

Chapter 206

Chapter 206. Emergency Board Meeting (2)

Even Orthes himself thought it was too simple of a pun.

But this alone somewhat subsided the confusion of the Hydra Corporation emergency board members.

Although he thought it would never happen, Orthes added a few more words as insurance in case the Mage King suddenly launched a public opinion campaign.

"Argyrion truly believed in and worshiped that extra-dimensional being as the Mage King. At least that means that his power is comparable to the Mage King in mythology. Please, everyone, think of it as facing a real 'Mage King'."

And as he looked around, his eyes met Kaicle's. Kaicle seemed to have some kind of conviction about the being that even the eight Tower Masters and Orthes and Carisia couldn't handle together.

He was looking at Orthes with eyes that seemed to say, 'Are you really not going to say it?'

'No. Why are you looking at me instead of Carisia?'

Kaicle knew that Carisia's final judgment was the same as Orthes' final judgment. Orthes looked around once. With the exception of Hector, Carisia, and the Pope, everyone was the kind of person who would be confused about the fact that the Mage King was the enemy.

Having to face mythology. The pressure of turning the greatest magician into an enemy.

If these facts were revealed in the middle of the battle, there was a chance that rebels would emerge instead of losing their will to fight. The cooperation of the directors was essential for the battle plan to fire the Ten Commandments bomb in succession, let alone using only the Artificial Commandments.

Orthes sighed and looked at Carisia.

Carisia silently nodded once. It was an expression of her intention to support whatever answer he chose.

"And what I said just now is a propaganda slogan for external release."

"Yes?"

Arabella asked back. If that was for propaganda, what was the truth?

"It means that it's a statement that reveals only part of the truth to prevent the Orthodox Magic Tower or minor magic towers from siding with the Mage King."

The directors who still didn't know the truth, and Lampades and Knemon looked at Orthes with one mind and one heart. Their expressions seemed to hope that the answer they were thinking of wouldn't come out.

"We have to fight the Mage King."

It was pandemonium.

The Mage King. The greatest magician who created this world? With us?

Why?

Orthes waited for the directors to release all their confusion, and then successively dropped even more shocking truths.

"At the same time, it is not a lie that he is an extra-dimensional being. The Mage King is very actively trying to destroy our world, at least to take all of the Ten Commandments. If the Ten Commandments are recovered and the magic tower's extra-dimensional purification system collapses, the magic society will be over."

It was an answer that made the mouths of the directors who were about to ask why they had to fight the Mage King shut up on their own.

Carisia raised her hand.

"I would like to explain the detailed titles of the outside directors who have been incorporated into the Ten Commandments Front."

She threw a bomb softly and gently.

"First of all, that person over there, with the cracks spreading all over his body."

The Pope raised his hand. The Pope's faction priests, who Proditor had brought along at some point, were pouring healing Holy Decrees on him, trying to delay the Divine Rupture by even one second.

"He is the Pope of the Divine Cult."

"Divine...Cult?"

Cretone, who had been mainly involved in redevelopment and had nothing to do with Divine Investigation, expressed his doubts.

Divius, an unlicensed doctor belonging to Blasphemia, held his head.

"Think of them as the guys at the very top of the old gods' priests..."

"And Orthes' friend, Hector."

The old man shrugged indifferently.

"Orthes' friend, the leader of the magic society revolutionary group 'Knight Order,' the Sword Master. That's the knight who fell with the rise of magic."

Knemon felt his neck stiffen. It was a rumor that had been circulating when he was playing the role of a doomsdayist. That there was a secret society that was secretly scouting troubleshooters who specialized in martial arts.

'Was Orthes connected to that secret society!'

The directors looked around at each other, and then shifted their gaze to Lampades and Knemon. It was a rational judgment that if one friend was the leader of an anti-Ten Towers group, then the other friend would be similar.

Knemon and Lampades felt extreme injustice.

"Mr. Lampades and Mr. Knemon will answer with their respective current titles. Yellow Thunder Tower Master, Blue Water Tower Master."

"Wait...!"

Knemon tried to object. The head of the Blue Water Magic Tower was the Divine Cult. The reason why he was registered as the magic tower master there was because he didn't know what kind of reaction would come out if a member of the cult tried to contact the Ten Commandments.

In other words, he was just a figurehead. Knemon was already struggling to manage the Amimone Magic Tower (which used to be) that had been demoted from the Orthodox Magic Tower.

However, Lampades stopped Knemon. He had the mentality that he couldn't die alone now that things had come this far.

'Lampades, even you!'

'I can't be the only one who remains Orthes' friend!'

The directors fell into utter confusion. Two anti-magic groups and now two of the Ten Towers were Hydra Corporation's allies.

It was a combination that made them wonder if this was right.

"In addition to that, former Tower Masters of the Ten Towers will also come to Elysion and start a meeting on the Mage King's defeat operation. And I will present the Anti-Magic Field as a strategy at that meeting. Your cooperation is necessary to execute this strategy."

"...Are you saying that we are more needed than the former Tower Masters, President?"

Bertrand asked.

Carisia nodded.

"The project that you and Arabella were entrusted with is especially important. It's something that only you, who have been maintaining Etna City itself, can do."

"If you want to run away...."

The giant half-dragon Taros raised his hand timidly. Unlike his strong body, he was originally reluctant to fight first. Neuro also nodded. Neuro was a hunter, and he didn't refuse the challenge of catching strong prey, but the Mage King was a different story.

He wasn't a being that could be prey, but was always the hunter.

Carisia entrusted the answer to Orthes. After all, Orthes would be the one who would ultimately create the big picture of facing the Mage King.

"I won't stop you. Forcing you with force will only backfire."

However, Orthes added, saying 'but'.

"I don't think the Mage King will leave this world alone. From the former White Light Tower Master who directly served the Mage King, the Mage King has declared that he is a threat to the world."

The implication that they would run away and stand by as the world was destroyed was clear. The fear of dying and the confirmed ending of dying if they didn't fight. The survival instinct to run away and live even one more day and the will to obtain the future with their own hands competed.

"I will give you time first. There is about an hour left until the former Tower Masters of the Ten Towers arrive in Elysion. Please think carefully and decide."

As the directors left one by one, there was a director approaching Carisia. It was Bertrand.

"What is it?"

"I have something to give you."

It was a weapon that he had been planning for quite some time. Carisia's gauntlet-type magic arithmetic device. A plan to make and dedicate a new version of it to gain her favor.

The plan had been postponed indefinitely because Carisia kept entrusting him with all sorts of ridiculous blueprints, but Bertrand was still able to complete a new gauntlet in the meantime.

It was Carisia's exclusive weapon, made with the by-products of the project Carisia had entrusted him with and the relics left over from the Artificial Commandments.

A black gauntlet, the same as the one she used to use in peacetime. But it was sleek without a single seam. A weapon that was beyond the skill of a craftsman and was extremely bizarre.

"Is it because the relic of the blacksmith god Polybron was invested? It's strangely easy to hammer. In addition to all the functions of the gauntlet you used to use, boss, it's equipped with self-destruct and magic power injection rocket propulsion."

Orthes wondered if he had heard something wrong. Rocket punch was possible, but self-destruct?

Did Carisia's love of explosions spread to the directors?

Carisia accepted the gauntlet with satisfaction. She smiled slightly and said.

"Thank you. If we can see tomorrow, I'll give you more examples."

"If we can see tomorrow, that will be the example. Then we'll go back to our research."

Bertrand, who had called out Arabella, who was trying to slip out of the conference room, dragged Geryon and Kaicle to his workshop. It seemed that those people would fight to the end.

"How many will be left? The Mage King is the opponent."

The conference room where even Hector and the Pope had left to tidy up their respective forces. Carisia asked Orthes honestly.

"I don't know."

Orthes also answered honestly. Carisia nodded. Well, there are things he doesn't know either.

But Orthes' words were not over.

"But aren't you and I going to stay?"

Carisia chuckled.

"That's a given."

Chapter 207

Chapter 207. Emergency Board Meeting (3)

Amidst the confusion, there were directors who showed a particularly firm appearance. Bertrand and Arabella.

Bertrand didn't have many thoughts. His duty wasn't fighting. A miner and blacksmith who dug into the earth and wrestled with iron. He had neither the ability nor the will to do anything about mythological beings like the Mage King.

However, he didn't like the idea of the land he lived on disappearing. That was why he supported Carisia, who had the ability and the will to stand against the Mage King. That was why he was carrying out the work he had been ordered to do as a director without hesitation.

Arabella was the opposite. She had a lot of thoughts.

Most of them were thoughts about not wanting to work, and sometimes thoughts about not wanting to die.

She often had thoughts about wanting to die rather than work, but ultimately the thought of not wanting to die was dominant. She was dragged around by Kaicle and Bertrand's work and was able to grasp the Mage King's movement path and the major disasters that occurred on that path.

If that was left alone, the world would be destroyed. Certainly.

Having made her judgment, she chose to work to live, holding back tears.

The directors who had not made a decision mulled over the president's words that 'they were needed'. In fact, didn't Orthes and the president take charge of the battle in the White Light invasion almost entirely on their own?

The fact that the words that others were needed came out of their mouths. They struggled between the sense of crisis that the situation was that serious and the skepticism of how the situation could change even if they helped.

"Aish. All I have to do is ask directly."

Unlicensed doctor Divius headed to the president's office to find out what on earth they were needed for.

Knock, knock. It was the moment he knocked on the president's office door and went inside.

"Uh." "Uh?"

He saw one of the trainees he had modified when he was in Blasphemia, K17.

"Oh? Do the two of you know each other?"

"Well, for now...."

Divius trailed off. Why is that kid here?

"She is currently the chief of Blasphemia. She seized power in a coup."

"What?"

The reunion was unexpected. Both the place and the identity of the person he was reunited with.

Carisia gestured for Divius to close the door and come in quickly. Divius was surprised that quite a few people were gathered inside the president's office.

Even if he excluded Lampades and Knemon, who were in charge of the Ten Commandments, there was the 'kid' that Orthes and the president were raising, and another kid next to the kid. And even Meconion was there.

It was quite unexpected that Meconion was in this place. He thought she would just drink and take drugs until the last day, without any interest in these things.

"So. If I have the grapevine¹ I raised and you have the kid you raised, we can keep that dying guy alive?"

"Yes, Director Meconion. Bacchus has the tradition of being a god who was born twice, in other words, the myth of resurrection. If Ms. Kine, the only remaining priestess of Bacchus, uses Bacchus's wine, she will be able to reproduce the Holy Decree."

Meconion nodded.

"Hey. Anyone here who has experienced the extra-dimension?"

Orthes cautiously raised his hand. Orthes had been squatting in extra-dimensional contaminated areas since he was a troubleshooter. He had countless experiences of being covered in disgusting disinfectant solution that had been contaminated by the extra-dimension.

"How do you feel when you go in there?"

"It's nothing special. I just feel a bit nauseous."

"...It wouldn't feel good."

Meconion got up as if she had made a decision.

"Okay. I'll bring it, so wait."

Watching Meconion, who had quickly left the room, Divius felt something strange. Meconion thought that the people in this place would be able to face the Mage King.

Even though a mythological magician who was no different from the god of the magic society was the enemy, she had no doubt that Orthes and Carisia would fight.

That was the same for Divius himself.

The strange connections and strategies that Orthes had shown so far, and the ideas that had reached the realm of the bizarre, as embodied by the Ten Commandments Revolution. He had consistently proven himself, and finally seemed to have made all impossibilities possible by defeating the White Light of the Ten Towers.

The Mage King was the last gateway placed in front of him. The only mountain that could block those who had overthrown even White Light.

"So. Director Divius. What did you come for?"

"It's nothing. There was something I wanted to think about, but my thoughts have been organized. Instead, can I have a chat with K17, no. Niobe?"

"Ms. Niobe?"

"Well, all the consultations on the work that Blasphemia will take on are over, right? Then whatever."

Divius, who had modified K17, faced Niobe, who she had become.

"Fate is really amazing. To meet like this in a place like this."

"I know. I didn't know you would be around senior, instructor."

Senior? Feeling the strangeness, Divius questioned Niobe about her meeting with Orthes.

And he thought.

'Ah, damn it. I really don't know.'

Was Orthes a secret inspector of Blasphemia? Judging from his skills in ripping off Blasphemia so far, it was possible, but there were no traces of Blasphemia's unique modification, so it couldn't just be that.

But since he was a 'secret' inspector, he might not have received a modification in a way that would easily verify that he was from Blasphemia. Orthes' identity had been a mystery from the time he came to Etna City until now.

Divius soon smiled.

Yeah, the world has to have at least one mystery left to be fun.

Cretone had somehow been converted from a slave trader to a reconstruction expert, somehow participated in the Ten Towers succession war, and somehow survived.

He covered his head. It was the last chance to run away, but the problem was where to run away to.

What help would he be in the fight against the Mage King even if he stayed? It was the moment he was wandering around like that.

He saw Neuro and Taros.

"Are you not going to run away?"

Neuro's question. Taros nodded.

"Family, all. In Etna City. Cannot move."

If that was the case, what could he do? He had no choice but to rely on the hope that Carisia would win, and to believe that even if he died in this fight, she would embrace his people.

Neuro, who had read Taros's intentions, nodded.

"Family, huh."

Neuro didn't have any family. He had simply become a hunter to make traps and find ways to fight from afar in order to survive alone.

Then, from the time he became the chairman of the Hunters' Association, he began to take pride in being a hunter.

If he couldn't participate in this greatest hunt, wouldn't Neuro himself regret it if the world didn't end?

No.

"I see...."

Cretone, who had heard their conversation, realized that the two directors had decided to join the fight. Even the two who had first talked about running away?

Cretone intuitively felt that his worries would deepen greatly during the remaining 30 minutes.

The next meeting was held not at Hydra Corporation in Etna City, but at Elysion, the center of the magic society.

Even in Elysion, it was held in the magic tower, which was the center. The heart of the magic society where the magic power transmitted from the Ten Commandments was concentrated. At the round table located there.

The Hydra Corporation alliance, led by Carisia and Orthes, welcomed the extra-dimensional expeditionary forces.

It was as if they were declaring that the masters of the changed era were none other than themselves.

"Okay. Let's get straight to the point since we don't have much time."

It was the moment when Carisia opened her mouth like that and looked at Orthes.

"Wait a minute."

It was the former Tower Master of Black Dark. He stopped Carisia. Carisia's eyebrows twitched.

"Isn't the Yellow Thunder Tower Master, Lampades, your representative? What is the reason for hiding the one who directly recited the proclamation yesterday?"

What kind of absurd misunderstanding is this again. I couldn't help but sigh.

At that time, I just needed to say something to all of the Ten Towers as soon as possible, so I entrusted it to Lampades.

I was tired of being misunderstood, so I was about to explain it appropriately. This large-scale delusion of knowing Lampades as the leader.

In some ways, it could be used.

The ownership of the Ten Commandments was complicated. Except for the five Ten Commandments that we had secured for sure, White Light, Yellow Thunder, Silver Iron, Black Dark, and Blue Water. The Ten Tower Masters had returned while our subcontractors were putting up a delaying action and were claiming ownership.

In the eyes of those Ten Tower Masters, the desire for the Ten Commandments was dripping. If I said that I was planning to use the Ten Commandments as a bomb, they wouldn't listen properly.

But what if I used Lampades as bait and played around with the alliance conditions a little bit?

What if Lampades made a condition like 'As long as my ownership of Yellow Thunder is maintained, we will also recognize your ownership of the Ten Commandments. If this contract is broken, the side whose ownership was infringed first will own the Ten Commandments of the infringing side', and forced this with Aegio's Holy Decree?

After blowing up Yellow Thunder, he could swallow the Ten Commandments right away.

The picture was drawn.

Chapter 208: Emergency Board Meeting (4)

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It was the moment when Lampades was about to ask back, 'What on earth are you guys talking about?'

The thought, 'Ah, so the Tower Masters of the Ten Towers were no different from us,' flashed through his head for a moment. In the end, everyone from the Tower Masters of the Ten Towers to nameless troubleshooters was equally caught up in Orthes' global machinations.

Because Lampades had such other thoughts, the timing of his speech was a beat late.

"Indeed. You can't fool the eyes of the Tower Masters!"

"What?"

Lampades asked back in disbelief.

Orthes bowed exaggeratedly and pointed at Lampades.

"Mr. Lampades, they have passed the test. Indeed, even though they have been pushed back, they are the ones who occupied the one seat (一座) of the Ten Towers. It seems that they have the insight to have this level of knowledge."

Lampades looked around. First, he cautiously looked at Carisia, who was the real leader of this gathering.

However, Carisia, far from objecting, had already stepped back one step behind Orthes and was observing the situation.

Lampades' gaze turned to the directors. The directors of Hydra Corporation avoided his gaze, thinking, 'Ah, so the manager is plotting something strange and effective again!'

