

Chapter 1806

Zeke was starting to regret letting the masked man go back then. I would have killed him if I had known about his true crimes. Now, I just hope he'll come back for the sarira.

With that marked the end of the matter at the ministry. As promised, Zeke took Missy and Lacey to the nearest KFC.

While Missy was devouring her chicken burger, Zeke was immersed in his own thoughts.

Hundreds of thousands of spies risked their necks out there for me at this very moment.

They're putting their lives on the line while I spend time with my family. They don't even have any actual identities. Nobody knows who they are. This is unfair for them. This is unfair for those who would and had risked their lives for the nation.

Zeke started having ideas about modifying the spy system.

Until recently, spies had to work until the day they died.

From the very moment they became spies, they'd have to live with another identity as a cover. Unless the Great Marshal himself gave the order, they must never reveal themselves. Zeke wanted to change that into a five-year cycle. Simply put, he'd change out the spies every five years.

Just when he was starting to come up with a rough sketch of the plan, someone flung the restaurant's door open and in came a burly man. "Get down! Nobody moves!" the burly man barked.

The patrons were shocked by the threat. Some screams and shouts ensued, but most of them quickly put their hands on their heads and squatted.

Missy was scared as well, and she dropped her burger because of that.

Zeke reflexively pulled Missy and Lacey behind him so they wouldn't get hurt by accident.

Right after the criminal came in, a troop surrounded the restaurant. The one who was leading them was none other than Ares.

Just when Ares was about to come in and stop the man from doing anything, the criminal roared, "Hold it right there! Don't you dare even move a muscle! Take one more step and I'll kill one of the civilians right here!"

Left with no choice, Ares skidded to a halt.

However, he shouted, "Come out and surrender, Hector! You have nowhere to run. We have you surrounded. Any further resistance will only work against you, so stop this nonsense right this instant. This is your final warning."

The burly man cursed, "F*ck you, old man! You'd kill me one way or the other anyway! Since this is my last hurrah, why don't I make it a party? I, Hector Lester, will die on my own terms! Not yours!"

Hector Lester? That's one of the traitors Carl told me. Of all the places he could go, he just had to come here. Naturally, Zeke was going to kill him right there and then. As such, he slowly went up to Hector.

When Hector saw Zeke coming up to him, it made him nervous. "S-Stop right there you. Put your hands on your head and get down! I-I'll kill you if you don't."

Zeke ignored Hector's threat and kept going on.

D*mn this b*stard! Zeke's deliberate dismissal infuriated Hector. "I gave you a warning, but you swatted it aside. Fine, then." guess I'll kill you " .

Hector dashed toward Zeke like a car running at full speed. Strong winds started blowing across the restaurant from his manic movements.

Zeke halted in his step. He put his hands behind his back and stood there as Hector slammed into him like a truck. With a loud bang, Hector crashed into Zeke. What followed was a deafening, sickening crunch.

All the customers looked up fearfully. Judging from the sounds alone, they thought that Zeke was either dead or crippled from the impact of the crash.

However, what they saw shook them to their core. Zeke was still standing in the same spot, but he suffered no injuries at all. On the other hand, the burly man was sent flying backward. He was already lying on the floor, his whole body spasming in pain.

His chest had caved because of some broken ribs.

Holy sh*t. Did that guy just use Heavy Descent on the criminal?

At the same time, Ares quickly came in and subdued Hector easily. A moment later, he kneeled before Zeke. "Very sorry for disturbing your time with your family, sir. The suspect escaped and

almost injured civilians because of my incompetence. This behavior of mine deserves punishment."

LTE

Zeke waved him down. "It does not matter. Take the suspect away. Ares."

"Yes, sir." Ares took Hector and left the place.

Meanwhile, the crowd erupted into cheers and kneeled before Zeke as they expressed their gratitude and worship, though their words were a bit jumbled up.

"Oh. My. God. That's the Great Marshal. The Great Marshal!" "I can't believe it! I can't believe I'm standing so close to the Great Marshal!"

"It is an honor to see you, oh Great Marshal. It is an honor to kneel before you."

"Can you give me an autograph, sir?"

Chapter 1807

Zeke greeted the crowd with a smile, then he took Missy and left. However, the moment he left the restaurant, he felt a pair of eyes watching him closely.

Zeke's instincts were rarely wrong, so he quickly looked around him. A moment later, he realized who was looking at him. It was Hector.

There was mockery in his gaze as if he had managed to carry out a devious plan.

Zeke's brows furrowed. Hector's smile disquieted him, making him feel as if something was off.

"Wow, you're awesome, Daddy, You took that baddie out without even doing anything! I want to grow up to be as strong as you are, Daddy. Look at how the people worshipped you!"

Zeke said nothing to her. In fact, he didn't even hear her, since his eyes were only on Hector, who was already being led away by Ares.

"Daddy? Daddy?" Missy kept calling out to her father until he snapped out of it.

Missy said, "I was saying that I'm going to learn from you and become a superhero. I wanna beat up bad guys and get the people to worship me, too."

Zeke patted her head, smiling. "Sure. I believe in you, Missy."

It was at that moment that Zeke realized what was wrong. He could feel that his mental energy was hurt by Hector. It was hard for him to concentrate, and he didn't even hear Missy a while ago.

That would have been impossible in the past. He reckoned that Hector must have used some evil spell that could hurt someone's mental energy. That kind of spell was similar to the one the masked man used to split Zeke's shadow in two.

He's connected to the masked man! Zeke quickly called Ares. "Ares, how's the arrest of the traitors going?"

Ares answered, "All suspects have been arrested, sir. All one hundred and eight of them. Over thirty of them resisted violently and were killed. Everyone else is on death row, waiting for their verdict."

"I see. Zeke nodded in satisfaction. That's what I call efficiency. "Isolate Hector Lester and interrogate him in private. It's highly possible that he's related to the masked man."

"Yes, sir!"

Zeke's head felt uncomfortable for a long while, and that feeling only subsided when night came. Even so, he still felt lethargic, and he couldn't focus his mental energy at all.

Because of that, he went to bed early so he could heal his mental energy. Not long after he went to bed, he felt a silhouette passing by, though that feeling only lasted for a moment.

Even so, that still made Zeke tense up, and he quickly sat up. "Who's there?"

His question was met with nothing but dead silence.

Dammit! He quickly leaped out of bed and chased after the silhouette. When he came out, he found out-to his shock-that there were no guards outside, and the corridor was eerily silent.

Where is everyone? Where did everyone go?

The disappearance of the guards was weird, but it wasn't the time to think about that. The silhouette took precedence, and Zeke kept going after it.

After the silhouette escaped the ministry, it scurried off to a remote area, but Zeke kept chasing after it

Halfway through the chase, he used his energy to destroy the silhouette's suit and revealed who the intruder was. However, Zeke was in for a shock when he saw the face of the intruder. Hector? I thought Ares took him away. And I specifically told him to keep this guy under watch. How did he escape? And I thought his ribs were broken. How did he heal up so quickly?

