judgment Knight in any way. There's no way he can be right!"

This statement gave Elaro even more of a headache. The fact that Shuis hated Hungri wasn't a big secret. Actually, it wasn't just Shuis, all the knights-in-training under Elaro were not too friendly with the ones under Hungri. Similarly, the knights-in-training under Hungri scoffed at those on Elaro's side. Elaro had always wanted to change

the situation.

Even though the whole continent knows that the Sun Knight and the Judgment Knight hate each other, Elaro was very clear about the relationship among the teachers. On the contrary, it was the knights-in-training who matched the legend more closely.

Being similar to “the whole continent knows...” Did this mean that he was wrong?

Elaro forced a smile again. He would rather deviate from the legend if it would let his Twelve Holy Knights be as united as his teacher’s Twelve Holy Knights.

Suddenly, Shuis froze. Finding it strange, Elaro asked, “Did something happen?”

“Valica is here.” Shuis pointed at somewhere far away a little unwillingly.

*I see.* Elaro sighed inwardly.

It wasn’t only the knights-in-training under the Sun Knight and the Judgment Knight who did not get along. Actually, Shuis—the Storm Knight-in-training—and Valica—the Leaf Knight-in-training—also had a terrible relationship. This was one of Elaro’s headache-inducing problems. He just couldn’t understand why these two looked as if they had seen their worst enemy whenever they met. After all, no serious conflict had ever occurred between them—at least, Elaro couldn’t find out anything by asking the other knights-in-training.

Although Shuis's personality was rather cold, he did not often arouse hatred from others. Valica, on the other hand, was always smiling whenever he met someone, and was very popular. Still, somehow, those two hated each other with a passion.

Valica smiled and said, "Good morning, Big Bro Elaro."

"Good morning," replied Elaro, nodding in response.

Valica turned toward Shuis and courteously greeted him, "Morning." However, Shuis only hmped coldly, with no intention of responding.

"Shuis!" Elaro's face fell.

Startled, Shuis quickly said, "Morning." After that, he observed Elaro carefully and realized that the latter's brows were still furrowed. He unconsciously lowered his head, a dejected expression on his face. Seeing this, Valica grinned in satisfaction, with a hint of haughtiness. Elaro noted this, but he did not know how to correct Valica. After all, Valica had not done anything wrong. On the contrary, he had followed Elaro's suggestion and greeted Shuis properly when he met him, instead of ignoring him or coldly glaring at him.

*Just how can I improve their relationship?* Elaro thought hard about it, but could not come up with a surefire method. He could only come up with the idea of letting them spend time together, in the hopes that they would get to know each other better.

In his opinion, both Shuis and Valica were good kids. Shuis's

personality was a little cold, but he would not start a fight with others, and Valica had really good relationships with other people. There must have been some kind of misunderstanding that prevented them from getting along.

"You two, go find Judge and help him check the inventory for the donations together," said Elaro, placing a lot of emphasis on the word "together."

The two's expressions froze. It was rare for them not to say yes immediately. But, as the disappointment on Elaro's face continued to grow, Valica was the first to respond with, "Okay." Shuis shot a glare at Valica, but when he noticed Elaro's disappointed face, he was unable to disagree and could only nod in assent.

### *Chapter #1: In Training, Part 3- Sun Knight*

Donation money had just come in the previous day. Judge was currently hard pressed for time. The “donation money” turned in by the branch churches was not just cash: the majority was food, products from various regions, precious stones and jewelry, and weapons and equipment. They had to sort them as quickly as possible, prioritizing dealing with all the perishables, and then taking some to sell, while storing some as provisions. Since the prices of each region differed, they had to refund money or ask for a surcharge in case of any price discrepancies after the sale...

This year especially, the villages had had great harvests, so the items sent over by several branch churches were all food supplies and products. If they didn’t quickly finish processing these things, handing them over to cooperating merchants, they would rot, and that would be terrible.

This job was not actually difficult, just very time-consuming. In the previous generation, this was the responsibility of the Stone Knight and the Leaf Knight. In this generation, Elaro had given the responsibility to Judge and Valkyrs, the Earth and Metal Knights-in-training.

Valkyrs led several platoon members in delivering the checked off goods to the marketplace, while Judge stayed behind to continue making an inventory. Although the other person had only taken ten people, leaving more than thirty people behind, they were still scrambling all over the place.

“Captain, piiiiiiig!!”

“...”

Judge was a little speechless, but he had already heard the pigs’ cries, so he didn’t seriously think that his platoon member was cursing him. He reflexively cast the Shield of Earth, but then he thought that it wasn’t quite right, so he hurriedly dispelled the shield and dodged to avoid collision. A drove of pigs brushed by his calves, rampaging through the open spaces of the Holy Temple. Several sorry-looking holy knights chased after them.

He breathed a sigh of relief, glad he had dispelled the shield in time. If those pigs had collided straight into it, breaking their necks, it would have been terrible. The prices between a live pig and a dead pig were very different. He would probably have had to take care of the discrepancy himself.

“Cows, sheep, and pigs have all arrived! It wouldn’t be strange if we get a fish tank next!” A holy knight said in frustration, “The items sent by the branch churches have been getting more and more outrageous, especially the livestock. Sending over horses would have been easier to deal with.”

Judge shook his head and said, “W-we are knights. The branch churches lack horses the most. It’s im-impossible that they would send us horses.”

“Captain is right.”

The person who had spoken was a member of Judge's platoon. Actually, most of the current knights-in-training were only fifteen, and normally they did not need to choose their platoon members so early. Usually, they would choose them around the age of seventeen or eighteen. However, the circumstances of their generation were quite unique. Most of them had started their training between the ages of seven and nine. Now that almost eight years had already passed, most of the current Twelve Holy Knights were slowly handing their jobs over to the next generation.

Judge did not belong to the "slowly handing over" side. His teacher had long since finished handing over all the responsibilities to him. The Earth Knight really didn't like working much, but this was not his fault. After all, on one hand the current Twelve Holy Knights were already at the age to retire by normal standards. On the other hand, they were also the ones who had chosen such young children to succeed them.

In response, the Sun Knight often had a smile on his face while he looked at Elaro in front of everyone, regretfully saying, "In the blink of an eye, the child is already over twenty and can assume full responsibility, under the God of Light's care. Yet the affairs of the world like to hinder us to no avail, for his teacher finds that, although he already has many years to his name, his hands still hold the Divine Sun Sword, unable to pass on the benevolence of the God of Light..."

At first, few could understand what the Sun Knight wanted to convey, but after hearing it more than a hundred times, it wasn't possible not to come to some sort of understanding—the Sun Knight wanted to retire. Elaro was already of the age to take over, but unfortunately, the children chosen by the other Twelve Holy Knights were all too

young. When Elaro had been twenty, the others had only been thirteen and fourteen, so of course they could not succeed their teachers back then.

The situation dragged on, and now Elaro was already twenty-three, yet no one knew when he would officially take over. After all, some of them were only fifteen and couldn't possibly become one of the Twelve Holy Knights yet.

Regarding this matter, Judge didn't care either way. In any case, he had already started doing the duties of the Earth Knight since a long time ago. There was no difference whether he officially took over the position or not. At most, he would just receive the Earth Knight's weapon and room.

Judge saw around thirty people approaching from a distance. Elaro was likely the one who had sent these people over. The day before, Judge had asked him to send help. He had originally thought that since everyone was super busy right now, Elaro would at most send just one group of people, but this number meant it was likely that two groups had come. Judge was very happy... Wait, these two people were—Valica and Shuis.

His face immediately fell.

The two of them walked up to Judge. At the same time, the holy knights on each side—it didn't matter if they had originally been there or if they were the ones who had followed the two over—all fell silent. Valica smiled and said, "Judge, Big Bro Elaro told me to come help you."



The moment Judge heard that, he knew that nothing good could happen. *Told "me" to come help you? Then, where does that leave Shuis, who is behind him?*

"Big Bro Elaro is not your brother!" As expected, Shuis immediately grew angry.

Valica snorted and looked askance at Shuis. "He's not my brother, but does that mean he's yours? Big Bro Elaro is an orphan just like me. He only has a younger sister."

Shuis stated as if it was indisputable, "It goes without saying that Elaro is my big bro. Ever since before I was selected, I've been calling him big bro. You're the one who butted in halfway and started endlessly calling him 'Big Bro Elaro, Big Bro Elaro'!"

Elaro and Shuis had known each other longer than Valica had. This was a gap Valica could never fill, and it was also his most vulnerable weakness. So the moment he heard Shuis mention it, he also grew angry. "You have both of your parents and a bunch of brothers and sisters. I'm an orphan with nothing. I finally have a brother, yet you want to steal him away?"

"You're the one who is stealing my big bro!"

"S-stop fighting..." Judge intervened somewhat weakly. He looked left and right and scratched his head, unable to do anything about the fight. The conflict between Shuis and Valica was one known by all of the Twelve Holy Knights-in-training—except Elaro.

Elaro often inquired after them with great concern, wondering why Shuis and Valica hated each other so much. No one wanted to tell him the truth: "It's all because of you."

Even though they didn't all call him, "Big Bro Elaro," the truth was, because of their age gap, Elaro was like everyone's older brother. The eleven of them were all his younger brothers. He guided them, he loved them dearly, and they respected him deeply.

It was just that among younger brothers, there were those who liked to stick to their older brother, and there were those who didn't like to do so. There were those who grew easily envious, and there were those who didn't. Among them, the ones who liked to stick to their older brother the most, and who also grew envious the easiest, were Shuis and Valica. It went without saying that the two of them would argue endlessly.

When Judge saw them argue, to the point that one of them grabbed the bow from his back and the other stomped the ground hard with one foot, he couldn't help but sigh heavily. He resented Elaro a bit for sending these two over to him at the same time. Sending them over separately would have been no problem, as both of them were very competent and could help him a lot, but sending them over together would only result in a row.

He stood between the two of them and said, "I-it's fine if you argue! But don't use violence. If you get h-hurt, Elaro will be super angry." Once they heard Elaro's name, both of them hesitated. Valica took the lead and put away his bow, unenthusiastically saying, "Fine. For Big

Bro Elaro's sake—"

"You're not allowed to call him Big Bro Elaro!"

As he yelled angrily, Shuis gave a kick toward Valica, who twirled the short bow on his back and conveniently used it to block Shuis's foot. Valica snorted coldly and said, "Even your sneak attack failed. I really don't know how you passed Elaro's inspection. Did you act like a spoiled child in front of big bro?"

Huge flames ignited in Shuis's eyes when he heard those words, which were a bit excessive. Even the platoon members behind Shuis frowned, growing somewhat angry.

Seeing this situation, Valica fell silent. Inwardly, he was feeling a little remorseful for speaking so offensively. As a matter of fact, no one knew Shuis's strength better than he did.

Ever since they were young, in order to please Big Bro Elaro, who had excellent swordsmanship, they had always striven to practice hard. Later on, when they developed animosity toward each other, they were deeply afraid that the other person would receive a crumb of praise more from Elaro, so they practiced even harder. In the present, their strengths could be said to be at the top of the Twelve Holy Knights-in-training. Of course, not including Elaro.

However, for Valica to lower his head and apologize was an impossible task. He could apologize to anyone and everyone, as long as he was in the wrong, but Shuis was the only exception.

Shuis was so angry that he grew calm instead. “Why don’t you come and test out how I passed?”

When he heard this, Valica immediately nocked an arrow. He knew how fast Shuis was. Even though he did not have the Wings of God spell cast on him, the Storm Knight’s speed was just as his title hinted at—never to be underestimated. Without advance preparation, Valica was sure he would be at a disadvantage from the start.

With a tap of his foot, Shuis rushed straight toward Valica in a flash, a twist launching into a roundhouse kick. Although the Leaf Knight’s speed was not as quick as the Storm Knight’s, when speaking of agility, he was definitely not in any way inferior. With a quick turn of his foot, he easily dodged the roundhouse kick.

However, the kicking skills of the Storm Knight had always involved consecutive attacks. An upwards kick closely followed the roundhouse kick, and then became a heel kick... The kicks rained down in quick succession, like a raging storm, not allowing his opponent time to catch his breath.

Valica used the smallest steps possible to dodge his opponent’s continuous attacks. If the attacks were not strong, he would directly use his bow to block them, or he parried it. As he dodged, he backed up at the same time. He was not losing or retreating; rather, it was more advantageous for an archer to be at a distance.

However, even in close combat, the Leaf Knight’s skills had always been among the quickest and most agile within the Twelve Holy Knights. Faced with an attack akin to a raging storm, he was still able

to find an opportunity to shoot out two arrows. One of the arrows left a streak of blood on Shuis's right arm, but Valica also suffered the price of a kick to the left cheek for it.

Once the holy knights to each side saw their captains getting hurt, their fighting spirit also rose, and both sides began mutually hooting encouragement. Even their hands found their weapons. They were waiting for the most impulsive person to draw his weapon first. Immediately after that, a huge scuffle would certainly break out.

Seeing the situation, Judge sighed and muttered, "Elaro, I've decided to hate you."

Resigned, he walked forward and told the thirty or so people the two of them had brought, "Don't interfere. G-go over there and help with the inventory."

No one moved. The two sides continued to stare fixedly at each other. They were mostly all older than Judge, and they weren't his platoon members either, so Judge's orders weren't very effective. All he could accomplish was prevent them from fighting for the time being, but if he were to turn his head and leave, he was afraid that the two platoons would immediately start a brawl.

Judge couldn't do much about the situation. He could only stand between the two sides, using himself as a wall to separate them. Then, he stared fixedly at Shuis and Valica, who were in the middle of fighting, ready to cast the Shield of Earth to prevent the two of them from overdoing it in the fight and receiving severe injuries.

Unable to join the fight, the two platoons instead called out, “Go Captain,” to support Valica and Shuis. The current scene had turned into a scene of two extremes—one side was calmly making an inventory of the goods, chasing after pigs, and herding sheep, while the other side was lifting up weapons and shouting, “Go Captain!”

With their platoon members fanning the flames, sure enough, Valica and Shuis fought even more explosively. Several times, Valica’s arrow pointed directly at Shuis’s chest, and Shuis also repeatedly kicked toward Valica’s head. Luckily, both of them were very strong and did not let the other person’s attack succeed, or else the attacks would have most definitely brought about severe injuries.

It was instead Judge who was watching the entire battle in alarm. He nearly tossed out the Shield of Earth more than once, but luckily, he stopped himself in time. Otherwise, if Shuis ended up kicking the Shield of Earth with his full strength, the resulting leg injury would probably be severe. It was the same for Valica. If his arrow had hit the Shield of Earth and resulted in the arrow shattering, the splinters would have flown in all directions.

Judge had already learned his lesson. There was one time when he had cast the Shield of Earth and Shuis ended up with a fractured right leg, while Valica ended up with splinters from the exploded arrow pierced into his body. It alarmed Judge so much that he kept apologizing after the incident even though neither of them blamed him. Once Elaro learned of the matter, he even tossed both injured parties into the confinement chamber, and didn’t bother looking into Judge’s involvement.

However, Judge didn't ever want to see that kind of scene again, so he no longer dared to casually cast the Shield of Earth to stop them. Still, this also made it so that their chances of receiving heavy injuries increased greatly.

This didn't work. That didn't work. The only thing Judge could do was pay even closer attention to their conditions, hoping that he could find a better time to cast the Shield of Earth—perhaps the reason why his Shield of Earth always received full marks during inspections was actually thanks to these two people.

He was concentrating so hard that when a hand suddenly rested upon his right shoulder, Judge jumped in shock. But after he turned his head to look, he meekly retreated and continued taking stock of the goods. He no longer paid any attention to the two people who were fighting.

Valica was the first to notice something was off, because the platoon members shouting by the sides had suddenly fallen silent. He twisted his body, dodging a sweeping kick from Shuis, and in the midst of turning, he glimpsed a streak of brilliant gold, stunning him. Thus, he did not manage to dodge Shuis's next attack, and his left shoulder received a heavy kick.

Once he landed his kick, Shuis also discovered something was off. He and Valica had fought for many, many years. He knew the other person's strength very well. This kick of his just now shouldn't have landed, and once it did, not only did Valica not retaliate, he even frantically looked in a certain direction. Even the arrow nocked on his bow was drooping toward the ground.

Shuis also stopped his attacks, not worried that this might be a scheme for him to lower his guard. Valica wasn't that type of person. Then, he followed the other person's line of sight. His face immediately paled.

Elaro stood where Judge had originally been. His expression was neither angry nor strict. It was more expressionless than anything as he looked at them, but that was more than enough.

Valica gulped and put away his bow. Shuis lowered his leg. Both of them approached Elaro apprehensively, and then they stood straight with both hands pressed against their thighs. Their stances were fairly similar; even their heads were lowered to the same degree. If someone did not know them, they might think that these two people were such good friends that even their actions were very similar.

"I..." Elaro breathed in deeply and said, "am very disappointed in the two of you."

*For Shuis and Valica, this one sentence probably has an attack power of 1000%,* Judge and the other holy knights thought to themselves, immediately feeling sorry for them.

As expected, once these words were spoken, Valica's face turned deathly pale, and the rim of Shuis's eyes even turned red. Seeing this, Elaro gave a light sigh.

"Maybe it's my fault. The Storm Knight and the Leaf Knight do not have to get along with each other."



Even though Elaro said it was his fault, Shuis and Valica felt even more ashamed instead. They hurriedly opened their mouths, wanting to apologize, but the moment the word “Big—” sounded at the same time, they froze. Then, they glared at each other.

Seeing this, Elaro’s heart plummeted even further. He had always wanted them to be able to get along, but the more he tried, the more strained the situation grew. *Could it be that since I had forcefully tried to improve their relationship, it created the opposite effect?*

The two of them still had their heads lowered, not daring to look at Elaro. They seemed rather apologetic, but even so, they refused to approach the other person. Even though both of them stood in front of Elaro to apologize, the space between them was wide enough to fit another three people.

“Valica, stay behind to help Judge take stock of the goods. Shuis, take your platoon members and go to the training grounds to find Rhonelin. Together with him, lead the platoon members in practicing the sword. Even though you mainly rely on your kicking skills, swordplay is fundamental. You can’t slack off there either.”

Heads still lowered, the two of them nodded and then left to do their own jobs. En route, they were afraid to even look at Elaro, afraid to see his harsh expression.

It was true that Elaro was frowning. He watched them leave separately and even furtively turn their heads back to peek at him, but they only dared to do so once. The moment they saw Elaro’s expression, they no

longer dared to look again. Their expressions were full of shame and fear.

*So, my own Twelve Holy Knights are scared of me?* Elaro sighed. He didn't know if this was good or bad, just that he was a little... disappointed.



Elaro sat on a hammock hanging from a banyan tree in the gardens. This was his favorite place to reflect on things. The hammock's width was comfortable, and purple flowers on vines drooped down from the top of the tree, so it was not easy to see this hammock from outside. It was quite hidden, but he could see the entire garden through the vines.

If anyone wanted to find him, they would come to the gardens and shout for him. Elaro would then appear from the opposite corner—he didn't want other people to discover this secret hideout.

Actually, this place was originally one of the Cloud Knight's hideouts. However, after that time when Elaro's teacher had ordered him to find Knight-Captain Cloud, and Elaro discovered this place, the Cloud Knight had stopped coming here. The place became Elaro's special hideout for reflecting on things instead.

*You already learned Storm's kicking techniques, and your archery isn't bad either. I can overlook all of that, even though they say to be careful of biting off more than you can chew. Well, in your case, you're learning everything well enough, so there's no harm in learning a bit more. But do you have to learn Cloud's "You can't find me" skill too?*

*It's fine if you learn his confusing steps, but there's no need for you to learn the hide-and-seek part too, right? Since my youth, I've had to search for Cloud, and now that I am advanced in my years, I have to search for my student too?*

Teacher would complain from time to time, but he never truly forbade Elaro from occasionally hiding. Elaro even felt that his teacher already knew of his hiding place, but just hadn't revealed him.

After thinking of his teacher's words, Elaro couldn't help but think of his teacher too. No matter if it were the Sun Knight or the Judgment Knight, they were both people that everyone wholeheartedly believed in. There was absolutely no one who dared to go against them... Except the current Twelve Holy Knights.

The current generation of Twelve Holy Knights all wholeheartedly believed in the Sun Knight and the Judgment Knight. When it came to important situations, they had even less hesitation in following commands given by the Sun Knight. However, during normal times, they were able to get along like friends. This was Elaro's ideal kind of interaction, but...

Today was the teachers' first day away on their mission, yet he had already gotten into disagreeable situations with Hungri, Shuis, and Valica in succession. Moreover, these situations were actually not all that uncommon. Hungri had always been at odds with his philosophy, and Shuis and Valica had been quarreling for many years already. Even now, he couldn't figure out a way to solve the conflict between them—

"Brother, you're really hiding here again!"

Elaro raised his head and looked over. What his eyes immediately caught sight of was a white cleric robe with a golden trim. He had always felt that this outfit suited the other person very well, making her appear just like an angel. As long as he saw her smile, he would feel delighted.

He smiled and said, "Ludia, why are you here?"

Ludia was the only person who knew this place. Elaro and his sister had relied on each other since they were young. He would hate not letting his sister know where he was. He remembered how, when they were younger, she would immediately cry without stopping the moment he was out of her sight. It was hard to even leave her side to find food.

Ludia brushed the purple flower vines to the side and sat next to her brother without asking. Like a little girl, she swayed the hammock and smiled as she asked, "Brother has come here to stare off into space again. What are you thinking about?"

"I'm thinking about how you have grown up so much without my noticing," Elaro lamented. He really didn't know when that little girl, who had always been crying her heart out, had stopped crying, and had now turned into a reliable cleric.

Ludia burst into laughter. "Brother, you're not that old! You're like an old man sitting there lamenting over how his children have all grown up, and how he has grown old. If I remember correctly, you're only

twenty-three, right?"

Elaro smiled ruefully. He knew his mindset was too much like an old man's, but it couldn't be helped. Since a young age, he had watched a bunch of younger siblings grow up. It could be said that he was like an older brother, and sometimes he was even more like a father, completely bringing to life the saying, 'An older brother is like a father.' And add on a teacher whose expectations were rather high...

*"Elaro, you're an adult now, and you are mature and understanding. Your fighting skills are pretty good too. It could be said that you excel in several areas. Teacher is quite pleased and has only one request of his student."*

*"Teacher, please tell me!" Elaro earnestly pricked up his ears to listen. No matter how difficult the request, he would follow it at all costs!*

*"Teacher's only request is that as long as I have a request, you must follow them all, do you understand?"*

*"... Understood."*

He had a strict father with constant requests coming from above, and defiant children demanding his attention from below. This was the analysis Ludia had given him. Elaro could only smile wryly in response.

Ludia asked gently, "What happened? Don't tell me nothing happened. You're so busy, Brother. You wouldn't come here randomly to look at the scenery."

Elaro hesitated, but when he saw Ludia waiting for his response with an encouraging smile, he eventually spilled everything that had happened today to his little sister—the conflict with Hungri, and how Valica and Shuis had gotten into another fight.

After he finished describing the day's events, he said helplessly, "Ludia, why are you laughing?"

Ludia covered up her mouth. "Every time I see Brother having a headache over those two kids, I find it very amusing."

Elaro was even more worried. "It's not amusing at all. As their comrade, I don't want them to hate each other."

"Fighting here and there doesn't mean their relationship is all that bad!" Ludia hugged one of her brother's arms and raised a hypothetical scenario. "Brother, if one of their lives were in danger, do you think the other person would lend a hand to save them?"

Elaro was momentarily stumped for words, but then he passionately replied, "Of... of course! If either one dared to look on without helping, I would never forgive them!"

"Don't be so agitated." Ludia patted her brother's shoulder. "They're still kids, after all. Right now is exactly the time when they're brimming with youthful vigor. It can't be helped that they would compare themselves to each other, and you happen to be the person they're most conscious of. It's not strange that they would strive for your favor."

"Speaking of the person they're most conscious of..." Elaro was helpless as he said, "Shuis is still unwilling to write back home. Recently, he even stopped reading the letters from home."

Ludia looked at her brother with sympathy. The next generation of the Twelve Holy Knights was truly difficult to manage. She didn't know if it was because things could only go in the opposite extreme. The current generation of the Twelve Holy Knights mostly had compliant personalities. The only one who wasn't very compliant was the leader, the Sun Knight. However, the next generation was mostly comprised of rebellious personalities. If there were any with compliant personalities, it could only be the next generation Sun Knight, Elaro himself.

*This really is a worrying matter!*

Ludia inevitably grew a little worried. She turned her head and saw Elaro's slight frown. Although he was only twenty-three, his facial features were mature and handsome. Her smidgeon of worry disappeared abruptly, and she hugged Elaro tightly, shouting, "Brother, you're truly too handsome!"

"Huh?" Confused, Elaro lowered his head to look at his sister, not knowing why she had suddenly blurted that out. However, it wasn't all that strange, since Ludia often mentioned this to him. He merely rubbed her hair and didn't ask anything further.

After getting spoiled, Ludia pulled herself together and combed her hair that had been messed up from the rubbing. She returned to being a gentle and reserved cleric and continued to console Elaro. "Don't

worry, Brother. You'll definitely be fine because you're the best brother in the world. Even with as many as eleven troublesome little brothers, you'll definitely be able to whip them into shape!"

"Don't use words like 'whip.' Girls shouldn't speak so coarsely." Elaro smiled wryly. "Besides, we're not brothers, but rather comrades. Our relationship should be like that of friends, just like the teachers'."

Ludia was blunt. "But the gap in your ages has made it difficult for you to be like Teacher Grisia from the start, to be friends with the other Twelve Holy Knights."

When he heard this, Elaro was silent for a moment, but then he muttered, "This is all my fault. I am the only one whose age doesn't match any of the others. Is it because my age is different, that I can't understand their feelings? Is this why everyone is unable to get along?"

Ludia immediately refuted after she heard her brother's words, "Brother, it's just the opposite! It's actually a good thing."

Elaro looked uncomprehendingly at his sister.

"This generation of the Twelve Holy Knights is full of strong-willed children. No one is willing to follow anyone else, and their abilities are all pretty strong. If it wasn't because Brother watched them grow up, giving them this image of an older brother they cannot disobey in their hearts, how would you have been able to win over these children who have such great pride and arrogance?"

When he heard "pride and arrogance," Elaro furrowed his brows and



said, "It's true that they might be a bit prideful, but it's not to the point of arrogance. Having such strength, it's not wrong for them to feel a little prideful. Besides, they are still children, so their personalities would be more direct. It's not a bad thing."

Ludia covered her smile. She knew her brother loved these "little brothers" the most. Even his real sibling couldn't criticize them!

"Did they ask you to come find me? Was it Valica or Shuis?" Elaro was quite sure someone had. Otherwise, it would have been too much of a coincidence that Ludia had come here right after he had arrived. It was also obvious that she had known something had happened.

"Make a guess?"

Elaro only pondered for a moment before he said with certainty, "It was Valica, right? Shuis wouldn't do something like this. He would only come to me with red eyes and a lowered head, repenting until I forgave him."

"Right on!" Ludia clapped and said, "As expected of Big Brother! You understand your little brothers so well!"

This time, Elaro no longer denied considering them his younger brothers. But when he saw Ludia's smile that wasn't quite a smile, he seemed to remember something and hurriedly said, "Ludia, no matter how many younger brothers I gain, you'll always be my most precious little sister!"

"What are you talking about?" Ludia pouted and said, "Just because

they're your younger brothers doesn't mean they're not mine, right? The moment Valica offended Big Bro, didn't he immediately come appealing to Big Sis? Besides, isn't eleven enough? Do you still plan on acquiring more younger brothers? Also..."

She tilted her head, muffling her laughter. "Did you forget that you also have a cute 'Charsia' as a younger sister? Or is it that you no longer see her as a younger sister? It's not surprising. Charsia has already claimed that she'll marry Big Brother Elaro when she grows up. I get it, she's a fiancée and no longer a younger sister."

When he heard this, Elaro froze, but then he frowned and said, "What are you talking about? Charsia is only twelve, and aren't you afraid of what might happen if Teacher were to hear your words?"

"Hehe, that's why I chose to say it now, when he's away on a mission!"

*Away on a mission, huh...* Elaro sighed to himself. Only he knew the truth behind this "mission." Ludia and the other young holy knights-in-training didn't know what was actually going on, but they had some suspicions. After all, every half a year, the Twelve Holy Knights would all go on a mission together. No matter if it was the "frequency" or the fact that they "all" went, it was all very suspicious.

He didn't know if it was because his ability to conceal things was too poor, but Elaro always felt that everyone already knew that he knew the truth behind the "mission." Hungri would often even say things like, "Knight-Captain Sun trusts you so much, so he must have told you where they're going for this time's mission."

Elaro always replied that he didn't know, but he always felt that Hungri didn't believe him much. The others also frequently looked at him with suspicion in their eyes. Shuis was probably the only one who never doubted, but Shuis regarded him with a blind conviction. Shuis didn't even need to hear Elaro's words. No matter what, Shuis would always say, without the slightest hesitation: "Big Bro Elaro is right."

In comparison, Valica was more reasonable. He would avert his gaze, afraid that Elaro would see the doubt in his eyes. But if he were to be asked to say, "Big Bro Elaro is wrong," he probably wouldn't be able to do that either.

*Why have these two kids grown to show me so much deference?* Elaro had never understood why. The other kids had also grown up the same way, but no one else turned out like Shuis and Valica, who revered him so much that they fought for his attention.

"Holy knight Elaro!"

Elaro abruptly returned to his senses, and discovered that his mind had wandered off. He inwardly reprimanded himself, and hurriedly glanced out from between the vines. In the garden, a person wearing a black knight outfit was calling out to him in a hurry.

*Is that a knight from the Judgment Knight Platoon?* Elaro furrowed his brows as he stood up from the hammock. As usual, he would walk out from a different direction, but before he left, he glanced at Ludia, wondering if she planned on staying, or if she had other plans.

"I'll go with you."

Ludia had a bad premonition, especially since the person who had come for Elaro was part of the Judgment Knight Platoon. It was likely that Hungri had created some sort of trouble again. She would go too. If anything major happened, she could help. If nothing major happened, she could persuade Elaro not to get angered to death by Hungri.

The shouts from outside sounded quite urgent, so Elaro didn't dare waste any time. He hurriedly walked into the garden.

Once the knight saw Elaro, he relaxed. "Thank the God of Light for limiting His severity."

