

A VIP as Soon as You Log In

Chapter 32 New Rookie King (2) - -

“It’s small.”

Claire looked around Kang Shin-hyuk’s room and didn’t waste any time giving him her first impression. If it weren’t for the bag of chicken in her hand, he would have already driven her out.

“This a male boarding house; you’re not supposed to be here.”

“Shin-hyuk, let me tell you a secret; It’s not a crime unless you’re caught.” Claire gave him a meaningful smile and stuck a small black circle at the door entrance. Kang Shin-hyuk looked at it blankly, unsure of what it was.

“It’s a barrier against perception. They sell a lot of them on the trading board, so I recommend you buy one too. They’re only 50,000 HP.”

“50,000...!”

“At times like these, you’re such a newcomer. Why are you acting so surprised at only 50,000 HP? It’s not a disposable item, you can recharge it and reuse it.” Assuming you received the VIP bonus, it wasn’t an amount that could be obtained even by slaying ten variant War Trolls. Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t think Claire even knew of the existence of his VIP bonus, though, and figured she might be stunned if he told her.

“I figured it was a great item, but do you know who the dormitory director is? It’s Emil Bolton. He used to be in the top 300 in the world.”

“I see. It’ll be okay.” Claire took out another barrier and stuck it nearby the first as she said this. Content with her work, she decided to sit down on Kang Shin-hyuk’s bed, finding the hedgehog lying on a cushion nearby.

“Is that from the egg yesterday?”

“Are you stalking me?”

"I noticed when you chose it over the Class B artifact. Even if you couldn't use it, you could've sold it for a bunch of money. But this one is so cute. Can I hug him?"

"Don't let him get close to metal, he'll eat it." When Shin-hyuk had returned after his meeting with Shin Eunah, the creature had already gone through a door handle and a belt buckle. He was still hungry, too.

"Metal? Wait..." But here was an angel before Kang Shin-hyuk. Claire accessed the Hero Universe without hesitation and bought some ingots right from the trading board.

-Mew!

The hedgehog jumped up immediately from his spot and ran over to the unknown metal ingot Claire held in her hand. Once he was lying down on her lap and contentedly eating at the metal, she began to pet him with a satisfied look.

"He eats so fast."

"Yeah, I need to figure out a way to feed and raise him. Thank you for feeding him, sister."

"It's not expensive, so don't worry about it. Let's eat too." Having learned her lesson last time, Claire bought five servings of chicken. It was a good brand, too. Claire opened a can of cola while Kang Shin-hyuk hurriedly bit into a chicken drumstick.

"You did well. You made a good rookie debut, and you weren't even found out by Eunah."

"Well...I think she noticed something. She said she felt comfortable around me, and she noticed the sword during the match."

"Eunah said that herself? You really need to be careful of her intuition. It's like you wanted to be spotted."

"I don't. It was a little quiet today, but normally I receive a message from her every thirty minutes..." He had been half-worried and half-prepared for her to find out about his identity as Anvil at the athletic meet, but she hadn't. As a result, he concluded that unless he or Claire made a big mistake, she wouldn't

notice. Although, that didn't mean he was alright with meeting with Shin Eunah one-on-one regularly. When he had met her in person...

"Is that what she is normally like? It was completely different from when she sends me messages."

"Yeah, it's kind of scary. When she talks about Anvil, she becomes a completely different person." Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively nodded. It was scary. Outwardly, she was fine, an upstanding adult. Yet, she became like a seven-year-old child when she sent messages to her grandpa. He couldn't help but think he preferred the Shin Eunah persona or the Eunah one.

"At least it worked out well in the end, so then..." Claire handed the can of cola to Shin-hyuk and pulled a can of beer from her bag for herself, toasting him with it.

"Congratulations and cheers for Kang Shin-hyuk's rookie championship!"

"Cheers!"

-Mew!

Kang Shin-hyuk drank some of the cola and then went right back to eating chicken. The cola was sweet, and the food tasty, and Claire herself was also pleasant as they conversed over the meal.

"So you're a hybrid; combat and production. I mainly focus on production myself."

"I think Anvil focused only on production as well. According to the administrator, he didn't have the combat characteristics I did."

"Ah, so that's how you became a hybrid. But won't it be difficult to focus on both metallurgy and combat? It's difficult enough to master just one path."

"But I can. Or rather, I must." Kang Shin-hyuk responded strongly, having already finished off one of the chickens. Claire couldn't help but think that this child appeared to be most confident while he was eating.

"I think you can pull it off."

"Absolutely."

“Alright, if you’re trying your best, then I need to as well. I’m ready to open my bar.”

“You mean that...” Claire finished off the rest of her beer boldly, and Kang Shin-hyuk couldn’t help but think about how cool she appeared then.

“I’m going to set up a mobile bar for superhumans. I’ll have a separate main store, but I’ll drag a cart with cocktail ingredients to every gate that opens up and do business there! How’s that? Isn’t it cool?”

“It’s very cool!”

“You get it too!” It was an idea that even if he were only a toddler, he would have sincerely cheered on with all his heart.

“It won’t just be a potion business. By being there to see the types of monsters that appear, I can instantly make and sell cocktails designed to deal with them.”

“A bartender defending humanity on the front lines.”

“Frontlines...the frontline bartender. What do you think?!” He thought it was a bit of a cheesy name but didn’t want to tackle that subject. Claire nodded, very satisfied with herself.

“Shin-hyuk, you have some good sense. If someone asks me where that name comes from, I’ll tell them you came up with it. A mysterious man who showed up in this bartender’s path and gave them advice on how to use their abilities...it’s perfect.”

“Uh, sister...?”

“I had a question for you that I meant to ask last time.” She decided to ask the question that had suddenly come to her mind, and Shin-hyuk was happy to change topics before this one could continue further.

“Do you know anything about a man named Lee Manwoo?”

“...Do you know him?” Claire’s surprise at his casual familiarity with the name was unparalleled, and Shin-hyuk was momentarily taken aback.

“Do you know him personally?!”

“Well, we’re not close but he’s the adviser for the club I’m in. He occasionally shows up to talk.” Claire almost choked on her drink at that.

“I wondered if that person was really in Shinyoung...”

“Is he famous?”

“What are you even doing? He’s one of the greatest craftsmen in the history of superhumans...although Eunah often complained that compared to Anvil, he was just pretending to be a craftsman.” Kang Shin-hyuk couldn’t help but laugh at those words; he could tell how much Eunah thought of Anvil. In reality, it was probably somewhat true. Lee Manwoo wasn’t in the Hero Universe, after all, but Anvil was. Not that it mattered for Kang Shin-hyuk, who was only a blacksmith-in-training with poor skills himself.

“But why are you looking for him?”

“If you’re looking for a craftsman, it means you want something made. I had been wanting to put in a request with him, but it’s been difficult. I had heard he was at Shinyoung, so I thought I might ask you but...it turns out that was the correct choice.” Despite finding the answer she wanted, Claire’s face was dark.

“To be honest, I knew he had some reason for laying low. Have you seen him do any metallurgy yourself?”

“No, not at all.”

“I see.” She pondered deeply before letting out a sigh.

“Oh well. It’s not in me to bother someone who wants to be left alone. Which means I have no choice but to rely on you.”

“Me?”

“You said it yourself you wanted to master both. I’ll help you regain the power of Anvil, in exchange for a few tools.” She let out a spiteful laugh.

“I’m not the only one who expects things from you.”

“Do you mean Shin Eunah?”

"No, Lee Manwoo. He wouldn't have taken you on unless he knew of your talent." She winked as she handed him a new can of coke.

"If you've received the recognition of the best craftsman in the world, I have to believe in it myself. Your sister will be good to you, so grow up fast, alright?"

"...Yeah." Kang Shin-hyuk's face was beet red at Claire's face coming close and giving him a wink. She laughed at his innocent reaction and opened a new can of beer. Suddenly, she clapped her hands as if she came up with something good.

"I'm going to make a cocktail right now, so keep watch and let me know if I use that spiritual power or not. You can drink both my failures and successes."

"I'm prepared." Kang Shin-hyuk had been hoping for the good atmosphere to continue but decided to give up on his expectations and start eating again.

-If you increase the synchronization rate, you will be able to control your emotions more freely. That is the true skill of a blacksmith who has been struggling with iron for twenty years.

The message from the administrator came with awkward timing.

'I'm going to practice metallurgy tomorrow...'