There were a lot of weird things going on around here, and Zeke didn't have the answer to any of them. It was perplexing, to say the least.

He roared, "Hold it right there, Hector! Stop right now or I will be forced to attack!"

Hector kept running ahead without saying a word.

That depleted Zeke's patience. He molded his energy into the Dragon King Sword and sent it flying toward Hector. It flew true and struck Hector in his chest. Blood spurted out from the wound, and Hector fell with a thud, motionless.

Zeke went up to the body. Once he confirmed that Hector was no longer breathing, he was about to take the corpse back to the ministry.

Chapter 1808

However, a disembodied, holy voice suddenly said, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Let the dead rest in peace, and may you find peace with yourself."

The voice sounded like it came from the heavens, but at the same time, it was booming right beside Zeke. Well, this is weird. He had a strong feeling that the voice was talking to him.

He gave it some thought. In the end, Zeke decided to look deeper into the matter. A short while later, he found out where the voice was coming from.

An old monk with white brows and a white beard was fishing beside the river quietly. He looked calm and content with himself as if nothing could perturb him.

For some reason, Zeke thought the monk looked oddly familiar the more he looked. I think I've seen this guy before. Zeke spoke first, "Have we met somewhere before, oldtimer?"

The old monk nodded. "That we do, young man. That's what we do."

Zeke asked again, "Where have we met before, then?"

The old monk gave him a cryptic smile. "You shall find out soon enough, young man."

Zeke said, "I heard someone saying dust to dust, ashes to ashes earlier. Was that you?"

The old monk nodded.

Zeke asked, "What is that supposed to mean?"

The old monk answered, "It is as you have heard. Dust should be left to their own devices, free to fly in the air, while ashes of the dead should be scattered across the earth, so that their soul may rest in peace. That is what I was trying to say. You are not of this world, young man. Your existence is illogical and paradoxical. Let us leave, young man. I shall take you to where you rightfully belong."

Zeke frowned. "Are you mad, old-timer? If I don't belong here, then where do you suggest that I belong? One more word of nonsense from you and I shall show no mercy."

Zeke decided to ignore the old madman and was about to leave, but the old monk stopped him. "Wait, young man. Heed my advice. You are no longer suited to be in this world. By staying here, you'll only disrupt its balance. I am here on orders to take you to our world, where you belong."

Zeke laughed mirthlessly. "Is that so? Then tell me, old-timer, where do I rightfully belong?"

The old monk pointed at the ground. "Hell, of course."

"Insolence!" Zeke was furious. "You have just insulted a Great Marshal. Do you know what punishment awaits you, old man?"

The old monk quickly said, "That is just your title in the mortal world. You are nothing but a stray soul in the underworld. Besides, I did not insult you. That was the truth. To be honest, you are already dead."

Zeke growled. "You should rejoice in the fact that my Alpha Suicide Squad is not here with me. If they were, you would have been dismembered just because of what you said to me."

The old monk smiled bitterly. "I knew you wouldn't trust me, Great Marshal. But I have proof. Come with me." The old monk got up and walked around fifty yards to the east.

The light there was dim, but Zeke could make out the shape of a tomb there. More shockingly, however, were the words that were engraved on the tombstone. Here lies Zeke Williams, the Great Marshal. Wait, this is my grave? Did this old man make this?

Flames of anger flared within Zeke's eyes. "You made this fake tomb just to deceive me? I have to say, that's commitment, old man. You just gave me another reason to kill you."

The old monk replied, "If you still don't believe me, feel free to crack the tomb open and see if it's your body that's lying in the casket."

Zeke answered coldly, "If it's not my body in there, it shall be yours next."

He released his energy to crack the tomb open and exploded half the casket's cover.

When he saw what was inside, he had to do a double-take, and his legs turned to jelly. It's true! That is my body in there! I'm dead? When did that happen? Impossible! This can't be true!

"Follow me, young man. Let us not tarry any longer," the old monk said again.

"Piss off!" Zeke lost his cool, and rage took over. He molded his energy into a Dragon King Sword and cut the monk in two.

However, the monk did not even bleed. In fact, he slowly healed up, and a moment later, it was as if the wound was never there, to begin with.

Chapter 1809

"Great Marshal, you and I are nothing but ghosts now. We can't die again. Stop lying to yourself. The truth is right before your very eyes."

"Silence, you mongrel!" Zeke roared, "This is a dream. It has to be. I'm the Great Marshal! I can't die like this! Fortuna needs me to support it! I'm the people's figure of worship! Their emotional pillar! My wife and daughter need me to protect them. My soldiers still need me to command them! I can't die just like this!"

The old monk was about to say something again, but Zeke trapped him using his energy, and the monk couldn't even move a single hair.

Zeke dashed all the way back to the ministry and got back to bed again. This is nothing but a dream. All I have to do is wake up. That's all. Everything will be fine, he kept telling himself that.

Eventually, he drifted off to sleep. Before long, he heard the sound of roosters crowing in the distance.

Zeke quickly opened his eyes. The sun was shining warmly, and the breeze was gentle that day. Everything was fine and dandy once more after he woke up from that nightmare.

He touched himself for a moment. When he realized that his heart was still pumping and that he was still breathing, he heaved a sigh of relief. I'm still alive. But that was a weird night. Why did I have that bizarre dream anyway?

Just when he thought everything was fine, he heard someone crying their hearts out just outside his room. He frowned. Who is crying this early in the morning?

When he went to see who was crying, he realized that a funeral procession was going on. Thousands of people were wearing black suits and cried loudly as they moved forward at a slow, somber pace.

All the spies in the North were there as well, including Sawyer and his brothers.

Zeke's heart skipped a beat. "Who died this time?" He quickly stopped Sawyer. "Sawyer, who is this funeral for? Who died?"

However, Sawyer didn't even look at him, much less answer. All he did was cry in silence as he followed the procession forward.

"Sawyer!" Zeke shouted loudly, but Sawyer still didn't answer him. It was as if he didn't even hear Zeke.

Huh? What's going on? What's happening? Why didn't Sawyer say anything? Why didn't he even look at me? Wait, could it be....

A scary thought popped into Zeke's head. He quickly went ahead in the procession, and the further ahead he went, the more familiar faces he saw.

Ares was there, along with Sole Wolf, Killer Wolf, Alfred, and Nameless. On top of that, even Lacey and Missy were there as well. All of them were chanting the same name, "Long live the Great Marshal, Zeke Williams!"

Lacey and Missy's eyes were red and puffy from all the crying. Missy was holding onto a photo of Zeke, shouting, "Daddy! I don't want you to die, Daddy! I want you, Daddy! I-I want to see you right now!"