When he heard this, Elaro grew even more worried. "What happened?" After being asked, the Judgment Knight Platoon member showed a troubled expression. Seeing an elder reveal such an expression made Elaro's heart sink. *Just how bad is the trouble this time, for a Judgment Knight Platoon member who is always calm to reveal his uneasiness?*

His heart leapt as he remembered the situation from earlier. Anxious, he no longer worried over disrespecting an elder and solemnly asked, "Don't tell me he beat the criminal from just now to death?"

The holy knight quickly waved his hand in denial. "He hasn't died yet, but he is being resuscitated as we speak!"

*It actually reached the point of needing resuscitation.* Elaro hurriedly looked toward Ludia, and his sister nodded at him. No further words

were needed; Elaro immediately picked her up in his arms and sprinted toward the Judge's Complex. As long as Ludia could make it there in time, the healing could immediately be declared successful!

After all, she was the Pope's talented student.

*Chapter #2: My... Part 1—Father*

“Elaro, I’m starting to like you again.”

Judge watched Valica bustling about. Neither the pen in his hand, nor the commands from his mouth had ever halted. Following that, the crammed piles of goods started becoming more organized, divided into categories. The present scene grew more and more orderly, no longer resembling the previous, despairing mess.

Valica always handled matters properly and logically. Although Shuis took his work seriously as well, he was the type of person who worked hard but not necessarily smart. He was not particularly good at this type of work, which required categorization, and he wasn’t good at recording down trivial details either.

Even when infuriated, Elaro still made the best arrangements. Judge decided to forgive the fact that he had just sent both Valica and Shuis over together.

“Thanks for the help.”

When he found an opportunity, Judge sincerely gave his thanks. This was originally not within Valica’s range of duties. His main duty was diplomacy, such as forming good relationships with members of the palace. However, regarding this point, Elaro was doing well on his own, too. But his job kept him busy, so he only interacted with the most important people such as the king, the princess, and Elijah. He let Valica deal with most of the other aristocrats.

Valica raised his head from a document filled in with the categorized goods. "If you really want to thank me, put in a good word or two for me with Big Bro Elaro, so he won't be as angry anymore."

"Haven't you already asked Ludia?"

"If he knows that I have been seriously doing my job, Big Bro Elaro will always cool down quicker." Valica gave Judge a weird glance. "You don't call Elaro 'Big Bro,' and you don't call Ludia 'Big Sis' either. Although Hungri doesn't call them that either, with your personality, I expected you to call him big brother. I've always thought that it's unlike you to directly call them by their names."

Judge shrugged and said, "Teacher doesn't allow me to. He said that if I dared to allow Knight-Captain Sun's student to eat me whole, like you and Shuis, then he would swallow me alive. So I, I don't dare to."

When Valica heard this, his face immediately turned ugly. "I'm not like Shuis!"

Judge really didn't understand why they couldn't stop fighting. "If you got along and didn't fight, Big Bro Elaro wouldn't get angry."

"I don't want to get along with him at all!"

"Why do you hate Shuis so much?"

Judge felt that if they kept chatting like this, they really wouldn't be able to finish the job. But if he could help the two of them reconcile, he would be able to get Elaro to send them over together next time.

With one being attentive and the other hard-working, the two of them would definitely finish the job in the shortest time possible! For this reason, Judge was willing to take some risks.

"I just can't stand that guy!" Valica spat out, "He clearly has a father and a mother, and even brothers and sisters, so why does he still cling onto Big Bro Elaro?!"

"I heard that his home is very far, and he usually can't go back." Judge was like everyone else. He didn't understand Shuis's home situation very well. He had only heard that both of his parents were alive and well, and he even had a lot of brothers and sisters. Also, they stayed in the faraway Kingdom of Kissinger.

Valica said agitatedly, "He's even more of a jerk for not returning home! He has a family, yet he doesn't treasure them. He never goes home, not even during the long vacations. Someone who doesn't even know how to treasure family has no right to call him Big Bro Elaro!"

Valica was an orphan, and it just so happened that this generation of the Twelve Holy Knights did not have many orphans. Several of their families were even in Leaf Bud City, so they would return home now and then to visit. They didn't even need long vacations to visit their parents.

Judge was one of those people. Once, he had even suggested to Valica to go home with him during a long vacation. He had even talked it over with his parents, that when that happened, they could even directly recognize Valica as their godson. In any case, his mother had always felt that one son was too few, so being able to take in yet



another one of the future Twelve Holy Knights as a son made her incomparably happy!

Regretfully, Valica rejected it solemnly. He was very happy to remain in the Holy Temple, because Elaro was also an orphan, so it was a given that he had no home to return to either. Besides, Elaro always had more time then. Not only would he personally instruct Valica in swordsmanship, he would even take him out to buy daily necessities with Ludia, almost like a true brother and sister taking their younger brother on an outing.

For Valica, Elaro and Ludia were even better than actual relatives—but it would be even better if Shuis didn't follow along.

Judge said carefully, "Shuis probably has his reasons for not going home. After all, he hasn't returned home for several years. It doesn't seem like he's merely having a fight with his mom and dad."

When he heard this, Valica fell silent. He had also vaguely thought that there might be something off about Shuis's family. It was just that the grudge between them made it so that he refused to believe it.

"Have you asked Shuis before?"

For a moment, Valica wasn't able to refocus, but then he hurriedly asked, "What did you say?"

"Have you asked Shuis why he doesn't go home?" Judge said mysteriously, "I-I have asked him before!"

Valica stilled. He was a little curious. "What did he say, then?"

"Shuis said that he can't go home. When I asked him why, he fell silent for a long time before he replied, 'I just can't.'" After saying this, he looked at Valica and asked, "Doesn't that sound like it's not that he doesn't want to go home, but rather, that he can't?"

*He clearly has a family, a father, a mother, brothers, and sisters, yet Shuis says he can't go back?* Valica felt rage burn inside his chest. He threw the inventory list in his hands at Judge, and following that, turned to run off.

Judge froze, and then yelled at Valica's back, "W-What about making inventory?" However, the other person only ran farther and farther away. Judge sighed. "Forget it, this was originally my job anyway. However, Elaro, I have decided not to like you or hate you anymore."



Valica didn't have a home. He only had the orphanage. He had been there since he was seven. It happened because he had been wandering about on the streets and picking up expired bread from the bakery to eat. In the end, the bakery's chef sent him to the orphanage. He no longer remembered why he didn't have parents and had even been wandering the streets.

The orphanage in Leaf Bud City had always been commendable. In fact, the children there lived pretty well. But no matter how well they lived... It was only that. After all, there were a bunch of kids there. Being able to fill one's stomach and wear warm clothes was already good treatment that was hard to come by. He really couldn't ask for more.

Valica had been very satisfied. From constant hunger and cold to a full stomach and warm clothes, the orphanage was practically like the God of Light's heaven. He had been perfectly satisfied staying there.

When it came time for the selections for the Twelve Holy Knights, the orphanage would always send a group of children, who more or less matched the age requirement to participate in the selections. At the time, Valica was a bit too young, but the orphanage probably thought it wouldn't hurt to give it a try and sent him over. They sent a large group of children, after all.

No one thought that Valica would remain all the way until the last stage of the selections, and this selection even had several young candidates. In the end, the holy knights-in-training who had been chosen were rather young, even nearly causing the Sun Knight to vomit blood.

Having to leave the orphanage did scare Valica a bit. After all, he had only been eight years old. It couldn't be helped that he would feel flustered having to leave a familiar place. However, at the time...



That day was the last day of the selections. The Twelve Holy Knights would personally come to select their successors. Several of the candidates were fairly nervous, especially those children who had trained since childhood and had constantly been waiting for this day.

In comparison, Valica felt much more relaxed. He was merely there because the orphanage had sent him over to give it a try. Even if he didn't get selected, there was no need to feel disappointed. Therefore,

he treated it like a tour the entire time, and was walking here and there to take a look. Even when some helpful holy knights advised him that the Twelve Holy Knights might be observing nearby, he didn't immediately start practicing his sword like the others—he didn't have a sword anyway.

"Hi! Do you like the Holy Temple?"

Valica raised his head. The person he saw was a holy knight full of smiles. He carried a bow on his back. This wasn't very common among the holy knights. The majority of the holy knights used swords. Valica gave it careful thought and honestly replied, "I don't know, but it's very pretty."

"Is being pretty not good?"

Valica tilted his head to think and said, "There are many places that are very pretty, but when I'm hungry, it doesn't matter how pretty they are."

The holy knight before him showed an expression of pity, and he asked softly, "Are you hungry? Do you want something to eat?"

"I'm not very hungry." Valica answered honestly, but he then used hopeful eyes to ask, "But is there anything to eat?"

The holy knight laughed. "Yes, of course there is. What do you like to eat?"

"Warm soup!" Valica answered without the slightest hesitation.

"It's so hot right now, but you still want to eat warm soup?"

Valica rubbed the back of his head in embarrassment and said, "Yeah! I love warm soup the best! Because..."

It was a cold, winter day. Valica sifted through cold bread that gave off a sour smell in the trash bin, but the owner discovered him. He had thought that he would be chased away or even given a severe beating, but the owner lady was very kind and sent him to the orphanage.

At a loss, Valica curled up on the chair. He rubbed his small hands for warmth, and what he received was a bowl of steaming soup. He would never forget the deliciousness of that bowl of soup.

From then on, he fell in love with warm soup. He even formed an especially good relationship with the cook, hoping that the other person would make warm soup every day.

After he finished talking about why he liked warm soup, Valica raised his tiny face, using hopeful eyes to look at the other person. Usually, after listening to this story, and being faced with such an expression, there was a high chance that the other person would immediately take him to eat a bowl of warm soup, just like the cook at the orphanage. It was a time-tested method!

Unexpectedly, after the other person stared at him for a long while, he did not take him to eat soup. Instead, he asked, as if he was thinking about something, "Which Twelve Holy Knight's selection are you participating in?"

Because this question was too far a jump in topic, Valica blanked out for a moment before he could respond. "Storm Knight."

"Storm, huh? But he..." For some reason, the other person showed a distressed look and spoke hesitantly.

Valica felt that this holy knight was a little strange, causing him to remember what the orphanage always cautioned—"Beware of strange uncles." However, holy knights shouldn't be strange uncles, right? Therefore, Valica continued to do his best, maintaining the innocent and naïve expression of a child to prevent his warm soup from flying away.

The other person pondered for a while—Valica didn't know what there was to ponder about at all—and then stared directly at Valica, whose back grew cold from being stared at. Finally, he used a gentle and approachable voice to say, "Child, let me tell you something. My best dish is stew!"

Valica blinked.

"Have you ever had cheese and chicken vegetable stew, or sweet basil and tomato seafood soup?"

The super long names of the dishes stupefied him. At the orphanage, even cheese was rare, so of course there wouldn't be dishes with such long names. If the soup had meat in it, that would already be a luxury.

"So..." The holy knight showed a smile and asked, "Want to eat it?"

He had wandered the streets since young, and then he had stayed at an orphanage, so Valica was definitely not the average, ignorant child. He knew that there was definitely something wrong with the holy knight in front of him! He might truly be a “strange uncle,” but when Valica thought about the cheese whatchamacallit veggie stew, and the something something seafood soup...

“I’ll even add a lot of spices. Saffron is the most suitable for soup of the seafood variety. Cheese makes soup thick, so sprinkling some vanilla will make it palatable. The sweet aroma will make even clerics from the Sanctuary of Light come running to the Holy Temple, wanting a taste! Do you want some?”

“Yes!” Even though he wasn’t the average child, Valica still couldn’t resist his favorite food.

The other person smilingly said, “Great. As long as you switch to the Leaf Knight selection, you’ll have so much stew you won’t ever be able to finish eating!”

*Switch to the Leaf Knight selection?* Valica didn’t quite understand. Even though he wasn’t dead set on becoming the Storm Knight—the orphanage merely approximately assigned them by personality—he could only shake his head and say, “But that can’t be changed.”

“Don’t worry, there won’t be a problem. Later, all you have to do is stand among the selection ranks for the Leaf Knight. Leave the rest to me.”

When he heard this, Valica began to have doubts. He felt that this holy

knight was a strange uncle, but for the sake of stew, he was still willing to give what the other person said a try.

“Do I really only have to try out for the Leaf Knight, and then I’ll be able to have the stew you just mentioned? You aren’t tricking me, right?” He wasn’t very reassured. The orphanage said that strange uncles only ever told lies!

The other person said seriously, “I swear on the name of the Leaf Knight to the God of Light, I am definitely not deceiving you.”

“...Huh?”



Soup bowl cupped in his hands, Valica still couldn’t wrap his mind around how he had somehow been chosen as the Leaf Knight-in-training. All he had wanted was soup!

His little head was full of questions, but Valica couldn’t care less anymore. The bowl of soup in his hands was made by the Leaf Knight... Ah, he should call him “Teacher” now. Teacher said he was currently rather busy and didn’t have time to concentrate on making stew, so for the time being he made some simple cheese and corn soup for him.

“Eat up!” Teacher said with a smile—*Aren’t you busy? Why are you able to stay here and watch me eat soup?*

The soup was unbelievably savory. The moment he received permission, Valica could not resist eating the soup at once. It went down smoothly and was so delicious that he didn’t even care about



how scalding hot it was. He ate mouthful by mouthful, without stopping.

Leaf Knight said happily, "I was going to ask you if you liked it, but I can tell from just your expression that it must be super delicious. It's only a simple cheese and corn soup, but you're eating it so happily. I'm highly anticipating what kind of expression you'll show when you have some of my carefully brewed stew! Choosing you was the right decision!"

Valica was so busy eating the soup that he didn't pay much attention to his teacher's words.

"Sun even said, 'Is it right using 'liking to eat soup' to pick someone?'... But he's also super biased. He chose Elaro way in advance, and even Storm too..."

As he ate soup, he listened to his teacher's prattling. Since he wasn't listening very carefully, Valica wasn't very clear about what his teacher had said.

This happened several times. When his teacher discovered that the secrets he had accidentally let slip did not get revealed, he cherished Valica even more. Valica had soup nearly every single day. Weekends even came with specially prepared grand meals. Those were truly so delicious, that Valica nearly swallowed his own tongue.

His situation after becoming a Twelve Holy Knight-in-training was a lot better than when he had been at the orphanage. His teacher treated him very well, brewing stew for him every day. Valica lived practically

without any worries, no matter that the sword and archery lessons he later had were actually very tough. Judgment Knight and Hell Knight were the sword instructors, and both teachers were rather strict, causing each and every young holy knight to cry out in pain from the training.

However, Valica still considered himself blessed. After all, once he finished training, he would have delicious soup to eat. Besides, if he didn't exercise, he suspected that he really would turn into a pig, getting fed by his teacher like this.

The teachers had busy jobs, so they couldn't actually give lessons often, and the one with the best swordsmanship among the vice-captains, Adair, was even busier. In the end, that was how Elaro, who was a student himself, became a substitute teacher—the reality of it was, he was pretty much an official teacher.

He had strong swordsmanship, superb archery skills, and had even mastered ninety percent of the Storm Knight's kicking techniques. According to some rumors, Elaro had already started helping the Sun Knight handle documents. Valica felt that Elaro could only be described as omnipotent!

In addition, since Elaro was much older than the rest, a lot of them inevitably considered him an older brother. However, Valica didn't have that intention, because he didn't know what an older brother was in the first place. Even with the older kids in the orphanage, Valica didn't think of them as older brothers either.

This continued until a certain day when his teacher went out on a

mission. As usual, Valica went to attend sword lessons, yet discovered that not a single person was at the training grounds...

"There's no lesson today?"

He pulled a few holy knights over to ask. When he received this answer, he asked in confusion, "Why not?"

"Vacation, that's why." The other person was rather surprised and asked, "Didn't you know? The Twelve Holy Knights are out on a mission. It's the perfect time for a long vacation. All of you can go home and visit."

Valica stilled. He had heard that his teacher was going on a mission, but he hadn't heard about the long vacation plus going home.

"Hurry and go home!" The other person reminded helpfully, "The vacation this time is only two weeks long. If you don't live in Leaf Bud City, just the trip home will take several days, right?"

Valica shook his head and said, "I don't have a home."

There wasn't much of a point returning to the orphanage. He had only stayed at the orphanage for less than a year before coming to the Holy Temple. He had been really young then, so even if he returned, he probably wouldn't remember anyone.

"I-Is that so..." The other person was a bit at a loss. "Ah! Holy knight-in-training Elaro is also an orphan. Maybe you can seek him out!"

Valica nodded, but he didn't intend to. They were on vacation, so he didn't want to bother Elaro. Even though Elaro was also a holy knight-in-training, he always seemed like he had never-ending work.

Without anything to do, and since his teacher hadn't assigned him any homework, Valica idly wandered about for a day, then two days. It was the first time he noticed how long a day was. Five days. Six days. He had no clue what there was to do, so he could only shoot arrows by himself. Eight days. Nine days. He hadn't spoken to anyone for several days already. Valica suddenly realized that it wasn't a good thing to only interact with Teacher and the young holy knights-in-training, the way he'd done up until now.

Ten days...

"Valica."

Valica turned and saw Elaro. The other person was stunned at first, but he soon asked gently, "What's wrong? Why are you sitting here by yourself? Are you sad?"

He didn't mention the tears on Valica's face at all.

Valica rushed forward, hugging Elaro's waist tightly without letting go. He forcefully buried his small face in Elaro's chest, and finally, couldn't help bawling his eyes out.

Elaro didn't say a word. He merely reached out with his arms to hug Valica, letting him cry for several minutes, all the way until his sobs grew quieter. Once there were only tiny hiccupping sounds left, he

could tell that Valica was feeling a little hesitant and embarrassed. Only then did he ask, "What's wrong, did someone bully you? Don't worry, you can tell me."

Valica shook his head hard. However, his face was still buried in Elaro's chest, so it just looked like burrowing, causing Elaro to feel quite amused. After a moment, a stuffy response came from his chest. "Everyone has returned home. I don't have a home. I don't have anyone to t-talk to. I don't know why I started crying..." Having said so much, he felt really embarrassed.

Elaro immediately refuted, "Nonsense, of course you have a home. The Holy Temple is your home, the Leaf Knight is your father, and I am your big brother."

*Big brother...* Valica lifted his head. His reddened eyes saw Elaro show a gentle expression, smiling as he said, "I also have a younger sister called Ludia. You know that, right? She can be your little big sister, okay?"

"...Okay."

Elaro patted Valica's head and said, "Then, go wash your face and change into casual clothes. Accompany big brother out for shopping today."

"I don't have casual clothes," said Valica timidly. Back then, he had only brought two outfits with him to the Holy Temple, but two years had already passed and children grow very quickly. Those two outfits were already so small that he couldn't fit into them, so he had been

using them as cleaning rags.

Elaro smiled openly and said, "Perfect, Shuis also needs to buy clothes. We can go together." After he finished speaking, he waved at a particular corner.

Valica was taken aback. Shuis was standing in the shadow of a tree. He didn't have much of an expression on his face and was looking at Elaro and him quite indifferently.

*Did my bawling face get completely seen just now?* Valica's face reddened. Even though Elaro had also seen it, but Elaro... Big Bro Elaro was different!

Elaro didn't notice anything. He held Valica's hand and led him toward Shuis.

Shuis frowned and was staring fixedly at a certain place. Confused, Valica followed his line of sight and saw that he was staring straight at the hand that Elaro was holding.

Valica immediately shook off Elaro's hand, his face so red, it was like he had been burned by fire.

At this time, Shuis walked over and naturally took Elaro's hand. This action stunned Valica.

Enthusiastic, Elaro told the two children, "Shuis, Valica, neither of you are returning home, so when there are long vacations in the future, you can play together—"

"No way!" Shuis shot it down immediately. "I only want to be with Big Bro Elaro and Big Sis Ludia."

Valica's face turned ashen. He deeply regretted that he hadn't said no at the first opportunity he had as well.

Elaro's expression turned conflicted, but only for a moment. He came to his own conclusion, thinking that it was just that Shuis didn't want to leave his side, not that he opposed Valica. He immediately smiled and said, "Alright then, let's go shopping together. Let's go find Ludia first. Come on!"

Elaro held Shuis's hand but only waved Valica over. Valica had just shaken his hand off, so he figured Valica didn't like the action of holding hands.

Valica hesitated for a moment. Then, he promptly rushed forward to grab Elaro's other hand. Elaro paused momentarily, but merely smiled. He held Valica's hand back, his two hands holding one child each. Slowly, they walked toward the Church of the God of Light.

Shuis shot a glare at Valica. The latter frowned, wondering what this glare meant. Then, he heard him say, "Valica, bring money. Big Bro Elaro doesn't have money to buy clothes for you."

When he heard this sort of rebuke, Valica angrily said, "I'm not going to make Big Bro Elaro pay for my clothes!"

Elaro smiled and said, "I still have some money. Don't worry, I just

received my salary.”

“No!” Shuis immediately retorted, “Big Bro Elaro, if you do that, you’ll run out of money again before the middle of the month!”

“I don’t need much money in the Holy Temple anyways. Oh, but I think I’m almost out of essential oil again...”



## Chapter #2: My... Part 2—Brother

Valica rushed all the way to the training grounds, and Shuis was indeed there. Since Elaro had given a command, he definitely wouldn't slack off. Although it was already evening and about time to rest, the platoon members were still exchanging kicks in pairs. A trace of exhaustion could be seen on their faces, but the power behind their kicks had not decreased in the slightest.

Shuis was the most serious of them all. He was sweating all over, his shirt long since soaked.

Valica slowed down, knowing that Shuis had already noticed him but was purposely ignoring him. This wasn't anything strange. The relationship between them had been bad ever since that day they had both held Elaro's hands when they were young—indescribably bad! With firm steps, he walked toward Shuis. Finally, Valica stood right in front of him, no more than a step away. No matter how much Shuis wanted to ignore him, he could not ignore something that was blocking his entire line of sight.

Shuis stopped pretending he didn't see him. He looked straight at Valica and asked bluntly, "What do you want?"

Valica didn't know what he wanted either, but the anger burning within his chest helped him disregard his own uncharacteristic actions. He opened his mouth to press for answers, "Why can't you return home? You've never said that you 'can't' return home, or that you don't want to go home."

*Even so, why am I so angry?* Even Valica, at this very moment, did not understand himself. It was just that even Judge had known about this, yet he had known nothing!

Moreover, he had always thought that Shuis just didn't want to go home, maybe because he didn't get along with his family, or possibly because they'd gotten into a large argument. Even though he had suspected that the actual story might not be so simple, he had never thought to investigate further... He simply hated that Shuis obviously had family, yet still fought over Big Bro Elaro with him, who had nothing at all!

A flash of suspicion seized Shuis, but he quickly adopted his usual attitude and coldly said, "It's none of your business!"

Right after he spoke, Valica abruptly grabbed Shuis's collar. Although it was normal for them not to get along, Shuis never thought Valica would abruptly lose control like that, especially when they had just angered Elaro. Normally Valica was the one who would keep his cool for a while.

Shuis was rather puzzled, so he did not grow angry over Valica grabbing his collar. He even raised his hand to stop his angry platoon members from stepping forward.

On the opposite end of the training ground, Rhonelin and Dili had seen everything. They knew that Shuis and Valica had just angered Elaro, so it was unlikely they would get into another argument right away. Thus, they hadn't immediately rushed over. However, once they saw that the situation was getting out of hand, they hurried over.

"Valica, stop that!" Dili shouted sternly. Valica was grabbing Shuis's collar, but the latter did not retaliate, much to Dili's surprise. Usually, Shuis tended to be the one who struck first. He wasn't good with words, so anytime Valica harassed him vocally, he would always retaliate physically.

"This has nothing to do with you two!" Valica growled fiercely at them. He normally never treated them so rudely, but right now... he couldn't care less!

Rhonelin spoke calmly, "Of course it involves us. Captain is not here right now. As his vice-captains, we are naturally obligated to prevent you two from fighting."

"As his 'vice-captains'?" Shuis asked in surprise.

"Captain made the decision just this morning. Rhonelin and I will both serve as his vice-captains."

Dili glanced at Rhonelin. When their gazes met, both began smiling. Even Rhonelin, whose expression was normally indifferent, had on a faint smile.

"Two?" Valica murmured, "But that's against the rules."

"The rules are unimportant. Big Bro Elaro is right!" Shuis said without any hesitation, "But none of that is important right now. Valica, what exactly do you want?"

Dili and Rhonelin were both shocked. *Shuis actually said that something related to Elaro is unimportant?*

Shuis's composure influenced Valica too. His anger abated, and he forced himself to maintain a calm tone. "I want to know why you can't return home."

When he heard this, Shuis frowned, but he didn't grow angry. He did feel, though, that the situation was a little strange. Generally, Valica was the one who stayed calm, while Shuis was the one who impulsively lashed out with his hands... feet.

"I can't tell you."

Valica was silent for a moment and then asked, "Does Big Bro Elaro know why?"

Although he had asked, he was fairly certain that Big Bro Elaro knew. There was no way Shuis could keep anything from Big Bro Elaro. Also, with Big Bro Elaro's personality, he definitely wouldn't ignore something like why Shuis wasn't going home. He would definitely ask about it. Even Judge had asked... *Don't tell me, I'm the only one who hasn't asked?* When this occurred to him, Valica's mood dampened even further.

"He knows."

*I thought so!* Valica glared at Shuis. The latter angrily muttered, "It's not that I told him. He knew from the start!"

"Since Big Bro Elaro already knows, why can't you talk about it? Are you afraid I'll blab about it?"

Shuis shook his head. This cooled Valica's anger just a bit.

"You want to know that much?" Shuis was still rather bewildered.  
*Since when has Valica been so interested in my personal life?*

"Of course!"

"Fine." Shuis coldly said, "In the future, when I'm not by Big Bro Elaro's side, you're not allowed to bother him either. If you agree to that, I'll tell you."

Valica clenched his teeth and said, "Okay!"

Stunned, Shuis stared at Valica, entirely unable to believe that he had actually agreed.

"You really want to know that much?" He was extremely bewildered. They had fought for so many years and both deeply cared about Big Bro Elaro, but they didn't know any more about each other's personal lives than the other trainees did. *Just what has gotten into Valica today?*

Shuis turned toward Rhonelin and asked, "Can you help me lead my platoon members' drills? They have half an hour to go before they can rest."

Although Rhonelin nodded, his face showed concern.

"You won't start fighting, will you?" Dili was a little worried too. Shuis shook his head and glanced at Valica. "Rooftop?"

"Okay."

Valica knew very well where he meant by "rooftop." In order to prevent Big Bro Elaro from discovering their fights, they had to look for discrete places to fight. The rooftop of the southeastern corridor of one of the training grounds was nicely concealed by the angle. People below could not see the top, but people standing on top of the roof could clearly see below—if they were to see Big Bro Elaro coming, the two of them could immediately stop fighting and run away.

However, in the end, Big Bro Elaro had still discovered their location. He had jumped down from a tall tower above them, grabbed both of them, and then sentenced them to be shut inside the same confinement chamber for a week.

When they emerged from the room, with all limbs fully intact, the other knights-in-training praised the God of Light, for He was truly looking after His holy knights.

After that incident, they stopped going up to that rooftop. Actually, they no longer searched for places to fight, since Big Bro Elaro would always find them. Besides, if they purposely sought a place to fight in secret, they would be punished even more severely, so it was a waste of effort.

They totally did not ever want to be shut in the same confinement

chamber again, with nothing to do all day except glare at the other person as he ate, drank, used the bathroom, and slept—and they couldn't even fight!

Valica nimbly leaped to the side of the wall, and with a jump he grabbed and flipped himself up to the second floor. Then, repeating the same action, he flipped himself all the way to the top of the roof. His actions were incomparably agile and had always received no small measure of praise from his teacher.

Meanwhile, Shuis dashed to the side of the wall, running straight up the sides with ample spring and explosive power in his strides.

The people watching the scene sighed in admiration. Dili even asked softly, "Rhonelin, when you compare your combative skills with Shuis or Valica, would you be able to win against either of them?"

Rhonelin shook his head. "They're both stronger than me."

"You haven't even won against Valica before, even though he's an archer who specializes in long-range battle?"

Dili was somewhat surprised. He knew that his strength did not lie in battle, so he did not train much and obviously would not seek either of them out for a spar. He was also much older than both of them, which meant that while winning wouldn't look very good, losing would look even worse.

However, Rhonelin was only nineteen. He was not much older than them. He also had a talent for battle, so he often crossed swords with

the Twelve Holy Knights-in-training to compare skills.

“Valica is an archer, but long distance battle is not his only expertise.” Rhonelin’s tone held admiration as he said, “At closer distances, his attack power definitely does not lose to holy knights who wield only blades. You wouldn’t be able to imagine what kinds of stance he can shoot from, and in his hands, even a bow without arrows can become a weapon that won’t lose to a blade!”

“So that means Valica’s strength should be near the top of the Twelve Holy Knights-in-training?” When Dili said this, he realized his mistake and hurriedly added, “Shuis too?”

If their strengths differed too much, then they couldn’t have fought for so long and still be fighting, right?

“The Twelve Holy Knights-in-training of this generation are all rather strong.” Rhonelin fell silent for a moment and then added, “But the strongest is still Captain!”

Dili was a bit taken aback. “Is Captain really that strong?”

Of course, he knew that their captain was really strong. During their normal trainings, he could clearly see the gap between his strength and his captain’s. However, the gap was so wide that he was unable to figure out just how strong his captain was.

“Very strong!” Rhonelin looked at Dili strangely and asked, “Otherwise, how do you think Captain is able to keep the others under control?”



"By saying the four words, 'I am Big Brother'?" The moment these words escaped his lips, even Dili found it funny, but he truly did believe that was the reason.

"..." Rhonelin was speechless for a moment, but then he said, "Would Hungri care about those four words?"

"Nope." Dili chuckled embarrassedly. He had truly oversimplified things. Rhonelin thought it over and said, "There was one time... Oh right, Captain had sent you out on a mission so you didn't see it."

"See what?" Dili was surprised that he had actually missed out on something major.

"It was around three years ago. Hungri and Captain had gotten into an exceptionally serious conflict. No matter what, Hungri refused to admit he was in the wrong. Captain was so angry his face turned dark. In the end, he actually..."



After Valica jumped onto the roof, he turned around to wait for Shuis. Once Shuis landed on the roof, he walked to Valica's side and asked in confusion, "Why do you suddenly want to know about my family situation?"