As the two continued celebrating, Onyx finished eating the ingot and was now working his way through the aluminum cans they had dropped on the floor. The thorns on his back were gradually growing sharper, but Shin-hyuk hadn't noticed it yet.

-That's how it happened. He took the contract and left.

"Hmm, really?" On the way back to the hotel after leaving Kang Shin-hyuk's room, Claire was on the phone with Shin Eunah. She was recounting the story of the association member candidate she had met earlier that day. Of course, Claire had no intention of telling her she had just been partying with that very same candidate.

-I said it yesterday, but he really has great potential. It was difficult to keep my composure. I suppose he was chosen by that sword for a reason.

“So did you give the contract ridiculous terms?”

-Yes?

“Artifact rental, providing identification...such a ridiculous privilege for a simple sponsorship would never happen in the United States.” There was no response as Claire simply grinned and teased her friend.

“Be honest with me, Eunah. What were you thinking?” The latest_episodes are on_the_novelfire.net

-Maybe I'm in love.

“...Huh?” Claire had been expecting an answer like, ‘He’s my grandpa!’, but instead, the answer she received caused her muscles to tense. It was completely unexpected. The silence, however, only made Shin Eunah bolder in her confession as she could not see the shell-shocked expression on her friend’s face.

-My eyes kept going to him, and my heart kept beating every time I saw him. It felt like my chest was tightening...I had never met him before, but I had the urge to approach him and hug him that I could hardly endure. I couldn’t leave it be, so I abused my authority a little to get him into the association.

“Uh...huh? Huh?”

-Is it love? I haven’t experienced it before, so I don’t know. Claire, is this love?

“Well...well...isn’t it arrhythmia or a heart condition?” Claire tried to deny her words but was sweating.

‘She instinctively feels that it is Anvil but is trying to reason it out mentally. So this is the conclusion she came to...!’ However, Claire couldn’t tell her who Kang Shin-hyuk was. Shin Eunah continued to blabber to her friend like an innocent schoolgirl.

-Also, my hairpin vibrates whenever I see him! I’ve been wearing it for eighteen years, so I know. It only does that when I meet an exceptionally good person. It was the same when I met you.

“Oh, the hairpin that Anvil made you...so, he’s a good person because it vibrates?”

-Maybe this is fate? A bond that grandpa gave to me...

The hairpin was just reacting to the person who had made it, but without knowing that, it was easy to see how Eunah had come to such a conclusion.

-What should I do if it is love? There's a big age difference...and I'd have to ask grandpa first.

"Don't do that, please!"

-No, I won't ask. I have to think about it on my own."

"That's right!"

-Kang Shin-hyuk, Kang Shin-hyuk...what a good name. A good personality, too. Besides...don't you think he's handsome, Claire?

"Oh, Eunah...!"

The alchemist screamed at the chaotic situation gradually unfolding before her and grabbed her head.

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Chapter 33 - New Rookie King (3)

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-You've earned Spirit Glue for today's log in bonus!

Kang Shin-hyuk awoke early the next day, unaware of Claire's tremendous suffering at the hands of Shin Eunah's absurd misunderstandings. Onyx was already nibbling at his fingertips, complaining he was hungry.

-Myu!

“You ate so much yesterday...”

-Myu!

Whether it was because he was connected to the pet system or because he used his spiritual power to hatch him, Kang Shin-hyuk could read Onyx’s intentions as he let out a small cry. According to him, he would consume all metal in general, but the most delicious thing had been that finished weapon with plenty of spiritual power.

“I guess you know what you want. Do you get stronger when you eat that sort of thing?”

-Myu.

Onyx rolled up his body with energy at Shin-hyuk’s words, the tip of his thorns glowing purple.

“Hm?”

-Myu!

He realized belatedly that the creature was using the special ability of the steel spear he had ingested, poison spray, in an amusing way. ‘Wait a minute, poison spray?’

“Don’t shoot! I’m an ally.” At Kang Shin-hyuk’s frightened voice, the hedgehog dismissed the magic. At the moment, a familiar system window appeared in front of Shin-hyuk’s eyes. It was the status window of Onyx, not himself.

[Onyx: E+ rank]

[Physical Ability]

Force: F

Agility: C-

Health: E

[Special Ability]

Gold Magic: E

[Skills]

Iron Predation (S+): E

Implementation (SS): F

Defensive Position: D

[State]

Subordinate to Kang Shin-hyuk: Loyalty 52

Its overwhelmingly high agility was surprising, but the first thing that caught his eyes was the special ability Onyx had- gold magic. Presumably, it had something to do with magic metals, but it was something he had never heard of before.

“The iron predation is the same ability that the Godslayer has...so he can reproduce the power of what he’s eaten with it. It’s only F rank, but its rarity is higher than S. How absurd.” Kang Shin-hyuk carefully stroked his pet after confirming the poison had disappeared. He realized that this little guy really was no ordinary pet.

‘Still, that means I have to create an artifact to complement the Godslayer sword, and something for him to eat, in addition to making something for the Hero Universe and the contest.’ It was hardly something a human could find time for, much less in addition to martial arts training, studying for class, and the activities that the association would have him take part in.

“Administrator, is there an item that could make a duplicate of me for sale on the trading board?”

-There is not.

“Then, how about a product that will increase how much time is in a day?”

-Also no.

“How about a product that will let me graduate early?”

-No. How about dropping out and becoming a mercenary?

“Don’t give up on me...!” Kang Shin-hyuk let out a cry, and the administrator responded casually.

-Graduating early isn’t possible, but all of your other problems can be fixed by increasing the assimilation rate.

“Really?!”

-Of course. Therefore, please, earnestly raise the assimilation rate.

Of course, that was always the answer. He simply sighed and nodded.

“You said 5%, right? Let’s reach it today.”

-50HP bonus from a cheering administrator!

Kang Shin-hyuk asked Onyx to stay quiet in the room, buying some cheap ingots for him to eat from the trading board. He had been saving up the login bonus and the administrator’s bonus, so he could purchase enough for him to eat.

“... I’ll take one. I want to try metallurgy with other materials.”

-I think your priority should be getting used to the basics for now.

“I know, I was just being greedy.”

-A 20 HP bonus for members!

“Are you encouraging me?” These days, as Anvil’s memories were gradually recovering quicker and quicker, Kang Shin-hyuk felt the urge to imitate the Anvil he saw in his memories. The skill of a blacksmith who had reached the realm of perfection. When he woke up, he felt an instinctive need to chase after it. The administrator was reinforcing that desire as he tried to grasp at that lofty ideal.

-Myu?

“Yes, it’s all for you. I won’t take any.” He left after reassuring Onyx, who was staring at him anxiously. The sky was, fortunately, clear on his walk to the club room.

“Rookie King!”

“Your match the other day was insane!”

“Were you just pretending to be unable to use mana?”

“Hey, let’s hang out later!”

“Is that this year’s Rookie King?”

Things had dramatically changed for him now, as everyone who passed by was pretending to know him. He felt somewhat troubled as he didn’t know how to react, but he finally made up his mind. He quickened his pace as he walked, trying to put on a suitable sense of confidence for a Rookie King.

-100HP Bonus!

‘Why, just why?!’ It had been the same when he had shown up at the classroom earlier, his newcomer badge still too shiny. Even their homeroom teacher, Shiara Bertrand, looked incredibly happy at the meeting earlier that morning.

“Everybody in the sports competition worked hard. Some of you may have shown off your skills, and others may be unsatisfied with your results, but I believe all of you have grown greatly from the experience you gained. And...”

“You’re pretty today too!” Shiara smacked the head of the student who interrupted her without fear.

“As everyone knows, the Rookie King came out of our class this year. So we sincerely wish to congratulate you on that.”

“Woahhhh!” Cheers went up through the classroom at her words, everyone standing up and applauding. It was a scene that he couldn’t have even imagined a month ago; all he could do was quietly chuckle at it. He still felt like he had a long way to go to follow after Anvil, however.

“In addition to that, students who advanced to the semifinals in the solo exhibitions will be able to participate in the World Superhuman Conference held in Paris this fall. Surprisingly, three of them are from our class.” That was Kang Shin-hyuk, Karen Stringfield, and Baek In-ha.

“Do they get to skip class to go to Paris?” The source of this content is NOVE(l)FIRE .NET

“They’ll get to meet all those powerful people.”

“I wonder if they’ll see the Alchemist there. I envy them.”