Despair filled Zeke when he saw that scene, and he was heartbroken. That old monk was right. I... I am dead. But why? Why, why, why? How did this happen?

Zeke wanted to hug Missy and tell her he was always there, but he passed through her like a phantom. All he could do was watch as they cried their hearts out for him.

This is a dream! It has to be. This is still a dream. I must still be dreaming! Zeke told himself that, but he knew he was just lying to himself at that point.

He followed the procession until they came to a riverside. It was the same one where he met the old monk the night before.

His tomb was standing by its lonesome beside the river, but it was already blasted open thanks to him. Because of that, his remains were exposed to the elements. When his men saw what happened, they flew into a rage, while his family kneeled beside the grave and cried even louder.

At the same time, the old monk reappeared. "Come with me now, young man. Do not tarry any longer. I let you off last night because I was showing mercy."

Zeke looked at him coldly. "You're the whole welcoming committee, old man? You're unworthy of me. Tell Hades to come himself, and I might consider going with him."

The old monk said, "Yes, but I alone am enough, Great Marshal. You might be strong, but you're just a regular soul in the underworld. You aren't worthy enough to be in the presence of Lord Hades."

Chapter 1810

Zeke suddenly attacked the monk with his energy and pulverized the old man.

This time, the old man took a long time to finally heal himself up. "What is the meaning of this, Great Marshal?" he asked angrily.

Zeke answered, "I have to give you props for coming up with this plan, old man. If I actually believe that I'm dead, then I'd really die in the real world, wouldn't I? Or I'd be in an eternal slumber at the very least. But it's a shame the dream you concocted has a lot of flaws in it. It's too fake for me to believe."

"Amitabha," the old monk recited a sutra. "You're lying to yourself, Great Marshal. You know this is no dream. This is reality. And the proof is in the pudding. Besides, monks would never lie. I can understand how you feel, Great Marshal, but you can't solve anything by running."

Zeke asked, "You say this is reality? Very well then. What is the cause of my death? Answer me."

The old monk answered, "I trust you still remember Hector Lester, right? He hurt your mental energy in the day. It wasn't a serious injury, and you would have been fine if you healed up in time. However, instead of doing that, you went to sleep. Because of that, you lost too much energy, and your soul faded in the end."

Zeke retorted, "You might not know this, but I have Fortuna itself protecting me. Whenever I am in danger, it will manifest itself and keep me safe. I will never die."

The old monk gave it some thought. "Even so, Fortuna might also slip up. Not to mention you lost your energy bit by bit. It's normal that Fortuna couldn't detect your impending death."

Zeke asked again. "I'm a Great Marshal, and you're telling me this little place is my final resting place?"

The monk answered, "You might have forgotten about this, but you wanted to be buried in a quiet place after you die. That was what you wrote in your will. I think this is a great spot, don't you?"

Zeke asked again, "Who buried me, then?"

The old monk answered, "Your wife, daughter, and soldiers, of course."

"Bullsh*t!" Zeke snapped, "If I really did die, the first thing my soldiers would do would be to search high and low for my murderer and cut them down as vengeance! They won't bury me right away."

He continued, "Besides, if this is truly my funeral, the president would attend it himself. And I'd be sent off with the highest form of honor possible. But this procession doesn't seem too honorable to me."

The old monk was still looking calm, but he was actually starting to get nervous. At that point, he had no idea how to keep up his lie anymore. Even so, he tried his best. "It is important for the dead to rest in peace. Your soldiers buried you quickly so you can rest. Do not blame them. Great Marshal."

"F*ck you, a*shole!" Zeke could feel the monk getting nervous, and that proved that he was still in a dream. Once again, Zeke tore the monk apart with his energy. "I'm warning you, old man, so listen closely. You'd better run, and run fast, because I'll arrest you and lop your head off right after I wake up. I promise you that."

Zeke sent another wave of energy to the funeral procession. Once it made contact, the procession disappeared, and everyone was gone.

Everything became quiet, but Zeke still didn't wake up. He was still trapped in the dream. No matter what he did, he couldn't break free of the trap.

"D*mmit!" Zeke cursed silently. "That old man made this dream too real. It's too hard for me to break out at the moment."

If I'm trapped in this dream, I'm as good as dead in the real world. What should I do, what should I do?

Zeke was starting to get restless. At the same time, the old monk appeared again.

He praised, "You are as smart as they say you are, Great Marshal. I did not expect you to see through my Nightmare Curse. But so, what if you did? With how you are now, it'll still take you at least a year to break free of the spell I cast. And with you out of the picture for at least a year-"

Chapter 1811

"Silence, you cur!" Zeke willed Fortuna to manifest itself. Once the dragon came out of its chest, it roared into the heavens and gulped the old monk in one fell swoop.

Zeke still couldn't fully control the Fortuna dragon, but he could still will the dragon into doing something simple.

Once the monk was engulfed, nobody could disrupt him anymore, so he focused and tried to find a way to break free of the dream.

However, he couldn't come up with any good plan no matter what. Just when he was almost out of options, he heard a girl crying overhead. "Daddy? What's wrong, Daddy? Daddy, I'm scared. Wake up, Daddy!"

That's Missy's voice! Zeke quickly looked up, but there was only a chaotic void and dark clouds hanging above. Aside from that, there was nothing.

Zeke was heartbroken when he heard Missy crying out for him. He reflexively leaped up and tried to locate Missy through her voice. But the moment he jumped, he bumped his head against something, and it was agonizing.

The dream disappeared as everything went dark in a moment.

When he opened his eyes again, what he saw was the ceiling of his room. All right, I broke free of that dream. He felt his forehead throbbing, so he looked around and realized he bumped his head against the headboard.

"Wake up, Daddy. I'm scared. Daddy, please wake up. Don't scare me."

Zeke looked down and saw his daughter lying on his chest as she tried to shake him up.

He hugged her lovingly. She saved me. If it weren't for her calling out to me, I wouldn't have woken up this quickly.

Lacey woke up when she heard Missy crying, and she patted her daughter's back. "What is it, Missy? Hush now. Calm down. We're here, my sweet girl. We're here."

Missy cried to Zeke. "Daddy, that old monk's a bad guy! He wanted to hurt you. Can you chase him away, Daddy? I'm scared of him."

"An old monk? What old monk?" Lacey looked around frightfully. "I don't see any monks here. Did you have a bad dream, Missy?"

Even Zeke was surprised for a moment there. How did Missy know about that old git in my dream?

He realized why a moment later. I bet it's because of her sensing capability again. Missy's sensing capability allowed her to sense spiritual energy and magical herbs. However, that was not all. Apparently, she could also sense mental energy too.

But since she was just a child, she didn't know that that was a dream, and that terrified her.

Zeke hugged his daughter tightly. "Calm down, Missy. What you saw was a dream. Nothing more. There are no monks here. Even if there is a monk, I can beat him up easily.