Valica frowned, and Shuis continued indifferently, "If you won't talk, I won't either."

It was just a few simple words, but Valica was fully aware of Shuis's stubbornness. Since he had said so, then almost no one would be able

to force him to speak... Probably only Big Bro Elaro could do it.

Valica chewed on his lower lip and turned his body to face the setting sun instead of Shuis's face. Only then did he feel he could explain his reasoning.

"In the past, I always thought that you had a home you could return to, an entire family of people, yet you didn't know how to treasure them. You refused to get along with your family and instead came to fight with me over Big Bro Elaro..."

When he heard this, Shuis snorted coldly, but Valica did not grow resentful like always. Instead, he felt rather ashamed.

"Why can't you go home?" Unable to be deterred, Valica asked once more. If he had to, he would even ask a thousand times just to get his answer!

A noise came from behind him. When Valica turned his head, he saw that Shuis had sat down by the roof's ridge and was looking at the faraway setting sun as well.

Valica hesitated for a moment. Then, he turned his head and sat down next to Shuis. Together, they gazed at the setting sun in the distance. He didn't have any deep thoughts such as, "life waning like the setting sun," and merely thought that he was being rather foolish. He began to regret his initial action of turning to look at the sunset, and he was even more resentful toward Shuis for copying him.

Shuis said dully, "My parents tossed me at the Holy Temple and told

me that the Holy Temple would be my home from then on. I was not allowed to go home.”

“Why?” After Valica asked, he felt that another question was also important. He hurriedly added, “Why can’t you tell me the reason why you can’t go home?”

With Shuis’s personality, if no one asked, he indeed would never bring it up on his own accord. But it was a little strange that Judge had asked before and received “I can’t say it” as an answer.

Shuis fell silent, but Valica did not press him with more questions. He merely waited quietly.

“The answer to these two questions is the same.” Shuis’s lips quirked up as he said, “It’s because my father is the Silent Eagle of the Cathedral of the Shadow God, the top subordinate of the Demon King.”

Valica stared at Shuis with wide eyes. When Shuis saw this expression, his heart sank, but he felt no surprise. After all, this matter involved the “Demon King”!

Actually, it wasn’t that he absolutely couldn’t talk about this matter. The teachers and Elaro all knew about it already. There was no point in keeping it from his companions who would become the Twelve Holy Knights with him. Even the Storm Knight had told Shuis to do as he saw fit, but in the end, Shuis had chosen to conceal it. He didn’t want to see... a reaction like the one Valica had just had.

Valica was stupefied for a long while before he finally reacted by

shouting in alarm, "Then, you've seen the Demon King before?"

Shuis was taken aback. He shook his head slowly and said, "No. I might have seen him when I was really young, but I came to the Holy Temple early on, so I don't remember anymore."

Valica let out his breath. "Thank goodness. The legends say, a single glance from the Demon King is enough to transform you into an undead creature!"

Shuis snapped back, "Nonsense. My father and mother are both alive and well, and the dark knights in the Demon King's Castle are all alive, too! My parents even gave birth to a bunch of kids. Don't tell me undead creatures can have kids?!"

Valica smiled awkwardly. "That's what the legends say... Come to think of it, just how many brothers and sisters do you have?"

"I'm the youngest of triplet brothers, and I also have three younger brothers and four younger sisters." As he answered, Shuis peered at Valica, unable to believe that his reaction would be so... calm.

"Ten kids? And you're part of a set of triplets?" Valica was flabbergasted. He had heard before that Shuis had a lot of siblings, but he didn't think it would be that many!

"When I left home, there were only six." Shuis added dully, "I've never even seen the youngest four before."

Even though he said this, he didn't even remember the appearances of

his twin brothers. He only vaguely remembered that the two of them looked practically the same, while only he looked different.

*He's never even met his brothers and sisters...* Valica suddenly felt that something didn't add up, so he asked, "How do you know that four more younger siblings were born later?"

Shuis's face immediately fell. "You're suspecting that I have private dealings with the Demon King's Castle?"

Valica opened his mouth and stuttered, "No, it's just that, I... Sorry!" Although those were his suspicions, once he voiced the question and saw Shuis's expression, he felt extremely guilty. It was probably because even he didn't believe that Shuis would side with the Demon King.

Shuis said calmly, "I don't know why, but Father is always able to send letters to the Holy Temple. My teacher also knows about it. Often, he is the one who hands the letters to me."

When he heard that the Storm Knight also knew, Valica felt even guiltier.

Shuis emphasized, "Other than receiving letters, I don't have any contact with the Demon King's Castle. I haven't even replied to any of those letters these past few years."

"Why aren't you replying to the letters?" Valica was suddenly dissatisfied upon hearing this. Although he didn't want Shuis to have anything to do with the Demon King's Castle, family was still family.

How could he ignore them just like that?

Shuis furrowed his brows, anxiety coursing through him. "It's because I-I don't call that place home anymore!"

Valica suddenly recalled the words that Shuis had been saying just now.

*He was too young back then. He doesn't remember them at all. He has four siblings that he has never even met before...*

"If we're talking about parents, only my teacher comes to mind! Although I can still remember Father's and Mother's appearances, they're very blurry..."

Valica empathized with this rather well. Although in his case, the Leaf Knight was actually more like a... mother. Not that he would ever let his teacher find out!

"My brothers and sisters... I don't remember their appearances at all anymore, and I even have four siblings I've never met before. They threw me at the Holy Temple to be the Storm Knight-in-training so unfathomably, and then they stopped caring about me!"

Having heard the truth, Valica calmed down. It was now Shuis who was agitated.

"For all these years, I've never been able to understand. Even if Father doesn't want me to be the Demon King's subordinate, why are all my other siblings allowed to remain in the Demon King's Castle? Why did I

alone have to be tossed here?”

“You want to go home?” Valica was really worried. If Shuis replied that he wanted to go back, then Valica had to stop him with all his strength... Right! He hurriedly said, “If you go back, you might not be able to return. Then you won’t ever be able to see Big Bro Elaro again!”

“I don’t want to go back.” Shuis shook his head and said, “Teacher is my father, Elaro is my brother, and the Holy Temple is my true home.” Although he received an answer that put his worries to rest, Valica did not sigh in relief. Shuis’s answer had been very resolute, but a trace of grief had appeared on his own face.

If he had a home, but had to leave it when he was young and could never return, was there any difference from not having a home at all?

Although Valica didn’t know why his parents didn’t want him, at least he could always make something up. Maybe they had gotten into an accident, or maybe he had been kidnapped by bad guys when he was young; it wasn’t that they had abandoned him... Since he would never know the answer, there were a thousand “maybes” he could conjure. However, Shuis didn’t have any “maybes” he could console himself with.

Shuis vehemently said, “I don’t want to return home, but one day, I will definitely personally ask my father why, out of all of my siblings, I was the only one who was forced to leave home.”

Hearing this, Valica thought for a moment but did not dissuade Shuis. Instead, he seriously said, “When the day comes that you want to go

and ask this question, I'll go with you."

Shuis was stunned but immediately protested, "No way. My father is the number one subordinate of the Demon King. Do you want him to kill you?"

Valica said nonchalantly, "If you don't agree to it, I'll go and tell everyone the truth right now. And I will even warn them that you might secretly sneak home. I'll have everyone keep an eye on you together!"

"Y-You... why do you want to go with me?"

Shuis panicked that the secret would be leaked for a moment. Since Valica's relationship with him really wasn't very good, if Valica didn't want to keep his secret, it wouldn't be out of character... But wait! What Valica meant was that as long as Shuis let him go with him, he wouldn't reveal anything? Doing that didn't benefit Valica at all. In fact, it would endanger his life!

Shuis was puzzled once more. He said bluntly, "Valica, you're really weird today!"

Valica replied snappily, "The Demon King's number one subordinate's son will become the Storm Knight. Isn't that weird?"

"Very weird." Shuis glanced at Valica. "But your reaction doesn't seem to imply that you think it's weird that I will become the Storm Knight."

"You're just the son of the Demon King's subordinate. That's nothing!"



Did you know, novels often have main characters with extremely bizarre backgrounds? I've even read a novel about a prince who went undercover. He followed the army to crusade against the Demon King, and met a powerful mage companion. Along the way, the adventurer team's camaraderie grew deeper and deeper, until in the end, the mage actually turned out to be the Demon King himself!"

It was rare that Shuis actually laughed out loud. "You actually believe that? Stuff in novels is all fictitious."

Valica's face reddened. "But Teacher Cloud said that that book was real!"

"To even believe in stories like that! When you read, you're really different from the usual you. You're like another person." Shuis shook his head and stood up, planning on finishing the half hour of training he had missed.

Valica hurriedly stood up as well. "Wait, what we just talked about—"

"I got it." Shuis didn't even turn his head to reply.

Valica stilled and then said, "Just saying 'got it' isn't enough—"

"Fine, just come with me then!" Shuis yelled somewhat angrily. However, his tone changed right after when he turned and said, "Valica, come here and take a look at Dili and Rhonelin."

Valica took a step forward and lowered his head to look. He only saw their backs as they hurriedly left the training grounds. Their steps

were rather hasty.

“The direction they’re heading in is—”

*The Judge’s Complex!*

The two of them exchanged a glance. Although they usually fought endlessly, their rapport was very high at that moment. They jumped down from the roof together and chased after the two vice-captains.

## *Chapter #2: My... Part 3—Companion*

Using all his strength, Elaro rushed into the Judge's Complex with Ludia in his arms. A bunch of people were crowded inside. They were all members of the Judgment Knight Platoon. They were huddled in a circle, so he could not see what the situation was like in the center.

"Out of the way!"

Only after Elaro's shout did the holy knights ahead notice his arrival and hasten to open a path for him.

There were already three clerics casting healing spells. Based on everyone's expressions, the criminal must have still been alive. Elaro relaxed a bit. He took large strides forward and placed Ludia right in the middle of the scene.

Before she had even been set on the ground, Ludia was already chanting an incantation for a healing spell. The Pope had always praised the power behind her healing spells. Even though she needed to use incantations to aid even her Minor Heals, the effect was so much better than what many other clerics could achieve when casting spells of the same level.

The three clerics wholeheartedly welcomed Ludia's arrival, looking very grateful. However, they continued without a pause, laboriously casting healing spells. In no time at all, the originally dim Judge's Complex was filled with pale yellow healing light.

As far as healing was concerned, Elaro was unnecessary. So he had

the time to examine the situation.

The criminal lay encircled by the crowd. With the entire figure enveloped by the light of the healing spells, Elaro could not determine the condition of the injuries, so he dismissed them for the moment. He raised his head to look around, searching for the person he was more concerned about at the moment.

Hungri was standing to the side with his head lowered, watching the criminal silently.

He seemed to feel Elaro's attention. When he raised his head, he found Elaro staring straight at him.

Hungri was not too surprised. After all, he knew that a member of the Judgment Knight Platoon had gone off to find Elaro, even though Hungri had reminded him that Elaro would not be much help in saving the criminal. Still, the holy knight had rushed off at the first possible moment to seek Elaro out.

Although Elaro could not offer much assistance, his very presence was enough to calm everyone down greatly. Hungri looked toward Elaro. He had his brows furrowed deeply. His mature face and tall stature made him look a bit older than his actual age, and also made him more imposing. Although his renowned smile was absent, he still made Hungri feel that Elaro was—*the Sun Knight*.

Elaro made a gesture toward the exit. Hungri nodded without a word. The two of them left the Judge's Complex in single file. Elaro, in front, quietly sucked in a deep breath before he turned to face Hungri.

"After I left, did you bring the criminal out again to torture a confession out of him?"

However, Elaro was already convinced. When he had left, the criminal's injuries had not been severe enough to be life-threatening; but he asked anyway, holding on to a shred of hope that there was some kind of misunderstanding.

Hungri nodded wordlessly.

"Why?" Elaro looked at him sadly. He had initially retained some hope. He had hoped that the situation was not what it looked like, and it was merely that the severity of the criminal's original injuries had caused him to worsen over time.

However, that was really unlikely to have been the case. The Judge's Complex used very unique interrogation methods, mostly ones that would cause severe pain without leading to fatal injuries. In addition, as far as lessons required of a Judgment Knight were concerned, Hungri had always been a star pupil. Even the strict Judgment Knight had never been very critical, since Hungri had fulfilled expectations immediately.

Therefore, if a criminal were to die from interrogation, the likeliest possibility was that Hungri had done it on purpose. Elaro didn't want to think that way, but he knew Hungri too well. He knew the answer without even needing to speculate.

When he saw Elaro's expression, Hungri finally opened his mouth to

speak. "He was asking for a beating. That's it. There's no other reason!"

"Hungri, you need to stay calm and impartial—"

"I can't!" Hungri cut Elaro's words off with a furious shout. "You don't have to look at those scum day in and day out, seeing their evil deeds, hearing them talk. That's the only reason you can talk about 'staying calm and impartial' so easily!"

Elaro opened his mouth but could not retort. If he had to name one of the duties of the Twelve Holy Knights that he was completely unable to take part in, his only answer could be the interrogations carried out at the Judge's Complex.

In order to carry out an interrogation, one needed to undergo extremely specialized training. The Judgment Knight did not even let Hungri carry out real interrogations often, so of course Elaro would never be able to interrogate a criminal.

"I hate these criminals—no! I *loathe* them! I always have to pry out bit by bit the ugly, disgusting, and despicable crimes they've committed. Even when there's conclusive evidence, they're still full of excuses, and they just love to blame all their wrongdoings on the victims they've killed!"

"The most ridiculous excuse I've heard was from a rapist who blamed a girl whose skirt swayed around, saying that she was purposely seducing him!" Hungri glared at Elaro and asked, emphasizing each word, "Having heard this, do you still think those people have the right to live?"

Elaro's face fell. His tone was reproachful as he said, "The outcome should be the result of your judgment, not a side effect of your interrogation method! Hungri, if you let your emotions steer your actions and end up losing control, what difference is there between you and raging common folk? If anger alone is enough to decide the punishment, what need is there for the Judge's Complex?"

By the time Elaro finished, Hungri's expression had become hesitant. But then he heard Elaro use a worried and helpless tone to say, "If you had truly beaten the criminal to death, the situation might have been unsalvageable..."

Hungri clenched his teeth and said, "So what if he dies? In any case, I've already investigated thoroughly. The evidence is conclusive! It's definitely the death penalty!"

Seeing Hungri stubbornly refusing to acknowledge his mistake, Elaro actually became a bit angry. "Even if it is the death penalty, you shouldn't be the one beating him to death! His crime needs to be judged first, and then he needs to be publicly sentenced, letting the entire populace see the result of committing a crime!"

Hungri sulked but did not say a word.

It made Elaro feel truly disappointed. He had no more words he could use to persuade him. In the end, the only thing he could do was use the Judgment Knight to repress his student. "Hungri, you respect Knight-Captain Judgment a lot. Have you ever seen him lose control during an interrogation? Although the way he treats criminals is very

harsh, it's all for the sake of getting them to confess, not for punishing them. You should know this even better than I do."

Hungri stayed silent for a long time until he suddenly said, "I'm still not qualified enough, am I?"

"What?" Elaro stilled.

Hungri lifted his head, the rims of his eyes slightly red. His tone was barely controlled as he said, "I'm not anywhere near qualified enough to be your Judgment Knight yet, am I?"

Looking at Hungri's expression, Elaro experienced a rare moment of panic. Hungri had been extremely stubborn since they were young. Forget crying; even seeing him show any sign of weakness was a rare occurrence. It was only when he committed extremely grave errors that he ever lowered his head to apologize.

"Hungri, what are you talking about? None of us have become the Twelve Holy Knights yet—"

Hungri cut him off. "If it weren't because the rest of us are still too young, you would have already become the Sun Knight! It's only that I'm still not qualified to be the Judgment Knight, so you're unable to take your rightful place, but I..."

Without finishing his statement, he suddenly stopped speaking. Elaro felt completely helpless and had no idea what to do.

"I—I just can't be as good as Teacher!"



After shouting, he could not remain where he was any longer. The tears in his eyes were already... He turned his head and ran off.

*Hungri!* Elaro opened his mouth but couldn't actually call out to stop him. He wouldn't have known what to do afterwards.

Seeing Hungri run farther and farther away, Elaro could not keep his mood from dropping.

"I don't have the qualifications to be the Sun Knight either. I can't even get along with my Twelve Holy Knight companions whom I will be with for the next twenty years, so how could I be worthy to lead you all..."

Sounds drifted over from afar. Elaro raised his head to look. Dili and Rhonelin seemed to have bumped right into Hungri and were currently staring at him in stupefaction. Even farther away, he could see Shuis and Valica closing in as well.

Hungri seemed to have noticed Shuis and Valica's arrival too. He pivoted and left in a different direction to avoid running into them.

"Captain, Hungri was cry—" Dili hurriedly said. Although Rhonelin, who was next to him, did not speak, he also had a surprised look on his face.

Elaro waved his hand, preventing Dili from speaking further. He waited for Shuis and Valica to catch up.

When they stood in front of him together, Elaro suddenly felt that something was off, but he couldn't figure out what was so strange.

Shuis glanced in the direction Hungri had gone and said discontentedly, "Hungri caused trouble again? Big Bro Elaro, does he need to be brought back and punished?"

"Hungri is always causing trouble for Big Bro Elaro!" Valica continued after Shuis, his tone similarly discontented. "Bring him back and punish him like last time!"

*Has the mood between these two gotten... much friendlier?* Elaro was a little puzzled. He didn't understand how these two people who had still been completely at odds so recently could suddenly get along so much better.

"Last time? What exactly happened last time?" Dili was unbearably curious. He resolved that except for mandatory missions, he would never go out again!

Rhonelin opened his mouth, wanting to speak, but hesitated for a moment and looked toward Elaro.

Elaro smiled wryly and said, "He's already seventeen. How can it be like last time, when I dragged him over and spanked him?"

"...Captain, you dragged Hungri over and spanked him?" Dili stared at his captain in disbelief.

When he recalled what had happened that time, Elaro grew a little embarrassed and hurriedly said, "That happened several years ago.

Hungri was only a child then.”

”He was fourteen then. It’s only a three-year difference...”

He didn’t know who had whispered that just then, but Elaro grew even more embarrassed. He was also quite rueful. In the past, when his anger surpassed the limit, he could impulsively grab Hungri and spank his butt, because he looked just like a kid. However, as they grew older and older, Elaro was more and more at a loss on how to associate with this group of “younger brother companions.”

Ludia and a few members of the Judgment Knight Platoon walked out. In the back, two people were carrying a stretcher, while two people in front were responsible for opening a path.

Elaro hurried over in concern. “Has the criminal been saved?” After he asked, he saw how exhausted his sister looked. He added sympathetically, “Saving him must have been difficult?”

Ludia shook her head. “I was just too nervous. The injuries weren’t actually that severe and didn’t need so much healing. I misjudged, so I cast too many healing spells. That’s why it was so exhausting.”

When Elaro heard her words, he thought something wasn’t quite right. Since the Judgment Knight Platoon had been so nervous, the injuries had to have been very severe. They had carried out interrogations for many years and were experts at judging the severity of an injury. Moreover, this even involved an injury that could have been fatal, so it was unlikely that they would misjudge it.

Seeing Ludia's furtive glances, Elaro understood and smiled faintly, "And you say that I coddle my younger brothers. Don't you do the same?" *If the injury isn't as severe, then Hungri's punishment would have to be lighter too, right?*

Realizing she had been exposed, Ludia's face reddened, but she did not deny it.

"Oh my, Shu, Valy, you both came!" Ludia smiled as she said, "And even Linie!"

Shuis and Valica had both been used to Ludia's nicknames since they were young, and they didn't think there was anything wrong with them. They even enjoyed being called them very much. If they were in private, they would even reply with "Big Sis Lulu."

Rhonelin, on the other hand, felt a bit more awkward. After all, his age and Ludia's were not that far apart, and he wasn't like the two in front who had known Ludia in childhood. Even though he had been called "Linie" for one or two years already, he was still really, really not used to it!

Dili stifled his laughter and said quietly, "Actually, if we're going by age, then I'm even more suited to calling you Linie, right?" After he said this, "Linie" immediately rolled his eyes at him.

"Brother Li, what are you laughing about?" Ludia looked at Dili with large, bright eyes, pretending to be puzzled.

When he heard this nickname, Dili could only force a smile. He really

didn't understand why it was "Brother Li" and not "Brother Di." Brother Li made him sound like a warrior bursting with muscles, when in actuality, his fighting strength could not even compare to "Linie's."

Elaro watched his sister joke around with his subordinates and saw that Shuis and Valica seemed to have reconciled. Thus, his mood lifted a bit, but he still could not stop thinking about the worsening relationship between Hungri and him...

"Elaro."

Two holy knights from the Judgment Knight Platoon jogged up to Elaro but seemed hesitant to speak. Elaro could guess that they had probably come to speak on Hungri's behalf. Although Knight-Captain Judgment often had headaches over Hungri's willfulness and rashness, it was precisely because Hungri had this kind of blunt temperament, always flying into a rage over the criminals, that several members of the Judgment Knight Platoon liked him and would particularly dote on him.

*Perhaps the Judgment Knight Platoon cannot escape blame for Hungri's continued inability to confront criminals calmly?* Elaro thought helplessly.

"Do you need me for something?" Elaro still decided to listen to what the platoon members had to say.

"Hungri did not drag the criminal out to interrogate him out of selfishness." The Judgment Knight Platoon member emphasized, "We were all present. We would not have let him do so!"

Elaro was stunned but hurriedly asked, "Really? Then why was he interrogated again?"

"Really!" The Judgment Knight Platoon member nodded and said, "Not long after you left, that criminal started yelling in the jail. He admitted that the other two missing girls had also been killed by him, so Hungri brought him out, wanting to press him further for the location of the corpses. However, he kept refusing to divulge the information, only repeatedly describing how he had killed them. His speech was obscene and truly unbearable..."

After revealing this, a nearly uncontrollable fury came over his face. He even needed to stop speaking to take in several deep breaths.

Having heard this reason, Elaro grew even more dejected. Just now, Hungri hadn't mentioned any reasons at all. *Does he feel there is no need to explain to me, or does he feel I would not listen?*

"I've been at the Judge's Complex for so long, but even I really wanted to privately do him in... Cough!" The holy knight hurriedly coughed several times. "I mean, even I felt furious, not to mention that Hungri is still a child. It can't be helped that his temper is a bit heated. However, I'm not saying that he's in the right, just that he shouldn't be blamed too much."

Elaro shook his head and said, "This is such a major event. You will have to report it to Knight-Captain Judgment, right? What do you think Knight-Captain Judgment will do after he hears what happened?"

Hearing "Knight-Captain Judgment," the holy knight frowned and murmured uneasily, "Last time, he had only beaten the criminal half to death and he got confined for a month. This time, it's almost to death.

I'm afraid..."

Ludia had originally been listening quietly, but when she heard this, she could no longer hold back. She shouted, "Brother! You have to help Hungri!"

Elaro furrowed his brows. Of course he would help Hungri, but if Knight-Captain Judgment truly decided on something, who could possibly stop him... *Teacher can!*

Elaro thought it funny that he had actually forgotten this. At the same time, he relaxed a bit. Even if Knight-Captain Judgment were truly considering switching out Hungri, Teacher would definitely be able to stop it!

Shuis said angrily, "Don't help him! Let him get confined. Otherwise, he's going to bring trouble to Brother Elaro day and night!"

Although Hungri had indeed caused trouble, the Judgment Knight Platoon members were still upset when they heard Shuis's words. When it came down to it, Hungri was their most precious Judgment Knight-in-training. Saying such things in front of them was a bit rude. Elaro looked at Shuis seriously and said, "Last time, Knight-Captain Judgment said that if Hungri were to commit the mistake of letting his emotions affect his interrogations again, unable to separate his private feelings from his work, then he would consider replacing him. If this were to be the punishment, would you be able to accept it?"

"Replace him?" Shuis froze. He hadn't thought the situation was that serious. Even though he wanted Hungri to be punished, he hadn't

thought the punishment would be as grave as getting replaced.

Elaro was familiar with the backup Judgment Knight candidate. He was a pretty good person. Although he was not as skilled as Hungri at interrogations, he had a much calmer personality. Significantly, that candidate was already over twenty years old. Because their ages were closer, he got along pretty well with Elaro.

*If they were switched...* Elaro shook his head. *No! I don't want them to be switched!*

*Why don't I want them to be switched?*

A flash of doubt came over him, but Elaro was unable to come up with an answer. Why didn't he want Hungri to be replaced? Regarding his duties, Hungri couldn't separate his private feelings from work. Regarding personal matters, he and Hungri had communication problems all year round.

Unable to think of any reasons other than his personal feelings, Elaro grew even more worried. If even he couldn't find a convincing reason, then could it be that bystanders wouldn't be able to find one either?

*Why had Knight-Captain Judgment chosen such a young child as Hungri that year?*

*And why do I feel that Hungri should not be replaced?*

Elaro looked in the direction Hungri had run. He didn't understand Knight-Captain Judgment's thoughts from back then, and he didn't



even know his own thoughts now.

## Notes On The Chapter

1 **“Brother Li”**: Li (力) means power.

*Chapter #3: Secret... Part 1—The Debt Owed by Whom*

Today was the day of Teacher's return.

Elaro was extremely happy. There were many questions he wanted to ask his teacher. Although he was very worried that Hungri would get punished, and that it might even result in him getting replaced, Elaro believed that his teacher would be able to prevent something like that from happening. Therefore, he was actually not all that worried that Hungri would be replaced.

Although he knew he should not rely on his teacher—after all, someone his age should already be assuming responsibility—Elaro currently had too many worries. That included Hungri, who didn't want to see his face at all and was constantly avoiding him. The Judgment Knight Platoon was even helping Hungri avoid him. This gave Elaro quite a big headache. In addition, he was always busy with a lot of things whenever the Twelve Holy Knights weren't at the Holy Temple, so he simply wasn't able to think of any good solutions, or find time to discuss things with Hungri.

For example, Elaro was currently walking along the corridors of the palace. Only Dili followed behind him. Although he was already busy enough recently, if the king wanted to see him, he still had no choice but to set aside all of his tasks and go to the king's court as quickly as possible.

When he reached the hall's doors, Elaro smiled at the two royal knights guarding it. They did not smile in return, but Elaro wasn't unhappy because of that. The royal knights had always been this way,

and his teacher even claimed, "Originally, they were already as unyielding as rocks. After getting a good king, their hardness is now rivaling diamonds!"

Elaro had already entered the palace many times, and the people of Leaf Bud City, prestigious or otherwise, all commended him for his personality. Even diamond-hard knights could not help but soften a bit and speak to him politely, "Before meeting His Majesty, a search must be conducted."

Elaro raised his hands and turned around in a circle, allowing the other person to sweep him over with his eyes. Dili, however, did not receive such good treatment and was directly searched.

"Please enter," the royal knights said and smiled slightly. No matter how stiff they were, when facing the future Sun Knight, who always wore a smile, and who had a kind and approachable bearing, their solid defenses would be breached. They had very good impressions of Elaro.

"Thanks for your trouble." After giving his thanks, Elaro entered the great hall and immediately saw His Majesty, the king.

The king was already over fifty, his hair streaked with white. Although he didn't have too many wrinkles, the groove between his eyebrows was particularly deep. It made him appear like he was always frowning and troubled. However, with Elaro's understanding of the king, he could tell that his expression was not one of worry. This allowed Elaro to relax a bit. Nothing major should have happened.

He went down on one knee and said in a clear voice, "At your service, Your Majesty."

After the king indicated for him to rise, the king buried himself in his documents again. This was normal. The king never spoke much. Two knights stood by his sides. Originally, it was one old and one young, but now it had become two young knights, and there was also another person who sat close by...

Elaro smiled at the person to the side. "It's been a few days, Marquis Elijah."

Elijah chuckled openly and said, "I bet you don't want to see me at all!" "Hahaha—" Elaro answered with a laugh as well.

"...You should at least say it's not like that, right?"

Elaro's tone was apologetic. "Sorry, Marquis Elijah, but I don't want to tell any lies."

"Could I ask for you not to be so honest?" Elijah rolled his eyes at him and took out a stack of papers. "His Majesty has a mission for you. The faster you resolve it, the better. These are the details of the mission."

Elaro moved forward to take the stack of papers. After he finished looking them over, he actually apologized. "Your Majesty, please forgive me for being unable to carry out the mission."

When he heard this, the king lifted his head. Even Elijah, who was off

to the side, furrowed his brows. The mood immediately turned strained.

Elijah said sternly, "Such disrespect! Even the Sun Knight does not have the power to refuse the king!"

Elaro stilled. Although Elijah was the one who had spoken these words, Elaro could see that his eyes held no fury and instead held concern. It was the king whose face was full of anger... Startled, Elaro was about to explain, when he heard a call from outside.

"Her Majesty has arrived—"

The queen entered the great hall, holding hands with a little girl. The girl, who had originally been demure, immediately struggled free of the queen's grasp upon seeing Elaro. She jogged right in front of him.

"Big Brother Elaro!" She looked at Elaro expectantly, as if waiting for some kind of reward.

"Your Highness." Elaro bent down and gave her a smile. However, he did not rub her head like he usually did, because the young princess currently had her hair done up in two buns. It made rubbing her hair inconvenient.

The young princess waited for a long time. Then, she touched her head and realized that she had two buns on top of it. Of course her head would not get rubbed like that.

When he saw the queen and the princess arrive, the king's expression relaxed. He didn't want to frighten the two most important women in

his life: his wife who had accompanied him through half of his life already, and their precious daughter, the next heir of the royal family, whom they hadn't managed to have until they were already advanced in years.

Elaro was grateful to the queen and princess. Their arrival had immediately improved the mood. When he saw the young princess pouting, he said, "Pardon my rudeness," and lifted her up. In a split second, he abruptly remembered that the person he was currently hugging could very well become the queen of the Kingdom of Forgotten Sound, which was a rare thing indeed!

Years ago, the entire kingdom had been betting on when Princess Jasmine and Marquis Elijah would bear the heir, and whether the first born of the royal family would be a princess or a prince. However, the king suddenly announced that the queen had given birth to a princess. Countless people had lost a fortune then.

That year, Teacher had also lost a lot of money, and he had confronted Marquis Elijah for it, choking him until he foamed at the mouth. He yelled at him for being a useless, money-losing commodity, and that he really should have let the Pope scheme him to death back then and be done with it.