“Everyone quiet down. The festivities are over, and now Shinyoung’s curriculum will begin in earnest. It would be good to think of the classes up until now as a tutorial to get used to Shinyoung.” She finished her speech and looked at Kang Shin-hyuk briefly before leaving the class. However, the ending was a mess as she unconsciously hummed a tune to herself as she left.

“Our teacher is cute...”

“So cute...”

“Hey, first period will be outdoors! Change into your gym uniforms!” The students prepared for class in a warm atmosphere, but it was as the homeroom teacher said. The teachers kept rushing the students, and things became nearly as twice as intense as before.

“You must’ve realized it during the competition, how much people look up to you as elites!”

“If you feel like you can’t measure up to that standard, pack up and go home now. If not, run. Run even more! Run until you collapse!”

“You ten in the back, you have ten more laps to run! Make the most of your abilities!”

Kang Shin-hyuk was feeling refreshed as he went through this class that forced students to run without thinking. If he didn’t have spiritual power, he would have already reached his limit and collapsed. But thanks to the spiritual power that already reached C-rank, he was able to hold his core firm. His regenerative power at E-rank was helping his muscles regenerate quickly as well, which made a huge difference, enough to put him in the lead of the group.

“I think I’m faster.”

“No, you’re slower.”

“Wha? Dude, you can’t be faster than me, this is all I have.” Baek In-ha, who was keeping pace with him, pretended to be frightened by his confidence before laughing. The teacher gave them a look as if to run without talking, but Baek didn’t give up.

“Can you run any faster?”

“A little bit.”

“Alright, keep up with me.” Baek kicked it up a notch. Kang Shin-hyuk clicked his tongue and sped up as well, using more of his spiritual power to keep up. The power of his soul strengthened his body, the change even more dramatic and longer-lasting, now that the grade of his skill had increased. It was only natural that his body would strengthen alongside his soul. His calf muscles bulged as they pushed him forward.

“Don’t use all your strength on running!”

“Ha, who would?”

“Go faster!”

“Stop being crazy!” Soon Karen Stringfield joined them, running alongside the two men. The three left the other students behind. The students behind them, led by Do Woojin, clenched their teeth and renewed their mana to pursue after them. In the end, the only four people who completed the course were those three in the lead and Do Woojin. The teacher looked at them coolly before turning to another class.

“There are some good contenders in C class. Are you just going to them?”

“No!”

“I see. Alright, run again for 10 more laps! Go, go, go!”

The students were clamoring that now their education was only physical. The teachers, however, were skilled. They knew the limit of their student’s bodies and that pushing them close to that limit was the fastest way to develop their skills. This intense training was the most efficient method of doing so, born out of a deep understanding of the students.

“Next week will be gate practice. If you look pathetic then, you’ll really die. We’ll give you basic protection, but you’ll be fighting real monsters.”

“If you don’t want to die, then train! Get used to the formation needed to fight a monster and push yourself to the limit to defeat your enemy!”

The basic combat and skill training was also intense. It made sense, given that gate practice would be next. It was the most dangerous and practical training they would receive. Kang Shin-hyuk continued to prove himself in all of the classes, showing that he was indeed qualified to be the Rookie King.

“Kang Shin-hyuk...”

“Wow, I can’t even see his sword anymore when he swings it.”

“It’s obviously a trait evolution.”

“Is he stronger than Baek In-ha?”

“No way, but it’s close.”

Neither Do Woojin nor Karen Stringfield could beat him now. Gong Joon-pyo, the gym teacher, could only resentfully grind his teeth.

“I’m looking forward to the gate practice.”

“If you’re lucky, you’ll be paired with Baek or Shin-hyuk.”

“What, we’ll be in pairs?”

“Actually, Karen would be a good partner too.”

Unfortunately for those students, their hopes were shattered in the last lesson of the afternoon- Group Combat Training. The teachers had already formed groups based on the midterm exams and their performance at the athletic meet.

“Finally, class C. Baek In-ha, Karen Stringfield, Do Woojin, and Kang Shin-hyuk. You four will form the last group. Your group will be conducting special exercises.”

“Crazy, they’re like some special forces...!” Usually, when one student was particularly stronger than the others, they would be removed from the class

and put into a group of aces formed from each grade level so they could receive special practice. In this case, however, multiple talented people had gathered in one class. As such, four students from class C were grouped up to conduct that special practice.

“You will enter the D+ rank gate. Don’t think it’ll be easy just because your abilities are outstanding.” The teacher laughed darkly as their group was announced.

“The crown you wear is heavy, and you won’t have time to settle down and relax.” As he listened to the teacher’s words, Kang Shin-hyuk looked at his teammates. Do Woojin would make an excellent tank with his traits, and they had two fast melee attackers. The teacher was trying to scare him, but he knew that the D+ rank wasn’t all that dangerous. Of course, they still had to be vigilant. He also had one important issue to address before then.

‘What should I bring?’ He knew you couldn’t bring external artifacts to gate practice, which meant the Godslayer was out. But he wondered what about artifacts or tools the students created themselves.

The teacher’s answer to that question made him smile.

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Chapter 34 - New Rookie King (4)

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“So I’m going to create my own artifact somehow. Fortunately, my teacher gave me the OK since they didn’t think I could do it.”

“That’s a good idea.” Lee Man-woo nodded as Kang Shin-hyuk’s idea brilliantly tricked his teacher. Lee Man-woo, the Artifact Creation Club advisor, had agreed to authenticate that he had created it himself.

“It may not be reliable, but with your skills, it shouldn’t be impossible. What’s important right now is keeping your mind disciplined, as I said before. If you make an item with your need in mind, your results will be higher.”

“If you think about what you need and make it... would my emotions naturally be contained in it?”

“The darker feelings that you don’t need will disappear, leaving only the ones you do.”

“I see!” Perhaps it was because of his newfound experience with Anvil’s memories, but Lee Man-woo’s advice sounded different to him now. With his guidance and the memories of Anvil, it was only natural the growth of his metallurgy would be exceedingly fast. Lee Man-woo saw that Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes were glittering, and he gave him a bittersweet smile.

“I think I understand you a bit better now.”

“Haha...”

“No, it wasn’t a joke. With your metallurgy, you intend to pursue another path alongside it.” They were the same words that Claire said before. Truly, it was uncanny how well other craftsmen understood him. His answer did not change this time either.

“I will do both. I can’t give up on either one.”

“I knew you would say that. I don’t intend to interfere, so I won’t say anything more. Perhaps the metallurgy you have will affect your combat abilities...or perhaps your martial arts will have a positive effect on your craft. At the very least, I don’t think they will interfere with each other.”

“Is there any more advice you can give me?”

“No. Think about the rest yourself.”

“Alright, then...” Kang Shin-hyuk immediately began to devise a plan that considered the characteristics of his team members.

‘We have two fast ones and a strong one. But how about me? What can I do...’ The answer came to him quickly. The other three were exceptional close-range strikers, and he himself preferred to use swords and spears. But his special weapon skill encompassed all weapons, which naturally included ranged weapons like bows and guns. He could bring a sword as well, but a ranged weapon would definitely be useful.

‘There are so many types, though. Bows, crossbows, guns, javelins... I suppose a gun is beyond my current ability.’ Except for students who received special permission, they weren’t permitted to possess live ammunition, anyway. Moreover, guns weren’t particularly preferred when dealing with strong monsters as they don’t have recoverable ammo. Although he doubted the monsters at the gate they were going to would be that strong.

‘Crossbows are out too. It would be strong enough with my power, but it won’t leave a particularly good impression of my abilities.’ He went through the myriad of weapons he had practiced with one by one, enjoying the process immensely. It felt like he was taking a step forward as a blacksmith.

“I’ve decided.”

“What are you going to make?”

“I’ll make javelins. It has less range but more destructive power than a bow.” A javelin is a throwing-spear that had a simple structure to make.

“It’ll be difficult to make it stand out since it’s so simple.”

“I think I’m going to change it up a little bit.”

“I’ll watch your process.” Kang Shin-hyuk immediately set to work. He had a lot of practice with similar weapons while he was practicing his throwing technique, so he knew its characteristics well.

‘Control your mind...control your mind...’ He melted the ingot down into a familiar shape with the furnace and began to stretch it out on the anvil with his hammer. He had to get the balance exactly right. He focused on shaping the tip of it, hammering away. This chapter is updated by Nove(l)Fire .NET

‘What sort of things do I need? If it were Anvil, how would he make this part...?’ The speed at which he worked was quick but careful. No one who saw him would think he was a beginner who had just started using a hammer.