The girl was still frightened, but the voices of her parents slowly made her open her eyes. When she realized she was lying in her father's arms, she heaved a sigh of relief and stopped crying. "I had a nightmare, Daddy."

Zeke thought to himself, That was no simple nightmare. It's some Inception-level sci-fi fantasy.

Zeke thought he had woken up the first time only to see his family holding a funeral procession for him. If he was a weak-willed man, he would never realize it was a dream, let alone breaking free of it. Seems like the enemy's going to be tricky this time.

Zeke calmed her down. "You're fine now, Missy. You're awake."

He would never tell Missy the truth in case she and Lacey started to worry about him.

Lacey took Missy over and hugged her. "It's still early, Missy. Go get some sleep. You too, Zeke. You've been exhausted these few days."

Zeke kissed Missy and Lacey on their foreheads. "You sleep with Missy, Lacey. I'll get some patrolling done in the meantime."

Chapter 1812

"Very well then." Lacey didn't want to get in the way of Zeke's work, so she nodded.

She took Missy and went to bed. "This is odd," she mumbled. "Missy has never had any nightmares before."

She would probably never know that the dream she thought was a nightmare was actually something that almost killed Zeke, nor would she realize that Missy was the one who saved Zeke when he needed it most.

When Zeke came out of his room, dawn had just broken over the horizon. Sole Wolf, Ares, and the others were hiding in the shadows around his room, alert at all times.

When Zeke came out, all of them quickly gathered around him.

"Nothing happened last night, Zeke. The masked man didn't show himself."

Zeke nodded. "They're probably already here, and they've attacked me." Zeke suspected that the dream last night was the work of the masked man. That old monk was probably his lackey, sent to take the sarira back.

Everyone bristled at his word. "What the f*ck? They attacked you? But we didn't notice anything wrong."

"Even so, this is a failure on our part. This failure warrants nothing but punishment, sir."

Zeke waved them down. "This is not your fault. Where's Hector? Where did you lock him up?"

Sole Wolf quickly answered, "We isolated him as you said. He's now in the underground dungeon where we found Carl."

Zeke ordered, "Take me to him right away. Everyone else, stay here."

"Yes, sir."

Sole Wolf took Zeke to the dungeon. The very same one that Carl was imprisoned in.

Hector was a burly man, but one night in the dungeon took all the wind out in him. Compared to how he was a day ago, the man before them was nothing but a husk.

When he heard someone coming, he looked up, but his eyes were dark and dull.

When Zeke came in, his eyes turned as wide as saucepans, and he stared at them in disbelief.

"H-How are you still alive? Impossible. This is impossible."

Zeke sneered. "It seems I've underestimated you, Hector. I never thought a small fry like you could trip me up, but you did. And you almost killed me as well."

"What?" Sole Wolf flew into a rage. "This b*stard tripped you up? And he almost killed you? I... I'll kill him right now!"

Sole Wolf was about to kill the man, but Zeke stopped him. "Hold on now. I still have some use for him. Hector, let me ask you something. That escape from the soldiers and you barging into the KFC wasn't an accident, was it? And you injured my mental energy on purpose, didn't you? It was all a plan, am I right?"

He continued, "You did all that so I could be dragged into a dream someone created for me, right? Tell me who ordered this?"

Hector quickly denied, "No... No... T-That was just a coincidence. I barged into it only by chance. I wouldn't have gone into it if I knew you were in there. And what are you talking about? What mental energy? What dream? I-I have no idea what you're saying."

Zeke sighed. "Fine. Looks like you want to do this the hard way, then. You got your wish."

Zeke molded his energy into the Ammo Needles and sent them flying toward all the acupoints that would make Hector suffer.

Ever since Zeke could mold his energy into real-life items, he seldom took the Ammo Needles with him. The needles conjured by the energy were easy to cast, and they were more powerful than the real needles as well.

The moment the Ammo Needles made contact, Hector broke down from the sheer agony that was flaring up within him. "Ahhh! I-I'll tell you everything. Please have mercy. Have mercy!" he screamed.

Zeke called his needles back and demanded coldly, "Tell me the name of the mastermind. What is their goal? Why are they doing this? Don't even try to lie. I can probably guess what their true goal is."

Hector believed Zeke. There was no reason not to, after all.

Chapter 1813

Zeke was smart enough to see through the dream and break free of it. Naturally, small fry like Hector would fail to keep any secrets from him.

Hector answered, "It's Stanley. A man called Stanley Heckleson told me to do this. He wants you dead. Only then can he bust us out of here."

Zeke asked curiously, "And who is this Stanley Heckleson?"

Hector answered. "He's the current minister for the Ministry of Sacred. I think you know that the current minister is no more than an impostor who pretends to be Carl and takes over his place."

Zeke nodded. I see. So Stanley Heckleson is the real name of the man in a bronze mask. His goal must be the sarira. I bet he's lying when he said he could bust Hector out. Just some false promises, as usual.

"Stanley taught you how to hurt my mental energy, didn't he?" Zeke asked for confirmation about another thing.

Hector quickly nodded and confirmed Zeke's suspicion. "Yes, he did." LTE +10 pearls

Zeke asked again, "And how did you come across Stanley?"

Hector replied, "Years and years ago, he slipped into my dream and trapped me in there. He threatened me. I would have to go into a contract that'd basically make me his servant, or he'd never let me wake up. I had no choice, so I agreed. And I wasn't the only one. All the people you guys captured were enslaved in the same way as well."

Zeke noticed that a little detail about his explanation was off. All the people they had captured were the ones included on the name list Carl had once mentioned. The masked man, or rather. Stanley, had been trying to pry that list from Carl's memory, but Carl never gave it up.

If that is the case, then how did Stanley manage to get his hands on the list and enslave them through his power? Hmm, he must have slipped into Carl's dream sometime back then and asked him about it. It's just that Carl didn't realize it. That is one scary skill Stanley has in his possession. If the government can get their hands on it, it'll be great for the nation.

It was then that Zeke thought he'd keep Stanley alive when the latter was caught, or at least until the man handed over all his secrets about the Nightmare Curse.

Zeke asked, "Where is Stanley hiding right now?"

Hector quickly shook his head. "I don't know. Seriously, I do not know where he is."

Zeke molded his energy into the Ammo Needles again. This time, they floated in the air and pointed straight at Hector's head. "This is your last chance. Your choice."

Seized by the fear of death. Hector said, "There's a temple about ten kilometers southwest of the ministry. That's the rendezvous point. We would meet there every now and then, but I have no idea if he's still in there. That's the only thing I know about him, I swear!"

Zeke went outside. "Come with me, Sole Wolf. To the temple."

"Sure!" Sole Wolf replied.