Elaro was very curious about what exactly had happened "back then," but his teacher claimed that it was just a boring, trivial matter. His teacher had no intention of clarifying anything, so Elaro didn't ask further.

He lifted his head to look at the king, and explained apologetically,

"Your Majesty, the Holy Temple is very willing to carry out the mission you have tasked us with, but to carry out this mission, one must leave Leaf Bud City. Right now, the Twelve Holy Knights are out on a mission and have yet to return. I have currently assumed the Sun Knight's duty of leading the Holy Temple. Is it possible to wait for the teachers to return before carrying out this mission?"

In actuality, the king had already thought that this might be a misunderstanding—the person before him was Elaro, not Grisia—so when he heard the explanation, his expression relaxed. He glanced at Elijah, and the latter said, "So that's how it is. According to my understanding, they should be returning today. Waiting until they return to the Holy Temple to carry out the mission will not be too late."

"Thank you very much for understanding, Your Majesty."

Elaro noted the mission down in his mind as part of his itinerary. Although it was the Holy Temple's duty in name, it was actually his teacher's responsibility.

In all, his teacher owed the king one hundred missions—the Judgment Knight had been the one to write the IOU, so that the king would pay the army to crusade against the Demon King. The Pope had been the one to stamp the seal, so that he wouldn't have to pay as much of the army fees; the Sun Knight was the one who had to pay off the debt, and all complaints were ineffective in front of the Judgment Knight's churlishness.

The king assigned all sorts of missions. The only commonality among them was that they were all "littered with challenges." Even though



the king knew that the Sun Knight could not leave Leaf Bud City, he didn't take that into consideration at all because he knew that the Sun Knight had a lot of resources on hand. His location didn't matter. When the Sun Knight completed the 38th mission, he finally blew his top. From then on, he completely refused to acknowledge that he owed any debts. He could even point at the IOUs, including other ones written by himself, and say that he was a blind person who could not see.

*Lying with his eyes open!* The king had seethed with anger, but he hadn't dared to pressure him too much. If they caused the Demon King to resurface over a piece of paper, anyone who knew the truth would probably split their sides laughing and burst into fury at the same time.

In the end, the king could only seek out the Judgment Knight, the one who had written the IOU. He would definitely not allow this IOU to be buried, like it had never happened.

When the Judgment Knight received the mission tasked by the king, he happened to be extremely busy, so he had Elaro tell that to his teacher. However, the Sun Knight refused to take on the mission, and had Elaro return to tell the Judgment Knight. Then, Elaro discovered that the Judgment Knight had already left the city on an investigation, but the mission's deadline was drawing near. One side was adamant on disregarding the debt, while the other side had nothing to collect. In the end, Elaro had no choice but to complete the 39th mission himself.

Once the king discovered that the one reporting back was actually

Elaro, he then assigned all missions to him from that moment on. Once the Sun Knight discovered that his student was already capable of completing such difficult missions, he then refused to take on any missions from Elaro, using the excuse, "There's no such thing as a student assigning his teacher missions." After that, Elaro could only obediently complete the 40th mission, the 41st...

*If an IOU written by the Judgment Knight has to be paid off by the Sun Knight, then having the student pay off the teacher's debts is even more right and proper!*

When the Judgment Knight came to criticize him, that was how the Sun Knight had replied.

At the time, to prevent the Demon King from resurfacing... or the danger of having the Demon King get killed, Elaro hugged an enraged Judgment Knight tightly, stopping him from rushing out to beat up the leader of the Holy Temple. He even emphasized that he was very willing to complete the missions, and that it had nothing to do with Teacher, and so on...

The Judgment Knight gave Elaro a piercing look, and then he turned and clobbered the Sun Knight. Only after that did he turn and leave, washing his hands of the whole affair.

From then on, Elaro began entering the palace frequently. He became friends with Marquis Elijah despite his age, and he played with the cute young princess, becoming her favorite big brother. Later on, even the queen doted on him, for she had no sons of her own.

The king was quite fond of this serious and responsible child as well, though that didn't mean he ever cut back on assigning missions.

If it wasn't because it would be a big problem for the royal family to adopt the future Sun Knight, Elaro would have become the adopted son of the royal family. The king simply could not approve the queen's suggestion.

"Elaro, you're not that young anymore." Elijah asked, "Has the Church of the God of Light decided on when the next generation of the Twelve Holy Knights will take over?"

Elaro reported back truthfully, "It hasn't been decided yet."

"Why hasn't it been decided yet?" The king actually spoke, his tone disapproving.

"My other companions are still young. It's not yet an appropriate time for succession, so the teachers have no plans to pass on their positions yet."

The king said calmly, "Deciding on a time does not mean succession must happen right away. It's best to decide on a 'definite time for succession.' This way, trainees would have the awareness of the heavy responsibility they will eventually carry."

Elaro agreed whole-heartedly, "Your Majesty is right."

Although he knew that His Majesty's words made sense, Elaro was not someone who could open his mouth to call attention to this. He had

always been very careful to never ever bring up any suggestions that sounded like “urging.” After all, *he* was the one whose age was too far apart from everyone else’s...

“Big Brother Elaro.” The young princess wanted attention. “Let’s go to the gardens together to eat cake, okay?”

Elaro smiled apologetically. “I’m sorry. I’m currently a little busy. How about I eat cake with you next time?”

The little princess’s face fell, but even though she was young, she was relatively mature because of her royal upbringing, so she did not cry or complain. She merely nodded and buried herself completely in big brother’s embrace.

*Big Brother is really busy. He’ll definitely leave soon.* She had to take the opportunity to have him spoil her. He always gave off a faint fragrance, one that couldn’t be smelled if you weren’t close enough. However, the little princess had discovered the fragrance ever since the first time Elaro had lifted her up. She liked this scent a lot, so whenever Elaro came, she would always plaster herself to him as much as possible.

*Big Brother still isn’t rubbing my head.* The little princess touched her head, coming across the two buns again. She was a little frustrated and vowed that she would never tie her hair in buns again.

Elaro noticed the young princess’s actions and smiled as he lightly pinched her cheeks. She then started beaming.

The queen thought it amusing, watching these two interact just like siblings, or even father and daughter, and then seeing the king with his brows furrowed, apparently a little jealous. She smiled as she said, "Elaro, when you're finished and have time, come and have some tea."

"I will."



As Elaro walked back to the Holy Temple, his posture remained tall despite the blistering heat, his back as straight as a sword. Although he didn't look hurried or slow, he was tall and had long legs, so his large strides were the same as a normal person's jogging speed.

Dili hurried to follow by his side. Although he wasn't short, he had no choice but to break out in a jog every now and then to catch up with Elaro's strides.

Actually, no matter how fast they walked, riding a horse would be faster. However, the sun was truly bright today, and it was precisely noon at the moment, so Elaro would never let himself be in the sun for longer than five minutes. Therefore, he could only walk, and he walked under roofs the entire time. If he had no choice but to walk under the sun because there were no roofs, he would hasten his steps so that his time under the sun never surpassed ten seconds.

Dili had always thought this habit of Elaro's to be very strange. It really didn't seem like the behavior he would have, but it was true that Elaro really did not like being in the sun.

Dili took in the color of his captain's skin. Although it wasn't as white

as snow like the current Sun Knight's skin—using such a description to describe a man truly had a strangeness to it that was hard to voice— it could be considered fair, fairer than many girls'. To people who knew Elaro, it didn't feel like Elaro would care about something like the color of his skin.

*Besides, with Captain's build, a bronze color would match him better!*  
Dili deeply believed so.

"Is something wrong? Is there something strange about my appearance?"

Sensing Dili's gaze, Elaro grew nervous, especially since his teacher would return today. If his teacher were to discover that Elaro's appearance wasn't perfect, then even if the punishment was light, he would still have to apply ten days' worth of facial masks. He was already almost out of money to buy the essential oils... Come to think of it, he still needed to buy the essential oils on the way back.

He should have applied facial masks yesterday, but it wasn't until nighttime that Elaro remembered he had forgotten to purchase the essential oils. He could only guiltily vow that he would definitely apply facial masks the next day!

"Nothing, my mind just wandered for a moment," Dili hurriedly answered.

Relieved, Elaro nodded. Immediately after, he suddenly coughed once. With his vice-captain's suspicious gaze on him, he said, "Dili, I need to buy some things. Wait here for a bit."

"Got it."

Dili knew inside his heart that his captain was going to go buy "that thing" again. Rhonelin had also experienced "stay in your original spot and wait for Captain to return for you." Dili had always been very curious what exactly his captain was buying, and he'd discussed it with Rhonelin before. Although Rhonelin was not very interested in probing into people's private matters, he still had his own guesses.

"Should be perfume."

Dili had been stunned. "Captain uses perfume? I've never smelled it before."

"One time when I sparred with Captain, I smelled the fragrance he gave off. The scent is very faint, so you have to be very close to smell it."

"Does Captain like perfume?" Dili's feelings were mixed, as he had discovered yet another habit that really didn't match his captain. However, who didn't have at least some sort of strange habit? It was just that his captain's... strange habits were a bit numerous.

*On his next birthday, maybe I should give Captain a bottle of perfume? I wonder what kind of perfume Captain likes?*

"Floral!" Rhonelin was very certain. "What I smelled was a floral fragrance!"

"F-Floral, huh..."

Recalling this "past event" that had happened not too long ago, Dili abruptly remembered the matter he was recently distressed about—should he buy a rose or a lavender perfume? The shop assistant said that these were the two most popular perfumes in their shop, and the scent was pretty good... coming from a girl, that was.

When Dili considered Elaro having these two fragrances coming from him, he was left completely speechless. Maybe he should go together with Rhonelin to the perfume shop so that he could smell and figure out just what kind of perfume their captain used...



Elaro turned his head to look around. He felt that there were eyes staring at him from behind, but he had been over thinking. There was no one behind him, only an empty alley.

Teacher had instructed him thousands and millions of times never to let anyone realize that his fair skin was the result of facial masks. Otherwise, it would destroy the public's view of the Sun Knight. Furthermore...

*If all the women in the city fought with us over the materials for our facial masks, then the prices of the materials would definitely greatly increase! That is definitely something that cannot be allowed to happen! My salary is already low enough! I already owe enough debts! If the price of the materials keeps increasing, I'd rather go back and be the Demon King!*



At the time, Elaro had thought his teacher to be too emotional. Then, as he grew older, he began carrying out missions, and later took on his teacher's debt. The missions assigned by the king were all highly difficult, but because they were not part of the Church of the God of Light's duties, the Pope was pretty much unwilling to provide any financial help, so Elaro could only use his own salary to complete them.

The expenditures grew explosively just like his own height, but his salary was more like Hungri's height... Perhaps he shouldn't make such a comparison. In short, whenever there were any years with subpar harvests, causing the price of essential oils to rise by three percent, he would have the urge to serve as the Demon King's subordinate.

Luckily, he had Ludia, who could help him a bit, no matter if it was a cleric's ability to heal or... his sister's salary.

Ludia had gotten into the habit of directly handing Elaro half of her salary whenever she got it. Even so, he was often still unable to make ends meet. There were several times when he had to borrow money from Shuis. Shuis never asked any questions.

There was once when he really had no choice and even had to borrow money from Valica. However, when Elaro saw how hard Valica had to try to squash the suspicion in his eyes, Elaro vowed that he would never borrow money from Valica again, unless he was completely cornered. Three months later, the king assigned him two missions at the same time, completely cornering Elaro.

Elaro had an endless amount of things he had to do, frequently cornered with no way out, and only able to complete the tasks

assigned by the king on his own, since there was absolutely no way he could explain to other people why he had to take care of these matters. Sometimes, he wondered if he might be able to lower a lot of his stress if he told Dili and Rhonelin about things like applying facial masks. Then, at least he could borrow money when necessary.

"For the sake of whitening my skin, I apply facial masks every week. Actually, it's not exactly 'facial masks,' since I have to take off all of my clothes. That's why the amount of essential oil necessary is alarming. I often can't make ends meet. Please lend me money..."

*No, no, I better keep it a secret from them for now!* Elaro felt a headache coming on.

The moment he entered the essential oils shop, the shop assistant greeted him familiarly, "Good afternoon, holy knight Elaro. Are you here to buy the oil for your sister today as well?"

Elaro smiled brightly as he said, "Yes."

"It's being used up so quickly!" The shop assistant exclaimed, "Your sister must love this type of oil, huh? This type isn't cheap at all!"

"...It's true that it's not cheap." Elaro's smile faded a bit.

*"Elaro, do you know what the Sun Knight's number one task is?"*

*Elaro nodded at his teacher. "Recruit worshippers!"*

*"Wrong, that's the most important task, but not the first task you must*

*do! 'Whitening' is the true first task. Your skin is really very dark. You must be in the sun a lot, right?"*

*"Every day during daytime, I'm in the sun." Elaro felt that this was a given.*

*"I'm sure you aren't maintaining your skin?"*

*"What's maintaining?"*

*Elaro was a little puzzled, but he didn't receive an answer. Instead, his cheeks were grabbed and kneaded.*

*"My God of Light, your skin is as rough as sand! Aren't you a child who should have soft skin and tender cheeks? You—"*

*Elaro, whose cheeks were currently pulled into a deformed shape from both sides, stared at his teacher with wide eyes, not understanding why his teacher had suddenly stopped in the middle of his words. In the next moment, his cheeks were released. Elaro rubbed his face and heard his teacher's question.*

*"You and Ludia are orphans, right? How did you solve the problem of eating and staying clothed?"*

*The jump in topic was too big. Elaro was stumped for a moment before he could respond. Then, he recounted the means one by one. "There are lots of fruits that can be picked during the summer. I know how to make traps to catch rabbits and squirrels. I can also use rocks to hit them. Sometimes, the hunters would be in a good mood and lend me*

*a bow. I could shoot down a lot of prey and exchange for bread, clothes, and blankets. That's how we escaped the cold during the winters."*

*Elaro paused, remembering the winters he went through during those times... He sucked in several deep breaths before he could continue. "Winters are troublesome. They're cold, and I can't catch any animals. It's very hard to get anything to eat. When we really had no choice, we could only seek the villagers out."*

*Teacher stayed silent for a long time. He didn't say anything and only took out an entire row of bottles the size of a pinkie from a cabinet. He said, "Following the usual practice of the Sun Knight, choose your favorite scent."*

*Following that, Elaro fought bravely through the various fragrances. Suddenly, he smelled a very familiar fragrance and exclaimed, "Teacher, is this the scent you give off?"*

*"That's right. This is lavender essential oil. It has many uses, but most importantly, it's quite cheap among essential oils—"*

*"Teacher, this one smells so good!" Elaro cried out in surprise, holding a small bottle in his hands.*

*"This one is... Are you sure you really like this one?"*

*Elaro made sure by smelling it again. He nodded his head up and down. "Yeah! I only like this one!"*

*"Only like this one?" His teacher was silent for a moment, and then muttered, "At least, it's a little cheaper than 'roses' which my teacher picked... Elaro, remember this!"*

*"Yes!" Elaro was very serious.*

*"This essential oil was chosen by 'yourself.' Don't hate me in the future!"*

*But Teacher, sometimes I really do hate that you didn't stop me then...*  
Elaro took hold of the familiar small bottle, smelling the fragrance that he'd liked then and still liked now, his heart conflicted.

"Three bottles, like usual?" The shop assistant smoothly took out the essential oils.

"Yes."

The shop assistant said apologetically, "However, the harvest this year hasn't been good. The prices of the essential oils have all risen by around ten percent, while this is the only one that has risen by twenty percent. Do you still want three bottles?"

*Teacher, I, I really want to hate you!*

"Yes..."

### Chapter #3: Secret... Part 2—What Kind of Fragrance

After carefully stashing away the three little bottles in his coat pocket, Elaro left the essential oil shop. His mood was the complete opposite of his pocket—heavy, while his pocket was light. He didn't know how he was going to complete the king's mission, especially since it was a mission that was very far from Leaf Bud City. The traveling, food, and lodging expenses alone would be endless...

*Do I still have no choice but to borrow from Ludia? Ah! I just borrowed from her last week. The money she has left is probably only enough for meals on non-work days. Maybe Shuis instead... No, last month, Shuis already took his next month's pay in advance to lend to me. So, there's only Valica left?*

Elaro abruptly stopped walking. He recalled that before the teachers had left on their mission, the Leaf Knight had smilingly signed for a box full of seasonings. *Is his own salary really enough for him to buy that box of seasonings...?*

Elaro wanted to be more optimistic, but he found that he absolutely couldn't deceive himself. The Leaf Knight surely must have taken Valica's salary to pay for the seasonings.

He took in a deep breath. In the end, if he really had no other choice, at most he'd just have to go and borrow money from Teacher Grisia. After all, this was originally a mission he had to complete. So, Elaro should be able to... be able to successfully borrow money from him... Probably...

Suddenly, screams and sounds of a disturbance came from afar. Elaro's hand immediately closed around the hilt of his sword, but then he wondered, *Could the teachers have returned?*

Today was indeed the scheduled date for the teachers' return. If the Twelve Holy Knights appeared together on the streets, it would not be strange for such an uproar to result. Elaro relaxed a bit, until he heard a familiar voice within the commotion.

"Captain—"

*No!* Elaro's face abruptly paled. Even if the teachers had returned, they would return straight to the Church of the God of Light. There was absolutely no way they would appear on the streets; they had used a teleportation circle to leave Leaf Bud City!

He heard a faint cry of "Captain" again. *There's no doubt about it. It's definitely Dili's voice!* Elaro immediately broke into a run, and he didn't even keep to the streets properly. Instead, with a single step, he jumped onto the rooftops and rushed straight toward the place where Dili had been waiting for him.

The distance wasn't far, just a few streets, and running along the rooftops was even faster. After only a dozen or so leaps, Elaro could see Dili right below the roof he stood on. Dili had his sword raised, fighting off two enemies while he shouted for the surrounding citizens to quickly leave.

Elaro's eyes widened, and he shouted, "Dili! Watch out on the left!" Hearing his captain's voice, Dili turned his head reflexively to look at

him with a joyful expression. However, he hadn't heard Elaro's warning clearly, and had even shifted his gaze away in the middle of battle, so both the engaged enemy right in front of him and the enemy sneaking up on him from the left succeeded in their attacks.

The enemy in front of him used a knife and was originally targeting Dili's chest. However, because Dili had turned to look toward Elaro, only his left arm got slashed. Following that, the sneak attack from the left knocked Dili completely flat on the ground.

Elaro snarled and jumped off the roof. When he landed, he had already drawn his sword. He held his sword with his right hand and pulled the sneak attacker off of Dili with his left hand. He lifted the person high up, about to give an angry warning, when he realized the person's complexion was very odd.

Ashen skin, deep purple lips and clouded eyes that obviously didn't have any spirit... *An undead creature?*

The undead creature struggled violently, both hands wildly scratching at Elaro's arms. Even though it didn't have a weapon, its hands and fingertips had both rotted all the way down to the bones, and they could be considered a type of weapon. Just now, it had directly used its hands to attack Dili.

Elaro frowned and didn't hesitate any longer. With a powerful toss, he threw the undead creature away. While it was still in the air, he swung his sword once. When it landed heavily on the ground, something round rolled away from the body. The undead creature was already thoroughly dead.



He stared fixedly at the remaining enemy. Although it looked more like a person, just one with an extremely terrible complexion, Elaro had already figured out from its dark element that this was also an undead creature. Furthermore, it wasn't a low-level creature. No wonder Dili had had such a hard time dealing with it.

"Dili, how are your injuries?" He didn't turn his head to look, fixing his eyes on the enemy.

Dili's voice came from behind. "Merely a scratch. It's nothing."

When he heard this, Elaro put Dili out of his mind, focusing completely on the enemy before him. The opponent was using a sword and wearing simple armor. Upon first glance, it would be hard to tell that it was an undead creature. Of course, no undead creature could pass careful inspection. Those lifeless eyes could never trick anyone.

However, Elaro suddenly thought of a certain someone, who was an undead creature and had kept his disguise for over ten years. Out of the entire world, "he" was the only undead creature of that level.

"Undead! You dare to trespass in Leaf Bud City!" Experience told Elaro that this undead creature's level should mean he had some intelligence. At least, conversation should not be a problem.

As expected, the other party's face contorted, and it let out a hoarse roar unique to undead creatures, "Under the orders of the Monarch, I have come to kill you!"

*Monarch?* Elaro froze, looking at the other party in puzzlement. However, it had already raised its sword and rushed forward, so Elaro had no more time to investigate further. He could only raise his own sword and engage in battle.

*The opponent's strength is quite good, but in the end, it still cannot rival mine.* Elaro furrowed his brows, dodging a few attacks. After he came to this conclusion, he did not want to prolong the battle. He took a step backward first, and then reached his hand out to swipe it across his sword. The originally silver sword promptly shone with white, holy light.

"Grr—" The undead creature fell back several steps, absolutely hating the white glow.

Seizing the opportunity, Elaro rushed forward, swinging right at the other party's sword. A heavy kick followed right after that, causing it to involuntarily stoop over. At this time, the blade shining with holy light sliced from left to right, and a second head rolled about the streets.

Clean and direct consecutive attacks that don't allow the opponent to even react before utter defeat had always been Elaro's fighting style.

*"Before you defeat the opponent, you must engage in a prolonged battle first, then... I haven't even finished speaking. Why have you already killed it? Try it again. Slow down!"*

*"Before you defeat the opponent, you must engage in a prolonged battle first, then you must allow the opponent to show off its strength*

*for a while... Why have you killed it again? Try it again. You're not allowed to fight so quickly!"*

*"Before you defeat the opponent, you must engage in a prolonged battle first, then you must allow the opponent to show off its strength for a while before you break out your ultimate skill—if you kill it again, I'll kill you!"*

*Even though Elaro heard him, he wasn't able to stop himself in time at all. A single strike, and the undead creature's head rolled.*

*"..."*

*Elaro said helplessly, "S-Sorry, but Knight-Captain Judgment and Knight-Captain Hell both taught me this way. My swings have already become a reflex. I can't slow down..."*

*"Sword experts are really annoying!"*

At the age of fifteen, Elaro had already earned a spot on his teacher's list of hated sword experts. Although his teacher said he hated it, he sent Elaro out on all sorts of missions in great delight, including the ones owed to the king. By now, it had already been seven years. The battle experience he had was even more abundant and rich than what many holy knights already past forty years old had.

Elaro, who had ample experience, chose to directly kill the opponent without any hesitation, because undead creatures were difficult to render unconscious to bring back to the Holy Temple. Interrogation was also impractical. They were already dead and did not feel much

pain. Besides, undead creatures sent out like this usually weren't able to provide any information.

*Such an average undead creature... Elaro lowered his head to look at the corpse. It said it was here on the Monarch's orders?*

*No! Impossible. If it really was "that person," he should know very clearly that an undead creature of this level is nothing to me. Sending this over wouldn't even be a worthwhile test or training exercise.*

*Is "his" name being used? Or did he actually send it?*

"Captain."

Elaro turned his head. Dili stood behind him with a brilliant smile on his face.

Seeing how Dili could move with ease, Elaro was finally reassured that he was not hurt too badly. He immediately berated him, "Dili, you are far too lax with matters regarding battle. How can your reaction be turning your head to look at me when you hear a warning in the middle of battle? If the enemy today had been a little stronger, you might already be dead!"

Dili's smile vanished, and his expression turned solemn. His fighting ability could never compare with Rhonelin's, so he mostly concentrated his efforts on handling official business instead.

Elaro was really unsatisfied with Dili's combat ability, and when he caught sight of Dili's arm that was still dripping with blood, he felt his

anger rise even higher.

"For the next few days, swap duties with Rhonelin. You're responsible for the platoon members' drills. Rhonelin will help me with official business. If there's something he doesn't understand, help him out. And likewise, when it comes to fighting, you should consult Rhonelin more."

Elaro's tone was reproachful. "Don't be afraid to ask just because you're a little older than him, or you're afraid of losing to him in a spar. Losing to a comrade is always better than losing to an enemy, wherein you lose your very life!"

Dili froze. He had really been too foolish. "Yes, sir!"

Elaro's expression finally relaxed a bit. He never ever wanted to receive news of his vice-captain losing his life in the middle of a mission.

Elaro walked forward to study the corpses of the two undead creatures. His brows furrowed. Something wasn't quite right. Even now, when the undead creatures had already been defeated, he still felt a little uneasy. It was as if there was "something" permeating the air...

"Long live the Sun Knight!"

The citizens suddenly burst out with thundering cheers. Even though the course of Elaro's battle was really too quick, so they hadn't seen much, Leaf Bud City recently had too few undead creatures appearing. There weren't even any thieves who dared to provoke the holy knights

and royal knights, so such a battle was a rare sight. No matter what, thundering cheers had to be given.

“The Sun Knight is truly too strong—”

“As expected of the Sun Knight!”

“I’m not yet...” Elaro wanted to explain that he was only the Sun Knight-in-training, and not the official one, but the people’s cheers were so loud that his explanations couldn’t be heard at all.

Teacher was right. The citizens really weren’t very good at telling which generation of Sun Knight they were on. All was fine as long as the characteristics of having golden hair, blue eyes, fair skin, and a smile were met.

In the end, Elaro could only give up on explaining. He took a deep breath and gave the Sun Knight’s trademark smile, causing the surrounding citizens to cheer even louder.

“What a... nice smell!” Amidst the cheers, some people started saying, “Where is that fragrance coming from?”

“I smell it too. It smells like a floral fragrance...”

*Floral fragrance?* Dili stilled.

“It must be a miracle, a miracle from the God of Light!”

“The Sun Knight must have received the God of Light’s favor!”

The Sun Knight, more accurately, the future Sun Knight, Elaro looked up at the sky tearfully. His spirit was truly already with the God of Light as he kept back his tears and mumbled, "The essential oil bottles actually broke. I was just thinking something was wrong..."

"What?" Dili hesitated. He thought he had heard that a bottle had been broken? *Ah! Was it a bottle of perfume?* The fragrance was really familiar. Just like what Rhonelin had claimed, it was indeed a floral fragrance. It should be...be...

"Violets!" He blurted out.

Elaro winced. He turned to ask, "What did you say?" Did the fact that he had just gone to buy violet essential oil get discovered? Even though he could say it was for his sister, everyone at the Holy Temple knew Ludia. They would probably know that his sister never used any perfume...

Dili hurriedly waved his hand. "No, nothing, Captain. Undead creatures actually appeared within the city. I will immediately return to notify Rhonelin and the other platoon members. Should we do a citywide search?"

Elaro considered his words. Although they were currently very busy, having undead creatures appear was quite serious. No matter how busy they were, they had to investigate it thoroughly. They absolutely could not let there be any trace of undead creatures inside Leaf Bud City!

Elaro nodded seriously. "I will patrol the vicinity for a bit. You should return ahead of me and seek out Vice-Captain Adair. Borrow ten platoon members from him. With one current Sun Knight Platoon member and two of our platoon members, carry out the citywide search in teams of three. Do not allow any undead creatures to remain in Leaf Bud City!"

"Understood!"

After he received his orders, Dili turned to leave. Although it was a big scandal for creatures of darkness to appear in the vicinity of the Church of the God of Light, and he had just been harshly reprimanded by his captain, his mood was buoyant. Other than witnessing his admirable captain's prowess...

He also knew what to do about the birthday present now.



"Have the Twelve Holy Knights returned?"

When Elaro returned to the Church of the God of Light, he stopped a holy knight in passing and received a negative answer.

*They haven't returned yet?* Elaro felt uneasy. It was already evening. Normally, the teachers would have been back by now. They usually returned earlier rather than later, but it was possible that it was just that something had delayed them. It wasn't like there weren't any precedents. *I shouldn't need to worry too much...*

"Elaro!"



Elaro turned to look. Adair was currently walking his way with large strides. "I heard that undead creatures appeared? It's been a long time since undead creatures have dared to trespass in Leaf Bud City! How is the investigation coming along?"

Elaro hesitated for a moment. He uses his eyes to scan their surroundings a bit, making sure that no one would hear him. Then, he whispered, "Big Bro Adair, before I defeated it, one of the undead creatures said that the 'Monarch' had sent it."

Adair stilled and said quietly, "The Monarch? How is that possible?"

"Could it just be referring to the person who summoned it?" Elaro was a little uneasy. "Maybe I'm being too sensitive. The teachers still haven't returned yet?"

"Not yet." Adair frowned and said, "If they haven't returned by tomorrow, I'll go over and take a look. As long as I ask His Holiness, the Pope to use the teleportation circle, I can reach them immediately."

Elaro nodded. "I'll go with you." He really didn't feel reassured. The sooner he saw his teacher, the better.

"No!" Adair turned him down on the spot. "None of the Twelve Holy Knights are in the temple. If something happens, you have to immediately take command. It'll be enough for Vidar and me to go over and take a look."

"Has Vice-Captain Vidar returned from his patrols?"

Elaro relaxed a lot more. The vice-captains of the Sun Knight and Judgment Knight Platoons were both present. Both of them had high reputations in the Holy Temple. Outside of the Twelve Holy Knights, these two people were the most capable of leading the Holy Temple. Having both of them present was very reassuring.

When Adair saw Elaro's reaction, he furrowed his brows and said, "Elaro, you have to remember that when the Twelve Holy Knights aren't here, *you* are the leader of the Holy Temple! Neither Vidar nor I have the qualifications to lead the Holy Temple. Only you can make the decisions."

"Big Bro Adair, you are the vice-captain of the current Sun Knight. How could you not be qualified?"

Hearing this, Adair inwardly sighed and said, "In any case, you have to be mentally prepared. If something happens to us and we can't return, you have to take command of the entire Holy Temple. There will be no one else qualified to help you make decisions."

"Big Bro, you're only going over to take a look. You don't need to account for everything so seriously, right?"

Elaro thought it was a little ridiculous. *Isn't this making too much of a big deal out of things? In the past, when the dark element was at its thickest, no major mishaps happened. How can something happen after so many years?*

*Besides, this is a huge matter that involves the entire world's fate.*

*Nothing wrong can be allowed to happen!*

"Don't ever think like that!" Adair placed his hands on Elaro's shoulders and said solemnly, "That year, when the entire city of Leaf Bud evacuated, Captain even wrote up a substitute nomination agreement in order to prevent the worst case scenario from occurring. On it was written, 'If the Twelve Holy Knights all perish together, all of the vice-captains will immediately succeed them and become the new Twelve Holy Knights.'"

*Perish together...* Elaro didn't even dare to think of such a scenario.  
*What was Teacher feeling when he had to make that kind of preparation that year?*

"Prepare for the worst, and then pursue his path with no second thoughts. That's Captain's style of doing things."