Little by little, he was showing the experience he was learning and relied less on the instincts given to him, feeling more comfortable in his own body as he hammered away.

-You crafted a steel javelin (D+) with a weak spirit. Metallurgy has increased.

Despite the fact he had been working carefully and using his spiritual power, the result wasn't quite an artifact. The synchronization rate hadn't even increased.

"It looks like your work is becoming a lot more natural despite being limited to working with only steel." Lee Man-woo praised his progress, but Shin-hyuk couldn't agree with him. Anvil had created wonderful treasures that would astonish countless heroes despite the limitations of his materials, all within the abandoned workshop of a dead world. It wasn't a matter of making an artifact anymore, or of skill proficiency. He knew this wasn't his best, and if he were satisfied with stopping there, he would never grow.

"... I'll try again."

"You've already been working for a bit, and you made what you set out to do."

"It's alright. I can keep going. I brought a lot of snacks to keep me going." Kang Shin-hyuk lifted the bag he brought with him and took out one of the energy bars it was packed full of. Lee Man-woo was speechless as he watched the student eat the energy bar and get right back to work. The process was precisely the same, melting the ingot and hammering at it on the anvil. As he did it, though, Shin-hyuk tried to focus entirely on the metal before him.

'I had too many thoughts to contain and wasn't sure of what I needed.' Spiritual power bloomed inside of him, wrapping around him and moving down his hammer to the anvil and the metal atop it. He could hear a faint metallic voice calling out to him, which he listened to with his hammer. He remembered what Anvil had looked like when he was forging the metal, never intending to put any thought or emotion into his craft—just hammering the iron, letting the mind naturally move with spiritual power. That's how his anger would just dissipate away.

-Klang! Klang! Klang!

Kang Shin-hyuk had been too obsessed with figuring out artifacts that he misunderstood a fundamental fact. Lee Manwoo said it was difficult to put one's emotions into iron. He tried to achieve that without understanding and failed as a result.

'But I'm glad I realized it sooner rather than later.' He decided not to think too deeply about it now and push away thoughts of Anvil. It was him, not Anvil, who was hammering the iron right now.

-Klang! Klang! Klang!

He forgot about the anvil, his heart, and even his spiritual power. All that existed in his world was forging the javelin. It was the most fundamental wish of any craftsmen, to craft something. The anvil vibrated, spiritual power covering the metal with each impact of the hammer. The iron was responding to him, crying out in response.

"Huh..." Lee Man-woo was entirely focused on Kang Shin-hyuk as he was immersed in metallurgy. He had no doubt in his skill, but the pace he was developing was absurd.

'He's using techniques I don't know and can't follow...' Not all people's experiences in learning metallurgy were the same. Lee Man-woo had learned the skill after working as a blacksmith, but there were those who awakened to it suddenly. To those people, it was like knowledge just flowed into their heads by its own accord.

'With metallurgy, each person's growth and potential varies so much, but this...' Even with that, Kang Shin-hyuk's metallurgy was utterly alien to him. Even those who awakened the skill without training didn't show such skill and would experience countless errors as they practiced. He was awkward and lacking still in many ways, but he moved as if he already had the skills of a master.

'He instinctively noticed even the smallest errors and is looking for a way to fix them. He's faster than any craftsman I've seen...' It was, of course, faster than him. Faster, deeper, and more beautiful. Lee Man-woo realized he was jealous of Kang Shin-hyuk and couldn't help but laugh at himself. What was the point of an old man who had given up on crafting feeling jealous of a young man who had just started?

'I just don't want to admit it, but he's talented. It will bloom brightly if it's nurtured. There's nothing I can do but keep others out of the way.' It wasn't a responsibility he felt as the teacher in charge of the club. No, he just wanted to remove the shackles Shinyoung had imposed on him. He wanted to see how far this boy's amazing metallurgy would go; to see this talent that clearly overwhelmed him. He thought Kang Shin-hyuk would make something that he never could.

-You crafted a separating steel javelin (C-) with a moderate spirit. Metallurgy has greatly increased.

-Metallurgy has grown to D rank! Stamina has grown to C+ rank! Your resistance to heat has increased, and a 20% correction will be applied to your working speed.

-Synchronization has greatly accelerated. Current assimilation rate of 5.3%

-The soul's vessel has strengthened, and your spiritual power has grown to C rank. You will take less damage from weaker spiritual power and will now be able to recognize the source of the soul.

-The first VIP benefit is in progress. 5 million HP has been unlocked. The 'My Room' function is now available! Access My Room right away to check out the Dimension Quest!

Suddenly, as he stood there holding the new javelin in hand, Kang Shin-hyuk had no idea what he should do.

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Chapter 35 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (1)

Chapter 35 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (1)

[Separating Steel Spear]

[C-rank]

[Special Ability: Split]

*Split: When throwing this javelin, there is a 30% chance that two more spears aimed at the target will be created. The created spears will disappear after hitting the target.

The first thing Kang Shin-hyuk did after he recovered from the shock of all of the notification windows was to check the javelin he made. That alone would have been surprising enough.

“An artifact...!”

“You really created one.” Lee Manwoo, who had been watching from the side, let out a loud laugh. He was the world’s best craftsman, so he could easily see how great the artifact this student had just created was.

“You succeeded in containing your emotions.”

“I tried to do it sincerely.”

“Ha, that’s enough.” Lee Manwoo couldn’t help but let out another short laugh at Shin-hyuk’s response. In such a short period of time, he went back to correct the mistakes he made and found the right path forward.

“If you submit that to the contest, you’re guaranteed to win a prize. You could even go after the grand prize. Not many people are capable of using javelins, admittedly, but the contest doesn’t evaluate that.”

“I need to use this for practice, so I can’t submit it right away...thank you for keeping watch so late, sir.”

“I had to observe to prove to the school that you made it. But you’re right; it is already late at night.” Lee Manwoo realized that it was indeed already dark outside, the sun having set hours prior. He was so absorbed in watching Kang Shin-hyuk that he didn’t notice the time passing.

“Well, it’s alright. Next time I...” He felt an intense impulse, one he hadn’t felt in a long time, that was brought about by watching Shin-hyuk’s blacksmithing. It was an impulse he tried desperately to quell.

“No. You did well today. You’re probably tired, so go home. I’ll be getting some rest too.” Lee Manwoo waved him off, and Kang Shin-hyuk quickly picked up his two spears and left the club room. It was hard for him to remain calm, given all that had just happened.

-A 100HP bonus from a joyful administrator!

-A 200HP bonus to congratulate you on gaining access to My Room!

-Congratulations on the creation of a C-rank artifact with a 50HP bonus!

Especially since the administrator’s messages kept popping up in his view.

“Please calm down.”

-I’m very calm now. I’m just congratulating you on your assimilation rate passing 5%.

“No, thank you for that...” With the creation of this new artifact, his metallurgy had grown significantly, as did his synchronization rate. The situation was confusing to him, which the messages from the administrator didn’t help, though he wouldn’t say that out loud. Kang Shin-hyuk did view the administrator as a friend and didn’t want to upset him by saying that.

“It only exceeded 5%, but five million HP was unlocked.”

-I told you once you passed it, you would be able to afford to feed Onyx. The amount of HP that the previous you earned over the course of twenty years exceeds any other member.

“... That’s kind of scary.” The fact that Anvil had acquired such a large amount of HP was indicative of the impact he had on the Hero Universe. He was aware, now more than ever, of the enormous footsteps he was following.

-But in the end, that business is now yours as well. It will come back to you naturally. That artifact in your hand proves it.

“I mean- no, it will be the same in the end. Thanks, administrator. Let’s go as far as we can.” Whenever he thought of Anvil, his previous life, the same

questions, and anxiety haunted him. However, he couldn't let that keep dragging him down. The administrator responded as he always did.

-A 20HP bonus to a member who can honestly express their gratitude!

Kang Shin-hyuk returned to his dorm room, holding his two javelins in hand. As soon as the door opened, Onyx, who had been just sleeping, opened his eyes and rushed towards him. Or rather, towards the separating steel spear he was holding.

-Myu!

"No, don't eat this one."

-Myu!

He threw the first javelin he made to Onyx, who rushed to take a bite of it and then stored the artifact in a place where Onyx couldn't reach it. After that, he grabbed a quick snack and prepared for bed. He wanted to check out the My Room feature, but he felt too tired to do that. Creating artifacts wasn't simple, and he made two of them in a single day. His stamina was low, though his spiritual strength still had some energy thanks to the rank-up at the end.