Zeke went to the temple with nobody but Sole Wolf by his side. Ares and everyone else were left behind to keep an eye on the ministry in case the enemy came to save their comrades.

It didn't take them long to arrive at the temple Hector had mentioned earlier. There was a stream meandering quietly behind the temple, and the moment Zeke laid eyes on the place, he knew where he had seen it before.

This is the place where I met that old monk in the dream. But in my dream, my grave was where the temple is now. If I'm right, that monk must be Stanley's accomplice.

Sole Wolf shouted at the temple, "If anyone's in there, you'd better show yourself now! You have one chance! If you don't come out, I'll tear this whole place down!"

His threat was met with nothing but silence. Angered, Sole Wolf tried to tear the temple apart with his energy.

But right before he could do it, Zeke could vaguely feel a wave of mental energy coming from within the temple. He suspected that Stanley might have left something in there. Therefore, he stopped Sole Wolf from destroying the temple and quickly went in.

When he went through the door, the mental energy on it affected Zeke's mind. At the same time, he heard Stanley's voice talking in his head, "Come to Minor Thunderclap Monastery if you wish to see me. And come alone. If I see anyone else coming with you, I will not show myself."

Sole Wolf kicked the statue of the temple's deity as he cursed, "D*mn it! Stanley Heckleson is nothing but a coward! If he won't show himself, then I'll tear this stupid temple apart!"

Zeke suddenly said, "Sole Wolf, I need you to see if there's any Minor Thunderclap Monastery in the vicinity of this area."

Sole Wolf was surprised that Zeke suddenly wanted to know where the nearest Minor Thunderclap Monastery was located. He was confused, but he didn't ask anything. Instead, he whipped his phone out and contacted the North's operating department. *****

The North's operating department was responsible for the governance of Eurasia's land, so they knew every inch of Eurasia like the back of their hands.

Not long after he made the call, a staff member replied, "The nearest Minor Thunderclap Monastery is located in a swamp in the northwest from where you are standing right now. That's a totally remote area, so the monastery receives exactly zero visitors now. It might still be there, or the swamp might have gobbled it up."

It must still be there. After all, he wants me there, and he might have turned it into a mini base or something.

With that thought in mind, Zeke told Sole Wolf, "Sole Wolf, I'm going to the monastery. You go back and keep an eye on the ministry with Ares and the others."

Sole Wolf looked at him curiously. "Why do you want to go to the monastery all of a sudden, Zeke?"

Zeke answered, "Because our quarry is waiting for me right there."

Sole Wolf replied, "Then I will go with you, Zeke. This time, we'll take that b*stard down."

Zeke shook his head. "I'm going alone. Stanley said he won't show himself if I bring anyone with me. Your job right now is to keep an eye on the ministry and protect my family."

Sole Wolf argued, "Zeke, this is obviously a trap. You can't just walk right into it."

Zeke replied, "This is an order!"

Sole Wolf wouldn't go against his order no matter how disgruntled he was, so he could only do as told.

Again? Can't you stop us in some other way? You always get your way by claiming that it's an order. This is getting old.

Eventually, Sole Wolf went back to the ministry, while Zeke ran at full speed toward the monastery according to the map given to him by the operating department.

Zeke might just be an Ultimate Class warrior, but he had two slivers of Fortuna within him, and he could manifest his energy, molding it into anything he wanted.

His true speed and power were on par with any Celestial Class warrior. He could run at speeds faster than sound, which was something only Celestial Class warriors could achieve.

Thanks to that, Zeke arrived at the swampland in less than two hours. It was a gigantic place, and the edge was nowhere in sight from where Zeke was standing.

There was nothing but fog wherever he looked. Weeds grew everywhere, but they had wilted out along with the trees around them, leaving nothing but a trail of dead silence around there.

The murky puddles on the ground looked as if they were alive and could see around them. Anyone who was there would be terrified, but not Zeke. He did not even slow down.

He was fast enough for anyone to think that he was flying, so the swamp didn't affect him much.

Along the way to the monastery, Zeke saw a lot of bones strewn on the path. Many people had died there because the swamp trapped them. All the negative energy the bones were radiating could affect anyone's mental energy.

Even Zeke felt a lot of pressure there. If a regular human were to barge in the place by accident, they'd get corrupted by the energy and die in the swamp eventually. Zeke ran on and on for almost an hour before he finally came across a structure that looked like a building. It was an ancient building, and it was dilapidated and deserted for what seemed like years.

There were six openings in the courtyard that housed three buildings in it, but most of the walls had crumbled.

The building in the middle had a plaque over the door that read "Minor Thunderclap Monastery."

Even though it was supposed to be a holy place, the monastery's air was filled with death and darkness, just like the swamp that surrounded it. If Zeke didn't know better, he would have thought he was in a haunted house.

He came to the front door and opened it, but it creaked loudly and sounded as if someone was moaning in the shadows.

A young monk was meditating in the courtyard with his eyes closed. He was chanting sutras under his breath and knocked on a wooden bell. When the door was opened, he opened his eyes and looked at Zeke. "I have been waiting for you, Mr. Williams." His eyes glinted brightly.

Zeke asked, "And who are you?"

The monk answered, "I guess you're too occupied with your work. It hasn't been too long since we met, but you have forgotten about me."

The monk took out a bronze mask and wore it over his face. He was none other than the masked man-Stanley Heckleson. He was the one who had usurped Carl's place as minister for the Ministry of Sacred.

Zeke growled, "Stanley Heckleson! Do you admit to the crimes you have committed? Surrender, and I shall grant you a quick and painless death."

Stanley chuckled. "If I were you, I wouldn't look so confident, Mr. Williams."

Chapter 1815

He stood up and knocked on the wooden door behind him three times. "Master, our guest has arrived."

An old monk came out from the dilapidated house behind Stanley, and it was none other than the monk who had appeared in Zeke's dream.

The old monk greeted Zeke, "We meet again, Mr. Williams."

Zeke said, "Ah, I see. So this criminal is your disciple. Then this makes things easier. I'll arrest the both of you."

The old monk stopped him. "Now calm down, Mr. Williams. Sit down and have a chat with me. Perhaps you might change your mind after you hear what I have to say."

It was weird, but Zeke had a feeling that the monk looked familiar, as if he had seen him somewhere, but he couldn't remember where. His instinct told him that the monk must be related to him somehow. Since he wanted to get to the bottom of the case, Zeke decided to have a chat with the old monk. There was already a wooden chair beside him, so he sat down on it. "Have we met before? You seem familiar."

The old monk smiled mysteriously. "Oh, it goes much deeper than that, Mr. Williams. We used to live together for a while."

"What?" A frown furrowed Zeke's forehead. "We did? But I have no recollection of that. D*mn you. You must have wiped that memory of mine with your power."

The old monk shook his head. "Your memory did get wiped, but I was not the culprit. Your master was."

My master?