When he heard this, Elaro fell silent for a moment. Then, he said, "I am still far from living up to Teacher's standards."

Right after he spoke, he felt that his words were very familiar, like he had just heard someone say them...

*"I'm still not qualified enough to be your Judgment Knight... I-I just can't be as good as Teacher!"*

It was Hungri!

*I actually said the same thing?* He had always felt that he was unable to be as good as his teacher, but Hungri hadn't even reached the age

for succession yet, while Elaro had long passed it. The person who actually needed to reflect should be himself! Elaro couldn't help but mock himself.

"Nonsense. You're not bad at all! Have you forgotten the nickname you've earned even though you haven't assumed the position yet?" Adair rubbed Elaro's head. Even though Elaro was already taller than him, he still sometimes treated him like a kid.

Regarding this, Elaro was actually quite happy. He had grown up among a bunch of kids, so it was very rare for him to be treated like a kid.

Adair mumbled, "However, if you want to win against Captain, you do lack one certain characteristic, and that's being despicable... cough, cough, and shameless... cough! In this area, you will probably never win against Captain."

Elaro laughed. "It's true that I can't win against my teacher in that area."

Seeing that Elaro's spirits had lifted, Adair patted his back and said ruefully, "Fortunately, you are already over twenty years old. If you were only in your teens like the others, I really wouldn't know if I should tell you about this worst case scenario, and then toss the heavy responsibility of commanding the entire Holy Temple onto your shoulders."

"This doesn't really count as tossing it onto my shoulders, Big Bro Adair. With my age, I should already have succeeded... Ah, that's not

what I mean.” After saying so much, Elaro suddenly felt that he sounded too much like he was complaining that he couldn’t succeed the position yet.

Adair merely smiled. “You’re right. It’s too bad the others are still young. Even though they are all very capable, they do need just a bit more discipline. Elaro, you’ll need to bear with it a bit more. No matter how late, you will all have to succeed within the next one to two years. After all, the captains are not young anymore. It is time for them to retire.”

Elaro chuckled. “Big Bro Adair, are you thinking of retirement too? You’re not any younger than the teachers, are you?”

“That’s true. The passage of time has really put years on me!”

When he heard this, Elaro observed Adair’s face. He was only a little older than forty and couldn’t really be called “old.” It was true that he had some wrinkles around the corners of his eyes and mouth. When he smiled, the wrinkles were even more noticeable. Even so, he didn’t feel old at all. He was still very much filled with energy. At most, it was just that he could be considered a bit older.

“However, there’s also someone whom the passage of time isn’t able to put any years on,” Adair suddenly said.

Elaro shared a glance with him. Adair didn’t have to explain for Elaro to understand tacitly to whom he was referring.

*Indeed! That person is really...*

*Chapter #3: Secret... Part 3—The Demon King is... Shh!*

He took a step forward. Upon hearing rustling sounds, he lowered his head and saw that ashes completely covered the ground.

*Where is this?* He was a little puzzled. He raised his head to look around, but a strange, black fog surrounded him. He couldn't see anything at all.

"Elaro..."

Elaro turned and cried out in surprise, "Teacher? Have you returned?"

"Returned? Hehe..."

"Teacher?" Elaro could faintly see a dark shadow. He fumbled his way in that direction, and, at the same time, asked, "Teacher, why haven't you returned yet? Have you gone to complete another mission along the way?"

When he was close enough to see his figure, Elaro abruptly froze in his tracks. He stared in disbelief at that shadow.

The person was facing the side. His long hair was loose and covered most of his face. In the midst of the black fog, his figure wasn't very clear, but Elaro could still tell that the long hair draping downwards was black.

Elaro asked cautiously, "Teacher, is that you?" He hoped it wasn't. It was trivial and normal for other people to have black hair, but

whenever his teacher's hair turned black...

It meant that the Demon King had once again resurfaced.

The person's lips quirked up, and he said with a smile, "You've seen my true self, and you've been my student for so many years already. Elaro, don't tell me you still can't recognize me?"

*Of course, I recognize you.* Elaro just didn't want to admit it. He was not surprised to receive a confirmation, and he was no longer shocked out of his wits. Rather, he tried his hardest to calm down as he asked, "Teacher, where are the others?"

"Relax." The Demon King was obviously not surprised that Elaro would ask this question. He answered disinterestedly, "They're alive and breathing."

When he heard this, Elaro truly let out a big sigh of relief. However, he was immediately scared into retreating the very next second. Both of his teacher's feet suddenly left the ground, and he flew right up to him. His eyes stared directly at him too. It was a pair of completely black eyes, without even a shred of white—the eyes of the Demon King!

"Is it scary?" He chuckled and said, "I remember in the past, when you saw me like this, you immediately screamed 'monster!'"

"Teacher, aren't you bearing that grudge a little too long?" Elaro tried his hardest to maintain how they usually interacted. Based on his experiences living in the Demon King's Castle many years ago, this was the best way to avoid angering the Demon King.

"It's because you suddenly appeared, and I was greatly shocked that I said that. Afterwards, when I figured out what was going on, didn't I leave with you?"

"That is true. You sure have more guts than even the sky can hold!" The Demon King laughed, and then his voice turned cold. "Otherwise, how would you have dared to join hands with Adair to trick me back then?!"

Elaro's heart skipped a beat. At first, he wanted to hide his reaction and remain calm on the outside, but then, he abruptly remembered that he wouldn't be able to hide it from his teacher. It might be better to directly show his reaction. He breathed in deeply and smiled painfully, "Teacher, please don't scare me! You have already taken revenge against Adair and me several times. Are you still not finished taking revenge?"

"With something like revenge, even exacting it ten times wouldn't be overdoing it," answered the Demon King as if it were a matter of fact. Then, he tilted his head and looked curiously at Elaro. "Are you really not afraid of me?"

"Of course I'm afraid. Even your usual self is very scary..."

The Demon King immediately scolded, "Nonsense! If you were actually afraid of me, how would you dare to always force me to correct documents?"

Elaro answered helplessly, "Teacher, that has always been part of your



duties. I only 'asked' you to do 'a little bit' of it. Besides, you are the Sun Knight, and I am only a holy knight-in-training. How could I force you to do anything?"

"Of course, you can!" The Demon King roared, "Everyone has been tricked by your appearance and conduct! They don't know at all that *you* are the most despicable and shameless bastard! Always, each time..."

"Always? Always what?" Elaro asked innocently.

The Demon King's face twisted, and he growled, "You always make me want to hit you!"

As he scolded him, he ruthlessly smacked his student on the back of the head. Elaro let an "ow" escape, and he rubbed the back of his head, his face full of grievance.

In actuality, his teacher had never been strong, so his smack didn't hurt at all. Letting him hit him a few times was always better than having his teacher take revenge later on.

Seeing his student's grieved expression, the Demon King laughed. "What are you pretending for?"

Hearing such a familiar phrase, Elaro couldn't help relaxing. Other than the eyes and the hair, the Demon King in front of him was no different from how his teacher usually was. Back then, the Demon King had actually treated him very well, too. Although he had been young and hadn't been able to do much, and it had been impossible for him to

complete any missions, the Demon King had still fed him well and let him sleep well. His lifestyle had probably been even better than a king's.

"Elaro, let me ask you. If I want to take you away from the Holy Temple with me, would you agree to leave with me like before?"

The Demon King extended his hand, his long fingernails lightly scratching Elaro's face. "Although you have betrayed me once, you are still my cute student. Besides, I've already spent so much time teaching you. Tossing you away seems like such a waste."

"T-Teacher..." Elaro couldn't help stepping away. Those black eyes without any glimmer of light were right in front of him, making him feel like he was about to suffocate.

"I can't leave with you."

"Why not?" The Demon King froze for a moment, and then his anger erupted along with the dark element. "In the past, you didn't even hesitate before agreeing to leave with me. At the time, I wasn't even your teacher. Now that I've taught you for so many years, you're actually unwilling to leave with me!"

Elaro felt really uncomfortable being engulfed by the dark element, but what was even more difficult for him to bear was his teacher's wrath and... his forlorn expression.

"T-Teacher, that's because at the time, I was merely a knight-in-training, who had just joined the Holy Temple, and Ludia had only just

become a cleric-in-training. The Church would take care of her, so I could leave with you without any worries. But it's different now."

Elaro clenched his teeth and continued, "Teacher, if you truly plan to leave the Holy Temple, then I will have to immediately succeed the position of Sun Knight. I will become the leader of the Holy Temple, to continue leading the Twelve Holy Knights on the path of light!"

The Demon King stared fixedly at Elaro, but he then slowly moved away and flew backwards. He sighed, "Elaro, you have really grown up. You no longer need your teacher anymore. It's time for me to leave. If I don't, I might not be able to stop myself from... killing you!"

"Nothing of the sort! Teacher, don't leave!" Elaro hurriedly ran to catch up, shouting worriedly, "Please don't leave! You have to think of Charsia—"

"Don't mention them!" The Demon King finally stopped, but he agitatedly roared, "Do you want to cause their deaths?"

Elaro began to panic. He hadn't wanted his teacher to leave, so he had thought of using his teacher's most treasured people to stop him from leaving. However, he had forgotten what his teacher had previously mentioned—the more concerned about a person the Demon King was, the more easily that person would become his target!

"Charsia and... I can't bear to part with... I should take them with me... No!"

The Demon King appeared conflicted and growled, "Tell them to go.

Leave Leaf Bud City! Elaro, you haven't forgotten what I've instructed you, have you? If something happens, you have to make them go far away. No one is allowed to know their location!"

"Teacher!" Finally, Elaro rushed before his teacher and tightly grabbed his shoulders, not giving him the chance to leave.

The Demon King raised his head. For a brief moment, the darkness in his eyes receded, turning into a listless blue.

*He finally recovered!* Elaro was elated, but before he could even utter, "That's great," he was suddenly sent flying by an immense power...

"Elaro, help me protect them. Don't ever let them get harmed. Don't let them... get hurt by me!"

Elaro crashed onto the ground. He had no time to deal with the pain coursing through his body. He climbed back up and shouted, "Teacher—"

However, his teacher was no longer before him. Immediately, Elaro's heart chilled. He didn't understand how things could have become so serious all of a sudden. *What should I do? And if she and Charsia hear of this, what would...*

"Big Bro Elaro! Big Bro Elaro—"

Hearing the shouts and knocking grow louder and more hurried by the second, Elaro slowly stood up. The scenery before him gradually grew clearer. There was a single bed and two tables, one of which was

covered with documents. There was also a cabinet... This was his room.

"Was it a dream?"

Elaro hesitated for a moment. A bead of sweat dripped from the tips of his bangs into his eyes. When he raised his hand to wipe his face, he discovered that sweat covered his entire face. Lucidity slowly returned to him, and he felt his fingers trembling. His heart was beating as fast as if he had just experienced a battle.

"Elaro!"

The shout finally pulled him back to his senses. He walked over to open the door. He had already determined from the loud voices that it was likely Shuis and Valica. He had probably created so big a commotion that he had woken them up.

When he opened the door, the first person he saw was actually not one of the two he had expected. He froze for a moment, and then blurted, "Hungri? Why is it you?" After he spoke, he saw that nearly everyone had come. The few people who resided a bit farther were also hurriedly making their way over.

Hungri calmly explained, "I live right next door to you. I listened to you groan for half the night." He just didn't mention that before he had even listened for long, he had already been standing outside, hesitating about whether or not he should knock.

When he heard this and saw how everyone was staring fixedly at him, Elaro felt a little embarrassed. He apologized, "Was I too loud? I'm

really sorry—”

“There’s nothing to be sorry about!” Hungri cut him off and said,  
“What happened? I’ve never heard you in so much pain before.”

Elaro paused for a moment and simply said, “It was just a nightmare.”

Hungri turned his head and asked, “Shuis, Valica, you two know Elaro the best. Do you believe him?”

Valica had a hesitant expression, but Shuis didn’t hesitate at all before he responded, “Big Bro Elaro is right—”

“Don’t you want to know what Elaro is worrying about?” Hungri abruptly interrupted Shuis.

Shuis was stumped. Indeed, he wanted to know very much, but since Big Bro Elaro didn’t want to tell them, then he was unwilling to force him to. “Big Bro Elaro is right—”

Hungri cut him off once more. “Your Big Bro Elaro is exceptionally worried, and he wants to bear it all by himself. The stress is so great that he even has nightmares about it, to the point of shouting, yet you want to let him continue to bear it alone?”

Shuis opened his mouth but found that he could no longer say anything to support Elaro.

*You won!*

*So amazing! You completely nailed Shuis's weak point.*

*Good job, Hungri!*

Everyone looked toward Hungri in admiration, one after another. The expressions on their faces amply gave voice to the words they wanted to say. Elaro could only smile wryly and say, "Hungri, you're making it into too big a deal. It's just a nightmare."

"A nightmare involving Knight-Captain Sun?"

Elaro froze. Without waiting for him to ask, Hungri explained on his own, "I heard you shout 'Teacher.' The Twelve Holy Knights were scheduled to return today, yet they haven't, and you had this nightmare. So, it should be related to the teachers, but you're not someone who would make a fuss about nothing. So, the situation must be serious, not something miniscule like being late!"

Elaro suddenly discovered that he had found a reason why Hungri shouldn't be replaced. Just now, Hungri had known what Shuis cared about the most, and had only needed to say a few words to get someone he usually didn't get along with to stand on his side. This was truly a remarkable ability. Furthermore, he had easily deduced that this matter had to do with the Twelve Holy Knights, and he had even figured out that it wasn't a small matter...

With such skills, it was no wonder that even the strict Knight-Captain Judgment would not ask more of Hungri's ability to interrogate.

"Elaro, what are you spacing out for?"

Hungri really wanted to roll his eyes, but he tried hard to keep his serious expression. It was rare to have everyone standing on his side, making it so that he could demand information from Elaro. He had to make good use of this chance!

Elaro returned to his senses. "I'm not... Um..."

*My mind does feel a little slow!* Elaro frowned. He had already been up for a while. It couldn't be that he still wasn't fully awake, yet it was true that his reactions were a little sluggish.

This feeling was somewhat familiar. He remembered that there were times when his teacher had been too lazy and had used telepathy to pass messages to him all day long. He had given him several missions that way, and he had even been so bored that he would use telepathy to chat with him. As a result, the very next day, Elaro woke up to a headache that lasted for three full days. Moreover, he couldn't even recall anything he had done on that first day.

Afterward, his teacher asked around, and it was only then that he found out that although telepathy was more taxing for the person sending the message, the person receiving the message would also use some mental strength. When anyone received too much, symptoms such as dizziness and sluggish thinking would appear, and there might even be pain—it wasn't a dream just now!

Elaro abruptly came to this realization. Combined with what had happened during the day, the situation had truly become dire. He had to seek Adair out as soon as possible, but everyone was blocking the



door. He could only say, "Excuse me, I have to see Vice-Captain Adair."

Shuis, Valica, Judge, and all those belonging to the Sun Knight's faction silently moved to the side to open a path for Elaro to pass through. However, their attitudes were rather strange. *They moved to the side so silently, and Valica didn't even open his mouth to ask if he could follow me?*

But the situation was dire, so Elaro didn't have time to ponder over it. He hurriedly stepped out to leave—

"Why is it that whenever something happens, you look for Vice-Captain Adair to discuss it?"

Elaro stilled in his tracks. He turned his head to look. Everyone stared at him wordlessly, and Hungri's expression was no longer solemn. He yelled furiously, "Just who are your Twelve Holy Knights?"

"Of course, it's you guys," he responded naturally.

Walking past everyone, Hungri stood at the very front. He raised his head to glare at Elaro. His attitude wasn't anything unusual. Hungri had always been rebellious, and it could be said that he had confronted Elaro countless times, but this time was different. This time, everyone stood behind Hungri.

"Since that is so, then you should tell your worries to us, right?"

Hungri... Actually, everyone's expressions were similar. They were all full of hope. Even Valkyrs, the most indifferent, was no exception.

Elaro was nearly tempted to speak, but he couldn't. He couldn't say it. How could he casually tell them something like "The Sun Knight is the Demon King?" Would these children before his eyes really be able to handle something like "the person leading us suddenly becoming the greatest enemy?"

At this time, Shuis suddenly rushed forward and stood in front of Elaro. He growled at everyone else, "If Big Bro Elaro doesn't want to say it, then drop it. Don't force him!"

Hungri glanced at Shuis but didn't say anything. Then, he moved his gaze back to Elaro, staring fixedly at him. Everyone else all looked at him too. Finally, even Shuis turned his head to look at him.

*They... are they really those children who used to crowd around my legs?* Elaro suddenly felt that he didn't recognize them.

Although a few of their faces were still chubby, their expressions were much more mature than their faces or even their actual ages suggested. Especially Hungri. Although he was one of the older ones among them, his delicate appearance meant that he had never appeared much older than them.

However, it was almost as if everyone suddenly grew up at this very moment. Although their expressions were all different because of their differing personalities, they all had the same determination. They were all waiting quietly for Elaro to speak.

"I-I really have to see Vice-Captain Adair." Elaro turned his face away.

He no longer dared to look at their expressions. He turned to leave...  
his own Twelve Holy Knights.

*Chapter #4: Teacher's... Part 1—True Love*

"Big Bro Adair!"

Elaro hurriedly knocked. Not long after, Adair opened the door, his face sleepy and puzzled as he looked at Elaro.

At first, Elaro had immediately wanted to blurt out his conjectures, but there was movement inside the room. Only then did he remember that other than Adair, there was another Sun Knight Platoon member in the room. If he remembered correctly, it should be that person who was always full of smiles, Ed.

Ever since the Church of the God of Light had deployed troops to defeat the Demon King, forcing him to practically live in seclusion in the Demon King's Castle, no longer rampaging all over the place, the Church of the God of Light's reputation had grown in leaps and bounds. The current number of holy knights was at its highest within the past fifty years. Even Adair, who used to have a single room, had chosen a platoon member to stay with him in order to empty out another room.

In the Holy Temple, other than the Twelve Holy Knights, no one else had the privilege to request a room to himself. Even the Twelve Holy Knights-in-training often lived two to a room, unless there were extra rooms they could use.

Even so, Elaro was an exception. He still had a room to himself.

In the past, for Grisia's convenience to apply facial masks and accomplish other miscellaneous things, Neo had stressed that his

student needed his own room. And so, Grisia followed “tradition” and had his student take a room for himself.

When Adair saw Elaro’s hesitant expression, he immediately turned his head and asked, “Ed, have you fallen asleep?”

“...I’m asleep.”

Adair nodded and closed the door behind him. He turned to face Elaro and said, “Go ahead and tell me what is so urgent that you can’t wait until tomorrow morning to come find me.”

Elaro quickly described his “dream” in detail, and then he told him the deduction he had just made. “Big Bro Adair, I believe that it wasn’t a dream, but rather Teacher using telepathy on me! Something really has happened!”

Adair lowered his head to think. Even though Elaro was anxious, he knew that Adair was loyal and devoted to his teacher. He would likely be even more worried than Elaro, so it wasn’t as if he were wasting time.

“I understand now,” Adair finally opened his mouth to say. “The undead creature during the day must have really been sent by Knight-Captain Hell himself. It was probably a warning! Although I don’t know what actually happened, since none of the knight-captains have returned, I’m afraid that the situation probably doesn’t allow Knight-Captain Hell many options. His only option was likely to use this method to warn us that trouble has occurred.”

*I-Is that so?* Elaro stilled, immediately feeling a little upset that he hadn't been able to make the connection earlier.

"Let's not wait until tomorrow. I'll go find Vidar immediately and seek out His Holiness, the Pope with him. Elaro, go and contact... the people you need to contact." Adair looked at him directly, believing that he didn't need to spell things out.

"Should I wait until Big Bro checks out the situation before acting?" Elaro really didn't want to bring such bad news to them.

Adair said strictly, "Better to waste our efforts, than to allow anything to happen! You should know how important the two of them are to Captain, right?"

Elaro shivered. "Yes!"

"You're really good in every aspect, except decisiveness!" Adair ruffled Elaro's hair roughly, like he was punishing him and consoling him at the same time. "It won't be long before you take over. You should hurry and learn from Captain. Be decisive in your commands!"

Elaro smiled wryly. "I'm just worried that I'll do something wrong and cause everyone to waste their efforts, or even create a larger mess. That would be terrible."

Adair's expression shifted strangely as he asked, "Do you think Captain has never done anything wrong?"

Elaro frowned. "I have never known Teacher to have done anything

wrong.”

“Hasn’t he ever told you to do something before, and then once you’ve completed it, you discovered there was no follow-up, and you don’t know what the result was either?”

“Yes...” *And many times too.* Elaro hesitated for a moment, but then quickly defended his teacher, “But it’s probably because Teacher didn’t tell me what was supposed to happen afterwards. There are lots of things he does that hold deeper meanings—”

Adair purposely retorted, “How do you know that there was a deeper meaning, and not just that he did something wrong but didn’t tell you?”

Elaro froze. Come to think of it, there really were times when he finished doing something and there was no follow-up. Even if he asked Teacher, he rarely received a clear answer...

“Come on, no matter how much you worship Captain, don’t treat him as if he is the God of Light. Captain still has his limits.”

Elaro was silent for a moment, but then he said sadly, “I hope that Teacher has not reached his limit this time.”

“I hope so, too.” Adair sighed and opened the door to the room. He shouted, “Ed!”

“Here!”

“Bring me my sword.”

After Adair finished speaking, Ed immediately rushed out. He held a sword in his hand. It was evident he had been prepared.

Adair took the sword and told Ed, "Vice-Captain Vidar and I are going over to see how Captain's mission is coming along. During this time, you will lead the other platoon members and follow the usual schedule to complete your duties. If anything unexpected happens, listen to Elaro's commands."

"Understood!" After receiving the order, Ed rather tactfully turned around to go back to being "asleep."

Adair patted Elaro's shoulders and said, "Elaro, do your best. I'm leaving now."

"You're leaving right away?" Elaro was rather surprised.

"Of course, there's no reason to dally. The sooner we clear up the situation, the better!"

After he finished speaking, Adair turned around to leave.

Elaro watched Adair, who had just given him so much sound guidance. He looked rather unruffled and appeared as if he wasn't very worried over Teacher's situation, but Elaro keenly sensed that Adair was not as relaxed as his expression seemed to imply.

"Big Bro Adair," Elaro finally opened his mouth to call out to him.



"What now?" Adair turned his head to look toward Elaro, a light crease between his brows. He looked a little displeased.

Elaro reminded him very cordially, "You're only wearing pajama pants."

"..." Adair fell silent for a moment and then shouted, "Ed—"



Elaro stood before the door to a small house. Dawn had only just broken. The morning light spilled across the small garden in front of the house, causing the lavender flowers that filled it to glisten. There were also several different kinds of violets being grown in pots, making the entire garden look rather luxuriant. These two were Charsia's favorite plants. Although she was only twelve, she was already an expert at managing the garden.

Formerly, there had only been a lawn outside of the house, and overgrown weeds frequently occupied it. It wasn't until a certain someone abused his power and ordered the holy knights under his command to weed the place at regular intervals that the garden began looking pleasant.

Elaro stood before the door, hesitant about knocking. The morning light grew stronger and stronger, but he still didn't move. His only thought was to let them sleep until it was fully bright.

He stood there up until the door opened by itself, and a woman waved him in with a smile. "Come in."

Although Elaro was a little surprised, he tried his best to smile and said,

"Auntie Charlotte, why have you gotten up so early?"

"I was waiting for someone." Charlotte leaned against the door frame and asked with a smile, "And haven't you shown up?"

Elaro's heart fell. He knew very well that the one Charlotte was waiting for wasn't him. If he remembered correctly, every time his teacher returned from a "mission," he would always, without exception, come to this small house. Sometimes, he would bring Elaro along as well, because Charsia always made a fuss about wanting to play with him.

In what seemed like the blink of an eye, Auntie Charlotte had already lived here for more than ten years! Elaro couldn't help looking at her. She really didn't look like a woman who was already over forty years old. At most, she looked like she was in her early thirties.

"Come on in!" Charlotte took hold of Elaro's hand. "Although the weather has grown warmer lately, it's still quite chilly at this hour. You must have been standing outside for a long time already. Don't catch a cold and be like your teacher, falling sick so frequently."

When he heard this, Elaro felt even sadder. He had once heard the Twelve Holy Knights mention by accident that Teacher had almost never fallen sick in the past. However, as the years went by, his body grew weaker and weaker, and the boundary that separated "then" from "now" was obviously...

"Then, pardon my intrusion."

He stepped foot into the house. The inside hadn't changed much, just

the decorations made out of pressed flowers had grown in number. This was Charsia's work, and other than those things, there were also a few objects used for prayer. Those things belonged to Charlotte, who was a cleric.

Almost no trace of Teacher could be seen within the house, probably because he never visited much in the first place.

"Have you eaten breakfast yet?" Charlotte asked in concern. "Are you hungry?"

"Not yet. I'm quite hungry," Elaro answered honestly.

Actually, even if he weren't hungry, he would still say he was hungry because Auntie Charlotte's interest was cooking, and her cooking was superb. As time passed, a lot of holy knights began voluntarily coming to the garden to weed it, and sometimes, when they ran over and saw that there weren't a lot of weeds, they would become very disappointed. It was because after they finished weeding, Charlotte would always cook a delicious meal for them.

Finally, Charlotte simply opened a small restaurant that operated by reservations. It was a restaurant that only served holy knights and clerics—of course, they had to pay. If anyone dared to dine and dash, that person would definitely be killed by the leader of the Holy Temple.

"Sit down," Charlotte said. "I'll cook something for you."

Elaro nodded and quietly sat down to wait. Soon after, he saw an eye-catching small head peeking in through the door...

Golden hair, blue eyes, fair skin, and a pair of large eyes framed by a round face, incomparably cute—she was also one of the reasons the holy knights and clerics loved visiting. A child this cute was rare.

“Charsia, have I woken you up?” Elaro felt very apologetic.

“Not at all!” Charsia rushed over, her large eyes smiling so much, they had turned into arcs. She reached both hands out, wanting Elaro to lift her up and sit her on his lap.

“Big Brother Elaro, it’s been so long!” Charsia complained, while acting spoiled.

“It’s because Teacher has gone on a mission, so I can’t leave the Holy Temple for very long in the meantime.”

“Uh huh.” Charsia nodded and said, “I know. Mama has been waiting for Papa the entire time.”

When he heard this, Elaro’s heart ached. He abruptly hugged Charsia and said, “Sorry... I’m really sorry!”

“Big Brother?” Charsia was momentarily puzzled, but then she suddenly yelled, “Mama!”

Startled, Elaro turned his head to look. Charlotte stood by the kitchen door, holding a tray piled with food, her face blank.

“Auntie Charlotte...”

*Thump—*

A soft sound unexpectedly came from the window. Charlotte's tray fell to the ground at the same time, and soup spilled over the floor, but she didn't pay it any attention. She stepped over the broken bowls and plates, rushed over, and snatched Charsia into her arms from Elaro. She worriedly shouted, "Elaro! This is a warning trap Grisia set. It's the window to the left!"

*Has he really come?*

Elaro immediately drew his sword. Even though both the Judgment Knight and the Hell Knight unanimously praised his swordsmanship, he didn't have any confidence—the Demon King's absolute and frightening power was not something even the most skilled swordsmanship could hope to withstand.

*Anyone who is on the Demon King's mind will have to perish when he goes crazy!*

Elaro stood protectively in front of the mother and daughter. He stared fixedly at the window. First, a pair of hands appeared on the windowsill, and then that person slowly stood up, raising his hands to show that he meant no harm. It could be because of the trap, but his entire body was covered with dirt. He was completely unkempt.

"Hungri?" Elaro was taken aback.

Hungri looked abashedly at the three extremely nervous people inside

the house. He answered, "Yeah, it's me."

Elaro breathed out a huge sigh of relief, but then he immediately grew angry. He scolded severely, "Hungri, why are you sneaking around? You scared Auntie Charlotte and Charsia!"

"Sorry..." Hungri apologized awkwardly, but then he asked in confusion, "But why are you all so nervous?"

He couldn't comprehend it. With Elaro's strength, there weren't many people in Leaf Bud City who could be a threat to him, and Auntie Charlotte had always appeared fearless. *Why would they become so frightened over a trap being set off?*

Elaro was at a loss for words, but luckily, Charlotte lent a hand in smoothing things over. "Come on in, Hungri! Let's eat breakfast together."

Hungri smiled awkwardly. "Okay."

Elaro and Hungri cleaned up the mess on the floor together, while Charlotte and Charsia rapidly whipped up a four person breakfast. After that, they all sat down together to eat.

Charsia riveted her glare on Hungri. Hungri patiently endured it and said, "I already said sorry for scaring you by accident. No need to keep glaring at me, right?"

"I didn't get scared at all!" Charsia pouted. She looked at how Hungri and Elaro were sitting on the same side, and loudly declared with quite

some discontent, "Even though you and Big Brother Elaro are closer in age, I won't give him to you or any other girl!"

When he heard this, Hungri rolled his eyes exaggeratedly. This wasn't the first time Charsia had said this to him, so he merely responded snappily, "I'm a guy! How many times do you need me to repeat that before you get it?"

Charsia immediately refuted, "Liar! You wanted to be the Judgment Knight, so you cross dressed as a guy. Everyone says so!"

"Who is this 'everyone?'" Hungri immediately raged, "Tell me who they all are. I'll slaughter them all!"

Charsia actually began listing them all. "Ji from the food market, Uncle Charlie from the street corner, the royal knight big brother who sometimes sneaks in among the holy knights to eat... Ah! But the Uncle and Auntie from the next street over, who plant a lot of flowers, insist that you are indeed a boy."

"... Those are my parents."

Charsia came to a sudden realization. "So that's it! They're lying to help you cover up!"

"Cover up, my ass!" Hungri cursed.

"Ah—you swore again! Be careful, or my papa will smack you!"

Hungri's face paled, but he still didn't back down. "I'm not afraid of

your dad. It's not like he's my teacher!"

"Even though he isn't your teacher, my papa will still smack you!"

"Hmph, the person your dad is afraid of the most is my teacher!"

"Papa wouldn't be afraid..."

As Elaro watched Hungri and Charsia's interaction, which could cause people to burst out in laughter, his lips involuntarily lifted upward. This scene made him feel more relaxed and cheerful, feelings he hadn't had in a while.