"Would it be okay to postpone it a little...?"

-It might be better to check it out tomorrow. It will be Friday, and after class, you will have the weekend.

Kang Shin-hyuk tilted his head, not quite expecting that response. He had been speculating that My Room wasn't just a simple room, however, and wondered what could be inside.

"Will I have to go far...?"

-It would be best to pack some luggage.

"You know I have gate practice coming up, right?"

-Which is why you need to prepare even more.

Kang Shin-hyuk decided to listen to the advice and packed a bag without saying anything. The administrator never lied to him, after all.

Friday's class wasn't much different than the previous day. All the practical subject teachers pushed their students without rest, and the students were eagerly waiting for the writing class. However, even that long-awaited class completely betrayed their expectations.

"There are a lot of hardships awaiting you at the first gate practice. Since we must prepare you thoroughly in advance, today, we will conduct a test."

"Beg your pardon?!" The students screamed in unison as the teacher in charge of monster ecology began to hand out test papers.

"Do it carefully, as they will be weighted. Think of this as a matter directly related to survival inside the gate."

"We have to train over the weekend too..."

"It is important to train your knowledge of monsters haunting the lower gates. Now start!"

"This is hell..."

"You really have to know all of this to become a superhuman?!"

Each of the students taking the exam cried out in a different voice. Most of the questions weren't just related to the knowledge of monsters but required judgments tailored to an individual situation, and thus most of the students had a hard time answering.

'Because there are so many people who become superhumans without knowing this, there are still deaths at the lower gates. Shinyoung really goes all out.' As the other students lamented the exam, Kang Shin-hyuk calmly answered the questions. He couldn't just borrow Eunah's power, so he had been diligently studying and taking notes to increase his score. He could clearly draw out the situations in his mind and determine how to actually deal with them. There was a small group of students, alongside Kang Shin-hyuk, who had been preparing and thus were answering the questions with ease.

"I will score the exams right away since everyone must be busy over the weekend."

“Oh please, teacher...”

“I only want all of the students taking part in the practice to be safe.” The teacher’s words were serious. Most of the students who received less than satisfactory results were committed to studying theory for a significant chunk of their weekend. Karen and Baek In-ha were among those who had to study.

“I was going to do joint training this weekend, but...it seems it will be difficult. Hehe.” This chapter is updated by NovelFire.net

“What are you even doing?” Karen laughed slightly at Kang Shin-hyuk, who was gazing at Baek with a mixture of doubt and reproach.

“You’re the type who is stronger in practice than theory.”

“Did you not notice the sign I sent you asking for the answers?”

“I ignored it.”

“Traitors will have to pay a dear price!”

“Yes, yes. Work hard on your assignment.” It wasn’t a bad thing for Kang Shin-hyuk that the plans for joint training had fallen through since the administrator had said he should be prepared to leave for the weekend. He left the classroom by himself, ignoring the resentful gazes of those who would spend their weekend studying.

He was back in his room.

-Are you ready?

“Yes...maybe.” Kang Shin-hyuk had his Godslayer sword attached to his waist and the armor he wore during the rookie games. On his back, he wore a pack containing food, water, and the javelin he made yesterday. Additionally, Onyx was with him, and he had metal grains to feed him with. It might have been too much equipment for entering My Room, but the administrator told him to pack well.

“Okay, then... let’s enter.”

-Connecting to My Room.

He could feel his body being dragged somewhere else, his vision cutting off.

“Am I alive?”

-You're alive; it's just a very dark place. Don't worry.

-Myu!

Fortunately, he could read the administrator's message without any problem, the words shining bright on his eyesight. It only made him more anxious, however. He must have just entered My Room, but why was it so dark? He considered several possibilities in entering the place, but him being unable to see it wasn't one of them.

“Should I turn on the light?”

-50HP bonus for your excellent guess!

He received a bonus, but the room was still bathed in darkness.

“Do you have to use HP to buy an exclusive item or something to turn on the light?”

-No, it doesn't take HP.

“What do I need to do then?”

-To activate the complex functions of My Room, you need to perform a dimensional quest.

“Lighting the room is a detailed function. I didn't know that.” Kang Shin-hyuk trembled slightly with anger, recalling the dimension quest yesterday when he received the notification. He skimmed over it, not knowing it was essential to use the My Room function.

-With only a 5% synchronization rate, the functions of My Room couldn't be activated. It would take too long to reach a high enough rate to unlock them, so the dimensional quest was activated to accelerate your use of the My Room function.

“What a well-thought out measure.” It was a quest, so he thought maybe it was like a search or expedition type of task like in a game.

-In fact, this is also a way to help you accomplish your goals. The dimensional quest can provide you with the time you need.

Kang Shin-hyuk recalled that he did say it would be better to go to My Room for gate practice as well. It was clear that this was the administrator's plan from the beginning. Curiosity began to replace his anger.

[The City Wall of Despair]

[The weapons you made in the past have spread all over the worlds, and some of them are used for the wrong reasons. If you go ahead and recover them, it will help increase your synchronization rate.]

A text box with a different texture than the administrator's messages appeared in front of Shin-hyuk's eyes. It explained what exactly the dimensional quest was.

[Recover your armament 'Heroic Shield' from Kieron, the closed world. If it is successfully retrieved, you can get semi-permanent access rights to Kieron.]

[Quest Deadline: One month]

[Earth to Kieron Time Ratio: 1:10]

"Heroic Shield." That was the name given to the shield that Anvil made in his last memory.

"By the way...for the wrong reasons..."

-You can check it out yourself.

"Going to another dimension?"

-That's right. It is possible through the intermediate dimension of My Room.

"So that's why you were clamoring to get me access to enter here..." Kang Shin-hyuk had been preparing for something like this since he had learned about the Hero Universe. Other dimensions existed, and you could communicate between them. So why wouldn't it be possible to travel to them? It had happened a lot faster than he thought it would, though.

"Can I really do this?"

-There is no need to worry about the difficulty of the quest. Only dimensional quests that can be solved with your current abilities are presented to you.

“My current abilities...” Kang Shin-hyuk nodded at the administrator’s message as he read over the notification in his retina again. Heroic Shield. He could remember the thoughts Anvil had over it, as well as Mirang’s worries.

“Then, this time rate... one day on Earth is ten days on Kieron?”

-That is correct. Even if you spend the entire time until the quest deadline on Kieron, only three days would pass on Earth. Since your soul belongs on Earth, you will only age three days as well. What a great benefit!

“It really is...” That he could train in this other world but only use three days on Earth was more than he hoped for. Kang Shin-hyuk was starting to get pumped up at this opportunity. He wouldn’t be able to spend the entire time there, however, as three days passing on Earth would make it Monday.

“I’ll have to finish up by school time on Monday.”

-I believe if it’s you, it will be possible.

The administrator blindly complimented Kang Shin-hyuk once again, but this time he believed it himself.

“Okay, let’s start right away.”

-Connecting to the world: Kieron.

Just like when he arrived at My Room, he could feel his body being dragged somewhere else. He closed his eyes and then opened them as soon as the sensation stopped, greeted by a bright world around him. He didn’t have time to appreciate the light; immediately, as his eardrums were assaulted by a loud noise from all around him.

“The general is dead!”

“They’re about to deploy the laser cannon...!”

“The general is dead! Retreat, retreat!”

The administrator said it would be safe, so why did he hear the sounds of a battlefield? Kang Shin-hyuk raised his head, his vision filled with the sight of two groups of humans fighting with a massive wall between them.

“Block their arrows!”

“You can’t back down. Today, I will get back the orb! March!”

“Energy is gathering at the Walls of Despair!”

All of them were armed with cold steel in the form of swords, spears, and bows. Only a few mana abilities were popping up, and no artifacts could be felt. The two forces were about equal in strength, but that wall was the deciding factor.

“Prevent that trash from climbing up!”

“Take no prisoners!”

“The Orb of Water is ours!”

The enormous walls were smooth on the outside as if made of whole iron and apparently had the ability to gather energy and shoot destructive beams. It was like a huge artifact.

“Administrator, maybe that city wall...”

-Yes.

From the moment he arrived, he noticed that his spiritual power was resonating with an object other than his divine sword. Specifically, that wall. It was clear the wall was related to him, and more so, though it was huge if you carefully examined it...it almost looked like...