Zeke's heart skipped a beat. He never thought this matter was related to his master-Pietro. He had been trying to look for Pietro for a long time, but no headway was made at all.

This old man knows my master?

Zeke was obviously getting stirred up by the topic. "You said my master wiped my memory. Is his name Pietro?"

The old monk answered, "Of course. Pietro is the only one who can raise a strong warrior like you, Great Marshal."

Agitated, Zeke asked, "How do you know my master? And you said we lived together for some time. How do you explain that? And where is my master? Where is he right now?"

The old monk sighed and said solemnly, "Technically speaking, I'm your elder. Your master and I trained under the same person. But back to the topic at hand. I warned Pietro about it, but he still stubbornly went to Mount Kush in the end. That mountain is a treacherous place, and I haven't heard from him since."

Zeke looked at the old monk closely, but he still couldn't remember anything about the old guy.

Why did my master wipe my memory about this guy?

Zeke then asked, "Why did he go to Mount Kush? He's a powerful man, and he's

probably already a God Class warrior at this point. Who or what in this world can pose threats to him?"

The old monk answered, "Child, our knowledge of this world is limited. There are many things out there that can harm us easily. We must be ever vigilant. But let me ask you something. Do you want to save your master?"

Zeke answered without any hesitation, "Of course I do."

The old monk nodded. "Then do as I say, and I guarantee that your master will be safe."

Zeke said, "Is that so? Then tell me your plan."

The old monk replied, "Give me the sarira and a part of your shadow. I can then reunite you with Pietro."

Zeke sneered, "Do you take me for a fool, old man? You're just trying to take the sarira and my shadow for yourself, aren't you? Do you think I'd believe that? And you even dragged my master into this? How dare you?"

The old monk let out a long sigh. "I knew you would never be tricked, but it was worth a shot. You're as stubborn as your master. Years ago, your master stopped me when I tried to split your shadow in two, but in the end, I managed to wound him and take a part of your shadow for myself.

However, I was deceived by the Netherworld that wanted your shadow for their scheme. They stole it away from me. But since I managed to get it once, I believe I can do it again!"

Zeke asked curiously, "Why do you want my shadow so badly? What do you want to use it for?"

Chapter 1816

12:51

The old monk shook his head. "I'm sorry, but I can't tell you that. You'll get in the way of our plans if you know what we're trying to do. Besides, you shall be dead soon, so there is no point in knowing anything at all."

"Very well, then." Zeke was slightly disappointed that he didn't get any answer he wanted. "Since it has come to this, then it is time for you to die. If I can't know about the answer, then nobody can."

He molded his energy into two Dragon King Swords. They floated in the air, majestic and imperious as a pair of emperors, while a gale started swirling around him. Eventually, it became a tornado that flew up high into the heavens.

"You shall die!" Zeke shouted.

The old monk tensed up and released a wave of negative energy that became a tornado that rivaled Zeke's as well. He pushed both of his hands forward, sending the tornado toward Zeke. Zeke sent the swords flying at the monk,

followed by the gigantic tornado. A moment later, the tornadoes clashed, and an ear-piercing screech washed across the monastery.

A moment later, the swords were torn into little pieces by the old monk's tornado.

The old monk smiled. "Legend has it that the Dragon King Sword is indestructible, but it seems like the books have exaggerated it."

"I wonder," Zeke retorted. His tornado sped up and lashed out at the old monk.

"You never know when to give up, do you? Again!" The old monk attacked with his tornado again, clashing it against Zeke's.

The explosion the clash caused was deafening, and the earth rumbled beneath them. The impact flattened the monastery, leaving nothing but debris in its wake.

The magnificent explosion lasted for two whole minutes before it finally faded into the air.

Stanley smirked smugly in Zeke's direction. He thought that once the dust had settled, he would see Zeke heavily wounded and lying on the ground.

However, what he saw shocked him.

Someone was heavily wounded, yes, but it was not Zeke. Not a single gust of the old monk's tornado was left, and the monk was badly injured from the recoil. He was spewing blood and kept retreating from the battlefield.

On the other hand, Zeke's tornado was still going strong, and it even turned into something corporeal. The tornado was just like an alloy drill that made a big hole in the ground, and there was no way a tornado made out of negative energy could compete against that.

Zeke scoffed, "Is that all? I can't believe my master lost to a piece of trash like you. I bet you were just bluffing, you old git."

The old monk was visibly agitated. "You are as powerful as the rumors say, Great Marshal. You're just an Ultimate Class warrior, but you can turn your energy into real things. That alone makes you on par with Celestial Class warriors. I have to say, Pietro has always had an eye for talent."

The old man then smirked and continued, "But do you really think I've fought you at my true power? Do you think I cannot defeat you? Then you are sorely mistaken."

Zeke taunted, "Then show me what you got, old man."

"Very well, then." The monk laughed. "You are worthy of witnessing me at my full power!"

The monk leaped ten meters into the air, and the negative energy around him tore his clothes to shred. A moment later, blood flowed out of all his pores, forming a crimson fog that covered the whole monastery.

Zeke frowned at that sight, and he tensed up. Any skill that required a blood sacrifice was always a forbidden skill, and naturally, their power was something to be reckoned with.

What kind of power is he going to unleash? Can I even handle it?

A moment later, rain started falling from the crimson fog, seeping into the ground, turning the earth red.

Suddenly, bizarre sounds started coming up from the ground, and cracks started forming, as if something was about to come out.

What is going to come out?

Zeke looked at the ground closely and kept breathing as he tensed up, getting ready for battle.

Five seconds later, something popped up from the ground, and it started mushrooming. First, it was just a single Buddha statue, but then fifty more popped up at the same time.

Chapter 1817

The statues were already tainted by the blood in the soil, and they lost all sanctity. In fact, they looked like demons that came straight out of hell.

Judging from their looks, Zeke guessed that they must have been buried there for many years.

The old monk said, "This is what I call Commander of the Bodhisattvas. It's something I had set up fifty years ago. I was going to save this for Pietro, but I guess I had no choice. Take this, you sh*tty brat! Arise!"

The moment the old monk gave his command, all the statues started shining brightly, and pillars of light shot up into the heavens. Eventually, the pillars of light manifested into fifty bodhisattvas. It was as if the gods themselves were covering the skies as they looked upon the earth. 100

Zeke suddenly felt a heavy pressure on his shoulders. This is not going to be easy. After all, it's a plan which has spanned five decades in the making by a strong warrior like him.

"Flatten him!" the monk roared, and the bodhisattvas in the sky came plunging down on Zeke.

12:53

Shocked, Zeke released his energy to clash against the incoming attack. However, once they came into contact, Zeke's energy stopped advancing, and it even bounced back a little.

The recoil caused Zeke to start spewing blood. At the same time, the pillars of light started weighing down on him, burying his legs into the earth.