Hector? He had heard rumors from his days as a troubleshooter, but they weren't personally close. In the end, the only person who could save him was Knemon, who had the common ground of being captured by Orthes.

It was the moment when Lampades looked at Knemon.

"Indeed. To recognize the leader at a glance. We can't just ignore the ghosts of the old system."

Knemon nodded and recited nonsensical lines. The former Tower Masters also knew that Knemon was the magician who occupied the Blue Water Magic Tower, so the former Tower

Masters' prejudice that Lampades was the leader of the Hydra alliance deepened even further.

'Knemon, even you!?'

'This is a reward for the previous meeting....'

The directors were in complete confusion. Two anti-magic groups and now two of the Ten Towers were Hydra Corporation's allies.

It was a combination that made them wonder if this was right.

"Let's stop fighting over unnecessary pride. Everyone knows who we have to fight against right now, don't we?"

The Black Dark Tower Master opened his mouth. It was Orthes who accepted it.

"That's right. You have passed the minimum test. Then I'll ask. Do you have the means to stand against the Mage King?"

The Black Dark Tower Master carefully looked at Orthes' faint impression. He was a strange person who he had definitely seen somewhere before, but couldn't be sure. The Black Dark Tower Master thought that this person was Lampades' confidant and answered.

"No."

It was a surprisingly concise answer. The Black Dark Tower Master stepped forward as if representing the other former Ten Tower Masters.

"It was you who invited us. Haven't you heard the story from the monster of White Light, who is one of your leaders? The technique of the Ten Towers has been defeated."

"You're honest. Mr. Lampades. May I announce the plan to them?"

Lampades, to be honest, had entered a state of resignation of 'I don't know anymore'. Coincidentally, the heavy look that came with that perfect resignation, with all that was laid down, was very well suited to the role of a world manipulator.

Lampades nodded heavily.

"Our 'alliance' will block the Mage King's magic and defeat him with abilities other than magic, including martial arts and divinity."

"...Haven't you heard the story from the monster of White Light? We were defeated by magic that was exactly the same as that."

"We have already finished analyzing that magic as well. No, in fact, we have been preparing an even more 'advanced' magic from before."

"Advanced? Are you ignoring the history of the Ten Towers?"

"We are not ignoring the history of the Ten Towers. You were the Ten Towers, and therefore the pinnacle of the magic society. That's why the form of magic became 'that' way."

Orthes said with emphasis on 'that'. The former Tower Masters could not understand Orthes' intention. The structure of the magic that prevented the attribute of all magic power from being formed and bound the Mage King with attribute-less magic power was even beautiful.

Could there be more sophisticated magic than that? Was there magic beyond the colorless technique that reduced any attribute in this world to attribute-less?

"Should I explain from there?"

Carisia intervened. She introduced herself as the initiator of the anti-Mage King technique.

"The reason why I was able to cooperate with your technique so smoothly just now was because, as I said before, I was developing a magic that went one step further than that. If you built anti-attribute magic, we made more than that."

"Okay. What is that outrageous magic that you can't think of because you're at the top of the magic society?"

"Anti-Magic Field."

A short word without even the detailed technique deployment diagram or the sharing of mental images. However, with just that, the former Tower Masters were able to know why the Ten Towers could not develop that magic.

"A 'magic' that removes all magic power? Do you think such a contradiction is possible?"

"Our Hydra alliance has a powerful creation made with the special technology of the current Yellow Thunder Tower Master Lampades. It's called the Artificial Commandments."

A clear sense of bewilderment settled on the former Tower Masters. The Artificial Commandments, was it possible to make such a thing?

"Ah. It's not a Ten Commandments that uses magic power. Because it was created by gathering the relics scattered in this world, what is at its center is not magic power but divinity. How is it? Don't you think we can practice the Anti-Magic Field if we use this?"

Kaicle, who had received Carisia's order, was grabbing his head and writing the theory of the Anti-Magic Field. With the addition of the colorless technique that Carisia had experienced today, and the shrine domain function of the Pluton Great Shrine, it could finally be completed.

"Divinity and magic power share the same orbit of ability. Just as Argyrion was able to convert magic power into mana, wouldn't it be possible to convert magic power into divinity and exclude it from a space?"

"...It's unconventional."

While Carisia was drawing the attention of the former Tower Masters, Orthes was stepping back and spreading instructions to Lampades. He had to trick them into signing the Ten Commandments mutual destruction agreement.

Lampades felt his neck stiffen as he read the message that was projected in his augmented reality vision. To act as the hidden strategist and leader of the impromptu Hydra Corporation alliance at this place. Where would he end up going after making one acquaintance wrong?

Step. Step.

Lampades, who had been staying among the crowd, finally stepped forward. Even the monster of White Light who succeeded White Light steps back one step. It was a scene that proved the treatment he received in this group.

The Black Dark Tower Master tensed up to the fullest. Although the Mage King's reincarnation was an unprecedented crisis, the Hydra Corporation alliance was also an unprecedented crisis in the magic society. An outrageous anti-Ten Towers group that would be counted as the first among all the rebellions since the Mythical Era if the Mage King hadn't descended.

"I believe you now know the reality of our plan."

"...Who are the ones who will face that Mage King?"

The Pope and Hector stepped forward. They were the ones who had received instructions from Orthes in the meantime.

"It's nice to meet you for the first time. Hector, the Sword Master of the Knight Order."

"Ruler of the sinful, I am the leader of those whom you call superstition followers. You can call me Pope if you want."

A sigh erupted from among the former Tower Masters. The Hydra Corporation alliance was truly like the Hydra in old myths.

Wasn't every heretical group that threatened the magic society gathered in one place? They were the most powerful poison that could stir up the magic society.

"The reason why you were able to procure the relics needed to make the Artificial Commandments...!"

"It's a question that doesn't need to be answered. Let's get to the point. Hand over the rights to use the remaining Ten Commandments during this fight."

The former Tower Masters still had four Ten Commandments left. They were saying to hand them over.

"Is there a need to hand over all four of the Ten Commandments? After all, the next battlefield will be Bipung."

"No. It is impossible to overwhelm the Mage King with just the output of Bipung alone. We will gather all the Ten Commandments in Elysion to face the Mage King."

Lampades said following Orthes' explanation. The Ten Commandments draws infinite power from the realm of Transcendence. It was only magic power that the wisdom of the Mage King catalyzed to draw out the ability. If the right person modifies it, they can reverse the connection area and summon divinity.

"An Anti-Magic Field using the divinity emitted from the ten Ten Commandments including the Artificial Commandments. If it's a decisive battle inside that, wouldn't it be worth competing with the Mage King?"

"How can you—"

The former Black Dark Tower Master stopped trying to ask for an explanation on how to transfer the Ten Commandments. They had already shown the power to move a city through the ultra-large-scale Eleusis. They would just have to apply the same principle.

"Then, the last problem is this. How can we trust you?"

"If you had come from the expedition just one day later, all of the Ten Commandments would already be ours."

"But right now, they are with us."

Lampades and the former Black Dark Tower Master's eyes met. Lampades was counting down in his head. It was according to Orthes' instructions.

One, two, three.

"Okay. Then let's negotiate. If the fight with the Mage King is over, we will return the Ten Commandments that you currently own intact."

"Who guarantees that?"

"We can."

The Pope explained about Aegio's Holy Decree, the power of oath. A powerful contract that binds souls so that no one can break the restrictions and must fulfill what they have promised.

"The superstition followers are on your side, if you distort the contract—"

"There's no end to that if you do that. Do you intend to watch the end of the world like this?"

Lampades, who had seized the atmosphere, finally threw the bait that had become the reason why Orthes had set up the current game.

"I will present the conditions first. Until the Ten Commandments connected to me are destroyed, I will never destroy your Ten Commandments either. Let's make a mutual assured destruction treaty that if any one of the Ten Commandments is destroyed, the other Ten Commandments must also be destroyed."

The guarantee that if the Ten Commandments that Lampades had were safe, then the Ten Commandments on the former Tower Masters' side would also be safe. The return treaty that followed. The former Tower Masters realized that this was the realistic limit.

The former Tower Masters nodded.

It was the moment Orthes smiled.

Chapter 209: Gods, Kings, and Humans (1)

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After the agreement, the transfer of each of the Ten Commandments to Eleusis began using the Artificial Commandments. Observations of the Mage King's movement path continued incessantly.

As the Ten Commandments of Bipung Magic Tower and Silver Iron Magic Tower were transferred to Elysion, the Mage King stopped moving for a moment. And then he didn't move. There were endless debates about the reason for the Mage King's stop, but in the end, the conclusion converged into one.

'He is sensing the movement of the Ten Commandments.'

The hypothesis that the Mage King recognizes the world through magic power was still valid because no counterexamples had been observed. The Mage King was observing the Ten Commandments, which were fluctuating in a place that was at least 100km away, and the analysis of those gathered was that he had chosen careful observation until the fluctuation subsided.

If all ten Ten Commandments were finally gathered in Elysion, the Mage King would advance to Elysion without hesitation. Perhaps the Mage King, who was convinced that all of the Ten Commandments were heading to Elysion right now, might resume his movement.

From this point on, even the minimum resources used to observe the Mage King were all invested in the transfer. They had to finish preparing the Anti-Magic Field before the Mage King arrived.

It was the moment when the transfer of all the Ten Commandments was completed.

Kaicle hurriedly opened the door and rushed in.

"There's an emergency!"

He hardened his face for a moment when he saw the full house of Tower Masters of the Ten Towers, but soon composed himself and started reporting. Even if he had faced the former Tower Masters, there was no time to care.

"...It's a message left by Director Cretone, who chose to defect, before he hurried back."

"Yes?"

Orthes asked back. He understood that they had run away because they couldn't fight the Mage King. But why did he come back without running away as it was?

What on earth had he seen?

"At this point in time, extra-dimensional encroachment is starting simultaneously at points outside the influence of the central magic road of Elysion, no. In fact, all points outside the influence of the extra-dimensional purification technique."

Extra-dimensional purification technique. The most fundamental function of all magic towers and magic cores. Outside the influence of the extra-dimensional purification technique, it was no different from referring to all the space outside the city.

Kaicle displayed a hologram video. The color of the area was displayed differently according to the extra-dimensional concentration on Kaicle's extra-dimensional radar. The clean areas without extra-dimensional encroachment were white, and the higher the encroachment, the more intuitive the display became closer to black.

The plains between Nokmok and Bipung, where the Mage King was located, had already been dyed completely black, and the extra-dimensional encroachment, like a gray plague, was spreading throughout the world.

"The Mage King's stop was not a simple search. As soon as he sensed that the arrangement of the Ten Commandments had collapsed and the extra-dimensional purification technique that the Ten Towers had formed had stopped, he is devouring this world itself...!"

The Ten Commandments was the center and origin of all magic cores. The arrangement of the Ten Towers and Elysion was also a kind of magic circle. It activated the largest extra-dimensional purification technique and propagated it to each connected magic core. The moment all the Ten Commandments were concentrated in Elysion in order to attempt a battle with the Mage King, the technique was completely twisted.

The Mage King sensed it. That this world had become more vulnerable to extra-dimensional encroachment than ever before. He began to flood the extra-dimension all over the world, starting from himself.

If this continues, the Mage King will take over the world simply by existing without moving.

It was absurd. The Mage King in the novel wasn't even this much. Orthes lamented towards the ancient priests.

Your prophecies, the most important part is wrong. The protagonist setting is wrong.

The world projected in the hologram was gradually turning from silver to ashen, and gradually heading towards lightless darkness.

From the point when he had taken one of the Ten Commandments, the Mage King's power had already transcended the upper orbit. Orthes thought about a being who could gain the upper hand against the Mage King. If there was any magic that could break through that ridiculous power and inflict damage, he could only think of one.

White Light. If the ten Tower Masters had gathered to bind the Mage King, and White Light's Infinite Starlight had directly hit the Mage King's manifestation, they might have succeeded in defeating the Mage King.

But it was a solution that was impossible to even attempt right now. Even Carisia, the magician at the highest level in this place, could not reproduce White Light's magic.

The former Tower Masters did not blame the Hydra Alliance. Even at the time when Nokmok had been absorbed by the Mage King, the collapse of the extra-dimensional purification magic circle created by gathering the Ten Commandments was inevitable, with only a difference in time.

Instead, they only stared at the screen carefully.

"We're going to die without even fighting."

Magic towers that did not have the output of an Orthodox Magic Tower had already fallen under the influence of encroachment. Lampades felt relieved that he had called all the people in the Lampades Magic Tower to Yellow Thunder immediately after this battle, and felt fear at the Mage King's absurd power.

"Orthes."

It was Hector, with a heavier voice than usual.

"...Old man."

"Now that things have come to this, it can't be helped."

How about we gamble together?

The details of the 'gamble' proposed by Hector were simple. The people who were most familiar with the extra-dimensional contaminated areas in this place were Hector and Orthes.

And Orthes was the only being that the Mage King reacted to. Use Orthes as bait to lure the Mage King.

All the strategies established by Orthes presupposed that the fight would take place in Elysion. Nothing could be done in a situation where the major premise had collapsed.

"...Wait, old man. How about we change the strategy a little?"

"Change it?"

Originally, teleporting into the extra-dimensional contaminated area was a suicidal act. However, sufficiently powerful magic had the power to change the impossible into the possible.

Just like the Ten Towers sent an expedition to Argyrion's base, which was lurking in the depths of the extra-dimension.

"We're going to drop Elysion on top of the Mage King's head."

"Huh. Crazy bastard. Is this the reincarnation of the White Light invasion? But if it's magic, we can't ignore the possibility that the Mage King will dismantle it like the battle in Nokmok."

Orthes' gaze twisted slightly. The slight movement of the blue irises under the thinly opened eyelids. Hector, who had been with him as a teacher, was able to know what Orthes was looking at.

Pope.

"Didn't that guy plan to change the ability that the Ten Commandments emit from magic power to divinity? If we build a teleportation magic with divinity, we can."

Again, his gaze was directed towards the kid who was barely reaching Orthes' chest.

Originally, the idea of magic being constructed with divinity was a theory that was designed only for the Anti-Magic Field. It would take a considerable amount of time to apply and research it.

However, Orthes knew about a bizarre case that went beyond using magic with divinity and fused Holy Decree and magic.

"There is already an expert with a good grasp of the simultaneous use of divinity and magic power, and there are more than enough individual experts in magic and Holy Decree, so the immediate modification of the magic formula... is probably possible."

Orthes' logic was like this. Prepare teleportation magic while buying time by fighting the Mage King. Drop the city of Elysion, which created the Anti-Magic Field, on top of the Mage King's head.

It would be great if the Mage King, who could not use magic, was crushed to death as it was, and even if he succeeded in surviving by any means, he would have consumed a considerable amount of effort to prevent the Anti-Magic Field from falling, so the subsequent fight would be more favorable, according to his logic.

"There's a problem. The spatial coordinates of the high-density extra-dimensional contaminated area are no different from changing every moment. In order to attempt teleportation to such a place, the accuracy of observation...."

Hector realized it only after saying it himself. There was an observer here with skills that couldn't be followed in the human world.

"Yes. That's why I'm going."

Orthes' declaration of departure. Carisia did not stop him. As the former Black Dark Magic Tower Master had said, defeat was certain if things continued this way.

Hector and Orthes were given the mission of observing the spatial coordinates to drop Elysion exactly on top of the Mage King and set off. Although they mobilized all possible extra-dimensional defense measures, the former Tower Masters evaluated that the success rate was less than 10% even if they thought well of it.

Carisia was not anxious about such evaluations. If Orthes declared that he would do it, it would be done.

Instead, she prepared to slay a god.

"A method to kill a god?"

The Pope said with difficulty. Distorting the direction by interfering with an artifact of the Ten Commandments level with a body that was barely surviving with Bacchus's divine liquor was an act that was getting closer to death every moment.

The one who was postponing the Pope's death right now was Kore. Pluton's Holy Decree forcibly fused the soul that seemed to be scattered at any moment.

Kore had wanted to come to this place and confront the Pope, asking what crazy things he had done.

But she had realized that the Pope's fate had already been confirmed as death, and knowing that there was a task that he had to complete before he died, she decided to cooperate with postponing his death at least until the Anti-Magic Field was completed. After all, Kore was a person who wanted to protect this world.

In the place where the priestess of Pluton and the Pope had gathered like that, the bastard of White Light asked about killing a god.

Chapter 210: Gods, Kings, and Humans (2)

Chapter 210: Gods, Kings, and Humans (2)

"Killing a god... that's quite a question."

The Pope was the first to answer. He spoke slowly, invoking mythology.

"In the myths of this world, there are certainly cases where gods have died. The war of the Primordial Gods is an example. However, that death is quite different from the eternal annihilation we might imagine."

"Different?"

"The Primordial Gods are the embodiment of the world's providence itself. This world still exists, doesn't it? That would be impossible if they were truly dead. Perhaps the death of the Primordial Gods should only be seen as a mythological metaphor."