After they finished eating, Elaro took the initiative to help clear up the bowls and utensils. He walked with Charlotte into the kitchen. The latter took the bowls and utensils and said, "I can wash the dishes. You seldom visit. You should go play with Charsia."

Elaro shook his head and quietly said, "Auntie, you should leave."

Charlotte froze. She turned and placed the bowls and utensils into the sink. As she washed them, she said, "All right. I'll leave after tidying up... Is he doing okay?"

Elaro shook his head. "I don't know the situation, yet."

Charlotte softly said, "Mm."

Silently watching her back, Elaro didn't know what to do. *Should I console her? But what if Auntie is currently crying? Would she want*



*anyone to see that?* After deliberating for a while, Elaro only said in the end, "Auntie, I have to take my leave now. You and Charsia should hurry and leave as soon as possible."

"Elaro!" Charlotte still could not help turning around and calling out, "Please, do your best to try and save him!"

After she finished speaking, she wiped away her tears. She was a little embarrassed for crying in front of someone younger than her. Her face was red, but she still looked resolutely at Elaro.

Elaro handed over his handkerchief and averted his eyes from her tears. He said with staunch determination, "Auntie, rest assured that I will do everything I can to allow Teacher to return! I swear to the God of Light!"



"Why did you follow me?"

On the way back, Elaro asked the person next to him.

"I didn't." Hungri turned his head away. "I merely went to see Auntie Charlotte. Can't I do that?"

When he heard this answer, Elaro didn't say anything more, primarily because he really didn't have any more energy to argue with Hungri.

After walking for a while, Hungri couldn't stand the silence any longer. He started speaking.

"Why won't Knight-Captain Sun marry Auntie Charlotte? They even have a kid already. There's no reason why they shouldn't get married. Letting Auntie Charlotte and Charsia live by themselves outside the Church for so many years with no man to protect them, how is that acceptable?"

"Although Teacher isn't by their side, he is most definitely doing everything he can to protect them!"

Hungri asked, "But wouldn't it be even better if he were by their side?"

Elaro fell silent for a moment, and then said, "Teacher has his reasons."

"I believe you," Hungri said calmly. "If he didn't have any reasons, then my teacher wouldn't leave it be. He would drag him off to get married to Auntie Charlotte."

"Do Knight-Captain Sun's reasons have anything to do with the current situation?"

The moment he said those words, Hungri saw Elaro's expression change. Elaro really wasn't very good at concealing things. As long as Hungri was able to raise related questions, he was confident he could figure out the answer from Elaro's bearing.

"I really can't tell you." Elaro hesitated once again, very afraid that Hungri would continue pressing him for answers. He hurriedly continued, "But one day, I will definitely tell you and everyone else. Definitely!"

"... You really will?"

Elaro nodded his head quickly. He had really grown afraid of Hungri's ability to interrogate.

Unexpectedly, Hungri didn't continue to press him. He simply said, "Okay, then I'll wait for you to tell me."

*Chapter #4: Teacher's... Part 2—Student*

The following days each felt like a year to Elaro. Every morning, the first thing he did was ask Ed if Vice-Captain Adair had returned yet.

The answer was always negative.

When the third day arrived and he received the same answer, Elaro was already mentally prepared. However, when Ludia appeared before him with a message from the Pope, his mood still plummeted to rock bottom, even though he had already prepared himself.

"Big Brother, His Holiness the Pope wishes to see you immediately."

Elaro took in a deep breath and said, "I understand. I'll head over right away."

Ludia reached out a hand to touch his face, her heart hurting for him. She comforted him, "Brother, don't worry too much. In just a few days, you look like you've aged a lot."

When he heard this, Elaro forced on a smile, not wanting to worry his sister. "I've always looked old."

Ludia didn't think so at all. "Nonsense! Big Brother, you're mature, not old."

Elaro merely smiled. Even though he knew that his sister was trying to make him laugh to ease his worry, he really didn't have the strength to laugh.

When she saw this, Ludia stopped trying. She asked softly, "Are the Twelve Holy Knight-Captains okay?"

Elaro shook his head. "I don't know the situation."

Ludia didn't ask any further questions. She actually didn't know what the Twelve Holy Knights did on their missions every half a year, but she was certain that Elaro must be in the know. However, since she had asked once and received no answer, Ludia did not ask again.

If it were something that he could tell her, Elaro definitely wouldn't keep it from her. Ludia trusted her brother that way.

"I should go see His Holiness the Pope now." After Elaro finished greeting her, he prepared to leave. He didn't think that his sister would follow him. He turned his head to look curiously at her.

Ludia simply hurried her steps to catch up with her brother. She lowered her head and smiled as she said, "His Holiness the Pope wishes for me to follow you over. He says that I should start learning how to manage a few matters."

"Congratulations." After he spoke, Elaro then grew worried and asked in a quiet voice, "Is the Pope not going to consider the Bishop of Radiance and the Bishop of Brilliance? They are much more experienced."

"Big Brother, you worry over too many things." Ludia blinked and said, "The Bishop of Radiance and the Bishop of Brilliance look much older

than His Holiness the Pope! How would they succeed him?"

Elaro wasn't convinced. According to his teacher, when "Teacher's teacher" had just been selected to be the Sun Knight, the Pope had already had his current appearance. Even now that Teacher was about to leave office, the Pope still looked the same. Even if they calculated based on the youngest age possible, the Pope should be at least seventy something years old already.

However, it was true that the Bishop of Radiance and the Bishop of Brilliance were no longer young. Passing the position to them was indeed not very practical, but Ludia was still too young. The burden of the entire Sanctuary of Light was really too much...

"Big Brother." Ludia said, helpless about him, "It's impossible that I would succeed the position right away. You should stop piling up your worries so much beforehand!"

Elaro smiled embarrassedly and stopped thinking about that problem. The two of them reached the Pope's doors. The holy knights guarding the door had them enter immediately. There was no need to announce their arrival.

When they walked in, the Pope was sitting behind his desk. His entire body was enveloped in gauze. Only a general outline of his features could be seen.

Both Elaro and Ludia knew that underneath the gauze was a fifteen year old boy—at least, that was what his appearance suggested.

"I believe that you know what I'm about to say, Elaro." The Pope's tone was calm as he said, "The Sun Knight Vice-Captain Adair has gone to investigate the situation. It is now the third day, but he has yet to return."

When he heard this, Elaro's heart plummeted to rock bottom. If he could choose, he didn't want to hear what was going to be said next.

"Elaro, you have to be ready. If three more days pass without any news, you and the other holy knights-in-training will take over the positions of the Twelve Holy Knights and be prepared for battle."

*Take over the position of the Sun Knight! Be prepared for battle!* Each order greatly shook Elaro to the core. Although he had known the process that would follow if something were to occur, hearing that they would have to start doing so still made him unwilling to proceed.

If he proceeded with the orders, it would mean—that Teacher would no longer be able to return.

Ludia's eyes widened. However, she had received orders from the Pope to quietly finish listening no matter what was revealed, so even though she had heard such a grave matter, she didn't ask a single question.

The Pope folded his hands on top of the desk and calmly asked, "Holy Knight Elaro, you haven't forgotten the Sun Knight's teachings, have you?"

Elaro immediately replied, "This student would never dare to forget!"

"Very good." The Pope serenely said, "Then go. Tell everything to every one of them. Let them prepare themselves. Let them be ready to succeed the Twelve Holy Knights. Let them be prepared to take on 'everything.'"

Elaro could only nod and accept the command. "Understood."

"Ludia, stay. I have things to tell you."

"Yes, Your Holiness."

Ludia looked worriedly toward her brother, who saluted and turned to leave. His figure seen from behind looked like he was in such... pain.



In the past few days, major criminals from local churches were being transferred over to the Church of the God of Light one after another. Hungri was so busy with the transfers, verifying the criminals' situations, and looking over the results of the local churches' initial interrogations, that he barely had time to breathe.

*Don't tell me that the teachers picked such a time to leave to test our abilities to take care of everything?* Hungri had such a conjecture. However, even if that were the truth, he would only feel happy. It would mean that the time to succeed them was growing nearer and nearer. It would be great if succession could happen within the year.

However, such an event should be impossible. Succeeding the Twelve Holy Knights was a large matter. It would probably take several



months' worth of effort just for them to finish completely transferring over all the duties.

*Aim for next year!* Hungri looked over the statements the local churches had given him even more seriously. He had to handle things to the point that his teacher could find nothing to fault him for.

*But Teacher has really been gone for a long time this time...* Hungri grew doubtful.

Regarding this matter, Elaro's reaction was so strong that it was strange. As the formidable next Sun Knight, he should have a smile on. Normally, he really liked to smile a lot, but lately, his furrowed brows were even more creased than the Judgment Knight's.

*That guy is always hiding a bunch of stuff!* However, Elaro had already promised him earlier. One day, he would tell everyone—

The door to the Judge's Complex was pushed open. Hungri raised his head. At first, he thought it would be new bunch of criminals. He didn't think he would see Elaro walk inside. *You think of him, and he's here. Something seems off about him...* Hungri furrowed his brows and put down the documents he held. He walked down from the judgment platform and asked doubtfully, "Elaro, has something happened?"

Glancing at the symbol of the God of Light above the judgment platform, Elaro took a deep breath and said, "I have to leave for a bit. Please take care of the entire Holy Temple in these next few days."

After he finished speaking, he hesitated for a moment, but in the end,

he still did not tell Hungri the “worst case scenario” that Adair had mentioned. Faced with the young face before him, he really couldn’t say something like, “Please be prepared for the fact that we could all die in battle, and you will have to lead the Holy Temple.”

Hungri froze. At first, he had been walking over calmly and slowly, but now he immediately rushed in front of Elaro. “Where are you going?”

Before Elaro could think of an excuse, Hungri immediately asked another question. “The teachers aren’t around because of their mission. Vidar and Adair also left two days ago. Now, even you are leaving? Just where are all of you going?”

When he heard this, Elaro recalled that the Pope wanted him to tell all of them about everything. However, once the words were spoken, his teacher might never be able to return... He clenched his mouth closed.

Seeing that Elaro was unwilling to say anything, Hungri bellowed, “You’re always so mysterious. You can’t say this. You can’t say that. The teachers only ever tell you anything. Are we really so untrustworthy?”

Elaro couldn’t help wanting to explain on the teachers’ behalf. “It’s because you’re all still too young. I’m already over twenty—”

“But you’ve known it for a long time already, right?” Hungri didn’t accept it at all and continued to interrogate him, “At what age did you learn of the reason why the teachers go on a mission every half a year?”

*Age eight.* Elaro was completely afraid to answer. He dodged the question. "I discovered it by accident. Teacher didn't tell me anything."

Having received no answer, and seeing Elaro hemming and hawing, yet still not revealing anything, Hungri was so angry, his face grew red. He growled, "Elaro, just at what age do you plan on succeeding the position of the Sun Knight? I'm already seventeen, yet none of you are willing to tell me anything. Some of the others aren't even sixteen yet. Just how long do you plan on waiting before succeeding?"

Elaro froze, but he was rather calm about this matter. "I am the only one whose age is too different. It's a given that I should wait."

When he heard this, Hungri was so angry that he no longer cared about their age difference, about how Elaro was the leader of the Holy Temple, or even about how Elaro was much taller than him. He grabbed Elaro's collar and coldly ground out, "The others and I are all doing our utmost trying to catch up with you, yet you and the teachers are always blocking us outside the door! In the future, are we actually going to become the Twelve Holy Knights together, or is it that you're fine with succeeding by yourself?"

Having Hungri's tone turn so frigid alarmed Elaro more than facing his angry shouts. It meant that Hungri had truly grown furious. He hurriedly explained, "I only felt that all of you are still young. You are all close in age except for me, so of course I should be the one to wait."

The moment he finished speaking, Hungri's expression turned even more malevolent, yet Elaro didn't at all understand what he had said wrong.

Hungri bit out, "Do you think you are the only one who knows the meaning of sacrifice?"

"Don't give me that nonsense about how you're the only one who is different... We are all the Twelve Holy Knights! No one is different! Since you have slowed down your strides to wait for us, we would obviously hurry our steps to catch up with you. Only when we walk together are we the Twelve Holy Knights and can be considered true companions. Aren't I right?"

*True companions.* Elaro lowered his head to look at Hungri. *I see. So that's why he absolutely can't be replaced...*

Hungri resentfully said, "Elaro, say something! What are you staring off into space for? That's your only flaw, always blanking out from time to time... No, wait! The fact that you're hiding so much is bad too." Elaro returned to his senses. He said ruefully, "I have this feeling that my younger brother has grown up."

Hungri growled, "Younger brother, my ass! We're companions!"

"Yes, yes, yes, we're companions. Don't swear." Elaro smiled widely, yet he extended his hand to rub Hungri's head.

"Don't you dare rub my head! You're still treating me like a kid—"

Elaro smiled as he said, "Let's go find the rest of our 'companions' right now and tell them everything."

"Of course, you have to tell them..." Halfway through his casual response, Hungri abruptly realized what Elaro meant. He froze and asked in disbelief, "You're willing to explain now?"

Elaro nodded cautiously and said, "Actually, I should ask for Teacher's approval first, but the current situation is unusual. His Holiness the Pope has already given me an ultimatum. If the teachers do not return within three days, we are to succeed the Twelve Holy Knights and be prepared for battle."

"Succession in three days?" Hungri's eyes widened. Immediately afterward, he heard something even more shocking. "Be prepared for battle? What battle?"

"Come. Let's gather all of our companions first." Elaro calmly said, "I'll tell you guys everything."



In the conference room, Elaro and Hungri both sat at the head position of the long table. This was the first time they were seated this way. Since they weren't the Twelve Holy Knights yet, the teachers would only have them come over when they wanted them to observe something. During those times, the teachers would be sitting in their spots, and they would be sitting or standing behind the teachers, observing the teachers' every action.

It was the first time Elaro was sitting in the Sun Knight's actual spot, but he didn't feel the least bit happy. He only felt very worried. He didn't at all want to sit in his teacher's spot under such circumstances. He raised his head. The holy knights sitting on his side were Shuis,

Valica, Judge, Youg, and Snow. On Hungri's side were Valkyrs, Absenplum, Luke, Leo, and Fey.

"You really are all grown up."

After his lamenting, several people immediately rolled their eyes at him. Shuis and Valica were probably the only ones courteous enough not to roll their eyes at him.

Hungri glared at the person next to him and said resentfully, "Didn't you say you would no longer treat us like younger brothers?"

"Yes, yes..."

"Sigh!" Fey sighed and pushed up the monocle on his left eye. He said, "It's not that I want to say this, but Elaro and Hungri, the two of you really aren't suited for sitting next to each other."

"What in the world do you mean?" Hungri's reaction was so strong that he jumped up. "Are you saying that I'm not qualified to be the Judgment Knight?"

For a long time, everyone had already accepted Elaro as the most suitable successor of the Sun Knight, so Fey's words could only be directed at him. And the number one thing that Hungri hated was most definitely having people think he wasn't qualified enough to be the Judgment Knight.

"You misunderstand. This has nothing to do with being the Sun Knight or the Judgment Knight. It's just that... Sigh!" He pushed his monocle

up and said while sighing, "Sitting side by side like this, you really look like a married couple."

"..."

Elaro hugged the person next to him without letting go. At this time, he was incomparably glad that he was much taller than Hungri. If not, he wouldn't have been able to stop Hungri from hacking a companion to death during their very first official gathering.

Fey placed one hand on his chin and said, "Oh my, good thing my position is the farthest from you... Ah!"

The hilt of Hungri's sword that he held hit Fey's head spot on.

"Let go of me!" Hungri growled. "I've wanted to kill that guy for a long time already!"

"Hungri!" Seeing that the next thing Hungri would throw would be his sword, Elaro hurriedly said, "Do you want to kill Fey right now, or do you want to hear me tell you about what's going on with the teachers?"

Hungri froze, glared darkly at Fey, and then finally turned and sat down.

"Say it already!"

Everyone looked toward Elaro expectantly. He took a deep breath and finally opened his mouth to explain.

"In the past, because the dark element grew too saturated, it led to the birth of the Demon King..."

Just as he began to narrate, the others rolled their eyes at him again. Protests even sounded. "This is too far in the past! Why not start speaking about the first generation of the Twelve Holy Knights?"

Hungri glared at everyone and bellowed, "Shut up, all of you! Just sit there and listen!"

*It's unexpected that Hungri doesn't think that this story is too unrelated. He's even speaking up for me.* Elaro looked toward Hungri in surprise, while Hungri merely calmly said, "Continue. If anyone on my side dares to interrupt you, I'll sew his lips shut!"

*I wonder how Hungri controls the other five?* Elaro was a little curious. It was true that Hungri wasn't weak, but under the situation where each and every one of the current generation of Twelve Holy Knights was rather strong, he definitely couldn't be considered one of the strongest... *But now isn't the time to think about things like that!*

Once again, Elaro began talking about what had happened in the past. Shortly after he began, everyone sat upright and still. The more they heard, the larger their eyes grew. He worried whether telling them these matters was too much of a shock, and they wouldn't be able to accept it.

In the end, after he finished explaining, there was absolute silence in the room. Everyone stared at Elaro blankly.



"This is the truth of the matter. Now, every half a year, they must go to the wilderness where no one lives and allow the 'Demon King' to release as much of the dark element as he can. This is the reason why our teachers must go on a mission every half a year."

There were still some things that Elaro had not revealed. He glanced at Luke, wondering how much he knew about Knight-Captain Hell's secrets. He didn't know either how much of the truth Knight-Captain Hell would be willing to let his student know, so Elaro chose to completely skip over that portion without mentioning it.

*But Luke's expression isn't strange...* Actually, he should say, it wasn't stranger than anyone else's. Other than the same stupefied look as everyone else's, there was only a little bit of confusion over why Elaro was staring so fixedly at him.

Elaro moved his gaze away and looked at everyone. His expression was extremely solemn. "What I explained to you all just now cannot be divulged to outsiders, not even a single word! Or else, it will be regarded as a betrayal of the Church of the God of Light!"

When they heard this, Shuis and Valica were the first to say, "I swear to the God of Light, nothing I heard today will ever escape from my lips!"

"This I swear to the God of Light..."

"Under the God of Light's watch..."

One after another, they swore the gravest vow with solemn

expressions. Although none of them vowed that they would get struck by lightning or the like if they broke their vow, to those who had accepted the Twelve Holy Knights' teachings since young, an oath sworn to the God of Light was an oath that could never be defied.

"Actually, even if we said anything, no one would believe us, sigh!" Even though he said this, Fey had sworn an oath without any hesitation.

Hungri pondered, "So, the current situation is that the Sun Knight has lost control—"

"The one who lost control is the 'Demon King.'" Elaro immediately cut in and snapped, "Under no circumstances can you mix that up!" Hungri froze and lowered his head to apologize. "Sorry, I spoke wrongly."

Their surprise as they looked at Hungri, who had just frankly admitted his mistake, was akin to hearing that the Sun Knight was the Demon King. They began to doubt just what kind of day it was for them to first learn of the Sun Knight's secret, and then see Hungri admit his mistake so frankly.

"What kind of expressions are those?" Hungri was bewildered. "This rule is very logical. After all, the walls have ears. We don't know when someone might overhear our words, so the safest method is saying nothing from the start! You hear me?"

"Understood!" Five people answered in different ways one after another, yet all were solemn.

Hungri nodded in great satisfaction. As for the other five people, they weren't under his direct command, so they weren't any of his business.

However, Elaro didn't go out of his way to repeat his orders to the five in his faction. He knew very clearly that they didn't need any reminders.

Once more, Elaro looked around at everyone. He suddenly felt a lot more at ease. Without his knowing, they had all grown to the point that they could accept the truth. He had really worried too much. He should finish explaining things, and then he could even leave to do what he must without worrying anymore.

Elaro turned his head to look at the person beside him. He instructed, "I want to go and check out the situation with the Twelve Holy Knight-Captains. So, Hungri, take my place—"

"Like hell I'll take your place!" Hungri growled furiously, "Are you joking? Even Adair has gotten trapped there. What can you do even if you head over? We have already lost a Sun Knight. We can't lose a second one—"

"We haven't lost any Sun Knights yet!" Elaro interrupted Hungri extremely angrily.

Seeing that Elaro was actually showing such an enraged expression, Hungri grew panicked. However, he clenched his teeth and said, "Elaro, you have to admit that the situation is really dire!"

Elaro shook his head. "No matter how dire the situation is, it wouldn't be worse than that year. Even then, we had not lost the Sun Knight, not to mention now!"

"It was extraordinary lucky that they succeeded then! We can't fall into the trap of thinking that luck will always be on our side!"

Hungri said agitatedly, "Failing just once is enough to destroy everything. If it weren't because someone like you, who never lies, was the one who said it, I really wouldn't be able to believe that my teacher would take that kind of risk—"

Elaro could not help asking, "Hungri, if I were the Demon King, would you give up on me just because it's risky?"

Hungri froze. He had never considered this question...

"No matter what, I have to go over and take a look."

Elaro took a deep breath. It was impossible for him not to do anything for his teacher. He had personally witnessed the "Demon King" before. It was too sorrowful like that. He was incapable of not doing anything and watching his teacher become that kind of sorrowful presence again right before his eyes. Now more than ever, he also had Auntie Charlotte and Charsia. *What about them?*

"Anyone on the Demon King's mind will have their life endangered. If nothing is done about it, everyone will perish together."

Elaro could only exaggerate the matter a bit. This was the limit of his "lying." In actuality, his teacher had mentioned that the Demon King's

power had substantially weakened by now. If the “Death Monarch” was willing to do his all to use the dark element to battle against him, then within this generation, they might be able to put an end to both the problem of the excess dark element and the Demon King... Luckily, the “Death Monarch” personally overruled the suggestion.

Elaro turned to leave. He wasn’t worried that Hungri would not let him. Even if Hungri was unwilling, what could he do to stop him?

“Elaro, you can go, but take me with you.”

Elaro froze in his tracks. He turned around, wondering if he had heard wrong. “What did you just say?”

“I’m giving you two choices. First choice. Don’t go. Second choice. You go, and I go too.”

“W-What would you accomplish going there?”

Hungri thought it over and added, “There’s also a third choice—let me go!”

Elaro finally couldn’t stop himself from shouting, “Are you crazy? What are you going there for?”

“I’m crazy? You’re the one who has gone crazy!” After Hungri yelled at him, he turned and asked everyone, “Tell me, is the Sun Knight more important, or the Judgment Knight?”

Everyone’s gaze was on Elaro. Their answer was easy to see.

Hungri glared at Elaro and said, "From the very beginning, my teacher has always told me, 'you cannot lose the Sun Knight,' so no matter what you say, no matter how reasonable your justifications are, I won't let you go head to head with the Demon King by yourself! But it's true we can't give up on the teachers just like this, so let me go!"

*How can I let that happen?!* Elaro hurriedly explained, "I won't go head to head with the Demon King. I'm only going over to take a look at the situation. Haven't you said that we 'cannot lose the Sun Knight'? That's why we definitely can't give up on Knight-Captain Sun—"

"I definitely won't give up on the Sun Knight!"

Hungri bit out, "That's why, I will use my life to prevent you from leaving. Because to us, *you* are our Sun Knight!"

"Valkyrs and Luke, block the door... Valica and Shuis, block the window!" After Hungri gave a string of commands, he added on, "We have to do our utmost to prevent our Sun Knight from leaving!"

Everyone froze, but Valkyrs stood up indifferently. After he walked to the door and took his position, everyone else started taking action, too. They took position according to Hungri's orders and got into battle-ready stances, so as to prevent Elaro from catching them off guard.

*However... telling Valica and Shuis to stop Elaro should be completely useless?* They all looked at the two people who were the most unlikely to follow Hungri's orders of stopping Elaro.

Valica clenched his teeth, took out his bow, and nocked an arrow.

Then, he jumped in front of the window to guard it, surprising everyone so much that their eyes were nearly going to fall out.

Then, they all looked toward Shuis. His loyalty toward Elaro was practically even greater than his loyalty to the God of Light. *He definitely wouldn't be able to stop Elaro... right?*

But with Valica changing sides as an antecedent, it was inevitable that they would begin to doubt.

With everyone's attention on him, Shuis calmly said, "Big Bro Elaro, if you're going, you have to take me with you. That's because I am the most qualified person to go."

Before Elaro even said anything, Hungri burst out shouting, "What in the world do you mean—"

"Then, I'm going too!" Valica immediately yelled in a hurried manner, "Shuis, you promised me that you'll let me go with you!"

Hungri was practically about to spit blood. "Really, what in the world are you lot going on about?"

Shuis very straightforwardly used the truth to shut Hungri up. "My father is the Silent Eagle, the Demon King's number one subordinate. He is the true leader of the Demon King's Castle."

"..."

*Today is even more astonishing than the past ten years combined!*

Judge lamented.

Hungri clenched his teeth and said, "You guys actually kept so many secrets... What else? You might as well say that our God of Light is twin brothers with the Shadow God! After all, a bunch of people from the Church of the God of Light are relatives with people from the Demon King's Castle!"

Elaro looked at his surroundings. Each and every exit of the conference room was thoroughly blocked. Even though he had the strength to destroy the wall and create an exit, he didn't have the means to stop them from following after him. Shuis, Valica, and Valkyrs were faster than him, and Valkyrs was even the successor of the Metal Knight who specialized in pursuit and concealment. He didn't at all believe that he had the ability to break away from him.

After determining that he wouldn't be able to force his way out, Elaro could only sigh and say, "Hungri, I really can't just leave my teacher be."

"We also can't just let you go like this!" Hungri growled, "Have you ever thought about what we should do if you also couldn't return?"

"Don't they have you?" Elaro actually smiled. "I only just discovered today that you are already more than qualified to be the Judgment Knight. It would be no problem even if you took over right now."

"... So you're saying that I wasn't qualified before today?"

"Ah! That's not what I mean..."



"In any case, I won't let you go! You better give up on that notion! Even Shuis is lending a hand to obstruct you, so you shouldn't go at all!"

Shuis immediately protested, "I'm not obstructing Big Bro Elaro!"

Hungri showed an odd smile and said, "You're already obstructing him. There's no way Elaro would take you to confront the Demon King. You better watch him closely. Otherwise, he would definitely leave you behind and go meet the Demon King by himself."

Shuis froze. He hesitated for a moment, feeling that it was true that Elaro would do so. He went to stand beside Valica. He knew very well that if the two of them worked together, even Elaro would not be able to pass them—unless it was a battle to the death.

Elaro surveyed his surroundings again. Even though he had purposely been chatting with Hungri, no one had any intention of lowering their guard...

"Let's just leave it at this for today. It's already late. Let's continue the discussion tomorrow."

When he heard this, Hungri said calmly, "Sure. Let's go. We'll all go and sleep on the floor of Elaro's room."

"..."

Hungri snorted coldly. "Even if the criminals I've imprisoned don't

number a thousand, it's at least a few hundred already. Do you think I'd give you a chance to escape?"

Elaro had indeed planned on it, so he couldn't say anything to deny it. He could only smile wryly and say, "Hungri, there's no way my room can fit twelve people."

Hungri didn't care much at all. "It is a bit small. We'll just have to pile on top of each other."

Everyone rolled their eyes at Hungri exaggeratedly. The faces of the taller ones among them had nearly drained of all color. It went without saying that if they had to pile on top of each other, they would definitely be the carpet!

Seeing that Hungri was allowing no room for discussion, even if their faces had paled, they didn't complain. They really were planning to go to his room to "pile on top of each other." Elaro could only sigh and say, "Then, let Shuis come and guard me."

Hungri immediately shot that down. "No, Shuis wouldn't be able to win against you by himself!"

Shuis glanced at Hungri. He hadn't thought that Hungri would believe that he wouldn't release Elaro. Rather, he was impartial and determined that he could not win against him in a fight.

Elaro clenched his teeth. "Then, let Valica come over too."

Hungri thought it over and said, "At least, Luke and Valkyrs need to be

there too.”

“That won’t do!” Elaro blurted.

Hungri narrowed his eyes suspiciously. “Other than wanting to escape, what other reason can you have for not wanting them to sleep on the floor of your room?”

*The reason is that my facial mask ingredients are all on my desk, and I haven’t cleaned it up...*

Elaro took a deep breath. “Shuis, Valica, and Valkyrs then. No one else!”

Hungri silently thought it over. These three were all very strong, and they were particularly alert and fast. Even if they really couldn’t stop Elaro, they would definitely be able to prevent Elaro from leaving during the time period when the others hear of the commotion and rush over.

“Okay!”

That night, Elaro tried his hardest to come up with a reason. “Because I’ve been feeling too stressed lately, I decided to adopt a hobby to deal with the stress, so I planned on making floral scented bread,” and then he tried his hardest to ignore the suspicious gazes that the two of them were trying their best to contain—the moment Valkyrs had entered the room, he had made his bed on the floor, lain down, and immediately fallen asleep, not at all concerned about what was on the table.



*Chapter 4: Teacher's... Part 3—Return*

He carefully tiptoed over the three on the floor, afraid he would step on them. Halfway through, he suddenly stopped, turned around, and gently pulled up the blanket that Shuis had kicked to the side. Since the weather was warm, he only pulled it up to Shuis's stomach and no higher than that.

When Shuis shifted, Elaro jumped in shock, thinking that the dose of medicine hadn't been enough—he hadn't dared to use too heavy a dose, deeply afraid that it would cause lingering harm to Shuis, Valica, and Valkyrs.

Although "she" had guaranteed nonstop that there wouldn't be any side effects, that after they had slept their fill and woken up they'd be even healthier... she had always had a willful personality. Even Teacher had warned him before not to trust her too much.

Seeing that Shuis was still asleep, and his expression didn't look like he was suffering, Elaro finally relaxed more.

With his head lowered to look at him, it was as if he had returned to "that time" when Shuis had still been a baby. He had been called over to help look after him. Like now, he had had his head lowered to look at the three babies. During that tense and dangerous time, only with his head lowered to look at the babies had he felt relaxed.

"Shuis, I'll do everything I can to prevent your father from having to become the Demon King's subordinate again!"



Hungri abruptly opened his eyes, feeling a bit lost. He slowly got up...  
“Ow, my waist!”

Only after sitting up did Hungri realize that he had fallen asleep leaning against his desk again. His teacher had warned him many times not to sleep on his desk for an entire night. It was bad for his health.

However, Hungri still occasionally did so. Taking care of paperwork was taxing. He would fall asleep against the desk without realizing it. It wasn't something he could control—if he could control it, then he wouldn't be falling asleep.