-Kieron is a small dimension that makes everything that comes under its influence smaller as well. There is no exception, even for members who could access it from the outside.

“ ... ”

-The exception is artifacts that have established their own spiritual power. Only those inanimate objects, made by members prior, can escape the influence of this world.

He saw it in Anvil's memory. It was the shield he made, the Heroic Shield.

"...No, how in the hell do I recover that?

-Myu!

In the midst of his despair, the similarly miniaturized Onyx cried out cutely. He held Onyx carefully; the creature was anxious to rush towards the wall full of spiritual power.

He now understood why the name of the quest was the Wall of Despair

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Chapter 36 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (2)

Chapter 36 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (2)

Kang Shin-hyuk felt a need to get a grasp on the situation first. It was a quest to get the Heroic Shield back, which means that those who claimed it as their wall would be his enemies, but what if...

"Return the Orb of Water!"

"Those damn Survival Alliance guys! Stealing Orde's treasure was a nasty trick!"

"In this world, power is order! Weakness is a sin!"

"No defeated soldiers will grow old. Kill them all!" The latest_episodes are on the NovelFire(.)net

At least the good and evil on this battlefield was clear. Kang Shin-hyuk was able to figure out the situation by picking up the yells and screams ringing out on the battlefield. Those who currently occupied the wall were the Survival Alliance, and they had stolen a treasure known as the Water Orb from the group named Orde. They were fighting now to retrieve it, but couldn't cross the wall, with their situation looking dire. Kang Shin-hyuk immediately realized he needed to cooperate with Orde to get the Heroic Shield back. Even leaving aside the concepts of good or bad.

"There's someone wearing unusual clothes over there."

"Leave them be!"

"No, kill them and take their stuff!" Apparently, one of those stationed on the wall had a sharp eye, crying out a warning as he discovered Kang Shin-hyuk. It was frankly odd he hadn't gotten any attention up until now, wearing modern clothes around these soldiers decked out in medieval armor.

"Kill him!" Arrows rained down toward Kang Shin-hyuk from the top of the wall but looking at it; he felt neither fear nor anger, only a distant longing. He was prepared to suffer an attack since he was in a battlefield, even if they were all humans.

-They're not the same as you. They're aliens with different customs than your world.

"It's unfortunate that my first contact with an alien is like this..." Kang Shin-hyuk pulled out Godslayer and filled it with his spiritual power, tracing a trajectory in the air above him with it. He stopped the magic arrows of Mitsui Yuta like this, so ordinary arrows stood no chance. He swung his sword once, smashing and scattering the arrows closest to him. He quickly fell back after that, sword still at the ready.

"He's a skilled warrior!"

"He dares insult our citadel? Activate the wall! Kill him with everything you have!"

They were referring to the special abilities of the Heroic Shield. It was a type of counter that converted the damage done to the shield into energy and fired it at a single point. It was originally at a level that could frighten the enemy.

But ever since becoming a giant, it was now a terrifying weapon of destruction that could wipe out an entire area.

“Can’t you stop it?”

-You have to avoid it.

Kang Shin-hyuk put as much spiritual power in his body as he could, retreating at full speed. A huge crater remained in the ground where the energy had struck, the place he had just been.

“Die!” The warriors of the Survival Alliance, who were fighting the soldiers of Orde under the wall, attacked Kang Shin-hyuk as if they had been waiting for him. Kang Shin-hyuk’s face hardened as he realized their weapons were aimed at his vitals.

“...Hoo!” His hesitation was over quickly as he struck at the spearman leading the charge, narrowing the gap between him and the attackers. He swung his sword, the attack neatly cutting through the necks of three people. It was a skillful enough attack that those who saw it retreated.

-Sorry, dear member. Even I couldn’t predict that such a large-scale war would be happening.

“It’s okay. I was prepared for anything...” He had been prepared ever since he decided to become a superhuman. He was prepared to take a person’s life. The enemies of humanity weren’t just limited to monsters; there were plenty of wicked people who had become drunk on power and left bodies in their wake. If he wanted to live in that kind of society, he would have to face them one day. And if he wanted to live, he would have to take their lives. Shinyoung didn’t neglect in that training, either.

‘I didn’t think I’d be doing it for the first time now though...’ He saw no reason in sparing the opponents who rushed forward with the intent to kill. Especially not in a battlefield where the lives of countless people could be snuffed out in an instant.

“...” But even still, as he tried to reason it out, he was still human. The feeling of killing another human who looked like him left him feeling unbearably filthy.

“Woo...”

-Hm?

Kang Shin-hyuk let out a deep breath, his sword-arm trembling. The people around him were still amazed by his skill, and thus didn't yet notice his agitation.

-Dear member, are you okay?

"...I'm okay now."

-Myu!

"Thank you...I won't give you the Godslayer, though."

-Myu...

Kang Shin-hyuk managed to endure the feelings welling up inside him, and hastily began to withdraw from the battlefield. He put all of his remaining spiritual power into his legs, running even faster than he did with Karen Stringfield. The enemies couldn't even dream of catching him. Those on the wall still screaming after him, but those who had seen his swordsmanship decided it best not to approach him and let him leave.

"Get back! Retreat!" Around that time, the soldiers of Orde began to retreat as well. The Alliance shot arrows at them as they fled but didn't actively pursue them. In the first place, there had been more archers on the safe walls than soldiers down below fighting. They wouldn't abandon the overwhelming advantage they had.

"Listen up, if you surrender to the Survival Alliance and give up all your stuff, we'll accept it!"

Kang Shin-hyuk slowed down to wait for the retreating soldiers while listening to the insults slung by the Survival Alliance. There was only a single road leading out from the deep valley the fortress was located in, so if he waited here, he could meet with those retreating.

"Well now...?"

"Ah, it's that man!"

The soldiers carrying their wounded soon discovered Kang Shin-hyuk and shouted out loud. He looked quite different from them, wearing his modern outfit and the bag upon his bag. Onyx was situated on his shoulder.

“He showed up in the fight!”

“I saw him too; he appeared out of nowhere.”

“He cut down three of those alliance soldiers with a single strike!” Fortunately, unlike the Survival Alliance, they didn’t try to attack him. He remained vigilant but decided to relax a bit around them. Soon, a man wearing an armband pushed his way to the front to speak with him.

“Were you waiting for us?”

“Yeah. I thought our goals would match up.” The language was different, but he could understand it. The administrator helpfully informed him it was a function provided by the Hero Universe. He decided to ask about it more later, specifically for his foreign language studies at the academy.

“Our goals...” The soldier speaking to him looked back to the others. Kang Shin-hyuk saw one of them nod his head, and the one in the lead turned to him.

“Hmm, alright. We’ll listen to it.” The soldier let out a laugh and nodded.

“But first, let’s move out. This is still their territory.”

“Alright.”

They eventually stopped in the highlands, completely outside of the valley. The land was dry, without a trace of water to be found. But the soldiers had a well-equipped barracks stationed there.

“Looking at your expression, you really know nothing about us.”

“No. I really don’t.”

“Alright. Come this way.” The other soldiers began to take care of the wounded as the one in the lead brought Shin-hyuk to the largest building. Three other soldiers, including the one he nodded at before, followed them in.

“Alright, now let’s talk. I’m Zeke, and I lead these soldiers. At least, for now, as my superior just died.”

“I am...” Kang Shin-hyuk was about to give him his name but stopped. He couldn’t trust these soldiers quite yet, so he had to be careful.

“Anvil. You can call me Anvil.”

“Anvil? That’s a peculiar name. Is it a pseudonym?”

“It’s a name I made up; it’s like my recognition code.”

-300HP bonus for this member!

Even though he felt like it was a misunderstanding, the administrator seemed to be extremely thrilled that he called himself Anvil. But, in truth, he had only thought of that name since it was because he went through Anvil’s My Room to retrieve his shield that he was now in this situation. At least for now, he was working as Anvil. Thus, it was only natural he used that name.

“Anvil...yes, I see. Then I hope you can explain to us how in the world you suddenly appeared in that battlefield.”

“I used a special kind of magic. It sends me to the place where something I want is.”

“Magic...?”

-A 50HP Bonus for your artistic explanation!

“Have you ever considered that what you call the Wall of Despair looks rather strange?”

“It’s like a huge shield. It’s never been broken, and even when the continent was destroyed, it protected the Survival Alliance who were hidden inside it.” Kang Shin-hyuk briefly wondered about the destruction of the continent, and if it had led to the war between these two groups.