Zeke couldn't pull himself out, but even so, he held on and refused to give in to such an absolute power.

The old monk said, "Surrender, Zeke. Surrender and acquiesce. It'll be a great loss for mankind if someone like you were to perish here."

Zeke hissed, "But if I come out alive, you will be the one to perish."

The old monk shook his head. "As stubborn as your master. Continue!"

The pillars of light kept pushing downward, burying Zeke deeper into the ground. Eventually, it reached his chest, and even breathing became a difficult thing to do. Zeke's face turned as white as a sheet of paper, and he was drenched in cold sweats.

The pillars of light weighed like a mountain on his shoulders. It was a miracle he managed to hold on for as long as he did. Any other Ultimate Class warrior would have become mincemeat under the pressure.

The old monk looked at him with great interest. "You've lasted far longer than I thought you would. Honestly, I really don't want to kill you, but it's a pity you're a rebel at heart, so I can't let you live. However, I can grant you your dying wish. Speak up, child."

Zeke spat blood. "You're the one who should be coming up with your last words. Do you really think I've fought at my full strength?"

The old monk shrugged. "Whatever you say. If you're still not using your full power at this point, then when will you? When you're dead?"

He laughed and went on, "I know you're out of options now. That was just your final struggle, wasn't it? Now, die!"

The pillars of light pushed down again, and this time, they buried Zeke fully into the ground. Not a single strand of hair of him was seen, and his energy slowly faded into the air, eventually disappearing altogether.

In other words, Zeke had lost all signs of life.

The old monk snorted coldly, "All I asked for was a part of your shadow, but you refused to give me, so I had no choice but to kill you."

He then turned to Stanley and ordered, "Stanley, get over there and pull him out. Search him. Do not let the sarira fall into anyone's hands. It belongs to us."

"Understood!" Stanley nodded and went to where Zeke was buried. He put his hand into the ground and was about to pull Zeke out, but the moment he touched Zeke's head, he felt an immense strength sucking on his hand, preventing him from pulling out.

What on earth is this?

Shocked, Stanley tried to pull his hand back out, but the suction force was too strong. No matter how he struggled, Stanley couldn't break free from it.

To make things worse, the power that was holding onto Stanley was also sucking out his life force as well. Stanley was losing his life at a horrifyingly rapid pace. In just mere seconds, his hair turned white, and wrinkles started appearing on his face.

The pain of getting his life sucked away was more agonizing than any form of torture he knew. He could do nothing but to shout, "Master, save me! Save me! This... This hurts! So much!"

Chapter 1818

The old monk was shocked that Stanley was losing life force, so he tried to save his disciple, but the moment the monk came near Stanley, he could feel the force draining his life force as well.

He was an old, decrepit man to begin with. There was not much life force left within him, so he quickly took a few steps back, or the force would drain him dry.

Stanley's shouts became louder and even more agonizing. "Master, save me! I-I don't want to die!"

The old monk didn't want Stanley to die just like that either. He tried using his negative energy to see if he could pull Stanley out, but the force drained all of it as well. On top of that, it even tried to drain all the negative energy in the old monk's body.

The old monk quickly cut off the connection, and without the old monk's help, Stanley's shouts quickly died down. At that point, he had lost all signs of life and was nothing more than a decrepit corpse. The old monk gulped nervously. He's not dead. Zeke's not dead yet. Sh*t. He

was telling the truth when he said he wasn't using his full power. D*mn it! What kind of monster could come up with that kind of skill? It drains life energy and negative energy? Is that the Planetary Pull? No, Planetary Pull can only drain its target's life force, not negative energy. Besides, a regular human like him can't endure negative energy.

The old monk was out of ideas for once.

Sh*t. What kind of monster is he? Where did he even learn that skill?

Suddenly, a deafening roar came from underground, rumbling the earth with nothing but sheer fury. A moment later, a silhouette broke free from the shackles of the earth and leaped into the sky.

What was left was a gigantic crack, and as the silhouette burst into the sky, it pulled Zeke out from the earth as well.

Zeke was lying unconscious on the ground, but that was the very reason why the old monk was looking horrified. Hey, if Zeke is lying on the ground, then what the hell was that thing earlier?

He quickly looked up into the sky, only to see something he would never forget for the rest of his life. It was the creature of legends—a dragon. The dragon spanned more than twenty meters long and was flying in the air. It roared to the heavens, stirring up powerful winds wherever it went.

Holy sh*t. Where did this dragon come from?

The old monk would never know that the Fortuna dragon's self-defense mechanism was triggered the moment Zeke was in imminent danger. Right after it came out, it stared unblinkingly at the bodhisattvas in the heavens.

The desire in its eyes was overflowing, and it couldn't wait to devour all the bodhisattvas before it.

The old monk quickly calmed himself and gritted his teeth. "These pillars of light are the manifestation of tens of thousands of monks' faith over the last fifty years. No matter how powerful you are, it is impossible for you to go against all the monks' power of faith. I don't care who or what you are, but if you get in my way, I shall kill you."

He then shouted, "Destroy the dragon!"

Once again, the pillars of light charged toward the dragon, as per what the old monk told them to.

The Fortuna dragon wouldn't back down at all. Instead, it fearlessly charged toward the pillars of light.

Eventually, they clashed, and the explosion of light that followed blinded anyone who saw it, just like how the sun would.

The old monk quickly closed his eyes, but when the light faded ever so slightly, he quickly opened his eyes to see the outcome of the battle, but what he saw plunged him into a pit of despair.

His pillars of light had dimmed drastically, and some even started to flash before fading away into the air completely. On the other hand, the Fortuna dragon was still going as strong as ever, and not a scratch was seen on its body.

That's impossible! These bodhisattvas are five decades' worth of faith energy! How did that puny dragon manage to defeat it? W-What exactly is that thing?

The old monk refused to give in, and he shouted, "Destroy that thing!"

This time, the old monk willed all the pillars of light to come together and create a bigger bodhisattva that rivaled the Fortuna dragon in size. Once again, the bodhisattva's light returned to its zenith.

But this time, the Fortuna dragon was the first to attack.

In response, the bodhisattva extended its hand to face the assault head-on.

Chapter 1819

Once again, they clashed, and once again, the earth shook, while the same explosion of light took place.

When the old monk opened his eyes again, he plopped down on the ground in despair. Not only did the bodhisattva's light dim out significantly, but its arm was also broken and faded into the skies.

"Impossible! This is impossible!" The loss was unacceptable for the old monk. "Tens of thousands of monks put their faith in this place for over fifty years..."

battle. "And so what? Do you think that really accounts for something?" Zeke suddenly said. Obviously, he had regained consciousness sometime throughout the

The old monk gulped nervously. "What is that dragon? How can it be so powerful?"