Carisia glared at the Pope, her eyes full of displeasure. They hadn't come to him for such airy-fairy tales.

The Pope could easily read Carisia's thoughts. He didn't intend to end the discussion there either.

He brought up the names of the Primordial Gods at the start because of the Mage King. The Mage King, who had etched the concept of 'magic power' into the world order, had to be treated as an entity of the same rank as the Primordial Gods.

"But even if the Primordial Gods didn't reach death, they could permanently lose their power, within the range that we can perceive, or be forever trapped in the depths of the world."

The Pope looked at Kore. The underworld ruled by Pluton. There was a legend about the last vestiges of the Primordial Gods being trapped at the very bottom of the underworld.

"...Yes, that's right. Surely, if we use Pluton's Holy Decree, we should be able to seal even divinity itself. A Holy Decree to oppose divinity. That heterogeneity is probably why Pluton holds power comparable to the Twelve Olympians, yet isn't treated as one of them."

"The scythe I wield is also the embodiment of a tradition passed down, said to have ripped apart the power of the Primordial Gods themselves. It's difficult to give a definite answer to the question of whether a god can die. But if you ask whether we can completely seal the influence of any god in this world, then I must answer 'yes.'"

The Pope explained the most ideal synergy. The Pope would weaken the divinity with the Primordial God's great scythe, and Kore would seal the divinity through the Holy Decree amplified by Pluton's Great Shrine.

To defeat an entity that had reached the rank of a Primordial God, like this, it was necessary to somehow damage that absolute existence.

"The principle is the same as what Argyrion did to the Ancient Elder at the top of Nokmok. However, the intensity of their existence is on a different dimension from the Ancient Elders."

Carisia took out Aegio's Scale. The object that Orthes had left in the president's office.

"Can this artifact kill the Mage King?"

"The Divine Relic of an Olympian that never came into my hands...."

The Pope gazed at Aegio's Scale with a profound expression. It was an artifact he had once craved the most. A secret treasure that could twist fate if the proper price was paid.

"Did brother hand it over to you? I can't understand brother's thoughts at all."

Doubt filled Kore's mind. From the atmosphere, it seemed that the Pope was calling Orthes of Hydra Corporation 'brother'. But how could the Pope and Orthes be brothers?

Now that the Mage King himself had descended upon the world, it was certain that Orthes wasn't a pawn or a limb of the Mage King, but his true identity felt like it was slipping deeper into a labyrinth.

"It will be possible if you pay a sufficient price. But head of Hydra, what price is worthy of defeating a god?"

Hmm. Carisia turned her gaze out the window. She could see the Ten Commandments being deployed at various points in Elysion.

"If it's the most powerful relic in this world, it's worth attempting."

She replied quietly.

Orthes and Hector headed into the land of death. The concentration of extra-dimensional encroachment grew even denser. At times, the atmosphere itself was replaced with extra-dimensional magic power that was as dense as a liquid, forcing them to draw out abilities every moment they breathed to defend against the encroachment.

At the starting point of the end of the world, they faced the Mage King once more.

"...Seems like he's put on a bit of flesh on his bones, wouldn't you say?"

"Indeed."

Hector and Orthes exchanged trivial jokes. But while the form was a joke, the meaning contained in the words was not.

It was because the Mage King, who was still absorbing the essence of the world, had already completed his own form. White skin – though it was questionable whether it could even be called ‘skin’ – with incomprehensible strings of letters visible beneath the surface. He was a form that was closer to being ‘human’ than when he had first appeared.

Orthes observed his surroundings. The Mage King was constantly absorbing the world. Teleporting towards the Mage King right now would be suicide.

“Old man. Can you keep up?”

“Don’t you fall behind.”

Hector drew his sword. The Demon-Hunting Sword Technique (滅魔破法), a style passed down only to the swordsmen of the Knight Order. The swordsmanship that was the origin of Orthes’ ‘Technique Overwriting’.

He couldn't perform the madman's antics of grafting two different techniques together like Orthes, but the technique of shattering magic by destroying the connection points of a single technique was originally Hector's specialty.

This was also why Hector worked as a tax evasion instructor. He analyzed magic patents, accumulating an understanding of each and every structure of the techniques. Just until recently, Hector had been dismantling the ancient techniques inherent within the Ten Commandments.

He had secured the minimum conditions to compete against even the Mage King.

“Let’s do a test first, shall we?”

How would the Mage King react if someone with magic power mimicked Orthes’ attack method?

Hector thrust his drawn blade into the heart of the absorption process. The flow of the melting world essence that was flowing towards the Mage King stopped for a moment. From that point on, the dismantling of magic began. The dissolving landscapes that had been constantly drawn in, as if the Mage King were the center point of a black hole, froze in place as if they had been embalmed.

A white neck, skin engraved with letters, twisted. There were no features on that face, but Hector knew.

The Mage King saw.

The Mage King flicked his right hand. The flowing world essence condensed and took the shape of a sword. He grasped the order in which Hector shattered the magic, and he understood the place he would attack next.

Thus, a counterattack. A blade made by solidifying the landscape brushed past Hector's eyes, who was attempting to continue shattering the magic.

The heat of lava, the severe cold of glaciers. The emptiness of the universe. It was a blade in which all the forms that humans had defined and imagined were condensed. He barely managed to avoid it, but the hem of his grazed clothes burned, froze, then melted and disappeared. It looked like he had simultaneously come into contact with multiple clusters of properties, condensed to the extreme.

Orthes realized that Hector was 'showing' him the fight. A way to use the origin of Technique Overwriting, not Technique Overwriting itself. If Technique Overwriting was the key for the Mage King to sense Orthes' existence, then by excluding it, Orthes could be free from the Mage King's awareness.

'Damn it, old man. You should have told me before we set out!'

But it was impossible. The unpacking of the Mage King's technique was only something Hector had achieved at this very moment.

It was a technique he couldn't understand in the first fight. Now that he had accumulated wisdom through the Ten Commandments and faced him again, he had no choice but to show him how to solve it.

Orthes carefully watched the Mage King's response, who moved as if he had foreseen Hector's attack in advance.

'He doesn't use any other magic other than the sword he conjured to counterattack the old man.'

Was it impossible for even the Mage King to launch a large-scale attack while using a technique that acted on a world scale?

It was difficult to be sure at this stage. Orthes assumed that the Mage King was holding back some power. And he drew his sword.

A third blade intervened in the sword dance of Hector and the Mage King. The Mage King could parry Hector's attacks, but he couldn't simultaneously solve even Orthes' attacks.

The flow rate of the world essence flowing into the Mage King gradually began to slow down. The magic circle of absorption was gradually approaching a functional stop.

Orthes widened his eyes. It was to read the spatial coordinates.

It was the moment when he captured the Mage King and his surroundings in his 'eyes'.

Ah.

The Mage King's voice echoed.

It's you.

A relaxed, perhaps emotionless voice, so much so that it was hard to imagine that he was parrying the attacks of Hector and Orthes.

For some reason, Orthes was reminded of the relationship between a game character and a player by that voice.

Even while the character was attacking with all his might, the player could chat, use items, and check information such as the monster's HP. The busyness of the character and the busyness of the player were certainly similar, but they were definitely on different dimensions.

Just as Orthes' own eyes were surveying reality from above, was the Mage King also surveying this world from a more distant place?

Let's greet each other.

'Greet?'

A question was engraved in Orthes' mind. Greeting in this situation? It wasn't like the Mage King and he were acquainted. Why had he been interested in him since last time?

In this distant place, weren't they fellow countrymen who had met like a miracle?

Chapter 211: Gods, Kings, and Humans (3)

Chapter 211: Gods, Kings, and Humans (3)

Thought ceased.

A fellow countryman. A fellow countryman in the sense that I understood it?

The Mage King's words weren't, strictly speaking, 'words' at all. They weren't a language made of sound; rather, they were a form of projecting his pure will itself onto the world.

Some error could arise in the process of understanding this. Just as humans couldn't fully understand divine revelations and oracles.

But I had 'Eyes'. The gaze that observed the essence of existence allowed me to fully understand the Mage King's will.

The 'fellow countryman' that the Mage King was talking about was the word as I understood it.

Don't you believe it? Then I'll ask you. Don't you think this world is too similar?

"To the novel in which your story is written? That's because the ancient Divine Cult—"

No.

The gods who ruled this world. Aren't they too similar to the myths of *our* world?

I repeated the Mage King's name in my mind. Simon Magus. The name originally came from the Bible. The name of the magician who tried to buy divine power with silver (ἀργύριον: Argyrion).

It wasn't just a coincidence?

Have you heard my name? If so, you must already know the names of the other gods. Our fellow countrymen, who only live in one timeline, gave the names of the old gods to the stars revolving around the sun.

Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune...

Ah. Pluto had been kicked out, hadn't he? Pluton would be truly disappointed to hear that.

Knowledge of Earth beyond the extra-dimension flowed out as if it was nothing. I rummaged through my memories in confusion.

Certainly, there was a time when I had encountered traces of Earth, just like this moment. It was in the dream I had because of Estia's lamp¹.

What had Estia's ancient priest said?

He had mentioned, regarding the similarity between Earth's modern civilization and the architectural aspects of the magic society, that "It might be the Mage King's influence." I didn't have time to pay attention to it then.

Because the subsequent statement, that 'there was once ability on Earth too,' was even more shocking.

Now, the Mage King's declaration and Estia's clues combined.

The Mage King hailed from Earth.

If that was the case, then I was the only one in this world—

"...Orthes!"

Hector's voice jolted me awake. I gritted my teeth and continued the sword dance. The Mage King gracefully brandished the World-Sword he held in his hand.

Space was severed.

I rolled my body. The Mage King appeared, cleaving the very space I had been standing in just a moment ago.

That's right. Child who has lived in the same world. I know your home. I know the way home.

"Shut up!"

Orthes continued his calculations while wielding his sword. He had to read the spatial coordinates to send to Carisia. The Mage King, holding a sword in his right hand, summoned a magic circle in his left.

To Orthes, it looked like a kind of compass. A magic circle floating parallel above the palm of his left hand, facing the sky. A needle-like object was spinning in the middle.

Suddenly, at some point, a thread was tangled around the needle. A thread whose origin was unknown, whose existence had been unobserved.

Orthes' eyes read the thread's name. 『Fate』.

As the thread became tangled and scattered, the surrounding space suddenly began to distort. The sword that he had thrust out in a straight line extended towards the back of his head, and stepping to the left would send him plummeting downwards.

Hector and Orthes struggled with all their might to navigate the spatial chaos. Orthes, with the power of the Eyes he possessed, and Hector, convinced that what had created the spatial distortions was 'magic,' dismantled them one by one with his sword style.

The Mage King stood in the center of the space that had been distorted like a kaleidoscope. His will flowed into Orthes.

Returning home was your most secret desire, wasn't it? Why do you avert your own true feelings?

The Mage King's words pierced Orthes' core. Orthes told himself that he had given up on returning to Earth, but he wasn't even honest with himself.

A peaceful home, where neither a high-frequency blade nor special eyes were needed, came to mind.

It wasn't even a temptation to sell this world for a few pieces of silver. You just need to return home.

It wasn't betrayal. Just, a kind of retirement. But if there was one thing holding him back—

Hadn't you shown overflowing devotion for the sake of this world?

Orthes returned to his senses.

"No! All I've done in this world is cause trouble!"

It wasn't that there was *no* object to which Orthes had given his unrewarded devotion.

However, that object was certainly not this world itself. How many sparks had he thrown into the world, how many conflicts had he fabricated? As a result of that chaos, the Ten Towers' firm rule might be broken, allowing the stagnant water to flow once more.

But that was for Orthes himself. Calling it devotion to the world was an overstatement, and expressing it as a mere manifestation of selfishness was more accurate. There were simply those who had benefited by chance as a result of Orthes' actions.

Certainty increased in Orthes' eyes.

No matter how much of a Mage King he was, he didn't know everything.

If that were the case, then they could win.

The moment Orthes escaped from the future that the Mage King had drawn, he was able to perfectly read the spatial coordinates.

Phoibos' Crystal was shaking on Orthes' chest. It was the means to transmit the spatial coordinates in the extreme chaos of the entire world being flooded by the extra-dimension.

Phoibos' Crystal was a solidified crystal formed by projecting a part of the celestial domain where Phoibos resided into reality. The reason why the prophecy flowing from the divinity was immediately transmitted to the owner was because the essence of that crystal was connected to the metaphysical space where prophecies surged.

Orthes reversed his thinking here.

Prophecies descend from the heavens to the earth. But Orthes himself possessed Eyes that could interfere with anything, as long as it was a technique.

If that was the case, then if he used Phoibos' Crystal like a telescope, leaving a message in Phoibos' domain, wouldn't Hyacinth be able to read it as a prophecy?

The simple experiment conducted before deploying towards the Mage King had been successful. However, that was an attempt in a perfectly controlled environment.

Orthes gritted his teeth and slashed at the Mage King, cutting off his technique. A technique he couldn't even begin to guess at was constantly gushing forth.

At the same time, he interfered with Phoibos' domain, leaving traces. Orthes prayed that Hyacinth would be able to read it as soon as possible.

If the Mage King interfered with the world's structure with the magic that twisted fate, the spatial coordinates would be distorted once more.

Hyacinth was reading the heavens. The celestial sphere (天球) upon which the celestial patterns should have been engraved was covered by the extra-dimension and could not be seen. He had to brush away the indescribable colors of the extra-dimension and look at the original heavens.

Pluton's Great Shrine amplified his Holy Decree. However, Hyacinth alone could not pierce the thick wall of extra-dimensional magic power.

Therefore, the Divine Cult gathered. All those who remained, excluding the Pope and the priestess who were preparing something separately, gathered their divinity and projected it into the heavens.

Very slightly, a crack appeared in the sky covered by the extra-dimension. A part of the original clear sky shone through.

Hyacinth received the revelation.

Cretone, who had ended up returning to Hydra Corporation without even being able to run away, really wanted to cry. But since there was no place left to hide in the world anymore, what could he do? He had no choice but to silently endure the gazes fixed on him and do as he was told.

Kaicle and Bertrand gave orders to Geryon, and Geryon in turn gave orders to Cretone. It involved shoving magic cores and magic stones here and there throughout the city, or removing all the magic power and injecting the suspicious energy, the aforementioned 'divinity,' that had been extracted from relics.

Cretone didn't know what the work he was doing meant. Prior to the teleportation, he was acting as a human weight, balancing the magical equilibrium of the Etna-Elysion fusion.

Taros gathered the same mutants and moved busily in the place that had been the basement of Etna City and was now the upper floor of Elysion.

Their contamination had occurred while maintaining Etna City's magic power generator. Therefore, the mutants were more knowledgeable about magic power control than anyone else in Etna City. They were knowledgeable about everything from the maze-like structure created by the intertwining magic power ducts in the basement to the emergency repair methods for the magic power ducts.

If divinity, instead of magic power, flowed into a place that was originally designed for magic power to flow, there was no way there wouldn't be a backlash. The mutants dedicated themselves to cleaning, tightening, and lubricating the magic power ducts that were bursting and breaking, and to emergency repairs until the end of this decisive battle.

Meconion took a deep breath, inhaling deeply into her lungs an addictive substance that was generally harmful to the human body. In front of her were numerous patients contaminated by the extra-dimension.

Beside her, the mad doctor Divius was taking out bizarre tools and preparing happily for surgery.

The patients were those who had somehow escaped to Elysion because the Mage King was encroaching upon the world. If those magicians were left as they were, each and every one of them would become a connection point with the extra-dimension and melt away.

If that happened, the extra-dimension would pour into the interior of Elysion, and the absurd plan to drop Elysion on top of the Mage King's head would come to naught.

The extra-dimensional encroachment acted on both the mind and the body. While Meconion stole the patients' consciousness with her drug fragrance to block mental encroachment, Divius began the incision.

Everyone who was alive now was moving. Without exception, everyone was running around, finding something they could do.

It was a struggle to survive, a human struggle to oppose the Mage King.

Chapter 212: Gods, Kings, and Humans (4)

Chapter 212: Gods, Kings, and Humans (4)

Orthes thought he vaguely understood why the Mage King was trying so hard to win him over.

The Pope had said that this world was contaminated by magic power. By the order the Mage King had established.

Hector had inferred that Orthes was the Mage King's only unknown.

In this world, where even the Divine Cult and its leader, the Pope, couldn't help but harbor some degree of magic power, Orthes alone had no magic power.

From the moment he had awakened in this world until now, Orthes had been an existence outside the Mage King's order.

The Mage King's unpredictable chaos. The unknown apostle that the ancient Divine Cult had summoned to destroy the new order of magic power.

The Mage King must have anticipated Orthes' arrival to some extent. He knew that the Divine Cult made prophecies, and had distorted, from the past, the contents of 'Mage King-nim Returning in 2077', which would be written in the future, only revealing a part of himself.