“It is a shield. In another world, it was a shield meant for a human.”

“...What do you mean?” The real boss spoke up this time, the one who had been watching quietly from the group of three behind me. He was wearing a helmet, so I couldn’t see his face, but he sounded young.

"I am from a different world, here to retrieve that shield."

"I heard from my father that different worlds exist, but are there any who could travel from them beside monsters? No...I suppose you're not a monster."

"That shield is something I made." He ignored his own remorse, reminding himself he was working as Anvil now.

"So you've come to retrieve it...is there a way to recover it?"

"That's what I need to figure out now. But one thing is for sure; I need to get rid of those you call the Survival Alliance if I want to recover it."

"I understand." He nodded and stepped forward, dignity and prestige evident in his movements.

"I am Milan Van Orde, the Prince of the now ruined Orde."

"I am Anvil."

"Orde was robbed of the Water Orb- our lifeline. We must retrieve it from them, so our purpose is the same." Kang Shin-hyuk simply held his hand out to the prince of these ruins.

"Are you asking me to form an alliance with you?"

"Indeed. I wish to form an alliance." Shin-hyuk thought this prince was a pretty cool guy as they shook each other's hand.

"Do you have a specific plan? As you can see, we are struggling with crossing the wall, and, if possible, I am hoping that you can help us make a strategy. That is, given you are the creator of that wall and shield."

"I've no memory of making it, and I've no experience in sieges, but I do have an idea. Do you have any archers?"

"None have survived, and they are difficult to train."

"I figured that would be the case." He glanced at the backpack he was carrying. He had the javelin, a destructive and straightforward long-range weapon that could fly quite far if thrown by a strong man.

"Do you have any forges?"

That was how Kang Shin-hyuk, or rather Anvil, began his first dimensional quest.

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Chapter 37 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (3)

Chapter 37 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (3)

-Bartender: What? Are you really in a different world right now?

"I am. That's why I didn't receive your messages. I would never deliberately ignore..."

-Bartender: Look at you sucking up.

Two days after joining Orde, Kang Shin-hyuk was in the temporary accommodations given to him, whispering to Claire. She had initially tried to contact him by phone, but her messages hadn't gone through. She started to worry when he didn't respond and tried to contact him through the Hero Universe instead.

-Bartender: I suppose when you're a VIP, you get to experience such novelties. I wish I could help out.

"Can an outsider even help?"

-Some dimensional quests allow other members of the Hero Universe to accompany you.

"You can help out next time."

-Bartender: Well, that's not important right now. You're in a different world- are you really okay?

Kang Shin-hyuk was touched by Claire's words of concern and couldn't help himself from responding energetically.

"I am. The level of the forces around here is much lower than in our world. I was also told they only handed out quests that could be solved."

-Bartender: Why are you freely giving out that information? Well, that sounds suspicious, anyway. It's a good system for us, but...I really don't like it for some reason."

"It's alright. I wanted to check this out with my own eyes, anyway." He responded somewhat firmly to her, who was worried about him. Although the reason he had received the dimensional quest was to activate the My Room function, he probably would've accepted it anyway even if he didn't need to. He couldn't get the conversation between Anvil and Mirang out of his head, and he wanted to see the armor that Anvil had made himself. Most importantly, he didn't want to see the Heroic Shield being used for the wrong purpose. It was something only he could do, as the one who had accepted Anvil as his past life.

"This is my job."

-Bartender: ...Okay?

"Yeah." He had a slightly mischievous smile on his face as he continued in a playful tone.

"And there's no reason not to do it. It will increase my synchronization rate, and time moves much faster here. If I don't do it, I'll die with a lot of work left."

-Bartender: If you didn't say that, you would've looked cool.

Claire noticed he was trying to reassure her, but she decided not to point it out.

-Bartender: So, what are you doing now?

"Now, I'm..."

-Klang! Klang! Klang!

Kang Shin-hyuk stopped his hand that was swinging the hammer and let out a sigh. Embers scatted and danced around him in the air like fireflies.

“I’m working with iron.” He was making a javelin with a simple stove and anvil. Among the weapons that the soldiers could use to attack the enemies high up on the wall with their abilities, the only one that fit the bill that could be mass-produced in a short amount of time was the javelin. It could be manufactured simply, and it would be enough to break through armor with ease.

“It’s a javelin. Can you really break through the fort with this simple weapon?” Milan Van Orde expressed his concerns upon hearing Kang Shin-hyuk’s idea. It was an ancient weapon used since the dawn of civilization, and it had a shorter range than a bow. But Kang Shin-hyuk was convinced that the ones he made were fundamentally different. His confidence had only grown by making that artifact. It didn’t matter if these ones didn’t become artifacts; a well-made javelin would surely be just as destructive and far-reaching as a bow. Maybe even more. That was the difference of a weapon made by a blacksmith with metallurgy.

‘And on top of that...’ Kang Shin-hyuk was working much faster now that his metallurgic skill had risen to the D rank. It was like the connection between his thoughts and actions while working had become more natural, and his movements were more efficient. He had already succeeded in making more than twenty javelins in the two days since his arrival.

All of the javelins he made were of steel, the metal that was distributed in large quantities throughout the world. He was able to buy it at a reasonable price (about 1Hp per 10kg) on the trading board. Given the value of HP, though, he thought it should be cheaper. Of course, when he considered it, one of the administrator’s bonuses was enough for him to buy at least 100kg of the material. As a bonus to that, he had enough to give to Onyx so that he wouldn’t try to eat the completed javelins.

“Anvil, are you still working?”

“Yes. Good morning.” Kang Shin-hyuk had just finished the twenty-third javelin when Zeke greeted him. He was staring at the javelin Shin-hyuk was holding with an unsure expression.

“To be honest, I’m not sure about this. Can you really hit the guys in the fort with this stick?”

“Yes. I was actually thinking I should try out a demonstration.”

“Testing it?” Kang Shin-hyuk picked up the javelin he just finished and motioned for Zeke to go outside. The one-meter long javelins were piled up outside of the barracks near the soldiers. It felt like a bit of a waste of iron to use it now, but he had plenty of resources to make more.

“Anvil.”

“Okay, I’ll go ahead and demonstrate it all to you.” Seeing that Milan’s voice wasn’t very welcoming, he was quick to show off the power of the javelins.

“Are there any birds around here?” Follow current NOVELS on [no\(v\)elFire.net](http://no(v)elFire.net)

“Yes. Up until recently, our archers would shoot them down for food. With that and the Water Orb, our group...”

“Alright, that’s okay. Stop.” Kang Shin-hyuk spoke up, unwillingly to listen to an extended story. Glancing upward, he could indeed see several birds flitting across the sky.

“There are so many...”

“Anvil, you really do act like someone from a different world.” Milan responded in a bleak voice.

“Our world has declined because of a terrible monster. Those winged ones, however, are able to evade it and are still thriving.”

“A monster?”

“Well...” Some of the soldiers who were listening groaned as Milan explained the situation bleakly.

“It is a monster that hides in the ground, waiting to snatch at unsuspecting prey and draw them underground. It will also deceive people and mislead them. If you see something that looks suspicious, it’s better to avoid it.”

“...I will remember that.” Kang Shin-hyuk nodded seriously at his words and readied himself to throw the javelin. It was a weapon that was easy to master, the form for throwing one simple as can be. But despite that simple method of use, its effect was truly dramatic.

-Quek!

The spear rushed through the air, piercing a large bird hundreds of meters up. The bird fell to the ground, spear sticking out of it, and a soldier ran over to collect it.

“He really got it...it’s dead!”

“No, how did he...”

“It’s really dead!”

“That...it doesn’t look like an ordinary javelin!” While the soldiers were admiring and cheering him on, mostly out of a desire to share in the bird’s meat, Milan suspiciously looked at the javelin he had collected.

“I wouldn’t have bothered with it if I were intending to make a normal javelin. Do you believe me now?”

“Alright. If all of our soldiers...or even a quarter of them were armed with these, there is a possibility we could overthrow the citadel.” The number of Orde soldiers was not so great in the first place, numbering only in the hundreds. He said this world was declining, but he had to wonder how many people there would be if all of them were gathered in a crowd.

“Then we can get it back...the Water Orb...!”

“Why was it stolen in the first place?” Kang Shin-hyuk decided this would be a good time to finally approach the subject. Milan turned his head away as if to avoid his gaze.

“...We...originally relied on that fortress.”

“But they betrayed you. They stole the orb and banished you?”