Zeke answered, "That is the Fortuna dragon. It is the manifestation of billions of people's faith energy. Do you think mere ten thousand monks could go against the whole nation?"

"The Fortuna dragon? Fortuna manifested itself into a dragon? So the legends are true. You are the chosen one. You managed to tame Fortuna dragon itself. I... I lost this battle," the old monk said.

Zeke said, "You have one chance to tell me everything. Why did you steal my shadow? Why did my master go to Mount Kush? And why is he in danger?"

The old monk laughed tragically. "So what if you have tamed the dragon? Once the Netherworld takes your shadow into Mount Kush, this nation will fall into their hands. You and your family will still have to die in the end. Do you really think I will bow down to you? Dream on!"

The old monk didn't answer any of his questions, but Zeke managed to piece a part of the puzzle together from what he said.

Daemonium from the Netherworld is heading toward Mount Kush with Warren. But why would the nation fall into their hands once they reach the mountain?

Zeke had no answer for his own question, but he had decided to make a trip to Mount Kush. It was necessary if he wanted to find out about the truth.

He said coldly, "Since you tossed your last chance away, I have no choice but to kill you."

"Haha!" The old monk laughed maniacally. "I'm going to drag you down even if it's the last thing I do! We shall fight again!"

The old monk commanded the bodhisattva to charge at the Fortuna dragon, and the dragon responded in kind. However, the dragon didn't clash with the bodhisattva head-on. Instead, when they got close, it suddenly turned around and lashed its tail out at its enemy.

And with that, the bodhisattva broke down and crumbled into motes of light before fading away in the air.

The dragon suffered no damage at all, but the same could not be said for the monk. The recoil from the bodhisattva's defeat caused him to bleed from his face all over, and he fell with a thud, never to get up again.

Zeke slowly walked up to the old monk. "Now it's time for your judgment."

The monk smiled bitterly. "You have no right to judge me. Only I do. I shall not let

the gods dictate my fate. Even if I were to die, it shall be by my own hands!"

He pushed himself one last time and cut off all his meridians, taking his own life on the spot.

Zeke shook his head. Well, that's a waste. What a pity. I was so close to the truth, but he wouldn't tell me.

The old monk was a powerful warrior. Nobody could force him to do anything he didn't want to, not even a god. After all, the will of a powerful warrior was unbreakable.

Even though the monk and Stanley were dead, that didn't mean they were absolved of their crimes. They might not be alive, but their corpses could still receive punishment.

Zeke held the old monk's body in one hand and Stanley's in another. He wanted to go back and destroy the bodies, since it'd be trouble if those from Netherworld got their hands on them and cast a revival spell.

However, the moment Zeke came out, he realized he was surrounded a hundred people. All of them were monks armed with staves, and they were glaring at Zeke.

Zeke sneered, "You think a bunch of nobodies like you can stop me? In your dreams. But I suppose it's a good day to cut off the root of the problems, namely you b*stards."

"Amitabha," someone among the ranks chanted, and the crowd made way for an old monk. The monk's eyebrows and beard were white, and his hands were put together in prayer.

He came up to Zeke and greeted, "It has been a while, Great Marshal."

Zeke knew who the monk was the moment he saw him. It was none other than the head of the Shaolin Temple-Stephen Banchen.

Chapter 1820

Zeke had met with him a few times before, so they were acquaintances. "Do you admit to the crimes you have committed, you old git?" Zeke insulted him.

The young monks were annoyed by Zeke's insult to Stephen. After all, Stephen, who was also known to them as Master Banchen, was the very being they looked up to. He was their leader and very much godlike in their eyes. He had more than ten million worshippers, but Zeke called him an old git in front of everyone.

More importantly, Stephen didn't even snap back or voice any dissatisfaction. They did not know how they should feel after seeing that spectacle.

Stephen smiled bitterly. "Amitabha. I have to correct you, Great Marshal. I have only done nothing but my job. I've never broken any laws, nor have I committed any crimes."

Zeke threw the old monk's and Stanley's corpses to Stephen. "You're working with these guys, aren't you? They have committed grave crimes and have been punished with death. Since you're their accomplice, you too must die. And now you led these monks here to surround me, attempting to avenge these criminals. That has only made your crime worse."

Stephen bowed and explained himself, "This is a misunderstanding, Great Marshal. I am not here to avenge them. On the contrary, I am here to arrest them. To tell you the truth, these criminals are traitors of the belief, and we have been hunting them down for many years. However, they have eluded us for a long time, and we failed to locate them no matter how we tried. This morning, I found that someone was stealing our faith energy, so I came here as soon as possible to track the culprit down. I've now realized that it was their doings. Thank you for ridding us of these traitors."

"Are you telling the truth?" Zeke asked.

Stephen nodded. "In the name of the Buddha. I never lie."

Zeke nodded. "For your sake, you better don't. I will get to the bottom of this. If I find out that you're lying, I will make sure you and your beliefs are eradicated."

Stephen replied, "I fear nothing. You may look into this matter as much as you wish, Great Marshal."

Zeke said, "I need you to do something for me. Hand these corpses over to the Cygnus Room. Tell the people there to destroy them."

Stephen suggested, "Why don't you hand these traitors to me? I intend to use them as a warning."

Zeke growled, "I said, hand them over to the Cygnus Room for disposal."

Stephen was shocked, but in the end, he had no choice except acceptance. "Of course."

After that, Zeke left. If Stephen had insisted on taking the corpses, Zeke would suspect that they were colluding with the Netherworld, and he would never let any suspect go that easily.

Back at the ministry, Sole Wolf and everyone else were in an intense argument.

"I think we should go and look for Great Marshal right now."

"He's already gone for a long time. Even if he's not in danger, he might still be in trouble."

"I second that motion. We're his generals.

Our job is to help him out. We can't just stand here and do nothing when he's out there facing the enemy on his own."

"But we have our orders. Great Marshal told us to stay here and keep this place under control. If we leave our posts, we'd be going against orders."

"If this is the enemy's plan to distract us, we'd be walking right into their trap if we leave. If Mrs. Williams and Missy got into any trouble, the fault is all ours!"

Just when they couldn't come to an agreement, someone suddenly descended upon them, and it was none other than Zeke himself.

When Zeke finally appeared, everyone stopped arguing and eased up a little.

"You're finally back, Zeke. We were worried sick. So, did you manage to find the enemy?"

Zeke nodded. "Yes, and I have killed them. Get prepared, everyone. We'll be heading for Mount Kush next."

Since his master was on the mountain, Zeke must make the trip to save him from impending doom. On top of that, if the old monk wasn't lying, Daemonium was heading there with Warren, and if they managed to arrive, Eurasia might fall into their hands.

Zeke had no choice but to journey there to stop this disaster from happening.

The generals couldn't understand why Zeke wanted to go to Mount Kush all of a sudden, but judging from the somber look on his face, they knew it was an important trip to make.