But Orthes had deviated even from the ancient Divine Cult's expectations. Now that all the means by which the Mage King could indirectly grasp his existence had become useless, Orthes was nothing short of a ticking time bomb to the Mage King.

An explosive with unknown contents inside. It could be a simple firecracker for fun, or it could be a nuclear bomb that would annihilate the surrounding area.

Whatever goal the Mage King wanted to achieve through this world, he couldn't afford to leave Orthes' existence unattended.

That was why he had chosen persuasion. To return him to his original world.

'Damn it. So that's why he suddenly recognized me and started talking to me.'

Orthes' Eyes had been working to unravel the Mage King's techniques ever since the Mage King had first descended.

But the only moment when the Mage King had clearly recognized Orthes, to the extent that he heard Orthes' words and responded to them, was this single moment. The difference between this moment and their first encounter was one thing. The space they both recognized.

The moment the Mage King had spoken to him, Orthes had interpreted the extra-dimensional domain surrounding the Mage King all at once.

Even with Orthes' own abilities, he couldn't decompose every single element of the extra-dimension, but somewhere among the countless extra-dimensional fragments that had been divided infinitely finely, there should have been a fragment of a passageway connected to Earth.

The mental image shared by the Mage King and Orthes: Earth. The Mage King had used the catalyst of Earth to understand Orthes' existence.

It might be closer to interpretation than understanding. Looking at Orthes, who was originally outside the Mage King's field of vision, with a telescope called Earth.

But that telescope also had its limits. It could show the overall shape of Orthes, but it couldn't see through to the inside.

That was probably why the error of "for the sake of the world" had occurred. If he only looked at the fact that he had been summoned by the Divine Cult and was playing the role of opposing the Mage King, he might have felt close to a summoned hero.

But Orthes knew very well that he was someone who was very far from such a hero.

"Mage King. You don't know me. You wouldn't be able to understand why I'm opposing you."

Silence. I smiled with satisfaction. My coordination with Hector had become increasingly sophisticated, and the flow of the world's essence that had been flowing into the Mage King had now almost reached a standstill.

Hyacinth must have received the signal. A short minute, or a long five minutes. All I had to do was buy time.

"White Light told me about you. She said that Transcendence was far more terrible than she had thought. Your Transcendence wouldn't have been just about ascending to the heavens alone."

I recalled the moment when Argyrion had packaged the extra-dimensional expeditionary force and made it into a lunchbox for the Mage King. The Mage King's 'Transcendence' – wasn't he trying to achieve that on an even grander scale?

Let's look at the magic circle of the Ten Towers, which was originally created to assist the Mage King's Transcendence ritual. The extra-dimensional purification technique consisting of the Ten Towers was on a scale that could stop extra-dimensional contamination throughout the world. The Mage King had designed the Ten Commandments to influence the entire world.

In the Mythical Era, extra-dimensional encroachment probably wasn't as frequent as it was now. In the battle records of the ancient priests, or in the past of the mental parasitic entity, I hadn't found any special mentions of the extra-dimension.

The fact that there was no extra-dimensional suppression function in Pluton's Great Shrine also proved this. If that was the case, when was the point in time when the world became so desperately opposed to the extra-dimension?

The answer was simple. After the Mage King's Transcendence ritual.

The Ten Towers had been built to prepare for the Transcendence ritual, and after the Transcendence ritual was held, they fell into the hands of the Tower Masters. The first apostles, who created the current form of the magic society, built the extra-dimensional purification technique.

Was it because the Mage King's Transcendence 'failed' due to betrayal that the door to the extra-dimension had been opened?

I didn't think so. The Mage King had wanted to 'open' the door to the extra-dimension from the very beginning. A door leading to the Mage King's true form, which awaited in the extra-dimension.

A door connected to the hungry jaws of the extra-dimensional entity.

The fate of an entire world being swallowed whole by the hands of the Transcendent. That was the identity of the Transcendence ritual that the Mage King had plotted, and the reason why White Light had betrayed the Mage King.

I understood to some extent why the first part of the original novel had ended that way. The ending, in which the Mage King 'failed' to stop White No Name, causing the doors to the extra-dimension to open simultaneously, was an ending designed to imply that the Mage King and the extra-dimension were in an adversarial relationship.

Even the ending had been distorted to conceal his true purpose.

Okay. From here on out is important. To this seemingly boundless existence who has been planning this overwhelmingly vast plan of swallowing a single world for so long, what words should I say to keep him from turning his attention away from me?

I carefully chose my words.

"That grand plan of grasping the entire world in your hands was certainly an idea that ordinary humans couldn't follow. But, Mage King."

Hector nodded, watching Orthes' tongue suddenly lengthen.

'He's finally activated.'

He thought that all the plans had gone awry from the moment when the Mage King recognized Orthes and began to speak. It meant that even Orthes, who had been the only unknown to the Mage King, had been captured in his field of vision.

In fact, every time the Mage King's voice echoed, Orthes' blade gradually dulled and his movements became monotonous. He could feel the power gradually draining. Hector had sensed death and was devising a way to somehow extract only Orthes.

However, at some point, Orthes had suddenly regained his vitality.

"I am no ordinary human."

It wasn't just regaining vitality, he was even trying to deceive the Mage King!

There was a famous saying, 'When you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you.' The Mage King was an entity with the dignity to become the abyss of all people, but Orthes was also an existence located in the deepest abyss of chaos.

The two abysses looked at each other, and one abyss had broken free of its limits.

Hector's only disciple was growing, even at this moment.

"If that's the case, then is there any reason why I can't use your plan!"

...It was growth in a slightly strange direction, not swordsmanship.

Certainly. You are no ordinary human.

The Divine Cult reversed the flow of time to create your existence, reaching back to the ancient gods, even the most distant of the old gods.

You are probably the being closest to the old gods in this world.

If so. Do you also want to reach Transcendence on the same path as me? What a laughable story. I can see the causes and connections you have built. You cannot betray all of them.

"When did I say that I would betray everyone? The Ten Commandments remain. If I only took one of them completely, wouldn't I be able to reach the authority of a complete divinity, instead of a half-baked god like you are now?"

A new extra-dimensional entity. Following in the footsteps of a fellow countryman, you want to become a successor?

"An immortal and imperishable eternal existence, a true transcendent who has broken free of a mere human. I will eliminate the Incarnation you have extended into the magic world, and I will use that remains and the Ten Commandments to reach a new godhood. Returning to Earth without any reward, or becoming a god; it's obvious which one to choose!"

Orthes shouted as if it was his long-cherished desire. It was a declaration with such appealing power that even Hector, who had the longest relationship with Orthes in this world, was momentarily captivated.

But Hector was someone who had watched Orthes from the very beginning when he had awakened in this world. He naturally realized that all those remarks were a ploy to keep the Mage King's attention fixed on him.

What a grand ambition. As someone who has already walked that path once, I won't say that your dream is impossible.

The Olympian gods will be pleased. Although it is a different method from the one they desired, the purpose for which they left Earth and created a new world will be fulfilled.

"The old Olympians were hoping for the birth of a new god...?"

Not exactly, but it was created for a similar purpose.

But, nameless fellow countryman. In order to achieve that purpose, there is a wall that you must overcome, isn't there?

"Are you talking about yourself? Can you, who are already afraid of me and tried to drive me out of this world, act as a wall?"

Orthes felt the color tone of the space in his vision distort. The foreshadowing of Eleusis covered the space distorted by the extra-dimension.

From the empty air above the Mage King's Incarnation, Elysion was aimed.

Chapter 213: Gods, Kings, and Humans (5)

Chapter 213: Gods, Kings, and Humans (5)

Hector felt something was amiss. He was quite familiar with the way Orthes looked when he was swindling people with his silver tongue.

Attracting attention with a shocking declaration, sealing off rebuttals with something strange yet persuasive, and then taking the practical benefits from behind.

But the appearance that the Mage King was showing now was quite different from Orthes' average scam.

Far from simply being swept away by Orthes' eloquence, he was releasing his own information and contesting each other.

Despite Orthes' regained vitality and silver tongue, the Mage King maintained his consistent rhythm, presenting Orthes with new questions.

However, Hector could also feel the arrival of Elysion. The sign that Orthes' plan had succeeded.

No matter what extraordinary plan the Mage King had, now that things had reached this point, the initiative was on Hydra Corporation's side...

Hector suddenly felt a chill run down his spine.

He himself could feel 'Elysion's arrival'. Originally, Elysion should have appeared quickly and swiftly, like when Etna City had fallen upon White Light. To prevent the Mage King from taking the opportunity to counterattack by targeting Elysion's teleportation.

But Elysion's spatial transition speed right now was slower than expected. He couldn't be sure whether it was due to the backlash created by extra-dimensional magic power, or if another factor was at play, but it was clear that it wasn't as fast as it needed to be.

Even so, the Mage King didn't react in any way. Even to the point where Hector, a knight rather than a magician, could notice it.

It was a trap. A larger trap that had been prepared in reverse, pretending to fall into Orthes' trap.

But what on earth was the trap *for*?

At the same time as Elysion's fall, Carisia activated Aegio's Scale without hesitation. Orthes had entrusted the use of this scale to her, so he wouldn't have any complaints even if she used it now.

Lampades was slightly dissatisfied, but he was treated as the figurehead president of the Hydra Corporation Alliance anyway, so he had no real power.

“Just exploring the wisdom inherent in the Ten Commandments will make our magic tower’s future infinitely bright...”

But if the opportunity arose to take over the rights to use the Ten Commandments on the Ten Towers’ side by consuming Yellow Thunder, and even to defeat the Mage King, then it had to be offered as a sacrifice.

The future of the magic tower also needed to be secured in order to live, wouldn't it?

Carisia held Aegio’s Scale and poured magic power into it. On one side was the Ten Commandments Yellow Thunder, and on the other was the Mage King’s integrity.

It was the first step in tarnishing the perfect divinity of Simon Magus, the god and king of the magic world.

The Scale that had received Yellow Thunder as a price shook. Fate was twisted. Thousands of years of history and infinite magic power recorded in the Ten Commandments. All the powers were sublimated to interfere with the metaphysics of fate.

Thus, fate was twisted. A new fate was engraved in the metaphysical domain.

The Mage King's integrity was dismantled. That divine authority faded, still powerful but mortal nonetheless. A fate of competing with era's adversaries as a human was prepared for the Mage King.

The winds of fate were ever-changing. But wasn't the wind also bound to windmills and caught by sails to be used?

The Mage King's integrity remained immutable. That divine authority was eternal, still powerful, and consistently immortal. A fate of paying tribute to the era's adversaries as God-King vs. Humans was offered to the Mage King.

This much should be good.

From the first moment he had descended into this world, he had never been entirely within the realm of humans.

The Mage King had contaminated the world’s providence with magic power. This meant more than simply the phenomenon of magic power spreading throughout the entire reality.

He knew the Divine Cult’s most powerful weapon. Aegio's Scale.

The Mage King had contaminated even fate. That was why he was the 'protagonist' of the novel. The unknown luck described as 'protagonist buff' in what Orthes had thought was the original novel were fragments of the power that the Mage King could actually use to interfere with fate being revealed.

The manipulation of fate using Aegio's Scale. The sharpest knife to harm the Mage King himself.

The Mage King twisted the direction of that knife. By adding more power to the power that twisted fate, he made it stab himself.

In other words, this was a technique in the same vein as Orthes' Technique Overwriting. It was just that it had been expanded to the realm of fate.

Everyone intuitively felt that something was wrong. A warning bell rang incessantly from the very bottom of the human unconscious.

It was the frustration and despair that one naturally felt when witnessing a natural disaster. In front of a giant tidal wave, or in front of approaching lava. The instinctual urge to run away immediately because there was no way to resist.

But the disaster that was coming now didn't have a physical form; it was fate itself that had been created. There was no way to escape.

And only Orthes could see the engraved fate in a clear form.

"What is this."

Orthes muttered blankly. He knew that the concept that the Mage King had created and spread had already reached the level of the world's rules. But that contamination had extended to abstract concepts like fate?

Didn't you already know that divinity and magic power could combine?

The power emitted by the Divine Relic was also a branch of the Holy Decree; what reason was there not to be able to interfere with it using magic power?

The Mage King explained kindly. A tone so kind that he wanted to beg to be sent back to his hometown right now.

Orthes knew that this was the Mage King's guidance. He gritted his teeth and endured the urge to flee. But.

How on earth could he interfere with that?

Even with Orthes' Eyes, he could only confirm the principles; it was a distant realm. This was, in the truest sense, magic. Magic where he couldn't explain the trick, nor could he know when the deception had begun.

Nevertheless, Orthes didn't give up hope. It was the moment he was about to open his eyes wide and look at fate.

The Mage King's magic obscured Orthes' vision. The infinitely repeating fractal of information that had blocked Orthes when he had tried to delve into the origins of Nasion. It was a homogeneous composition, but the density was on a different dimension. The eyes were instantly overloaded.

His vision blurred. No matter what method he struggled with, the Mage King took control of and altered all the information that was visible, obscuring Orthes' Eyes. Like an omnipotent being watching the follies of humans, the Mage King declared.

This is my magic.

"...'Magic'."

Hector muttered, looking at the Mage King's back.

Hector drew his sword.

A very old sword passed down from Sword Master to Sword Master. He retraced the Knight Order's sword style.

Demon-Hunting Sword Technique. Destroy the demon and break the law.

If what the Mage King was using was 'magic to usurp fate', then the Knight Order's sword style, which broke all magic, should be able to break that magic.

That was impossible for the original Hector. Hector knew the limits of his abilities well. His best was a mutual assured destruction with one of the Ten Tower Masters.

But he had been able to meet Orthes again and cast aside an old fear. That delusion that his disciple might be an Incarnation of the Mage King.

In the space that had been lightened by casting aside fear, Hector was able to contain something else.

For example, Hydra Corporation's records.

The premise that the Mage King was also a god had broken the limits of the sword style. The realization that if he could break magic, he could also break the Holy Decree. He could destroy anything that possessed the concept of order represented by a technique.

For example, the Ten Commandments Silver Iron.

The knowledge obtained by seizing the Silver Iron Magic Tower and briefly accessing the Ten Commandments had expanded Hector's limits. He meticulously dismantled the structure of ancient magic that he wouldn't have been able to understand originally, laying the groundwork for destroying the mythical magic of the old era.

For example, Orthes himself.

Orthes used his 'Eyes' to twist and distort techniques in truly extraordinary ways. Even the vast techniques on a world scale, which other knights besides himself wouldn't even think to interfere with.

Hector had been constantly learning from Orthes. His disciple had constantly challenged the impossible. Even in moments when he himself would have been afraid and looked for another method, Orthes had moved forward.

The operation at this very moment was also like that. It was Orthes who had said to more actively change the proposal of luring the Mage King to set a trap, and to launch a surprise attack on the Mage King.

As a teacher, he had to show a model performance at least once, right?

Orthes, who was still squinting after closing his eyelids to escape the Mage King's magic, shouted.

"Old man, what are you trying to do—"

"Orthes."

He raised the corners of his mouth as best as he could. He had the Knight Order's long-cherished desire right in front of his eyes. He had gained the opportunity to meet his long-desired rival and fight to the death. How could he not smile?

"Take the sword for yourself."

Hector infused his sword with martial energy. It was all the martial energy he could draw out.

The Mage King could sense Hector's approach.

He used the power of literalization and meaning decomposition once more, empowered by the overwritten fate. It was a power that he couldn't use at the same time as world encroachment due to the limitations of the Incarnation, but he could use it without any difficulty now that fate was upholding him.

Hector stepped within the Mage King's range. His skin gradually became symbolic and fell off. The entirety of Hector, the human, began to be decomposed into a single story, several chapters and tens of thousands of paragraphs, hundreds of millions of letters.

Even so, the sword he held in his hand was clear.

He unfolded a sword style that had been sharpened over centuries and dozens of generations in order to stab the Mage King's heart.

The central axis of the magic of fate usurpation that the Mage King was unfolding was, after all, the Mage King himself. The usurped fate had to be offered to the Mage King.

Therefore, the center of the technique that Hector had to stab and destroy was also the Mage King.

The flesh of his limbs, including the hand holding the sword, slowly disappeared and scattered. However, even his will did not scatter. Hector's last sword strike had certainly reached the Mage King's ribcage.

That was the limit. Hector's body, which had already been decomposed and was disappearing, could no longer hold the sword.

A scratch on the white, letter-engraved skin, a single drop of blood. The physical damage was only that.

But Hector had changed fate.

Orthes could see the fate that his teacher had newly written.

Chapter 214: Decisive Battle (1)

Chapter 214: Decisive Battle (1)

The Mage King had meticulously anticipated a great many branching points as he plotted his return. Branching points of fate, split around the two axes of the Divine Cult and the Ten Towers.