Slowly standing up, he glanced at the documents. He hadn't finished going through them, but he still felt extremely sleepy, so Hungri decided to go back to sleep. He slowly moved toward the bed and couldn't help but berate his own stupidity. If things continued like this, he would probably turn into an old man before he was even thirty!

*But there's also someone who is definitely over forty, yet still looks like a youngster... What kind of ageless monster is he?*

Hungri lay on the bed and immediately felt a lot more comfortable. He glanced toward the empty bed next to his, which belonged to Valkyrs. Among the Twelve Holy Knights-in-training, only Elaro had his own room. The rest were all two to a room.

Regarding his roommate Valkyrs, Hungri was quite satisfied... because it was like not having one.

Although he wasn't on the level of Knight-Captain Cloud, who couldn't even be seen, Valkyrs was quiet, and he was indifferent to everything. Even when Hungri often worked through the night, or when he blew his top while reading criminal records and stamped with fury in the dead of night, causing even Fey, who slept next door to sigh repeatedly, Valkyrs would still be indifferent and continue to sleep without a twitch.

However, Valkyrs wasn't addicted to sleeping. Rather, he was especially vigilant. *Just how does he distinguish between danger and his companion merely losing it...?*

*Bang—*

Hungri jumped, all traces of tiredness completely vanishing. He reached for his sword but couldn't find it, finally realizing that he had placed the sword by the desk. He hadn't brought it over with him when he had moved to the bed. *How careless of me!*

"Fey! Luke!" he yelled, trying to get the attention of his neighbors. However, right after he yelled, he saw who had slammed the door open.

Once he saw who it was, Hungri relaxed. Then, Fey and Luke also rushed into the room. The crisp sound of a whip struck through the air—

Hungri immediately shouted, "Stop! It's Valkyrs!"

At once, Fey twisted his wrist, and the whip stiffly jerked in a

completely different direction, striking next to the feet of his target. Valkyrs had originally wanted to dodge, but after Hungri spoke, he stood absolutely still in his original spot.

Hungri hurriedly said, "Valkyrs, weren't you supposed to be with Elaro—"

He cut Hungri off. "Elaro disappeared."

"What? How?"

Valkyrs's tone was chilly. "He drugged us. Shuis and Valica followed behind me, but they're sluggish because of the medicine's effects." Hungri froze. He muttered in a low voice, "That bastard, he actually poisoned his companions!" He growled at Fey and Luke, "Wake everyone up!"

Fey had his chin raised, and he adjusted his monocle, looking just like an aristocrat rebuking his subordinate, "Sigh, seeing how loudly you've been yelling, everyone is already awake. They're all standing outside—Ah!"

When Hungri walked past Fey, he grabbed Fey's monocle and stuffed it into Fey's mouth. He then said to the crowd by the door, "All of you, come with me. We're going to the Pope!"

In the middle of the night, the Pope was naturally not in the study. With Hungri in the lead, they arrived at the Pope's room. Like usual, two holy knights stood guard outside of it. They couldn't be commanded by the yet-to-be-official Twelve Holy Knights and simply



refused to let them through.

Everyone looked at Hungri. He took a deep breath and yelled so loudly, the room shook. "Your Holiness, Elaro has run off to find the Twelve Holy Knight-Captains! If you don't wake up right now, the Church of the God of Light will no longer have a Sun Knight!"

Hurried footsteps sounded from within the room. Right after that, the door was yanked open, and a fifteen year old boy rushed out wearing pure white pajamas. They all stared at him in shock—the kid wasn't even wearing shoes.

They had known that the Pope's true identity was strange. However, it was still bizarre to see that the current Pope of the Church of the God of Light, who had been the Pope for a long time, was a boy who looked around their age, maybe even younger.

For a moment, Hungri couldn't react either. After freezing for a few seconds, he clenched his teeth and said, "Your Holiness! Elaro has gone off to find the Twelve Holy Knight-Captains. We need to know the location of the teachers' mission—"

"The second tower to the left; white, with a golden roof," the Pope interrupted.

Hungri blinked. "I'm asking about the location of the mission." *The mission can't be at one of the Church of the God of Light's towers, can it?*

"Just go there already!" The Pope shrieked like a kid who was throwing

a tantrum.

Hungri ground his teeth. "Understood!" Then, he turned and left, with everyone following him.

The Pope gazed at his back and couldn't help complaining about the two Knight-Captains.

"Grisia, Lesus, just what is going on with the personalities of your students? Hungri feels more like he was taught by Grisia, while Elaro feels more like Lesus's student.

"Even though their personalities are switched, the fact that Elaro likes to endanger himself is quite like Grisia. And Hungri leading everyone to chase after him is quite like Lesus. Even though their personalities are different, their actions aren't. Is that good or bad?

"But even with the personalities and the positions of the next generation switched, they still give me a huge headache. Sigh, I think I really should finish instructing Ludia... Ah! Oh no, I forgot to tell them where inside the tower..."



"The second tower, tower..."

"There!" Snow ran to the left, past Hungri.

Hungri followed after Snow without hesitation. If they were to talk about the person who was the most familiar with the buildings of the Church of the God of Light, that person would have to be Snow. That

was because Snow was nearly always looking for where his teacher was hiding every single day.

They reached the bottom of a tall tower but were stopped at the door. Snow, who was at the front, shoved at the door but couldn't budge it. It was evidently locked.

Hungri followed over and immediately growled, "Leo! Smash it in!"

Leo rushed forward, his broadsword slashing at the door mercilessly. Wood splintered, a large hole opening in the middle of the two doors. They entered the tower unobstructed. The decorations inside were rather simple. Gigantic paintings that reached the floors hung on the walls. On the left was a winding staircase. They immediately began to climb upwards...

"Wait!"

Hungri stopped and turned his head to look at the person who had spoken.

Youg crouched on the ground, both hands touching the surface. He said, "Something's not right below. I can feel the dark element. Valica, what do you think?"

Brows furrowed, Valica nodded and said, "I feel it too. Youg is right."

Hungri looked at both of them. Youg's job was to banish evil spirits. He was sensitive to the dark element. Valica was the Leaf Knight's successor. His sensing was stronger than everyone else's.

"This way." Absenplum stood in front of one of the large paintings.  
"There's a hidden passage!"

Hungri didn't hesitate. "Let's go!"

They gave up on the obvious path up and pushed aside the large painting. A dark, winding staircase led below. They actually couldn't see how far down it went.

Hungri took the lead and rushed down. Within the circular tower, the sound of their footsteps resounded loud and clear, fast but orderly.

"No—"

"...Elaro?" Hungri yelled downwards.

"Hungri?" A cry for help from Elaro actually came from below. "Quick, help!"

Hungri stilled but growled, "Judge, jump down!"

At the same time as he spoke, he grabbed Fey and threw him down the space between the stairs. At the same time, Judge jumped down as well.

"This is obviously unfair treatment~~"

As Fey complained, he took out his whip. He grabbed Judge with one hand and used his whip to strike the railings around them with his

other hand. From time to time, he would wrap his whip around the railings before letting go, and thus slow down the speed at which they fell.

Judge had the Shield of Earth, the strongest defensive shield, and Fey could ensure that they would land safely. It was too bad that the space between the stairs was too narrow and could only allow two people to drop between them at the same time. Hungri had his head lowered to watch the two of them fall safely.

After those two had been thrown down, Valica and Shuis immediately understood the reasoning behind Hungri's actions, so they also jumped down. They were both agile. Occasionally, they grabbed the railings around them or kicked with their feet, ensuring that they too would land safely.

"Hurry!"

Hungri continued to lead the others down. *Just how long are these stairs? I hope we make it in time...*



The moment Judge and Fey landed, they discovered a long corridor before them. It was too dark to see the end of it. They had no choice but to break into a run.

Fey's feet never stopped, just like his complaints. "How come the Church of the God of Light has such a strange place like this? This basement is really too deep. How was it dug? To actually waste money on this kind of place, no wonder our food has always been so

disgusting—”

Fey ran past a dark curtain and abruptly felt rather uneasy. *Was that some kind of magic array—? Eek!*

A humongous shadow darted toward him. He started to dodge without thinking, but realized that the thing flying his way was extremely familiar—*it’s Elaro!*

Unable to dodge, he could only block him. However, the strength of the collision against his arms was so strong that he spat blood. He couldn’t block it at all, and skidded back all the way until he smashed up against something.

“A-Are you guys okay?” Judge was the one who had stopped them. He was so frightened that his inquiries about their health tumbled out of his mouth.

Elaro turned his head. Both Fey and Judge jumped in shock. Half of his forehead was bruised purple, and there were traces of blood by the corner of his mouth. Fey and Judge were both speechless. Elaro had been the substitute swordsmanship teacher for many years already. *When has he ever appeared so beaten up?*

He glanced at them but didn’t have time to pay attention to them. He stood back up and ran forward, bellowing, “Scarlet, you can’t let them go!”

Fey and Judge stood up. Before them was a completely empty temple hall. There was only a magic circle that had been drawn on the floor. It

was so large that more than ten people could stand inside of it. They didn't have a clue what its purpose was.

Standing in the center of the magic circle were people both of them knew—Charlotte and Charsia.

Elaro walked toward them with deliberate steps. At the same time, he tried to persuade her, "Auntie Charlotte, you can't go over there, and you must not take Charsia! Aren't you worried for her safety?"

When she heard him, Charlotte smiled instead. "Look who's talking! The truth is, you actually wish to go, too, right? Otherwise, why are you here?"

Seeing that Charlotte was still able to smile, Elaro felt deeply powerless. "Auntie, this isn't a joke!"

"Stop it right there! Elaro, if you take even one more step, I won't hold back anymore!"

*Where did that voice come from?* Fey and Judge looked up simultaneously and were both surprised. A tiny little person floated in the air. It was probably only the size of a hand and was made out of ice crystals. No matter how one looked at it, it didn't look like something that could talk, but she had indeed spoken, and her voice was even that of a little girl's!

Elaro glared at the little crystal person in the air. "Scarlet, you can't let them go over there. Otherwise, Teacher won't ever forgive you!"

Scarlet said, aggrieved, "It doesn't matter if he never forgives me. I just don't want to see that child's efforts go to waste. He is almost free! He's so close. Charlotte and Charsia are the people with the biggest chance of bringing him back!"

*She's right... No!* Elaro clenched his teeth. "Teacher would never let them be endangered!"

Shuis and Valica arrived on the scene as well, but the sight before them confused them. After exchanging a glance, they decided to stand quietly by the side of the door where it was dark and not bring attention to themselves.

"Elaro!"

Hungri rushed onto the scene. When he saw that Elaro was still there, he breathed a sigh of relief. However, when he unexpectedly saw Charlotte and Charsia too, he was very bewildered, unable to make heads or tails of the current situation.

He could only glance at Fey and Judge, who had arrived a bit earlier, hoping he could receive an explanation, but the two of them were also confused. It was only natural that Hungri then looked toward Valica and Shuis who were standing by the door, but he immediately averted his gaze, not wanting to draw attention to them.

*Everyone's here!* Elaro gratefully said, "Hungri, you did well!"

*Well, my ass!* If he could, Hungri really wanted to kill his own Sun Knight, but he squashed that desire and only asked, "What do we need



to do now?”

Elaro looked toward Charlotte and Charsia. He commanded sternly, “Do everything you can to stop Auntie Charlotte and Charsia from leaving—”

“Big Brother, I’m going to bring Papa back,” Charsia said resolutely. Elaro’s words died. He nearly couldn’t speak anymore.

Charlotte hugged her young daughter, tears in her eyes. She said with a smile, “I’m sorry for having you take this risk, Charsia, but your papa loves you so much. You’ll definitely be able to bring him back—”

Hungri started to understand the situation. Charlotte had planned on taking Charsia over to have the “Demon King” regain his state of mind. Coincidentally, Elaro, who had also planned on heading over from this place, had run into them. And then... that strange glass person was probably the key person who could send them over.

According to his understanding, letting Charlotte and Charsia head over could provide a chance for the current Sun Knight to return, but it could also result in them getting taken away or something even worse. But if they weren’t allowed to go, then with the current turn of events, the Sun Knight was most likely already “gone.” All that was left was the return of the Demon King!

After Hungri made sense of the situation, he felt that this choice was extremely difficult, but he wasn’t worried about it. He wasn’t the person who should give the final command. That was why, along with everyone else, he merely looked toward Elaro, waiting for him to

command them.

Scarlet said in distress, "Elaro! Even you are giving up on Grisia?"

Elaro's expression didn't change, but he tightened his fists without thinking.

Agitated, Scarlet said, "As long as they head over, there's a possibility that your teacher can come back. It won't take much longer for the dark element to be returned to a balanced state, and then he will be able to happily spend his time with his wife and daughter! If we give up now, then all his efforts and struggles will go to waste, and the Demon King will once again resurface. Is that what you want? Elaro!"

Elaro calmly said, "Too much time has passed. For it to take this long, something must have happened, and the other Knight-Captains weren't able to handle it. That's why we can't expect Teacher to retain much of his lucidity. If even his long-time companions can't stop Teacher, then no matter who heads over, it would likely be useless."

*His reasoning is sound. They secretly thought to themselves. But just who was it that even drugged his own companions for the sake of going over to see Knight-Captain Sun, who doesn't have much lucidity left? Who is the one doing all those useless things?*

Elaro tried to persuade her, "Scarlet, if the Demon King harms them, or does something even worse to them, Teacher will truly fall apart! I mean, truly and utterly!"

Scarlet fell silent for a long time. Then, she finally said, "Truly going

completely mad might actually be a bit better than living his whole life suffering with a clear mind.”

When he heard that, Elaro immediately yelled, “Stop them,” but his attention wasn’t on Charlotte and Charsia, but rather on Scarlet, who was in the air!

A whip flashed toward the little crystal person in the air. Fey was close by, so he was the first to respond to Elaro’s command. Following that was an arrow. Valica walked over from the door, shooting arrows as he walked. Valkyrs never stopped throwing his knives...

As everyone worked together to attack, Elaro ignored his own command to attack Scarlet. Instead, he rushed toward the wife and daughter in the middle of the magic circle.

“Bastard—” Hungri cursed, afraid that not only would they not be able to stop Charlotte and Charsia, but even Elaro would be lost as well.

The whip landed against something invisible, unable to touch the little crystal person at all. The arrows and the throwing knives yielded the same result. Scarlet snorted. “My defense was set up by the Demon King himself. Besides, even if you guys managed to kill me, so what? You were too late from the start. Before Elaro had even arrived, the preparations were already done.”

As if confirming her words, rays of light burst out from the magic circle, gradually enveloping the mother and daughter, starting from their feet.

“Elaro, your presence will be beneficial, too.” Scarlet nodded. “His wife,

child, and student. That's definitely enough to bring Grisia back!"

"Elaro, come back!"

Hungri rushed forward, but someone else was even faster than him. Hope burned within him momentarily—but it was Shuis, the next Storm Knight who excelled in speed.

*Shit—All of you might as well hold hands and head over together!*  
Hungri felt that he was about to go crazy. He really wanted to strangle Elaro and his five holy knights! He yelled, "Fey! Valkyrs!"

Fey rushed over, but he was only in time to push down Shuis, who was closer in proximity. He wrapped his whip around him, and both of them fell by the edge of the magic circle. He didn't have any time to deal with Elaro. Valkyrs's location was even farther than Hungri's. Even though he had rushed over the moment he'd heard Hungri's command, he couldn't make it in time.

Hungri could only watch Elaro rush into the magic circle, when he had almost reached the edge of the magic circle himself.

*Do I head in? Do I stay out?*

He stopped. Hungri's toes were only a centimeter away from the outer edge of the magic circle. He reached a hand out to stop Valkyrs, who had been about to rush inside. Rage boiled within. He yelled, "Elaro, if you don't return, I won't ever forgive you!"

Elaro had almost reached the mother and daughter. Charlotte was

tightly hugging Charsia. At this time, the rays of light from the magic circle brightened so much that no one could see anything. This included Elaro as well, but he didn't stop. He followed his memory, sure that he would be able to safely grab Charlotte and Charsia!

Of course, he had heard Hungri's words. He made a silent promise to him. Right now, he no longer wanted to go find his teacher because...

*Teacher wants me to bring Charlotte and Charsia to safety, to a place the Demon King can't find them. He doesn't want me to bring them right to the Demon King!*

*I got them!* Elaro managed to hug the two of them and immediately lifted them. He began running out. The moment he stepped over one of the lines, it was like he had crashed against a wall. Losing his balance, he saw that he was falling, so he could only twist himself so that the mother and daughter in his embrace would fall on top of him.

After he crashed to the ground, the rays of light from the magic circle began to diminish. He was gradually able to see the outlines of his surroundings.

*Where might we be?* Elaro really wasn't certain. He raised his head and saw a pair of feet nearby. *Whose feet are these?*

"Elaro?"

*It's Teacher's voice... We're done for!*

"Elaro!"

The voice who had spoken his name this time was completely different but much closer. Elaro lifted his head and blurted, "Hungri!"

What confused him was how wild with joy Hungri looked. Just earlier, he had looked like he was about to murder someone. However, Hungri didn't pay any attention to him. First, he lifted Charsia up, and then he helped Charlotte stand. After doing so, he kicked Elaro.

Elaro smiled wryly and stood up by himself. He smiled at Hungri. Just as he was about to thank him for not following him in, for keeping him from worrying about the future of the Holy Temple, Hungri pointed behind him with his finger.

"Charlotte? Why are you here?"

Elaro froze. That really was his teacher's voice. He turned his head to look. Light continued to shroud the magic circle behind him, but more than ten people could faintly be seen through the light. After counting, he could make out fourteen—exactly fourteen!

The Twelve Holy Knights and the two vice-captains had all returned!

The tears that Charlotte had been holding back the entire time finally burst out. It didn't matter whether he currently had black hair or golden hair. None of that mattered. What mattered was that he had returned!

"Grisia!" She rushed over, throwing herself right into his embrace. She almost toppled him over, this holy knight who wasn't very physically

strong.

“Why are you crying?”

Charlotte yelled through her tears, “It’s your fault!”

The light from the magic circle gradually dispersed; however, the people within the magic circle were even more eye-catching than the light.

There were fourteen of them. Although their outfits were in tatters, their bearing was undiminished. Each of them had their own distinct qualities. The only similarity they all shared, was that they were all truly striking.

The man in the very center was particularly conspicuous. He had a head of resplendent golden hair, skin that was as white as porcelain, and a pair of eyes that were as blue as the sky. Even though the white knight outfit on his body was a bit ragged and burnt, that did not at all detract from his absolute magnificence.

Charlotte raised her head. It just so happened that the Sun Knight had his head lowered to look at her, and he had on his perpetual, dazzling smile...

“Damn ageless devil!” She began raging, “Didn’t you say that you wouldn’t use magic to stay young?”

“Eh? You know I haven’t done that!” The Sun Knight didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. He mumbled, “Where would I get the money

to use the kind of magic that needs to be cast regularly? It's really expensive!"

"Liar! Even so close, I don't see a single wrinkle on you. You don't even look thirty with that face!"

"Ah... maybe it's just natural beauty?"

"Are you saying that I'm not naturally beautiful? I want a divorce!"

"We haven't even gotten married yet..."

Their rapid but quiet quarrel made the Twelve Holy Knights around them glance at the Sun Knight's face—he really was a devil!

"Could it be that the Demon King doesn't age?" someone mumbled. Scarlet floated down and stood on the Sun Knight's shoulder. "Nothing of the sort. The Demon King is a normal person, too. Of course he ages. Often, he even ages faster. Becoming a vessel of the dark element isn't an easy task!"

*Ages even faster?* Everyone glanced through the corner of their eyes at the Sun Knight's face.

"He's probably a devil!" Scarlet said with a shrug.

"Huh..."

"Papa!"



Hearing this shout, a dazzling smile broke out across the Sun Knight's face. He knelt down to greet the little girl who was running over. "My little darling, why have you come here too?"

Charsia threw herself at her father, and he picked her up.

"Teacher!" At this time, the holy knights-in-training began rushing over to their own teachers' side. There were those who asked after their teachers...

"T-Teacher! I'm so glad that you h-haven't died!" Judge looked at his teacher emotionally. Although his teacher's condition looked rather terrible, and his shield even had several holes in it, he was still standing, so that was a good sign.

"Dead? *Your teacher* is the dead one... Shit! I actually cursed myself." The Earth Knight was very vexed, so he smacked his student on the head.

There was also someone who couldn't find his teacher...

"T-Teacher? Teacher, where are you? Don't tell me that you haven't returned?!" Snow was worried out of his mind.

"I'm here." Knight-Captain Cloud slowly appeared from behind the Earth Knight's huge shield.

Snow immediately walked over and held his teacher's hand. This was one of his perennial habits. If he didn't do so, he didn't know where his teacher would disappear to the very next second. Only by holding his

teacher's hand could he ensure that he wouldn't disappear.

Hungri walked up to his own teacher. He was a bit at a loss. He had never seen... his teacher look so ragged before!

The Judgment Knight's brows were like always, locked in a deep furrow. The most obvious mark that the years had left on his face was that deep furrow between his brows. Other than that, his face had grown even more mature, and perhaps due to too much stress, his black hair contained a few strands of white.

However, none of that was on Hungri's mind. His teacher's face was quite normal. Other than the white strands among his hair, he actually looked a little younger than his years. Compared to the Sun Knight's ageless, devilish face that made him look like Elaro's brother when they stood together—you couldn't even tell who the older brother was—this was much better.

What was strange were the clothes on his teacher. The Judgment Knight had always liked cleanliness. However, at that moment, the black clothing he wore was in shreds. Moreover, the black robes he wore over the top had disappeared altogether.

Hungri glanced beyond the tattered clothes. *Looks like there are no injuries. He must have been healed.*

"Teacher, you are back." In front of his teacher, Hungri had never dared to be rash. He greeted him obediently.

"Yes," the Judgment Knight answered.

Although his teacher hadn't asked, Hungri knew he was waiting for his report. He hurriedly said, "Teacher, we have learned a lot, including matters regarding the 'Demon King.'"

The Judgment Knight frowned. After he gave him a nod, he turned his head and called out, "Sun."

The Sun Knight turned his head. He had heard Hungri's words. He still had a smile on as he asked, "Elaro, come explain to Teacher!"

Elaro explained everything honestly, "Teacher, because the Twelve Holy Knight-Captains did not return even after a long time, and I also had a strange dream, I really couldn't help but worry. I told Vice-Captain Adair, and he decided to investigate the situation. When he didn't return either, the Pope gave a command that if you didn't return within three days, we would directly succeed the Twelve Holy Knights. Therefore..."

After he explained this, Elaro let his head drop. "I told everyone the truth. They now know that you are 'that person.'" *Since Teacher returned today, I really didn't need to tell them everything.* He felt extremely conflicted.

They all looked at the Sun Knight. Although they had already learned of the truth, they found it difficult to believe when they looked at him. The Sun Knight's appearance was handsome, his actions graceful. His entire being was as dazzling as holy light. He was the embodiment of the perfect Sun Knight, and he was also the spokesperson of the God of Light. *How could he be the Demon King?*

"Oh, so the students all know the truth now?" The Sun Knight wasn't very bothered. "Your teacher had originally been hesitant over whether he should command his student to tell the truth to his companions, who would hence accompany him in spreading the glory of the God of Light. However, after considering that you should have your own opinions as the next Sun Knight, your teacher decided that it would suffice for you to personally decide on the right time to tell them."

*So, Teacher has been waiting for me to tell my companions?* Elaro was stunned.

"Then, have you also found out?" To the side, the Hell Knight suddenly asked his student this question.

Luke was puzzled. "Found out what?"

"Knight-Captain Hell, I did not mention anything about you," Elaro hurriedly said.

Luke glanced at Elaro in puzzlement. Then, he looked back at his teacher.

The Hell Knight remained silent for a moment, but then he softly said, "I am not a living person but the final form of a death knight—a death monarch."

"..."

Teacher and student looked at each other speechlessly. Everyone else

was also staring with wide eyes. However, since the Hell Knight had always dressed oddly, it was actually less shocking than learning that the Sun Knight was the Demon King. Although they were surprised, they weren't very bothered—after all, if their leader was the Demon King, then it did feel rather normal for him to have an undead creature as a subordinate.

Luke had his head bowed for a long time before he suddenly looked up and declared, "Since I have already acknowledged you as my teacher, then no matter what happens, you will always be my teacher!"

The Hell Knight looked profoundly at his own student and merely nodded without a word.

"T-Teacher..." Judge looked at his teacher, face full of expectation. "T-Then, are you also something?"

"Like hell! I'm your teacher!" The Earth Knight smacked his student.



Elaro was shut in confinement.

After the Sun Knight learned of everything that had transpired, he grew so angry that not even the first syllable of "elegance" could be spelled out about him.

"I haven't even retired, yet you have already returned most of my teachings to me? To think that you discarded your own safety as the next Sun Knight, and even needed Hungri to stop you—you disgraceful bastard! Scram into the confinement chamber and write ten thousand

times, 'I am the Sun Knight. I cannot randomly throw away my life!'"

*Do you have the qualifications to tell him to write that?* The 38th generation of the Twelve Holy Knights watched their Sun Knight speechlessly.

The following day, Hungri was also thrown in confinement.

The Judgment Knight's rage couldn't be contained.

"You actually dared to torture a criminal nearly to death?! To think that you still can't even achieve the most basic 'not allowing your emotions to cloud your judgment'... I really should consider replacing you!"

Hungri began panicking. "Teacher, I've learned my mistake! Don't replace me!"

The Judgment Knight merely looked at his student with a darkened face. Hungri was so panicked, he didn't know what to do. His teacher had always been a man of his word. If he spoke of it, then he truly did have that intention.

Elaro, who was in the next chamber, immediately yelled, "Knight-Captain Judgment, if you really must replace Hungri, then please ask my teacher to replace me as well! My Judgment Knight will only ever be Hungri. If he isn't the 39th Judgment Knight, then I won't be the 39th Sun Knight, either!"

"Are you threatening me?" The Judgment Knight's face grew even

darker.

Elaro's heart jumped. He tried his best to stay calm as he said,  
"Nothing of the sort. I am only stating a fact."

Hungri looked at Elaro in admiration. Hungri nearly couldn't bring himself to look at his teacher's face anymore, yet Elaro had actually dared to say that kind of "threat" to his teacher.

"Hmph!" The Judgment Knight turned and said, "Knight-Captain Sun, just how have you taught your student? He actually has the nerve to threaten a teacher!"

Only then did Elaro and Hungri realize that the Sun Knight had arrived at the entrance of the confinement chamber at some unknown point. He was currently leaning against the door with a faint smile.

"Lesus, last time you told me that Elaro was courageous. Now, you feel that he has too much guts, huh?"

The Sun Knight smiled as he walked over.

Hungri was stunned. He had never heard the Sun Knight sound so... easy to understand.

The Judgment Knight snorted. "Such daring shouldn't be used for disobeying a teacher! What's more, whether my student is suitable to succeed me or not is my decision. No one else may interfere!"

The Sun Knight burst into laughter, and he even kept laughing nonstop.

"What's so funny?" The Judgment Knight was a little vexed.

"Have you forgotten the time when I had nearly been replaced too because of my poor swordsmanship? I remember that at the time, there seemed to be 'someone' who had led all the other Twelve Holy Knights-in-training to stand behind me. No matter what, none of you were willing to leave the evaluation meeting!"

"...Neo Sun hadn't really wanted to replace you then."

The Sun Knight chuckled as he said, "True, I also recall that it seemed to be the same 'someone' who hurriedly asked my teacher to return as assistance."

"..."

The Sun Knight sighed. "Lesus, my student is a stubborn person. Since he has said so, he would definitely do so. If you replace Hungri, then the next generation Twelve Holy Knights might not have a Sun Knight. I forgot to choose a back-up. Lesus, it's not like you don't know that—"

"Grisia Sun." The Judgment Knight coldly said, "I won't accept any threats, not even from you!"

After he spoke, he turned and left immediately.

"Teacher!" Hungri was unwilling to give up as he yelled, "I know I'm wrong. I won't do it again. Please don't replace me!"

The Judgment Knight paused momentarily, but then he left.



"Teacher..."

Hungri watched his teacher leave, all the way until he stepped out of the confinement chamber, and he could no longer see him...

Seeing Hungri's head droop and how silent he was, Elaro hurriedly tried asking his teacher for help. "Teacher—"

The Sun Knight suddenly asked his student, "Elaro, have you ever seen the entire process of the death penalty carried out after a criminal receives a death sentence?"

Elaro was momentarily confused, unsure why his teacher had suddenly brought this up. He looked at his teacher, who merely smiled at him.

"I have never." Elaro was certain that there was a point to his teacher's words. He followed along and asked, "Teacher, have you seen it before?"

"Of course, even if the benevolent God of Light does not wish for such a scene." The Sun Knight showed a compassionate expression.

"The criminal is first forced to stand in the plaza, and Knight-Captain Judgment personally recites all of the criminal's offenses. After that, the criminal is pushed into a cage and paraded through Leaf Bud City. On the way, if the public accidentally picks up a stone from the ground and throws it, and it accidentally lands on the criminal, since the knights are too busy with guard duty, it often 'slips by them' or 'they don't see it,' and thus cannot stop it in time. That is, unless the public

picks up a stone that is too large, and it causes too much of a commotion.

"After being brought to the execution ground, the criminal is then taken to the execution stage and a rope is tied around the criminal's neck. They carefully check to make sure they don't have the wrong person, and the royal family sends someone to attend the ritual. Only then is the sentence carried out."

Conflicted, the Sun Knight then said, "However, members of the royal family are always very busy. It's not rare for them to be late. They're always one or two hours late before they belatedly arrive. It's very troublesome."

After Elaro listened in astonishment, he felt this was quite cruel. However, he then recalled what Hungri had told him of the crimes that the criminals had committed before... He took in a deep breath and decided that this wasn't where his duty lay. *I should just leave it to the Judgment Knights!*

The Sun Knight sighed. "Actually, this is all because Lesus protects Hungri too much!"

Elaro didn't really understand what he meant, and he didn't fully agree either. "Knight-Captain Judgment is very strict. He has especially high demands of Hungri. He has never pampered him!"

"Strictness and pampering aren't exclusive. Otherwise, why is it that Hungri is already seventeen, yet he is unwilling to let Hungri see the final fate of the criminals on death row?" The Sun Knight murmured,

"If he has ever seen the 'final fate' of those criminals, he would definitely understand that only such a punishment would frighten the public enough that they wouldn't dare to commit a crime, so as to prevent themselves from receiving the same fate. Perhaps then, he would no longer even think of privately judging them?"

Elaro blinked and immediately understood why his teacher had told them this. He looked toward Hungri. Although his posture hadn't changed—his head was still drooped—his shoulders had begun to shake. It was evident that he had been affected.

"Hungri..." Elaro looked at Hungri, who was still silent and had his head bowed. He immediately tried to plead for him, "Teacher, please, you have to help Hungri! He did really well this time. On the contrary, I was the one who was too impulsive from start to finish. If you don't plan to replace me, then how can Hungri be replaced?"

"So you know that you were too impulsive this time?"

The Sun Knight's face darkened, and Elaro's heart plummeted along with it. However, in the very next second, the Sun Knight turned his head and smiled at Hungri. "Don't worry. Since Lesus didn't say that he would replace you immediately, that means he will give you a chance."

Hungri abruptly raised his head and grabbed at the bars. He shouted, "Really? Teacher isn't actually planning on replacing me?"

The Sun Knight smiled. "Lesus isn't that heartless. With his personality, if he really wanted to replace someone, he wouldn't shut that person

in confinement and even verbally warn him. He'd have directly replaced him. I feel that Lesus's intention to replace you might even be less than my intention to replace Elaro!"

After he finished speaking, he glared at his student.

"Elaro, don't think that you have any leisure to shield Hungri. This time, you were rotten to the core!" The Sun Knight pointed at his student and scolded, "Stay here and reflect on that!"

After his reprimand, he left angrily, just like the Judgment Knight.

The two of them, who had been scolded one after another, hung their heads and lamented, "As expected, I really can't compare with Teacher—"

Both of them stopped at the same time. Through the bars, they stared at each other in shock.

Shocked, Hungri said, "Elaro, what are you talking about? You're a really good Sun Knight!"

Elaro smiled as he said, "Do you think so this time as well?"

"...This time, you were a Sun Knight that really made me want to kill you."

Elaro's smile turned wry. He softly said, "Even if the same thing happened again, I really don't know if I would be able to make a different decision—"

Hungri interrupted him. "I will try my best to become a competent Judgment Knight. Even if the same thing ever happens again, you won't have to, and you shouldn't ever have to do everything by yourself! That's because what we're succeeding is the 'Twelve Holy Knights'! Got it?"

*The Twelve Holy Knights...* Elaro smiled. "Got it, Knight-Captain Judgment."



In the afternoon, Luke brought a pillow and a blanket and entered the chamber opposite theirs.

"What have you done wrong?"

Elaro and Hungri stared at Luke in surprise as he walked into the chamber across from them. They hadn't thought that Luke would be shut in here, too. During the incident, he hadn't done anything wrong. In the end, he had even accepted Knight-Captain Hell's "unique identity." No matter how they thought about it, there wasn't a reason for him to be here.

Luke merely shook his head. He was rather dejected as he said, "I refused to promise Teacher something. He told me that unless I agreed, I won't be leaving here."

"You won't be leaving here? Don't tell me that Hell Knight is serious about that?" Hungri's eyes were wide. "Don't you and your teacher get along really well? How have things turned so serious all of a sudden?"

"There's never a time when my teacher isn't serious," Luke said faintly.

*That's true.* Knight-Captain Hell was incomparably serious. Never joke around with him. That was something that the entire Holy Temple knew. *Even so...* Hungri couldn't believe it. "But it's not like he can shut you here for your entire life!"

Luke looked away and said, "Of course he can't. If, after a few months and I still don't agree, he'll probably replace me."

*Is it a fad right now for teachers to threaten to replace their students?* Hungri was a bit speechless. However, he didn't plan on getting involved. Even though Luke was technically under his command, he actually followed Elaro's orders. With such a large matter, it was natural that Elaro was more suited to handle it.

Of course, if Elaro really didn't plan on doing anything about it, then Hungri wouldn't stand by and just watch Luke get replaced. However, Hungri didn't think that something like that would ever happen.

As expected, Elaro asked, "Luke, will you ever agree to Knight-Captain Hell's request?"

Luke angrily growled, "Never, not even if my life depended on it!"

Hungri was stunned. He couldn't help wondering what exactly Knight-Captain Hell had wanted Luke to promise him. Hungri glanced at Elaro, waiting for him to ask. However, he didn't think that Elaro would merely nod. Elaro then walked to the confinement chamber's wall and

knocked on a certain brick. Following that, a hole appeared.

After the hole appeared, a bunch of food rolled in, stuffed in cans and bottles, as well as blankets and a whole stack of documents waiting to be corrected. When he saw the papers, Elaro quietly spoke to the hole, and then he returned the documents.

"I just knew that this confinement chamber was haunted!" Hungri grit his teeth.

By nighttime, all of the Twelve Holy Knights-in-training had been shut in the confinement chamber.

Luke was surprised as he looked at everyone. Hungri wasn't very shocked, while Elaro was even smiling.

Valica smiled as he said, "Big Bro Elaro is here, Hungri is here, and even Luke can't leave. Then, what are we staying outside for?"

After he finished speaking, he and Shuis immediately fought over the confinement chamber next to Elaro's. When they discovered that there weren't enough chambers for all of them, they decided to claim that chamber together.

Youg walked into one of the chambers. Behind the bars, he said, unruffled, "My teacher told me that if I didn't come, I wouldn't be a good comrade."

Snow followed behind Youg and said in dejection, "How nice, I can't even find my teacher."

"We advance and retreat together." Valkyrs was straight to the point. Luke looked at everyone, worried. "You'll anger your teachers. This is bad."

"D-Don't worry!" Judge patted Luke's shoulder. "Elaro said, while in the confinement chamber, we won't correct any documents. If I-I don't help Teacher correct documents, Teacher would d-die in three days! He'll go and convince your teacher very soon."

Luke still wanted to persuade them to stay out of it, "But—"

"No need to say anything more!" Elaro interrupted Luke.

"No matter what happens, I won't let anyone get replaced. That's because no one from my Twelve Holy Knights is replaceable!"

Although none of them spoke as they quietly listened to Elaro, their resolute expressions expressed everything they wanted to say.

"Sigh..." Fey sighed as he gripped the bars. "Even I'm feeling a bit moved, but when I think about how such a serious declaration was made when we've all been confined, I have this feeling that our future might be really bleak..."

"Shut up!" Everyone bellowed.



Extra Chapter #1: LOVE~ LOVE~ LOVE~

*The sound of footsteps...*

When he heard it, Grisia immediately extended his sensing. Nowadays, he didn't extend his sensing very far, and pretty much kept it to only three to five meters around him. If he didn't do that, it would be too taxing, and he wouldn't be able to keep it up for the many hours required. Although he now limited his public appearances as much as possible, it was still rather challenging.

Grisia turned, smiling at the person approaching. He wasn't expecting the person not to even slow down upon reaching him, or that they would burrow directly into his embrace.

Stunned for a moment, Grisia then gently placed his hand on the person's shoulder.

"Cleric Ludia, may the God of Light forever bless you. Have the God of Light's murmurings reminded you to come forth and discuss the God of Light's benevolence with Sun, or might there be some other matter?"

Ludia raised her head from Grisia's embrace and pouted. "Uncle, don't speak in such a formal and verbose manner!"

"Fine, I'll stop." Grisia extended his hand to pat the girl's head and purposely asked, "What's the matter? Is Elaro bullying you?"

Ludia giggled. "Brother would never bully me! Truly, he was very worried about you this time."

"I was only a little delayed. Ludia, in the future, you'll have to watch over Elaro more for me." Grisia sighed. "I never thought that child would be so impulsive. This time, he went way overboard!"

After he finished speaking, he felt it was rather amusing. He had never thought that he would one day say someone had gone overboard. In the past, it was always Lesus calling him out on it.

Ludia immediately spoke up on her brother's behalf. "Brother was just too worried about you!"

"Worry leads to panic." Grisia shook his head. "If something like this happens again in the future, help me stop that brat."

Ludia fell silent. Sensing this, Grisia could only face upwards and sigh. He had forgotten that, compared to Elaro, Ludia had been even younger when she had come to the Holy Temple. Perhaps she already thought of him as her... "father"?

Grisia rubbed Ludia's fine, pale green hair. "If I had married earlier, it wouldn't have been strange if I had a daughter your age."

Ludia's expression froze. She smiled with difficulty and said, "That would be terrible. The daughter standing next to you looks just like a younger sister. No one would believe us to be father and daughter!"

Grisia's head hurt as he said, "I don't know either what's going on with my face. It's probably because of the facial masks... Cough! Charlotte has complained about it to me several times, saying that she looks like

my mom. I told her it's nothing so serious. At most, it'd just be an older sister and a younger brother... and then she bit me several times."

Ludia smiled widely, but then she saw Grisia look toward the door. Her smile dimmed a bit, and she hurriedly asked, "Are you going to see Auntie Charlotte right now?"

The matter between him and Charlotte was already a publicly known secret. Grisia wasn't surprised that she knew about it and helplessly said, "Yes. If I don't see her soon, she might storm the Holy Temple to bite me."

"Can I help?"

"Help? Are you going to help her bite me?" Grisia joked.

"No!" Ludia's face flushed red, as she realized that her words just now could easily be misinterpreted. She hurriedly clarified, "I mean, help looking after Charsia and the like!"

"It's not a problem. I want to see Charsia again, too."

"Oh..." Ludia was somewhat disappointed. She nodded. "That's true. You must miss her a lot!"

Grisia smiled and said, "I'll be taking my leave now."

Grisia turned and left. The strange thing was, his sensing told him that Ludia still stood in her original spot, looking in his direction. It wasn't

until he had left for some time and had already reached the gates that she stepped away and departed.

Young girls were so difficult to understand. However, Charlotte had been even more difficult than Ludia back then... Grisia shook his head and sighed. When he walked out of the gates of the Holy Temple, the two guards by each side immediately saluted him, and they also let out a huge breath.

Grisia greeted them back and did not think it strange. With as imposing a person as Lesus Judgment standing by the gates, anyone would immediately feel the pressure in the air triple.

"Brother Judgment Knight, Sun has made you wait too long. Please follow Sun this way."

Lesus turned around. He wasn't wearing his usual black robes but rather dark, informal clothes. This was already a huge improvement. It had taken Grisia a long time before Lesus had been willing to change out of the Judgment Knight's black robes, and he even had to use the reason that it would scare Charsia.

With the weather being so hot, Grisia himself was also only wearing a simple, informal outfit.

"We should occasionally relax, too!" Grisia patted Lesus's back and said, "We're already about to retire!"

Lesus glanced at him and said with understanding, "Only because your teacher hasn't been returning very often lately, right?"

Grisia laughed awkwardly for a moment.

The two of them walked along the streets, just like the past twenty years, side by side.

"Come to think of it, you really wouldn't replace Hungri, would you?"  
Lesus simply said, "What do you think?"

"You don't mean it."

"..." Lesus turned his head to look at Grisia. "You think I would joke about it?"

Grisia smiled lightly. "You're only angry that Hungri keeps making mistakes and disappointed that he can't achieve your standards. But you're even more worried that he'll be criticized, so you would rather warn him first through wanting to 'replace him,' so that he wouldn't rashly commit a mistake. Aren't I right, Knight-Captain Judgment?"  
Lesus did not deny it.

"When you become protective, you don't lose to me at all. It's just that you'd always give the child a beating first before taking on all of his burdens."

Lesus said imperturbably, "The only reason you don't hit him is because Elaro has never done anything so wrong that you would hit him."

"Of course. My foresight has always been the best! First, I chose an

omnipotent vice-captain, and then I chose an omnipotent student whom I never have to worry about. Of course, I wouldn't need to hit him... Except this time, I really wanted to beat him to death!"

Lesus smiled.

Grisia stared at Lesus's face. The latter immediately let his smile drop. He knew that his smiles had never been pleasant to look at...

"You know, your smiles are much more natural now."

"Grisia."

"What?"

Lesus calmly said, "That's because you can't see."

Grisia came to a sudden realization. "Oh! No wonder I didn't feel frightened!"

"...Hah!"

The two of them stopped walking. Grisia looked at the small garden and smiled. "It seems like Charsia's handicraft has improved even more, but it's still all lavender flowers and violets. They're all purple, I take it?"

Lesus gave a "yeah" and said, "Some are darker and some are lighter, but they're all purple."

“Papa—”

The little girl rushed out. She had been waiting by the window for a long time already.

Grisia lifted Charsia up and laughed. “My little darling is growing heavier and heavier, and her face is so chubby, too. Has she been eating too much lately?”

Charsia pouted and protested, “I only ate a little bit more...”

Grisia pinched her cheeks. Charsia had always had a goose-egg shaped face with plump cheeks. Grisia always enjoyed pinching his daughter’s cheeks.

Charsia was also very used to it, and she treated it as an exchange—she liked grabbing her papa’s long hair.

Charlotte smiled as she looked at father and daughter. She greeted Lesus. “Judgment Knight, come on in. Don’t pay attention to their nonsense.”

“You can just call me Lesus,” Lesus said, like always. However, he knew that it wouldn’t result in anything. The Judgment Knight’s image always made it hard for others to approach him. There weren’t many who dared to directly address him as Lesus.

However, people often called Hungri directly by his name. It could be because he was still a Twelve Holy Knight in-training, but with Hungri’s personality, even when he became an official Knight-Captain, the

situation probably wouldn't change much. Lesus sat down by the side of the table, pondering whether this was good or bad.

Charlotte called out to the two people outside who were currently playing with the flowers and plants, "Charsia, come over and help with dinner preparations."

"Okay!" Charsia answered and hurried into the kitchen with her mother.

Grisia entered and sat by Lesus's side.

"You'll stay tonight, won't you?" Lesus said, "As usual, I'll sleep in the guest room."

Grisia hesitated momentarily. Although he heard the sounds of Charlotte and Charsia having fun in the kitchen, his heart nice and warm, he still clenched his teeth and said, "No, Roland didn't come with me. I can't!"

"I had been wondering about that." Lesus slowly said, "You didn't ask him?"

It wouldn't be strange if he hadn't. After all, during mission this time, "that kind of thing" had happened, so it would be normal if Grisia didn't want to have Roland come over. That was why Lesus hadn't asked anything when he didn't see Roland.

"I did ask him, but he was unwilling to come." Grisia shook his head and fell silent for a moment. "What happened this time scared him,



but it was really entirely my fault—”

“It was the ‘Demon King’s’ fault!” Lesus interrupted him flatly. Grisia stilled and then corrected himself jokingly. “Okay, it was the Demon King’s fault. If it weren’t for the Demon King, Roland wouldn’t—sigh! After this occurrence, he might never be willing to come here with me anymore. Come on, wouldn’t that mean I’ll never be able to stay overnight ever again? Without Roland around, I don’t know what can be done if I lose control!”

“Do you trust Roland more than you trust yourself?”

“Of course. If Roland has ever hurt anyone, it’s because he was forced to! He has never hurt anyone out of his own volition.”

“Isn’t your loss of control also the same?” It only took one sentence from Lesus to make Grisia unable to retort.

“You should stay by their side, Grisia.” Lesus said disapprovingly, “As a husband and a father, you should take responsibility and stay by your wife and child’s side. You shouldn’t let the two of them stay by themselves out here.”

“As long as the dark element is not stabilized, I won’t stay even a day by their sides. This is something that I had sworn a long time ago!”

Grisia grew agitated, but Lesus instead raised his index finger to his mouth and shushed him. Only then did Grisia discover that the laughter from the kitchen had stopped... *Damn!*

He had actually given them a scare. Grisia lowered his head, feeling incomparably remorseful. Thankfully, it didn't take long for sounds of dishes clinking and pots clanking to start again. Only then did he forgive himself a little, and he softly mumbled, "I can't! Lesus, I can't ever harm them, not even a single hair!"

Lesus said calmly, "You won't hurt them, Grisia. Even when you had completely become the Demon King, you never harmed Charlotte, so don't even mention it now."

Head still lowered, he knew that the other was merely comforting him, but Grisia felt himself relaxing a lot. He couldn't help smiling. "When the words come from you, they always feel especially believable. You really are naturally convincing."

"That's because I always speak the truth." Lesus said indifferently, "Don't change the subject. Stay. Even if something really happens, I will stop you."

Grisia didn't quite smile. "Do you think that I can't harm Charlotte and Charsia, but would let myself harm you?"

Lesus smiled faintly. "You can try. The person who gets injured first won't necessarily be me."

"Mommy, Uncle Lesus smiled!"

Apparently, dinner was finally ready. The two females held the dishes and were standing by the kitchen door. Charsia stood by her mother's side and had tableware in her hands.

"He did! It's scary, right?" Grisia continued the thread of conversation. At the same time, Grisia and Lesus both stood up and walked over to take the items out of their hands. Charsia obediently placed the tableware on the table.

"Don't say it's scary!" Charlotte shook her head. "You're way too impolite, Grisia."

Unconvinced, Grisia said, "If I'm too polite, everyone tells me to shut up."

"Your God of Light rambling nonsense isn't politeness!"

"You actually dared to say the God of Light rambles and speaks nonsense. He will punish you..."

"I'm talking about you!" While speaking, Charlotte's hands hadn't stopped working. She stuffed the beef and vegetables into the bread and threw it on Grisia's plate.

Grisia smiled as he picked it up to eat. "Your cooking is delicious, like always."

Charlotte's face grew red. "Of course! Just eat it already!"

"Papa, have a gherkin!" Charsia was busy promoting it. "Uncle, have some too! Charsia grew it herself!"

"It tastes great." Lesus's praise made Charsia so happy, she was

beaming. She knew that this uncle, whom she had known since she was a baby, never spoke anything untrue.

"Grisia... will you stay tonight?" Charlotte couldn't help asking softly. Usually, he would stay, but something so dire had happened this time. She knew his personality well and was afraid that he would be even more unwilling to visit now. Moreover, the fact that Roland hadn't come with him was very strange, but she didn't dare ask too much about it. She only hoped that Grisia could quickly forget what had happened.

When he heard Charlotte's words, the utensils in Grisia's hands jolted. Grisia lowered his gaze and kept silent...

"Uncle, will you stay, too?" Charsia happily said, "Tell me a story!" Grisia raised his head and stared at the Judgment Knight suspiciously. "How come I never knew that you know how to tell stories?"

"I borrowed a few storybooks from Cloud." Lesus explained very calmly, "I prepared some this time, too. I'll stay the night and read them to Charsia."

Charsia hurriedly asked, "Uncle, what story is it?"

"It's by your favorite Princess Ann. It's an adventure story she personally wrote."

"Awesomeness!"

With his young daughter eagerly waiting for her bedtime story, and

Charlotte who nearly didn't dare to look at him, Grisia hesitated over his decision. He looked toward Lesus, who was completely unruffled, as if he weren't the least bit worried that anything would happen.

"...Yes, I will."

*Extra Chapter #2: Q&A with the Twelve Holy Knights*

**[Q1]**

**Ceo Storm, why did you already choose Shuis when he was still a baby?**

Ceo: If you'd seen Shuis when he was small, you would have chosen him too. He was really too cute!

**So the reason you chose him is because you couldn't resist his cuteness?**

Ceo: Actually, it's because Sun said that he resembles Awaitsun a lot, that he would definitely become a super handsome guy in the future. I looked at Awaitsun, and he was so handsome that I felt that if I didn't claim his son in advance, I would really lose out, so I claimed him.

**[Q2]**

**Georgo Earth, will you die from excessive \*\*\* in the end?**

Georgo: I-I'd like to die like that! I-If only... Can I stop stuttering?

**Feel free.**

Georgo: If only that bastard Sun stopped hindering me, I would be able to die from exhausting my essence really early, and gloriously meet the God of Light!

**So have you ever successfully (beeeep) without Grisia's disturbance?**

Georgo: Of course!

**What age were you when you succeeded for the first time?**

Georgo: ...Next question!

**[Q3]**

**May I ask each Judgment Knight, don't you feel warm wearing such a heavy, black robe?**

Chasel Judgment: Very warm. If it's not a public occasion, I normally take off my outer robe.

Lesus Judgment: Warm, but I can bear it.

Hungri Judgment: I'm only the Judgment Knight-in-training, so I haven't worn the robe yet, but it looks very warm.

**Regarding your own student or teacher, what are your general impressions?**

Chasel: No need to worry about him.

Lesus: I respect him. He distresses me.

Chasel: I believe that I am not the one you feel distressed about?

Hungri: ...

**Hungri, your answer is?**

Hungri: I respect him.

**An additional question. On the opposite end, what about the Sun Knights?**

Neo: No need to worry about him.

Grisia: He distresses me. No need to worry about him.

Neo: ...

Elaro: He...He... Can I not answer this?

Neo: Answer it!

Elaro: ...He distresses me.

Grisia: ...

Neo: Hahahahahahahahahahahahaha!

**[Q4]**

**May I ask Chasel Judgment, on average, how often do you feel**



**like slaughtering Neo once and for all?**

Chasel: I never think about things that are impossible to achieve. No one is capable of killing Neo.

**Do you think you want to kill him more than Lesus Judgment wants to kill Grisia Sun?**

Chasel: My student's patience is even better than his skill with a sword. He would never want to kill the Sun Knight.

**What is your assessment of Lesus's student?**

Chasel: I don't know him too well, having only seen him a few times. Just based off of his appearance, I'm a little suspicious about whether or not he is a cross-dressing girl.

**[Q5]**

**May I ask the 37th, 38th, and 39th generation Sun Knights and Judgment Knights about their opinions regarding each other?**

Chasel: Swordsmanship is strong. Not so strong with everything else.

Neo: Hey!

**What about you, Neo?**

Neo: Swordsmanship is weak. Strong with everything else.

Chasel: Thanks for the compliment.

Neo: ...

**What about the 38th generation?**

Lesus: Swordsmanship is...

Grisia: Shut up!

**What about the 39th generation?**

Elaro: Uh...

Hungri: Hmph!

**[Q6]**

**As the spokespersons of the God of Light, do you think the God of Light is male or female?**

Neo: Better be female.

Grisia: Hopefully female.

Elaro: I think male, since the spokespersons of the God of Light, the Sun Knights, are all male. A female probably wouldn't look for guys to be the spokesperson.

Neo: Makes sense, dammit!

Grisia: As my student, why can't you let your teacher fantasize more before meeting the God of Light?

**[Q7]**

**Neo Sun, compared with your previous lifestyle back at the Holy Temple, what part of your lifestyle as an adventurer gives you the most trouble?**

Neo: The part that gives me the most trouble is 'where am I?'

**Aldrizzt, has anything changed with regards to what troubles you the most in your lifestyle as an adventurer, before and after meeting Neo? Can you give us specifics?**

Aldrizzt: Yes, there was a change. Before meeting Neo, what troubled me the most was getting chased by my clan. After meeting Neo, things that trouble me are actually quite numerous, but the matter that troubles me the most is probably frequently having to prevent Neo from running after other people to kill them.

**[Q8]**

**May I ask Grisia Sun, why didn't you quickly close the door that time you came across Neo in the toilet? Why did you stay until he gracefully finished his business?**

Grisia: That's because at that time, my life suddenly flashed before my eyes. Once I regained my senses, Teacher had already gracefully

finished his business and was carrying the Divine Sun Sword as he walked over.

**And then?**

Grisia: And then... I almost didn't have an 'and then.'

**[Q9]**

**Neo Sun, whom do you love the most?**

Neo: Hmm, are you asking me which woman I love the most? Too many, I don't remember. Each one is a good woman.

**What if we're not talking about romantic love?**

Neo: ...I don't want to answer.

**No, you have to answer!**

Neo: So what if I don't answer? What can you do, HUH?

**...Please answer! This is a question that *has* to be answered. If you don't answer, I can't face the readers, ahhhhh— Believe me when I say that I'll write about Aldrizzt getting fed up with you, so he ends up leaving, meaning you would have to wash your own clothes, cook your own food, and find your own way around—**

Neo: ...That annoying student of mine who always makes me worry

day and night.

**[Q10]**

**What is Sun's secret habit when he's serious?**

Grisia: I want to know too.

**No one's asking you. Lesus Judgment, what's Sun's secret habit when he's serious?**

Lesus: It's a secret.

Grisia: Hahaha, even I can't make him answer. How would you be able to get the answer out of him?

**Elmairy Leaf, what's Sun's secret habit when he's serious?**

Grisia: You went and chose Leaf! Good choice. He's a good guy who can't refuse anyone.

Elmairy: Ahh, why are you dooming me...

Georgo: Elmairy, I tossed your seasonings into the moat. If you don't hurry and save it, it might drift all the way to the Kingdom of Moon Orchid.

Elmairy: Ah, seasonings, wait for me!

**...Elaro, what is your teacher's secret habit when he's serious?**

Elaro: I'm not too sure, but I think it's gathering—ah!

Lesus: He fainted and can't answer you anymore.

**...Roland Hell, what is Grisia's habit?**

Grisia: Has anyone told you you're even more stubborn than Stone?

Roland: I'm not... wholly... allowed to tell you anything more.

Lesus: We've shed enough *light* on this! Or do you want a taste of the Twelve Holy Knight's wrath?

Georgo: If you ask any more, someone's really gonna die!

**New question!**

**[Q11]**

**May I ask the 37th, 38th, and 39th generation Sun Knights,  
what kind of existence is your vice-captain to you?**

Neo: He's a bastard who specializes in being a tattletale to Chasel!

**Then, why did you pick him in the first place?**

Neo: ...Back then, Chasel asked me 'How's this person?' and I replied 'Whatever.'

**What about the 38th generation?**

Grisia: He doesn't lose out in style when I bring him to the palace. Once he walks into the kitchen, he can produce entire banquets. On the battlefield, he can brandish his sword and slay the enemy. In the office, he can approve and correct documents. He is a comrade and a brother with the guys, and a charmer and an abductor with the girls...

**Are you done talking yet?**

Grisia: There's too much to talk about.

**What about the 39th generation?**

Elaro: They're my left and right hands. Rhonelin is my right. Dili is my left.

**Why have you specified them as your right and left hands?**

Elaro: Because Rhonelin is right-handed. Dili is left-handed.

**Has anyone told you that you focus too much on miniscule things?**

Elaro: ...Often.

**[Q12]**

**Elaro, have you ever regretted becoming the Sun Knight?**

Elaro: Actually, I'm still just the Sun Knight-in-training. I haven't become the official Sun Knight yet.

**Then, have you regretted going to the Sun Knight selection?**

Elaro: Actually, I didn't attend the selection. I didn't even fill out the registration form. On the day of the selection, my teacher ordered me to go to the training grounds to take care of the kids. Later, he announced that I had been chosen.

**Then, I guess I have to change my question. Have you regretted meeting Grisia?**

Elaro: Never. I never have.



### Epilogue: Afterword

If things go according to plan, there should be three volumes of the spin-off, 39—a Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3. The plot will be like the main series. Each volume will have its own story arc but will be connected to the next volume. The series will proceed in such a manner.

However, since the ending of Volume 1 is related to the central idea of the next volumes, the story arc won't be completely depicted until the next volumes.



Although *The Legend of Sun Knight* has ended, the characters in the story will continue living on. My books will probably never have something like "And they lived happily ever after."

It's because the stories will continually be happening, with the characters encountering more obstacles and having to make new decisions. But they will also experience happy events, just like how life is filled with all kinds of flavors, from sweet to sour to bitter to spicy.

The most typical example is how *Eclipse Hunter* continued on as *No Hero*. Now, there is the new example of *The Legend of Sun Knight* continuing on with the spin-off, 39.

Even though the Demon King situation has been resolved, there will still be many worrying and happy situations in the upcoming days. It's just that I haven't written them all out.

It's likely that only when the characters in the story are lying in their

coffins will there no longer be any stories to tell.

However, there are also several cases where they have already been laid under the dirt and still crawled back out, such as Roland.



Because I heard many say that they didn't want to see *The Legend of Sun Knight* end, I decided to write a spin-off to quench everyone's thirst!

If I were to call the main series a story depicting the 38th generation's friendship, then I would call the spin-off a depiction of how the 39th generation's friendship is developed.

Following this, the spin-off will continue revealing several past events, just like how this volume covered Grisia and Adair's first meeting and what happened to everyone after the Demon King event. Some of the characters from this volume will be further developed in the next volume, and at the same time, the story will continue advancing toward the future.

At what age will Elaro be when he is finally able to become the Sun Knight?

When will Grisia ever be free of the Demon King's curse, or will it never happen?

Just where should the Death Monarch Roland go, or should he go to Hell... that is something I might not get to write! (Ah, don't throw watermelons at me~)

In any case, the spin-off is for quenching the readers' thirst, so I included a lot of small stories about past events. On top of continuing the 39th generation's story, you are all welcome to come to my blog where I always open an after reading response corner, and tell me what you want to know about so-and-so's past or future. If I am able to include it in the story, I will try my best to do so and write it out for everyone to read.

However, if I can't do it, please forgive me. A story like the Twelve Holy Knights' that can be passed on is one that has no limits in its interconnection. There will never be an "end" to it.

But come to think of it, the Twelve Holy Knights aren't the only ones. My other stories are the same. Even if the author has stopped writing them, they will still continue forever and ever.

Actually, I should write a "Neverend" instead of an "End" at the end of my stories, but I wonder if that would get me killed by everyone when the next volume never appears even after a long wait. I think I'll obediently write "End"... Ahh, but "Endless" would be more appropriate, right?

I wish that everyone's dreams will always be "Endless."

by Yu Wo



## Character Introductions

### Future Sun Knight

#### Elaro Sun

**Height:** 188 cm

**Appearance:** Blond hair, green eyes that lean toward blue

**Common impression:** Big brother

**Small, hidden secret:** Likes a certain fragrance



## Future Judgment Knight

### Hungri Judgment

**Current height:** 168 cm

**Appearance:** Black hair, black eyes

**Common impression:** Vicious girl

**Small, hidden secret:** Puts great care into maintaining his hair



## Future Storm Knight

### Shuis Storm

**Current height:** 172 cm

**Appearance:** Blue hair, green eyes

**Common impression:** Definitely a natural hottie

**Small, hidden secret:** Sometimes hides in his blankets to cry





**Future ???**

**Ludia**

**Current height:** 167 cm

**Appearance:** Light green hair, green eyes that lean toward blue

**Common impression:** Elaro's younger sister

**Small, hidden secret:** Likes to tease her younger brothers