The Divine Cult, to gradually collapse over repeated flows of time. The Ten Towers, to be powerful, but stagnant and self-rotting. When both forces had forgotten their original purpose and grown weak, the Mage King intended to descend once more and seize the world.

The 'Knight Order' was outside those expectations. No matter how much he upwardly adjusted his assessment of their strength, it wasn't at a level where they could interfere with the fate of the world.

The Mage King's eyes turned to Orthes. That man had changed it.

The destiny of the Knight Order, which originally belonged to neither side and should have been buried in the flow of history and disappeared with their middling power, had been altered in Orthes' hands.

The power to extend the Divine Cult's plans outward, and to collapse the Ten Towers' system. An apostle of chaos who had descended from Earth.

The Mage King reflected on Earth. The oldest world, and therefore the cradle of the gods who were able to give birth to and nurture more extra-dimensional entities than anyone else.

Myth was like the lingering echo left by those who had transcended from Earth. Just as the traces of the Divine Cult's interference had inspired someone to write a novel, the traces of transients whose scale was far grander and more powerful were engraved in the human subconscious as myth.

The gods who left behind myths and ascended each chose a different way of existing. The Olympian gods created a new world, shaping it into a world that resembled their home.

Extra-dimensional entities were not simply living beings. Each and every one of them was the presiding spirit of a particular concept. The deepest part of the Olympian gods' concepts, their primordial myths, recorded chaos: change. The Olympian gods hoped that their pantheon, too, would not stagnate, but would constantly flow.

That was why this world had been created. As a cradle resembling Earth, to give birth to new gods.

The Mage King was at the opposite extreme from the Olympian gods, who welcomed change. He wanted to become the most powerful transcendent, to gather all the power in the world in one place.

That was why he had cast his fragments into the fledgling world and twisted the structure of that world. To drive the plan drawn by the Olympian divinity to ruin, and to devour the seeds of Transcendence.

However, his first attempt had been thwarted. By the demigods he himself had created: the Tower Masters of the Ten Towers. Because only the Divine Cult, the connections to the Olympians, were his enemies, he hadn't anticipated internal rebellion.

Therefore, the Mage King had devised a more elaborate and meticulous plan. A vast fate encompassing the Divine Cult and the Ten Towers.

And there, chaos had fallen.

The man with squinting eyes who was now wearing a blank expression, seeing the endpoint of the fate he had twisted.

Hector was gone.

He had shown that it was possible to see fate, and even overcome it, without 'Eyes', and then had scattered and disappeared.

I gritted my teeth. It was an opportunity that the damn old man had created by burning everything he had. I couldn't repeat that moment, obsessed with and buried in fate.

Now, with the magic of fate usurpation that the Mage King had prepared as a counterattack against the manipulation of fate dismantled, it was the only moment in which I could inflict a certain blow upon him.

The sword Hector had wielded had fallen and was stuck in the ground at the Mage King's feet. I ran and grabbed that sword in my left hand.

Klang—!

The Mage King reacted belatedly. He was trying to retreat from this place. Elysion's fall was right on his doorstep, so it was only natural.

But I had no intention of letting that happen.

I threw the high-frequency blade that I was holding in my right hand. The blade, caught up in the power of meaning decomposition, scattered and shattered into fragments. But at the same time, the Mage King's teleportation was delayed. I readjusted my grip on Hector's sword with both hands.

The Mage King's movements were delayed once more. It must have been unexpected for him too. The method of combat I was using now wasn't using 'Eyes', but rather a reproduction of the old man's swordsmanship.

The old man's last movements were each a message left to me. The culmination of the swordsmanship he had been teaching me since we first met in the ruins back in the day.

The playful scolding of, 'You have good Eyes, but you can't use a sword,' echoes in my ears.

What did he say? That there was no talent for using a sword, so the answer was memorization.

That was how I watched and memorized all the swordsmanship that the old man could show me. How to match a swordsman, how to exploit the weaknesses of an opponent using Enchantware, how to fight a magician.

The creation of variables and Technique Overwriting using the magic engraving drive were the fruits that had grown from the foundation I had inherited from the old man.

And this time, what the old man had shown me last was 'how to fight the Mage King'.

I saw it and memorized it. Without the help of 'Eyes', I could know the old man's movements with just ordinary eyes. Because the first thing I had learned in this world was the old man's sword.

The movements that Hector had shown me last were engraved in my eyes.

If the Mage King had laid out traps to obscure 'Eyes', then all I had to do was dismantle the magic without opening 'Eyes'.

Coming to the very last moment, I was squinting.

The Mage King faced a blind chaos. No. To be more precise, should it be called a squinting chaos?

If he was completely blind, an impartial collapse, with no inclination towards any one place, should have come. But the collapse that Orthes was causing had a tendency. The magic society, the destruction of the system and order.

A path that seemed to antagonize the greatest order, 'magic' itself. Elysion, which was falling from that sky, was like a symbol of the ruin of magic.

The Mage King could feel Yellow Thunder, which had disappeared above him, and the four attributes of the Ten Commandments, waiting to be detonated.

But he couldn't avoid it. Because that squinting chaos was returning the chaos that the Mage King had presented to him just a moment ago twofold.

Chaos was the seed of the beginning. A place where all concepts were asleep. That was why Orthes' Eyes could see the essence of the world. Because chaos already contained everything in the world.

The fact that his power was expressed as 'Eyes' was the result of the fate that the Divine Cult and the Mage King himself had twisted together. The novel recorded on Earth. Because Orthes had first seen this world in the form of writing, his power had also manifested in its most familiar form.

It was the moment when all the Mage King's escape magic was dismantled by Orthes' sword. The lower part of Elysion was already burning brightly. It would explode upon impact.

Didn't you say you wanted to become a god? Are you going to die with me?

Orthes didn't answer. The Mage King had the power to use anything he said.

And, the world was covered in light.

It was the moment when Elysion was breaking apart as the explosion propagated. Orthes felt a bottomless cliff forming beneath his feet.

In fact, it was a golden door that had been laid on the ground and opened. As soon as Orthes was swallowed into the darkness within the door, the golden gate closed.

The next moment, Orthes had fallen to Hydra Corporation Headquarters in Etna City.

He returned using Proditor's Holy Decree right before the impact of the explosion reached him. There was no need for a separate operation to match the timing of the return. He had recorded Proditor's Holy Decree with the Pope's Holy Decree, so it was a structure that would activate at the most critical time and return him.

But Hector had not been able to return.

"Orthes."

Carisia's voice could be heard. Orthes raised his head.

The core members of the Hydra Corporation Alliance were gathered in that place. Orthes dusted off his clothes and got up.

"...Knight Order Sword Master Hector failed to return. It is presumed that he parried the Mage King's magic and then died in battle."

The word 'presumed' contained Orthes' hope. He didn't want to confirm his death.

The silence was heavy. Now that someone with meaningful power to compete with the Mage King in a situation where the Anti-Magic Field was activated had disappeared.

"Boss, what is the status of the remaining combatants?"

"The Pope will reach his limit if he uses the Holy Decree even once more. The others in the Divine Cult have collapsed after releasing their divinity to secure a channel to receive revelations. The priestess might be able to move, though."

"I can move."

It was Kine. Bacchus' Holy Decree was illusion. It was doubtful whether it would work on the Mage King, but in the current situation, even one more combatant was welcome.

"Let me explain the situation."

Elysion had moved with Etna City on top of it. In a way, it was only natural. Carisia had no intention of taking out the Artificial Commandments embedded in the center of Etna City.

The Ten Commandments deployed in Elysion were five: Yellow Thunder, plus the four Ten Commandments from the Ten Towers expeditionary force's side. The Ten Commandments deployed in Etna City were five: the Artificial Commandments, plus the four Ten Commandments secured by the Hydra Corporation Alliance. It was a balance of 5 to 5.

The plan was to activate the core technique of the Anti-Magic Field in Etna City, located in the upper part, and amplify the Anti-Magic Field with the five Ten Commandments deployed in Elysion.

Of course, this was an 'external' plan to show to the Ten Towers expeditionary force. Carisia had been preparing from this point on to sacrifice Yellow Thunder to break the Mage King's integrity.

If Yellow Thunder, which had been responsible for one axis of the Anti-Magic Field amplification magic circle, was sacrificed to Aegio's Scale, the other four Ten Commandments that made up the magic circle would naturally be overloaded.

Using that as an excuse, Lampades would invoke the promise he had made with the expeditionary force and prepare to drop the Ten Commandments. The justification was that it was a means to deal with the anomaly caused by the loss of Yellow Thunder, and at the same time, to inflict a fatal blow on the Mage King.

By separating the Ten Commandments from Elysion and dropping them, the Mage King, whose magic was sealed by the Anti-Magic Field, would be subjected to four chain explosions.

A maximum explosion that poured in everything other than the five Ten Commandments needed to maintain the Anti-Magic Field. It was a massive explosion in which it was

unknown what kind of magic power disaster would have occurred if the space beneath Elysion had not been filled with extra-dimensional magic power.

While feeling an intuitive unease, Orthes also asked with a hint of expectation.

“Did we do it?”

Kaicle displayed a hologram. It was the video recording from Lampades' extra-dimensional radar.

Directly below Etna-Elysion, which was floating in the air.

The Mage King's magic power was shining.

Chapter 215: Decisive Battle (2)

Chapter 215: Decisive Battle (2)

The Mage King, marked as a dark black dot, was like the eye of a typhoon. Extra-dimensional magic power still maintained its existence centered on him. Orthes unconsciously gripped the hilt of his sword tightly.

"Wait a minute, outside director Kaicle. Isn't the point where the Mage King is located inside the Anti-Magic Field? How is the magic power emission being maintained?"

Magic power was still intact even inside the Anti-Magic Field? Orthes was about to laugh in vain. Wasn't that going too far?

"The Mage King's extra-dimensional magic power emission was originally immeasurable. The fact that it has decreased to a measurable value itself is proof of the Anti-Magic Field's effect. The real-time magic power emission is also decreasing as it continues to be affected by the field."

Kaicle displayed a graph of the change in magic power emission per second. At the start of measurement, the graph couldn't even be plotted because the numbers were immeasurable, but after the Anti-Magic Field was activated, it gradually trended downwards.

Proof of a definite effect. However, Orthes couldn't laugh.

"The rate of decrease is gradually slowing down. At some point, the amount of magic power will no longer decrease and will reach equilibrium."

"That's right. It is probably being continuously supplied with magic power from the extra-dimension. Of course, even in this situation, the fact that magic has been virtually sealed remains the same."

Kaicle added some explanation. The structure of magic would be maintained up to the area where the Mage King's own influence was still intact, but the moment it exceeded a certain range and entered completely within the Anti-Magic Field, the magic would be dismantled.

"...But, it's dangerous."

It was the Pope who spoke with difficulty.

"He was able to twist my Holy Decree by projecting his will even from the extra-dimension. Even if the current Mage King's power has been infinitely diminished, he has planted a wedge called an Incarnation in reality. We can't guess what kind of trick he will pull."

"In the end, someone will have to go and deal with the Mage King."

Orthes understood the situation and picked up Hector's sword. With the battle environment under the influence of the Anti-Magic Field, the number of personnel who could participate in the decisive battle was extremely limited.

The Divine Cult, which should have been responsible for one axis of the decisive battle, had mostly collapsed from exhaustion after breaking through the Mage King's barrier and downloading the extra-dimensional spatial coordinates. The number of personnel who could participate in the fight now...

"Pope. Can you fight?"

"My remaining fate is not long. I will collapse if I use my power even once more. ...I have something in mind. Brother, if you allow it, can I decide the timing to end my fate?"

Orthes glanced at Carisia. It was a meaning to ask if he could trust the Pope. Carisia closed her eyes tightly, then nodded.

The reason why the Primordial God's Holy Decree that the Pope possessed was frightening was that he could arbitrarily unfold the power of using time. Originally, the power of time would have been an unconventional power that could reverse the tide of battle with just a single use, but the opponent now was the Mage King.

To put it simply, the two types of time stop that the Pope had used at the top of Nokmok - time freezing and time suppression - were likely to be ineffective against the Mage King. He would have to find a power suitable for opposing the Mage King through several attempts, but the current Pope was in a situation where that 'attempt' was impossible.

If that was the case, it was better to entrust it to himself, who knew the most efficient way to use his life.

When Carisia's permission was given, Orthes also nodded. The Pope smiled at that sight.

"What, is there a problem?"

"It's just that it's too unexpected. Brother, remember. Even I did not expect this kind of relationship between the two of you. The Mage King will be the same."

"This kind of relationship? Are you talking about the employer and the employee?"

The Pope only smiled. Perhaps, he thought that Orthes had even implanted an illusion in himself.

"What about the priestess?"

"That kid's not going out."

It was Kine who said it with a rather spirited tone.

"Uh, Ms. Kine. For Ms. Kine to call someone else a kid—."

"Aish. Anyway! The priestess's help is needed for something like a divine necromancy technique that combines Bacchus's Holy Decree and Black Dark's necromancy. As a role to control the souls of the dead. Anyway, that priestess kid doesn't have much direct combat ability, right?"

Orthes tilted his head.

"Oh. Are you saying that Ms. Kore is needed as a coordinator of the Holy Decree, or a newly developed magic, Ms. Kine?"

"Yeah. In a way, you can think of the two of them as deploying at the same time."

Orthes scratched his head. The surrounding empty seats came into view. They were probably doing something in their respective positions to maintain the Anti-Magic Field.

It would have been nice if Carisia was with him. She was the most skilled among the remaining magicians.

Lampades and Knemon, especially Knemon, who had participated in the Amimone Magic Tower succession war with Kine, had a somewhat uncomfortable expression. He seemed to be blaming himself for not being able to help in the last fight, where the fate of the world was at stake.

"I understand. The two of you, then."

"...In theory, if we only block the magic power supply route from the extra-dimension, the Mage King's Incarnation will also collapse."

It was Arabella who spoke with fear, and even a deeper sense of fatigue. Neuro raised his hand sharply.

"My archery skills are all I have, but wouldn't it be better than nothing?"

"Wait a moment, please."

It was Carisia who stopped Neuro.

"Boss?"

"Director Neuro, and Ms. Kore, there is something else I want to entrust to you separately. I'll have you depart as the rearguard."

The rearguard. It was a somewhat grandiose name to use on a battlefield with a total of three allied soldiers and four, including the enemy.

Neuro looked at Carisia with a questioning expression. Most of the people remaining in this place did the same.

"Boss. Do you have a plan?"

"Yes."

"What's the first step?"

"You go and face the Mage King. In the time that buys me, I'll figure out something, somehow."

"If it's a work order from the boss."

The magicians' gazes were dumbfounded. It was an order to walk a solitary path towards death. Although Orthes' past actions had proven that he was at the pinnacle of anti-magician combat, how could the president give such instructions to her confidant?

Conversely, Orthes was nonchalant.

"Then, boss. Please do it as quickly as possible."

Orthes walked out alone in front of the Mage King. The Mage King was the same as before, but the environment around the Mage King wasn't the same.

An even denser vortex of the extra-dimension was swirling around him. Should he call it an extra-dimensional barrier to protect his existence from the Anti-Magic Field?

The Mage King seemed to have recognized Orthes. Ever since he had succeeded in observing Orthes using Earth as a medium, the Mage King never completely missed Orthes' presence, even if he was one beat late.

You have come.

"Yes, I've come. Damn it. Isn't this too much? You've eaten so much already, why don't you step aside a little?"

Greed was, after all, the instinct of humans, domination was the duty of kings, and ruling was the nature of gods. How could I step aside from taking the world that will become mine?

The Mage King instead asked back. Didn't *you* feel that you should be stepping aside now?

Orthes thought. No matter how much he thought about it, the Ten Commandments bomb wasn't something even the Mage King could withstand.

It would be a different story if it was the Mage King's true form, which was in the same echelon as the gods beyond the extra-dimension. But this Incarnation was different. Both

that Incarnation and the Ten Commandments were equal in that they were creations into which the Mage King had divided some of his wisdom and power.

Four Ten Commandments, on the same level as the Incarnation, were detonated in succession. It was an unspeakable bomb that converted all the infinite magic power that each of the Ten Commandments possessed into destructive power.

If the epicenter had not been the extra-dimension, it wouldn't have been strange even if the world itself had collapsed. Even if the integrity weakening caused by Yellow Thunder was assumed to have been less effective than expected, it was by no means an explosion that would just end with a slight reduction in magic power.

How could his form be intact even after being directly hit by such an explosion?

Orthes' question was soon answered. It was thanks to the 'Eyes', which had been carefully reactivated.

“Haha....”

The identity of the incomprehensible survival was protagonist buff. The Mage King had already shown that he could interfere with fate with magic. The magic that the Mage King was using now was the path itself of 'The Mage King of 2077', which Orthes had read and recognized in the form of a novel.

The fate that the protagonist will win.

Did you see? Then you must understand. The meaning of challenging me.

The predetermined impossibility.

The Mage King didn't obscure Orthes' eyes, which were looking at him.

Orthes thought of two possibilities.

Either it was impossible to use magic towards Orthes because of the Anti-Magic Field, or he had deliberately shown it to flaunt his promised victory.

But either way, it didn't matter. Orthes knew that the Mage King in the novel didn't always win.

Wasn't there White No Name, the only rival who had inflicted a de-facto loss on the Mage King?

And Carisia, this world's White No Name, was preparing a strategy to oppose the Mage King.

When White No Name fought the Mage King alone, she could only barely bring about a de-facto loss for the Mage King at the cost of her death. But now, wouldn't there be Orthes himself in addition to White No Name?

If the Mage King had fixed fate, then he himself was the chaos that would shake that fixed fate.

Chapter 216: Decisive Battle (3)

Chapter 216: Decisive Battle (3)

The more Orthes observed the Mage King, the more strangeness he felt.

It was a strange thing to say, but the Mage King rarely used magic purely for attack.

The magic of meaning decomposition, which reduced the world to letters, was perhaps the closest thing to direct attack magic, but its essence lay in 'absorption', not attack. Even that, with the Anti-Magic Field spread, couldn't be seen in use because absorbing the surrounding components would rather be toxic.

His 'attacks' were expressed in a more massive and subtle way.

For example, 'subtle' magic was the magic of fate manipulation, which was still the greatest obstacle facing Orthes, and by extension, the Hydra Corporation Alliance.

If he hadn't grasped the existence of the magic, if Hector hadn't shown Orthes how to twist fate even without 'Eyes', then no matter how much everyone in this world struggled, the result would have been a catastrophe.

'Massive' magic was the extra-dimensional encroachment that was swallowing the entire world. A transcendent-scale magic that was leading the world to ruin at every moment, before the Anti-Magic Field suppressed the Mage King.

It was absurd. If he put his all into stopping the massive magic, he would perish according to the fate led by the subtle magic, and if he tried to stop the subtle magic, he would be swept away by the massive magic and annihilated.

And even if he blocked both and launched a counterattack, the Mage King simply existed.

The expression of infinite life was insufficient. That was a truly surreal existence.

Nevertheless, Orthes didn't stop his sword. Hector had proven that even the Mage King could be wounded and defeated, and Carisia had promised victory.

The World-Essence Sword wielded by the Mage King was similar to the extra-dimensional spearhead that Halto had constructed. But it was much heavier and more multi-layered. From the spirit realm where spirits resided to Tartarus, where souls withered beneath the earth, the abilities contained in the components of the world were burst out along the trajectory of the blade.

It was an attack that circumvented the Anti-Magic Field. By releasing the pure ability, with magic power removed, from the world essence that the Mage King had accumulated, he had executed an attack that surpassed the restrictions of the Anti-Magic Field.

Nevertheless, the only advantage for Orthes was the existence of the Anti-Magic Field. The ability released by the World-Essence Sword could surpass the Anti-Magic Field, but the blade itself could not enter the influence of the Anti-Magic Field.

While gauging the distance to the Mage King, Orthes realized one thing.

Within the influence of the Anti-Magic Field, the effect of the magic that obscured 'Eyes' like before didn't reach. He could compare and analyze the veil that the Mage King had cast and the answer that was beyond the veil.

If he constantly repeated the comparison, he would be able to dismantle the Mage King's labyrinth.

Freely moving between Hydra Corporation's Anti-Magic Field and the Mage King's extra-dimensional barrier, Orthes was doing a tightrope walk in the literal sense of the word, risking his life.

An observation to delve deeper into the Mage King's existence.

The 'fate' that the Mage King had manipulated guaranteed ultimate victory, but it didn't guarantee that he wouldn't experience death during the victory process. Even if he experienced physical death and resurrected, or created a second Incarnation and continued the fight, victory was still victory.

'Those incomprehensible powers of existence and the power of victory are in different realms...!'

It was a truth that he had only realized at the moment when Orthes lifted the curtain and peeked behind it.

As the Mage King had said, extra-dimensional entities like the Olympian gods had a nature closer to concepts with life.

The Mage King was also like that. Naturally, his essence was magic. The Incarnation of the present-day magic that he had directly reorganized, represented by the 10 attributes.

The Mage King's two powers, 'fate as a protagonist' and 'Incarnation of magic,' were so closely intertwined that even Orthes' Eyes couldn't easily distinguish them. However, as he repeated the fight and got closer to the Mage King's essence, the full picture of the secret was gradually revealed.

Naturally, the chief god of the current magic society was the Mage King, the god of magic. Magicians themselves probably didn't even think that they were worshiping someone, but as long as they used the magic defined by the Mage King, every magician in this world was no different from a follower who followed him.

As long as magicians were the mainstream in this world, the Mage King would not die.

He realized why the first Tower Masters of the Ten Towers hadn't achieved the permanent incapacitation of the Mage King, and the severing of this world from the Mage King's true form, even though they had seized such a fatal opportunity for betrayal.

They couldn't kill him. As long as they used the magic that the Mage King had created, his existence was engraved in the magic society. Banishment, which was the closest thing to permanent incapacitation, was their best.

Orthes realized that their resistance now was the same. There was no means to finally kill the Mage King.

Even if he cut off all the techniques that made up that Incarnation and destroyed that absolute existence, the Mage King could return with a new Incarnation again as long as 2077 continued.

Even in the face of the reached truth, Orthes didn't let go of his sword. If he destroyed the current Incarnation, he could buy time until the next Incarnation appeared, and above all, Carisia had promised victory.

Orthes believed in his boss.

Piiing!

At that very moment, a silver trajectory, cutting through the air, came into view.

An arrow fired by Neuro.

Neuro recalled the boss's instructions. Her instructions and the magicians of the Silver Iron Magic Tower, who were alchemizing iron almost to the point of exhaustion, who she's also given instruction to. The boss was using all the human and material resources in Hydra Corporation to plot something extraordinary once again.

Even the arrow he was holding in his hand right now was like that. The arrow, which resembled magi-engineering very closely, but was forged in a different way, was equipped with a function to send the coordinates of the place where it was stuck to Hydra Corporation Headquarters.

Neuro didn't know what impact this coordinate transmission function would have on the decisive battle with the Mage King.

But he knew that he was contributing to the greatest hunt in the history of the magic world. It was a hunt that was as dangerous as it was great, but glory followed danger, didn't it?

Geryon was stopping the magicians of the Ten Towers who were trying to escape by any means. Ever since the Ten Commandments had exploded, the magicians of the Ten Towers had been trying to escape, but unfortunately, the place assigned to them was Elysion.

The place was located in the lower part of Etna City, and thus directly received the effects of the Anti-Magic Field.

Geryon was dispatched to prevent the magicians, who couldn't use magic, from running out of Elysion and breaking into Hydra Corporation, demanding, 'Give me back my Ten Commandments!'.

Under the Anti-Magic Field, Enchantware either stopped functioning or, even if it didn't stop, became useless, so it was set aside. Geryon was using only his two arms to compete with people for the first time in a long time.

It was a little disappointing that it wasn't a journey of struggle to defeat and trample on someone to climb up, but rather the brute strength he was exerting to block the magicians who were demanding that he open the door, but what could he do?

Geryon had pawned his life to Hydra Corporation. He laughed emptily and shouted to the magicians beyond the door.

"Your Ten Commandments are over! Even if you come out now, there's nothing left for you!"

Knemon was strangely surprised that even in this situation, or rather, even though he was opposing the Mage King, he hadn't despaired. He closed his eyes for a moment and explored the reason.

Naturally, it wasn't because he believed in his own magical skill. If he properly measured his capabilities, his pure magical skill probably wouldn't even reach a purifier of the Ten Towers.

Nor was it because he believed in the Ten Commandments. He had accidentally become the owner of one of the Ten Commandments, but the opponent was the creator of the ten Ten Commandments.

'After all, is there only one answer?'

It was because he had already felt all the anxiety and fear that Orthes would feel. Even Orthes, the greatest fear he had faced, didn't always have his plans go as he intended.

Orthes had also been captured by Argyrion and tasted unexpected events, so how much chaos and destruction would the Mage King, whom that Orthes was directly clinging to, be trapped in?

In fact, the Hydra Alliance had succeeded in counterattacking the Mage King, who had plunged the world into extra-dimensional encroachment in an instant, hadn't they?

Knemon saw the world beyond the radar. A world that was collapsing, eroded by the extra-dimensional flood that the Mage King had caused. A burning magic society. This might have been the image he had wanted when he was a doomsdayist.

But now, Knemon was no longer a revenge-filled youth who wanted to burn down the rotten magic society. Having taken revenge on the Amimone Magic Tower, Knemon simply wanted to spend the rest of his life in a secluded place.

If possible, he also wanted to rebuild the old Tavning Magic Tower.

Knemon repeated a wish that he had believed he would never make again after running away from the troubleshooter industry.

'Win, Orthes.'

Arabella looked up at Carisia, trembling.

"This? Do I drive it?"

Carisia nodded.

"Me?"

Once again, her head moved up and down. Arabella's expression was now almost tearful.

"With the boss on board?"

A warship of a size that was hard to believe had been built in a short time of less than an hour. Carisia and Arabella were in the bridge of that warship.

The heart of that warship wasn't a magic power engine. It was a power source that was well known in theory, but no one had seriously developed due to its unique inefficiency.

A power plant that used the expansion of water when it boiled and vaporized.

In other words, it was a steamboat equipped with a steam engine.

Chapter 217: The Last Work Order

Chapter 217: The Last Work Order of a Ruthless Boss

Arabella pleaded with her boss.

"Boss? Uh.... Wouldn't it be better to separate Elysion and drop it with a mass attack instead?"

Carisia shook her head. Arabella couldn't understand why Carisia was being so stubborn.

"Right! Because it was Director Bertrand who provided the blueprint for the steam engine's design and had the magicians of the Silver Iron Magic Tower alchemize and assemble the materials—"

"Director Bertrand is working hard to coordinate the Anti-Magic Field with outside director Kaicle. He said that countless errors have occurred even during the short time he was supervising the construction of this steamboat."

Arabella shut her mouth. She had been called to Bertrand and Kaicle's work on a daily basis, accumulating various mechanical engineering knowledge, and she had figured out how to operate this ship as soon as she saw it.

It was thanks to the fact that the operating method was infinitely simpler compared to the Arachnid-type Enchantware for information gathering that Arabella usually used.

'But...!' "What about the water needed for the voyage!"

Arabella didn't want to approach that mythological battlefield where the Mage King and Orthes were competing.

"Director Arabella."

Carisia smiled sweetly.

"Just do it."

Arabella had to force herself to smile.

Carisia watched Arabella, who was heading to her position with a mournful smile, and thought.

At least one of the things Arabella had pointed out was certain. A mass attack with a steamboat would be meaningless to the Mage King. Even ramming Etna-Elysion into him as is would be meaningless.

However, Carisia didn't think that the steamboat itself could damage the Mage King.

This was a symbol.

The arrow from Neuro. A signal was being sent from a tool that, like this ship, operated without magic power. Now was truly the time for departure.

Carisia used ancient magic that she had read in White Light's memories, primal magic from the era before the Mage King, to summon water.

Kine was meeting with Niobe and Kore. In a sense, it was an Orthes victim association, but the situation was too urgent to realize that fact and build friendship.

Niobe had brought all the detailed information about the old gods' orders and all the remaining relics from the Blasphemia archives.

There was a limit to the number of relics that one person could handle, and even if she wrapped herself in relics, it was doubtful how effective it would be if the opponent was the Mage King.

'The Mage King, huh.'

Niobe couldn't help but burst out laughing. How had Niobe, a mere Blasphemia grunt, risen to this position? She could understand being a key player in the internal coup, but she never thought she would be at the scene where history and mythology met, fighting against the reincarnated Mage King.

'L13 senior.... Or, was it Orthes?'

Now she even doubted whether that person was a true senior. But it wasn't an important factor. The Mage King, the incarnation of fate that Orthes had proposed to bring down together, was threatening the world itself.

Niobe had no intention of accepting a fate that destroyed people. If that was fate, she would gladly lend a hand to defying heaven.

She handed over all the information, from the records that had been collected a long time ago and were close to ancient books to modern outputs, to Kine.

While reluctantly shaking the hand of the current de facto leader of Blasphemia, Kine somehow felt a sense of kinship with her because she had been tricked by Orthes.

"So, Kine... was it? Can you do something with these records?"

It wasn't Kine who answered, but Kore.

"Yes. I am a priestess of Pluton, the god of the underworld, so I can summon the souls sleeping in the old days if there is a sufficient medium."

Kore said that and glanced at Kine's face. Their hair color was different, but the two people's atmospheres were surprisingly similar.

Kine showed it in action instead of words. When she snapped her fingers, translucent figures wearing ancient Mythical Era tunics began to line up behind her.

The closer to Kine the line of shadows was, the more ancient the clothing, and the further away, the closer it was to modern appearances. Kine, who saw a familiar face at the very end of the line, nodded resolutely.

In order to have a proper farewell with everyone in the Bacchus Order, she had to protect this world now.

Something fell from the sky. Orthes intuitively sensed that a teleportation by magic had been activated.

However, the 'magic' now was different from the magic originating from the Mage King that Orthes was facing. The time to observe what exactly the difference was was insufficient, so he couldn't be sure.

What bewildered Orthes even more than the strange difference in magic was the essence of the object that had entered his 'Eyes'. A simple phrase written: Steamboat.

Suddenly?

Why a steamboat of all things?

It was a less efficient power source than the magic power engine. It didn't seem like there was any kind of decisive weapon attached to that steamboat either.

The gateway of teleportation that Carisia had activated, following the coordinates transmitted by Neuro, had crash-landed at the scene of the decisive battle with the Mage King. Arabella, who saw the rapidly approaching ground, closed her eyes tightly and prayed.

Fortunately, the steamboat crashed into the ground with a loud noise, but it didn't shatter. It was thanks to some kind of defensive magic that Carisia had activated.

"Boss?"

It was the same for being bewildered as well. The Mage King couldn't use magic, so how could Carisia?

The Mage King watched the scene with interest.

Primal magic of White Light, is it. She was a pitiful child who had honed primal magic from before I gave her teachings. Are you that child's daughter?

Primal magic. Magic from the Mythical Era before 'magic power' had been spread throughout the world by the Mage King; magic that handled mana itself.

It was magic with a different root from the modern magic that had been created by the Mage King.

"I don't know. I don't want to resemble such a human."

Carisia, who had gotten out of the crash-landed steamboat after dusting off her hands, was wearing the gauntlets that Bertrand had newly forged.

However, only on her right hand. The gauntlet that should have been on her other hand was nowhere to be seen.

How foolish. White Light gave up because primal magic was weak. Bringing in knowledge from the old era in this short amount of time is a noteworthy idea, but it's a vain hope.

"Is that so!"

A familiar voice arrived. Kine. She was holding Aegio's Scale high, with Bacchus's grapes placed on top of it.

Bacchus was a god of wine, and at the same time, he was also called the 'twice-born god' and symbolized resurrection from death. The only priestess of Bacchus in the present era had joined hands with the priestess of Pluton, the god of the underworld.

From the Mythical Era until now, all the spirits of the priests that they could summon were present in this place.

The Mage King complimented lightly.

Quite a sight to see.

However, have you forgotten that even the greatest practitioner among them, the most powerful demigod, was defeated by me?

Orthes looked at Carisia. It was a meaning to ask if all the preparations were finished. Carisia shook her head.

She was waiting for the last symbol.

Astraphe hadn't been able to learn the regular curriculum of the Ten Towers or other magic towers, so she had been able to grow without being bound by any frame of magic. It was thanks to that unlimited imagination that she was able to extend her magical tendrils further into the extra-dimension than anyone else in the Lampades Magic Tower.

'The fact that she thought of Orthes as someone Father had sent was probably an extension of that....'

Lampades recalled Carisia's request. To let Astraphe unfold the magic she dreamed of as is.

It sounded good.

It was just that what Carisia had provided as preparations for 'Astraphe's magic presentation' was the Ten Commandments.

Lampades watched Astraphe with fear, and also with expectation.

Astraphe looked up at the sky. Among the bizarre substances of the extra-dimension that were falling in spots and dyeing the world, a starry night sky was floating in the middle of the sky.

It was the expanse of sky that Hyacinth and Demus, including the priests of the Divine Cult, had desperately created to receive Orthes' signal.

Astraphe recalled the old days when she lived in Etna City. Her mother would look at that night sky and whisper stories about her father and that magic.

Whenever that happened, Astraphe would imagine in her head what that magic could be like. Talking to the fairies in the stories, picking stars, and frolicking on the clouds. Things like that.

Again, she looked at another part of the sky. She saw the scene of the extra-dimensional rain falling and the world collapsing beneath it.

'Is *this* magic?'

No. It wouldn't be that. The magic she had imagined wasn't this terrifying and frightening. To Astraphe, magic was the magic in the fairy tales her mother had told her in the old days.

She first took out Black Dark.

Black was needed to paint the night sky.

Suddenly, the sky was dyed darkly. It was a monochrome landscape of black that covered the colorful shadows of the extra-dimension.

Then, lights began to be marked onto the sky in spots. White, silver, and blue-colored stars. I realized that the darkness covering the sky was the magic power extending from the Ten Commandments Black Dark. The stars rooted in the night sky must also have originated from the Ten Commandments that matched their respective symbolic colors.

I hurriedly turned to Carisia. If the magic power of the Ten Commandments was being diverted like this, the Anti-Magic Field would inevitably be weakened.

The Mage King's presence was amplified. Once again, that infinite magic power extended its claws towards the world.

And Carisia nodded. I relied on that intuition and set out on my last mission.

Chapter 218: The Narrow-Eyed Henchman's Final Task

Chapter 218: The Narrow-Eyed Henchman's Final Task

Carisia was able to read the memories of the White Light Mage from the Ten Commandments White Light. White Light believed that the Mage King was like the totality of the concept of magic as defined by himself.

Similar to Orthes' analysis, yet different. White Light recalled it thus:

'Just as lava cannot be burned to death, and the great sea cannot be drowned. The 'Mage King' cannot be killed with magic.'

Thus, White Light created Infinite Starlight, which was beyond the domain taught by the Mage King, but her pursuit extended in many directions.

Primal magic from before the Mage King's arrival, or exclusion using divine relics. A means existing outside the Mage King's domain to be used when the Mage King's Avatar appeared again.

Carisia brought all of White Light's preparations into reality.

Centering on Kine, she constructed symbols of the past Mythical Era. A blade from a world where magic, before the Mage King's arrival, did not exist.

However, this was a power once broken by the Mage King.

She prepared the next symbol. A combination of primal magic and modern magic created using Astraphe and the Ten Commandments. Magic that drew a sky outside the ten attribute system prepared by the Mage King. A branch of magic heading out of the Mage King's shadow.

The legacies of the past, which had been dismantled piece by piece in the Mage King's grasp, and the work of the Mage King himself, albeit repainted. Even with the addition of the Divine Power of the Mythical Era, it was insufficient to oppose the Mage King.

And Carisia added one more thing.

The world of Orthes that she saw and heard at Aegio's Judgment.

A steamboat. A symbol of his world where no magic, not even magic power, existed.

The first symbol that had been with her since the moment she awakened in this world.

This was different from anti-attribute or anti-magic power. It was not opposing something that existed, but simply not existing. The absence of magic.

Even the Mage King himself could not do anything about Orthes' homeland. With the third symbol as the last, Carisia cast magic.

Kine denying the era of the Mage King.

Astraphe denying the will of the Mage King.

Orthes denying the existence of the Mage King.

The Mage King watched the magic that combined the three symbols with admiration.

That magic could evolve this far in this short moment without his intervention. He could see why the gods of Olympus placed expectations for new changes on those who had failed to ascend.

Yes. The Mage King was enjoying it. It was certainly unexpected, but that was the limit.

Even if that magic hit the Mage King himself and the Avatar collapsed, he would simply send a new Avatar.

He was guaranteed eternal survival by the immortality he had achieved himself.

No matter how many times he was defeated, he would return.

Due to the authority he had unfolded in this world, the dimensional walls were on the verge of collapse. Infinite magic power flowed in from the True Gods beyond the Extra-dimension.

Above all, there was the fate he had rewritten. The authority of inevitable victory.

Even Orthes, whom he had been so wary of, no, since Orthes was the one who 'read' the Mage King's destiny of winning in 2077, he could not interfere with the final magic.

The Mage King foresaw what would happen next. There was a future in which Carisia's magic hit the Mage King's Avatar and the Avatar perished.

He could rewrite that future destiny and render Carisia's magic ineffective.

The Mage King could create futures where Carisia was caught in the attack before the magic was completed, and other futures as well.

The only clear signpost in the heart of the chaos that was Orthes. As long as the 'Mage King who returned in 2077' existed, his victory was immutable.

The Mage King reached out to the wheel of fate and twisted its movement once more. The metaphysical wheel screamed and rotated.

And the Pope moved.

The Pope could not know the Mage King's detailed plan. However, he knew that there must be some meaning in the number 2077.

Wasn't it only after he adjusted 'time' by reverse-engineering his own Holy Incantation that the Mage King descended?

The Pope decided to return to the Mage King what the Mage King had done to him.

The wheel turned. Faster than the Mage King wanted.

Very quickly, like time passing like an arrow.

The Pope's body, which had barely maintained its shape, began to crumble into gold. The rupture of divinity spread not only to the spirit but also to the flesh, disappearing without leaving even a trace of its form.

He knew that this was the last moment of his long existence as an artificial demigod.

He had no regrets about the final decision he had made himself.

If there were any regrets, it would be the regret that he should have honestly asked instead of arbitrarily judging his brother's limits with clumsy prejudice.

The Pope's time stopped in 2077.

But time did not stop. It surpassed 2077, which had not even passed a day, and headed for 2078.

To a place beyond the Mage King's era.

Thus, all symbols were concentrated on Orthes.

As a symbol of the Mythical Era created by the old Divine Cult, he could contain the authority of the priests summoned by Kine.

As a master of Demon-Hunting Sword Technique who broke down the formulas of the current era and patched together two different formulas, he could see the future of magic that would have gone in a different direction from the Mage King.

And above all, as a soul from Earth.

He was a living witness to a world without magic.

For the Mage King, Orthes, or more precisely, 'something summoned by the ancient Divine Cult,' was the only unknown, so he turned the entire timeline of '2077' into a trap to use him. A time of fate subordinate to the Mage King.

Carisia created a new fate centered on Orthes to unravel this. What Carisia did not expect was the Pope's last move.

The embers of the Mythical Era extinguished the Mage King's Era. Orthes now realized that everything depended on him.

Carisia smiled. A smile that sparkled impeccably whether viewed with physical eyes or spiritual 'eyes.' It was as if Carisia's whisper was heard in Orthes' ear.

'Originally, what a good boss does is allocate appropriate tasks to outstanding subordinates, right?'

Orthes knew what Carisia had ordered. Carisia herself was a hint. Carisia was a bug created by the collection of data deleted from countless worlds.

'Infinite' repetition was a magic sentence that could easily salvage at least one error no matter what attempt was made.

To pass on such a heavy task to the very end. She was truly a terrible boss.

But a good henchman would do whatever was asked, no matter how unreasonable.

Orthes raised his sword. The different eras depicted by the three symbols. The divinity of chaos dwelling within Orthes could embrace all the superposition of that uncertain future.

A fate that might come someday, that might have existed in another world. The tip of Orthes' sword began to graft fate upon fate beyond the formula.

The fate seized by the Mage King, the fate in which everything converged into a single order, became entangled and created a new fork in the future.

There was an era of acrid smoke filled with steam engines.

There was an era of tomb raiders who dug up the legacy of ancient civilizations after magic had disappeared.

There was an era of God-Streamers where demigods showed themselves on network cameras and gathered believers.

The era drawn by the Mage King scattered into chaos haphazardly, into infinite chaos.

The Mage King recognized all the diverging paths of fate that were constantly diverging. He hammered wedges into the era close to an extension of the current magic society. The Mage King predicted that Orthes would compete for dominance over the direction of fate.

The reasoning that Orthes, like the Mage King himself, would guide the world to a future in which he reigned as the master of absolute fate.

The most effective way to respond to this was to occupy more futures and seize the power to determine fate.

The Mage King's shadow loomed over fate. Based on the future he had occupied, he was pruning other futures in an instant.

However, fate was increasing much faster than the Mage King was seizing the era. It was incomprehensible.

In such a chaotic future, no one could be the master of fate.

The Mage King realized his mistake. Orthes did not dedicate himself to the world, nor did he want to reign as the master of all fates.

For him, chaos alone was enough.

The Mage King withdrew all magic. He concentrated only on the magic of return to banish Orthes alone from this world. Even if he lost the ability to interfere with the world for centuries to come, he had to drive that thing out of here now.

Orthes lamented that the return he had so desired was the final blow of the last adversary.

And that the only formula that could oppose that great magic, that could attempt to overwrite the formula, was the explosion of the Artificial Commandments that he had so desperately tried to dissuade.

Orthes did not understand the other Commandments. It would not be impossible, but he could not match the speed at which the Mage King was drawing the magic of banishment. But the Artificial Commandments.

Orthes understood and could graft the explosion of those Commandments, in which his own will was involved in every process from conception to birth.

"Boss! Now is the time!"

Orthes shouted urgently. Carisia had been anticipating the 'now' that Orthes was talking about longer than anyone else. She fired the gauntlet and detonated it in mid-air. As one exploded, the other gauntlet also exploded.

The left-hand gauntlet that Carisia had left behind was stuck as a detonator for the magic circle to explode the Artificial Commandments.

The enormous explosion that should have blown away Etna City in its original form. Orthes turned the direction of the explosion formula and grafted it onto the Mage King's return formula. The end of the Artificial Commandments spread to all the futures held by the Mage King.

Orthes sent a farewell greeting. To the Mage King, who had to face the light of annihilation of the Artificial Commandments over the branching, infinite future ramifications, as many as the number of fates he had rooted.

The words that Simon Magus recorded on Earth would surely know.

"Let there be light."

And there was light.

The light of chaos that illuminated the shadow of the dark order cast by the Mage King.

Chapter 219: Not Boss and Henchman (The End)

Chapter 219: Not Boss and Henchman (The End)

The fate set by the Mage King had now disappeared into countless chaos.

Orthes, with his divine power of chaos, affirmed all possible futures. Somewhere in that future, there would certainly be a possibility of the Mage King's return.

But at least, not right now.

The explosion of the Artificial Commandments intertwined with all the fates seized by the Mage King. Even the Mage King would have to spend a considerable amount of time to escape that pure white destruction.

Orthes lay down. The night sky drawn by Astraphe was beautiful.

Carisia sat next to him. Slowly, she stroked Orthes' hair. The soft touch stroking his hair. Orthes closed his eyes.

"It's over."

"So it is."

It was truly a bizarre ending.

Neither Orthes nor Carisia could achieve what they initially wanted.

Orthes ultimately failed to return to his homeland. The Mage King's last magic was that opportunity, but Orthes chose something else instead of returning.

Carisia failed to destroy White Light until the very end. She thought about detonating it even now, but that would collapse the dimensional walls that had barely regained their shape.

The two failed to achieve their respective desires.

But there were no regrets.

The Mage King's last misjudgment was probably due to this. The words "devotion to the world," which he threw out, expecting Orthes to be an altruistic human being because of Orthes' actions, were immediately denied.

The Mage King inferred the persona of Orthes from that answer. A truly human being who could give up anything for his own desires. A kindred spirit with the Mage King himself in that he possessed endless desires.

The goal of becoming a god by using the fate designed by the Mage King also had some reality. The Mage King did not doubt that Orthes was trying to possess the authority of an absolute being.

Wasn't it a natural conclusion to desire the most powerful force in this world? Moreover, Orthes already possessed divinity. Only one step remained to reach the absolute.

Who would give up that infinite power unless they were willing to lay down what they had for an unknown other?

But the Mage King did not know that Orthes' desire was directed toward returning, not power.

And one more thing.

His feelings for Carisia were deeper than his obsession with returning. It was a fact that even Orthes himself admitted only at the very end.

Orthes was an ordinary human being who feared sacrifice for an unknown other.

But at the same time, he was also a person who could burn his last hope for the one person he knew.

"Boss."

"You're still calling me that?"

"If I don't call you boss, what else would I call you?"

Carisia's hands gently pressed against Orthes' cheeks.

"It's okay. I'm going to quit now anyway."

"Huh?"

"The remnants of the Ten Towers mistook Lampades for the real head of the Hydra Corporation, right? Let's just pass everything on to them and retire!"

The remnants of the Ten Towers no longer had the remaining Commandments. But the experience and abilities they had accumulated as Tower Lords remained. As long as the Hydra Corporation had four Commandments left, it would be impossible to overwhelm the Hydra Corporation in an all-out war, but what about other methods, including guerrilla warfare?

They couldn't just indiscriminately purge them. The magical abilities of the Tower Lords were essential to reorganize the damaged Extra-dimensional purification magic in order to fight the Mage King.

Even if the Divine Cult, which would once again take the front lines of history, supported the power source to replace the vanished Commandments, the Ten Towers were the only ones who could be immediately put into maintaining the formula.

Carisia had no intention of getting involved in such complicated post-processing. It seemed wise to quit everything and go into hiding.

Somewhere in her heart, the still-sleeping impulse to destroy whispered. That if she took just one more step here, it would be the end of the world.

That she could erase the real world, which had been mechanically deleted as a 'fake world,' with her own hands.

She folded her last lingering feelings and buried them in her heart. She couldn't destroy the Ten Commandments White Light, but she was able to defeat the White Light Mage, wasn't she?

There would be times when it would rise again someday, but now, there wasn't enough time to enjoy the person next to her.

If this world disappeared, where could she live with Orthes?

"Still, be my boss for just one more day."

"Why? You always sang about how much you hated working, right?"

"I have to take care of my severance pay before I leave. I'll leave first, so give me a lot of money."

It was a silly joke. Carisia smiled and brought her lips to his forehead.

It was a quiet kiss without any sound. Orthes closed his eyes, so he couldn't be sure what had brushed past his forehead.

Certainty and speculation were different stories.

"Boss...?"

"Let's just say I got my severance pay with this, and run away somewhere from now on?"

Orthes raised his hand and stroked his forehead.

"No. I'll take my severance pay in money."

Then he smiled.

"I can get a lot of this even after I retire, right? Severance pay is a one-time thing."

The last schedule I attended as the head of the Divine Investigation Office was a memorial service. Those who fell on the Ten Commandments front. And those who disappeared in the Mage King's descent.

And Hector.

Hector's sword was stuck in front of his tombstone. I don't know how it was forged, or if it resembled its owner's stubbornness, but it was a blade that did not break even in front of the Mage King.

The Knights unanimously said that I, who had inherited the will of the Swordsman and executed the Mage King, was the rightful owner of the sword.

But I didn't think so. This was Hector's sword. At least for now.

"I organized the sword-wielding method I learned from the old man and handed it over to the Knights. I told them to take it if the best-wielding guy came out, so don't feel sad even if your juniors take your sword."

He was the kind of person who used to chant that a sword was only meaningful if it was wielded, so he would like it.

With this, I finished the last send-off. Carisia was waiting a little away.

"I wrote 'I resign with responsibility' in the boss's office and came out. Lampades will be the external representative of the Alliance, but internally, it'll be close to a triumvirate of Lampades-Niobe-Kore."

"That doesn't sound good. I remember most triumvirates in my world failing."

"It was an alliance that would be dissolved anyway after the post-processing was over."

Carisia jokingly added. It would be a better ending if she ended up destroying one alliance instead of destroying the original world.

I nodded. Well, just the fact that I didn't detonate it when I got White Light, saying 'It's time to go back to White No Name' was much better than the original ending.

"Oh. So Lampades is also the president of the Hydra Corporation? He'll collapse from stress."

"Ah. I handed that over to Arabella. I had designated her as the acting president when the president's seat was vacant. She's worked hard, so she should enjoy the power of the apex for a few days."

I was horrified by Carisia's pure malice. Most of the work that the president of the Hydra Corporation would have to do in the future would be the enormous paperwork that came with the post-processing.

To throw a weight called a crown at Arabella, who had already suffered a lot.

"I think I'll have to be a secretary for a few more days when I get back."

"That's not possible. I processed your resignation letter, and the budget for your severance pay has been executed. The two of us have become complete strangers with no connection to the Hydra Corporation."

Silly jokes were exchanged. A quiet graveyard. In a place where only the two of us were.

Carisia and I retired.

"Where are you going now?"

Carisia asked, looking at Orthes. Even if she wanted to spend money, she was too busy now with the post-processing of the descent of the Extra-dimensional being—officially announced as an Extra-dimensional being who impersonated the Mage King and seduced Argyrion.

It was questionable whether the account linked to the Ether Network would work properly.

Orthes shrugged.

"I have a house I bought near the Extra-dimensional border where I used to work as a problem solver. I'm just going to hole up there for a while and laze around."

"I see. You already had a retirement plan?"

"A more luxurious life was originally planned. Until the current social system is restored, I have to live frugally with what I have. What about you, Boss?"

"I'm not a boss anymore, remember?"

Orthes paused for a moment, saying 'Um...', but then he steeled his heart and said.

"Carisia."

"Yes. You know that well."

"What are you planning to do with your life now?"

"I'm going to follow the person next to me."

A slight bewilderment, and then relief, was written on Orthes' face. Carisia asked a playful question.

"Why, you don't like it?"

Slowly shaking his head. Carisia hesitated slightly and reached out her hand.

It was a bare hand without a gauntlet.

Orthes gently took her hand.

Not as boss and henchman, but as life partners walking the same path, the two walked hand in hand.

Tab 15

Extra. The Daily Life of the Faceless Fixer (1)

"You'll have to cut off your left arm."

"...What?"

The client who came to see the Faceless Fixer, Rutegan, was bewildered.

'Orthes? You said you were looking for Orthes?'

Rutegan knew well the reputation, or infamy, of the Faceless one, which was widespread in the fixer industry.

'Don't go. There are only two endings for those who seek Orthes. They disappear, or... they become strange.'

The front lines of the Extra-dimensional border region. A remote periphery in the magical festival centered around the True Magic Tower and the Ten Towers.

A place far from the pursuit of magic and the ivory tower of knowledge, where every day is a battle for survival. A place where dreamers who dream of creating a new school of magic by gleaning even fragments of bizarre knowledge flowing in from the Extra-dimension and madmen fascinated by the Extra-dimension gather.

Even there, Orthes was establishing a firm power base of his own.

'No, rather than a 'power base'...'

It might be more accurate to call it a cult. According to inquiries made to other fixers, those who were fascinated by Orthes seemed to regard Orthes as an object of faith.

A leader who would bring about the end of the magical society. That was the assessment of the four letters of Orthes' name.

Frankly, Rutegan did not want to join hands with someone named Orthes.

However, he had to head beyond the Extra-dimensional border region into the very depths of an area contaminated by the Extra-dimension, and the only fixers who would accept a request premised on such unreasonable access were Orthes and his cult.

Thud. Thud. Rutegan walked up the dark alleyway.

In the seemingly ordinary commercial building, there was a small bar.

But it was strange. It was evening now. It was a time when people would slowly gather in a bar. But there was no sign of anyone at the bar Rutegan was heading to now.

The bar's door opened with a creaking sound.

Rutegan trembled as soon as the door opened. Was it because of the desolate scenery with no one there?

No. There were quite a few people inside the bar.

What perplexed Rutegan was that even though there were more than a dozen people inside the bar at a glance, no noise leaked outside.

In the corner table of such a bar, 'he' was there.

It was exactly the same as the other fixers had described. An appearance that somehow felt faint even though he was clearly seeing it with his own eyes.

But the combination of the three curves drawn by his two eyes and mouth. Only the 'smiling silhouette' was strangely clear in his memory.

The Faceless Orthes was waiting for him.

"Welcome, Mr. Rutegan. I heard you wanted to entrust me with a request."

Rutegan swallowed. Until Orthes' mouth opened, the bar was filled with silence. It was somewhat humiliating to admit, but this atmosphere was quite terrifying.

"...That's right."

"Welcome. But, may I ask what kind of request it is exactly?"

"I heard that you are the best at 'diving' even in this Extra-dimensional border region."

'Diving' was a slang term referring to access to the depths of the Extra-dimensional contamination zone. It was an extension of using words like 'flood' to express the magical power of the Extra-dimension. In that it was difficult to escape the deeper you went, advancing into the contamination zone had aspects similar to diving.

"I can't say for sure that I'm the best, but I am confident in that field."

Orthes' narrow eyes became even thinner. Judging from the raised corners of his mouth, it seemed to be a smile.

People who saw the ominousness lingering on his expression would consider trying to express it with the word 'smile' an insult to smiles.

Rutegan took a deep breath. It was a request that everyone else had shaken their heads at. He had to entrust it to Orthes, at least.

"Our Magic Tower studied the magic of the Extra-dimension."

It was a confession made with considerable determination. It was a study that directly contradicted the school of magic research advocated by the Ten Towers.

But Orthes' smile did not waver.

"There are many people like that. They say that they are full of unique ideas and creative inspiration that go beyond the framework of conventional magic research."

Rather, he was packaging the study of Extra-dimensional magic as a 'unique blue ocean'. Rutegan drew out the secrets within him with the encouragement that was not quite encouragement.

"My grandfather realized that among the civilizations flowing in from the Extra-dimension, there was a civilization of giants, and that their body modification technology far surpassed the current Enchantware technology. Our Magic Tower tracked the location of the giant ruins based on several Extra-dimensional relics."

"That giant ruins must be in the depths of the Extra-dimensional contamination zone."

"I want to conquer the secrets contained in those ruins. I want to get my hands on the giants' technology."

"What are the clues about the location?"

Rutegan showed him a map. A very primitive form of map created in an analog manner to prevent leakage. It contained information such as the results of the magical power analysis of the relics believed to have been excavated from the ruins, and commonly found patterns.

Orthes looked at the map for a while and suddenly muttered strange sounds.

A combination of specific letters and numbers. If you listened carefully, it was a type of spatial coordinate notation.

Orthes' followers moved their hands busily after hearing the list of coordinates. They seemed to be writing down the coordinates that Orthes was calling out.

"Look."

A hologram rose between Orthes and Rutegan. It was a hologram showing the approximate geography of the Extra-dimensional contamination zone.

"I have narrowed down a few contamination zones with a magical power distribution similar to the magical power wavelength of the relics."

What was he talking about?

He remembered the magical power distribution of the Extra-dimensional contamination zone? Every day, no, every moment, the magic of the Extra-dimension was rampant and its composition ratio would change?

"There is a tendency even in the flood of the Extra-dimension. If you measure it over several years, you can find a cycle."

It was an absurd sound. In order to make that prediction over several years, he would have to closely observe the Extra-dimensional contamination zone every day for several years.

'This guy...'

How deeply, and how often, has he entered the Extra-dimensional contamination zone?

Rutegan stopped thinking. He felt that if he dug any deeper, there would be no turning back.

"If you entrust us with the request, we will first focus on exploring the three places designated now. If we do not find the ruins even after searching all three places, we will receive an additional fee."

"Additional fee?"

If there was anything more terrifying than fear of people, it would be fear of money. Rutegan's psychology in unconsciously questioning Orthes was like that.

"Of course, I understand your feelings as well. It is natural to be dissatisfied with the fact that the company's fault is in selecting the wrong excavation site at first, but why should you pay an additional fee?"

Orthes treated Rutegan in a friendly tone, like an ordinary salesperson. Rutegan felt that the dangerous transaction of Extra-dimensional exploration was somehow becoming more and more like an ordinary service contract.

"But please understand. Extra-dimensional exploration is not a common dangerous task. We are indeed people who make a living by digging in the ground, but we don't make a big margin."

"So. With the initial contract fee, it's a deficit to excavate just three places, is that it?"

"Yes. After that, it's difficult to even pay those friends' daily wages. But I can tell you this much."

Orthes whispered that the percentage of those who had entrusted the request to them who paid the additional fee was less than 5% of the total. If true, it was surprising precision.

It meant that the probability of finding the ruins in the first three explorations alone was over 95%.

Rutegan hesitated for a moment, but then signed the contract.

In any case, there was no alternative without Orthes. All of the coordinates where the giant ruins were presumed to be located indicated contamination zones so deep that other fixers flatly refused to approach them.

Orthes was the only one who could accept a request to dive so deep.

Orthes' guarantee was true. He led Rutegan to the first coordinate, and the relic Rutegan had brought pulsed intensely the closer they got to the coordinate.

Everything proceeded smoothly, like gears meshing.

"How is it?"

Orthes asked Rutegan with a gentle smile.

"Now, our team will carry out the excavation work. Please wait a moment."

"I want to accompany you."

"It will be dangerous."

Despite Orthes' dissuasion, Rutegan did not give in. What if they stole the secrets of the giant civilization? They were already notorious as a group of fanatics fascinated by the Extra-dimension. He didn't know what they would do when they saw the secrets of the ruins.

It had to be Rutegan himself who held the secrets of the giant civilization.

Orthes scratched his head a couple of times. He looked at the place where the excavation work was taking place, and then turned his gaze back to Rutegan.

"You'll have to cut off your left arm."

"...What?"

"You're right-handed, aren't you? We'll prepare for reattachment later, so you'll have to cut off your left arm."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"There are security devices in those ruins. They activate when they detect fluids. It was made to fit the size of a giant, so its precision is lower than ours, but."

Orthes' finger pointed at Rutegan.

"If it's someone with a sturdy build like Mr. Rutegan, the shoulder width will be large enough for the security device to detect. For safety, you must cut off your left arm."

"Bullshit! Would you do that to your team members too?"

Orthes hadn't even gone down to the excavation site. He had only briefly looked around the site. There was no way he could see through the structure of the ruins' security devices with just that.

Orthes shrugged at Rutegan's outburst.

"Of course, from the beginning, we were not planning to involve team members with a physique larger than Mr. Rutegan in the internal entry process.... I can't help it."

Orthes turned around.

"Is there anyone here with a physique larger than Mr. Rutegan?"

Orthes' followers did not answer. It was the moment when Rutegan felt the silence and thought, 'I knew it'.

Squeak.

The blades of the High-Frequency Blades flashed simultaneously from all over the excavation site.

"Oh.... everyone, I didn't mean to cut it off right now."

With Orthes' feigned embarrassment, the followers raised their severed arms.

This is a mess.

I barely managed to suppress the exclamation that was about to come out.

'Oh, these humans.'

At least listen to the full explanation before cutting it off.

Tab 16

Extra. The Daily Life of the Faceless Fixer (2)

My original plan was this:

1. Receive volunteers.
2. In the early stages of the ruins, in a thoroughly secured situation, have them recognized by the aforementioned security device.
3. Afterwards, show that the security device does not recognize someone with a smaller physique.

In this way, I was going to prove that there was a real security device that was dangerous to people of a certain physique or larger, and use that as a basis to try to persuade the client a little, but...

They cut off their arms before listening to the whole story.

I called other colleagues. Even though civilization is mysteriously developed in this neighborhood, like a cyberpunk wuxia, first aid is still important.

"Everyone! Attach them all except for one!"

It's a good thing everyone used High-Frequency Blades. The cut surface of the High-Frequency Blade is clean. If they had cut it off with poor skill and the cut surface was strange, and we couldn't fix it with a basic machine and had to call in professional personnel, we would have already been in the red.

A sigh came out on its own. The problem with my colleagues was that they were all good, but they didn't listen properly to what people said. They only listened to the middle part, or they took jokes seriously.

They're the kind of people who, if you make a joke like, 'Oh, the weather is so humid today, should we set something on fire?', they'll say, 'We knew you'd say that, so we've collected bombs in our basement'.

Still, they listen well to requests and don't have unnecessary stubbornness, so it was easy to work with them. If we had fought because we were stubborn with each other, I would have run away first.

"W, what..."

This Rutegan guy was flustered. Me too.

But as a professional, I can't show a flustered look to a client, can I? I've already been quite flustered, but I have to fix it from now on.

"Haha, I'm sorry about this. My friends are a little impatient. I was going to show you the recognition standards of the security device first, but they cut off their arms first."

I check the time. What I take out of my pocket is an hourglass. High-tech clocks with magic circuits can measure time precisely, but they are more dangerous when contaminated by the Extra-dimension.

It's common to accidentally bring a precision machine to the Extra-dimensional contamination zone and create a Terminator. Even though my eyes can read the contamination rate in real time, it's better to reduce unnecessary risks as much as possible.

"Let's see. The activation time of the reattachment kit is about 1 minute... Yes, wait for 3 minutes at most. I'll show you."

Show me? Show me what?

Rutegan had already been overwhelmed since the moment the dozen or so fixers severed their left arms without saying a word.

Orthes was approaching those who had cut off their arms and examining their injuries.

"Oh. Weren't you left-handed?"

"That's right."

"Then you should have cut off your right arm, not your left arm. The reason I asked Mr. Rutegan to cut off his left arm was because he was right-handed."

"I'll keep that in mind."

Orthes stood up the left-handed fixer.

"The person who won't attach his arm will be this person! Everyone else, attach your arms quickly!"

None of the gathered fixers objected to Orthes' words or judgments. Rutegan recalled again the assessment of others that 'If you meet Orthes, you either die or become strange'.

All of the fixers under Orthes were definitely crazy.

The most extreme evidence of that was the sound.

The sense of incongruity that Rutegan had felt even in Orthes' contact location that he had infiltrated earlier. Extremely restrained sound.

None of those who had severed their arms just now screamed in pain. Only peaceful breaths continued.

'How...'

How can you make a person like that? Is it brainwashing?

"Okay. Come on!"

Orthes urged Rutegan in a cheerful tone. The will to enter the ruins, which had been full until just now, began to fade.

"Wait a minute..."

"I'll show you directly. Okay, you there. The person who has attached his arm! Go inside the ruins now!"

Isn't that telling him to die? To send a fixer into the ruins where he doesn't know what's sleeping.

Moreover, he had declared with his own mouth that 'there are traps'. Orthes' order was virtually a suicide instruction.

The designated fixer didn't seem to think so. He headed into the dark maw of the ruins as Orthes said.

Not slow, not fast. Rutegan felt a sense of incongruity once again.

The stride of his steps is too consistent.

It wasn't difficult. It was easy for a practitioner of Martial Energy or an implantee of Enchantware to repeat that level of precision movement.

But now isn't it a time when cautious approach is needed rather than such 'consistent' movement?

Orthes opened his mouth.

"Advance 15 steps. And 3 steps to the right. Stop, then move 2 steps forward again. Take a deep breath."

A soft tone that even sounded gentle. The fixer approached as if being sucked into the deep darkness inside.

"Now, if you take 1 step forward, the security device will activate. First, a cauterizing heat ray from below your feet. Then, a disinfectant solution will be sprayed. It's called disinfectant solution, but it's from the giant's point of view. Think of it as the level of a strong acid. The moment you step on it, retreat at full speed."

Without hesitation, the fixer took one step with the same precise stride as before, and immediately retreated at full speed.

It was at that very moment. The stepping stone that the fixer stepped on turned red and hot, and flames that could easily burn the lower half of a person's body rose up. Then, a green liquid dripped from the ceiling. The disinfectant that came into contact with the heated floor bubbled and vaporized.

The eruption of deadly acidic gas. Orthes patted the fixer's shoulder who ran out.

"Good job. Tell them to give you additional danger pay when you get back, and let's withdraw early today."

The fixer nodded and joined the withdrawal team. The moment he stepped on the trap and ran away was like a precisely meshing, choreographed scene in a movie.

"Okay. This is what I was going to show you first. Seeing this, it'll take about 10 minutes for the acidic gas to subside. Let's take a break for a while."

In the meantime, Rutegan approached the fixer who had headed to the withdrawal team. He grabbed the fixer's shoulder.

"What's the matter?"

Businesslike respect. If Orthes' respect feels like a subtle giggle or sarcasm even though it's the same respect, their respect was truly mechanical.

"How... how can you do that?"

"Are you talking about the boss's work instructions?"

Thinking that the expression 'boss' was quite businesslike for a religious group, Rutegan nodded enthusiastically.

"If Orthes didn't know about a trap, or if the timing was even a moment off, if he was planning to deceive you, you would have died. But how."

No. It wasn't how. The question of the reason for this fanatical trust swirled in Rutegan's mind.

"Why. Why can you trust Orthes so much?"

A different color flickered in the fixer's eyes, which had been sunken. It was a light closer to madness than intelligence.

"According to the boss's words, you won't die."

"What?"

"We all know it. If we walk as he tells us, speak as he tells us, and breathe as he tells us, we won't die. His guidance is certain and his instructions are clear."

Rutegan felt a fear crawling up his spine. A instinctive fear felt when facing something that he could never understand.

"Client. Do you know what the involuntary resignation rate of our company's regular employees is?"

The words 'involuntary resignation' mean disappearance or death during operation. Rutegan shook his head.

"It's 0%. All of those who retire from our company walk out safely on their own two feet."

"What about those who don't trust Orthes?"

"They are not regular employees."

Their answer was that they don't count the deaths of those who doubt the revelation. Willingly, those that make the wrong choice.

Was that death caused by a wrong choice an accident? Or was it a silencing by the followers of the Orthes cult? Rutegan's fear increased.

"The involuntary resignation rate of probationary employees is around 6%."

It's lower than I thought.

"The boss knows that even those people can repent and return to his arms. It is mercy for those who have not yet opened their eyes."

The story was that he releases them like he is pasturing livestock, that he will eventually slaughter, because they will eventually fall into his grasp. Rutegan organized his breath, which had been scattered by fear.

"What about the dead 6%?"

"There are results of accidents such as those who deliberately rejected the boss's instructions or those who were overconfident and went ahead of the boss. We do not attack probationary employees first."

Right at this point, Rutegan sensed that he had asked too much. He revealed his suspicion of Orthes too directly and too much.

"...Why are you answering in such detail?"

"The boss ordered it."

"What?"

"When customers have questions, we are to answer them in as much detail as possible. It is a friendly service for customer satisfaction."