“Yes. We were protecting civilians, but they said they had no intention of protecting those who couldn’t fight. I...couldn’t agree with that.” Shin-hyuk regretted making him talk about it and wordlessly handed him the javelin.

“I’ve shown you how to throw so, so start training your soldiers with it. You can acquire food in the process. Oh, and have some of your men help me make more.”

“Alright. One more thing...it is shameful for me to ask, but...do you have any water to spare?” They said they were robbed of an orb that could make water, after all. Fortunately, that was something that could be acquired at a meager price on the trading board.

“Alright, then let’s barter.”

“Barter? I don’t know if we have anything of use to you.”

“You do.” Kang Shin-hyuk was staring at Milan’s metallic blue armor. It wasn’t steel or any other armor he knew. It was a metal unique to this world.

‘I can’t pass up an opportunity to acquire new metals for cheap.’ Of course, he had no intention of taking their armor or weapons. That would be counter-productive given the fight they were preparing for. But if they could receive much-needed water in exchange for metal, no doubt they would agree instantly.

“Ho, you want my body?”

“What?! No! I’m sorry, I’m interested in that metal.” Kang Shin-hyuk quickly cleared the misunderstanding, and Milan sighed with a relieved expression.

“It is Brenite, a specialty from the old continent. It’s light and sharpens well, making for great arrowheads. Unfortunately, it’s not particularly hard, so it’s not great for a full-fledged weapon.”

“Light and sharp, and great for arrowheads? That’s perfect.”

“It’s perfect...? Ah....” Milan, somewhat belated, realized what Shin-hyuk was thinking. He could only laugh.

A week later, the Orde units were armed with steel javelins that had Brenite tips. Of course, Kang Shin-hyuk had been working with the new metal non-stop.

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Chapter 38 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (4)

Chapter 38 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (4)

What determined the level of metal? Under the assumption it was being used to make a weapon, hardness was one of the most important evaluation factors. However, in many worlds, the existence of mana completely changed the criteria for evaluation. How would this metal react to mana? What change could mana cause to it, or how much could it contain?

“Magic metal is really a wonder...” The Brenite mined in Orde was an exceptionally light and sharp metal, caused by exposure to the mana flowing through the mining area. When mana was added to it, these characteristics were only reinforced. However, its hardness wasn’t particularly good; thus, it was not suitable for armor. But for arrowheads and javelins, it was perfect.

“It’s so pretty.”

-If anyone heard that, they might think you were confessing your love to a woman.

“But it’s really pretty.”

-...500 HP Bonus!

“Why?!” It would have been enough to just tip the spears with the metal, to conserve resources that were already scarce, but Kang Shin-hyuk wanted to make at least one made entirely out of the Brenite he had. The resulting shiny metal spear was a product that demonstrated Kang Shin-hyuk’s ability as he had been forging tirelessly for the past week.

[Brenite Spear That Never Fades]

[C+ rank]

[Special Abilities: Robust, Split]

* Robust: The spears hardness and attack power has increased.

*Split: When throwing the javelin, there is a 50% chance two more spears aiming at the same target will be created. The created spears will disappear after hitting the target.

The notification window indicated that he created another artifact. It was so beautiful to him that he wanted to embrace it and roll around on the ground with it. It was C+ Rank, which he was especially happy about. And it had two abilities, not just one. It was even better than the one he made for himself.

-This administrator is even more amazed at your metallurgy, making such artifacts in such a short time. Follow current novels on NovelFire.net

“Did you know about my metallurgy?”

-I did, from the moment you joined.

He wasn't sure if that meant when he joined the Hero Universe, or if he was talking about his previous life as Anvil.

—Metallurgy has grown to C-rank! Your resistance to heat will be higher, and the likelihood of a positive effect will be added to your finished product has increased.

—The synchronization has greatly accelerated. Current assimilation rate of 7.4%

—The spiritual potential that the soul remembers has been drawn forth. Spiritual Power has grown to C+ rank. The influence of spiritual power has been increased and can be used more skillfully.

A person who had just started metallurgy would not be able to raise his skill rank so fast only in the course of ten days. This was evidence that Kang Shin-hyuk had been able to make a leap to the next level as a blacksmith, thanks in part to the half-remembered instincts of a prior life.

“If you were Lee Manwoo, you'd think I've changed too much in such a short time.

-Dear member, the quest deadline is still ten days off. While such dramatic growth may be difficult to achieve once more, one more step should be possible.

That would mean going up from C rank. While he didn't know what that meant in blacksmithing, it was a huge gap to cross for any other ability. To achieve it in just one month...Kang Shin-hyuk considered it but shook his head as he remembered his conversation with Lee Manwoo.

"Well, he said I was a weird guy from the start."

-So you've realized it. He won't be dazzled by this kind of change, though; he doesn't have enough skill to notice this level of growth.

"And by the time my synchronization reaches one-hundred percent, it'll be so advanced it'll be unrecognizable."

-Of course.

"...Wow." He didn't expect the administrator to confirm it. But he couldn't help but wonder what would happen next after that moment came. Would he recover all of his memories, HP, and abilities? Anticipation and fear mingled inside of him. He knew he would just have to wait for things to become clearer.

"I can clear the quest quickly now. I'll spend the rest of my time working."

-100HP Bonus to a member with cool eyes!

-Myu!

"What? You think I'm cool too- oh, you're hungry." He decided to give Onyx some of the leftover Brenite he acquired in exchange for water.

-Myuuu!

While Onyx chewed away at a spiritual power filled Brenite dagger with the happiest face in the world, Kang Shin-hyuk packed up the Brenite spear he had just made with the steel javelin and a new sword.

"Anvil, are you ready?"

"I am." Milan and his soldiers were lined up, much more energetic than they had been ten days ago. Before, they had been half-starved and dehydrated, but now that they were able to acquire both food and water through their deal with Shin-hyuk, they had turned completely around.

"All that remains is the decisive battle." Milan stepped forward stiffly. In the last battle, he had a general leading his army. That general had been killed, and now this prince had to lead the army himself. He was nervous, and Kang Shin-hyuk could hear his voice trembling earlier when he was rallying the troops.

"Don't worry about it. You can do this. You guys will win." Over the past three days, Milan and his soldiers had been practicing non-stop. Kang Shin-hyuk had been forging non-stop in the meanwhile, going through the supply of Brenite he traded for.

"Of course." Milan's voice was firm now, as he shook away his doubts. It wasn't just to live that they battled. The Water Orb was the symbol of pride for the Orde people. If they ran away without it, they would be lost. Milan's face was covered by his helmet, but Kang Shin-hyuk could sense his resolution and spirit to fight.

"Alright, then let's go."

"It's time to depart!"

"We're going to capture that fortress!" There were two-hundred and eighteen soldiers remaining, including Milan, who were able to fight. One hundred of them were armed with the javelins Kang Shin-hyuk made, and another hundred abandoned their swords to pick up large shields. They were the main offensive line, archers in the back guarded by a solid formation of shields. The remaining eighteen soldiers were armed with swords and shields, and they would be the ones to clean up and push while the spear-throwers dealt with the main enemy forces. This was the formation that they decided upon to reclaim the Water Orb and Orde's pride.

"I'm sorry I won't be able to help you in the battle."

"No, you've already helped us enough." Milan looked as if he wanted to say something more, but decided to stop and stepped back. Kang Shin-hyuk responded with a small smile.

‘Am I being too cruel?’

-You can do what you want. The purpose of the quest is to recover the shield.

The administrator had been sticking to short, vague answers when it came to the humans of this world’s humans Shin-hyuk could only think it was out of respect for his decisions. But it felt a bit odd to him, as now the Heroic Shield was clearly occupied by the Survival Alliance, yet the quest was to take it from them.

‘Is the will of the Hero Universe different from that of the administrator?’ He tilted his head at this incongruity, but it wasn’t a question that could be resolved so quickly. He pushed it to the side and stepped in line with the soldiers of Orde. One of the soldiers, Zeke, approached him and offered him a helmet.

“It was taken from one of the fallen, but it’s better than nothing.”

“I think the dead may find more use for it.” Kang Shin-hyuk put it on regardless, accepting the sentiment behind it. A couple more soldiers approached him to offer him more armor; he decided to only accept their moral support.

“Soon.”

“Yes, soon.” As soon as Shin-hyuk finished speaking, he could see the fortress in the distance. It was protected by a valley on three sides, facing toward the only path available. As he looked at it from afar, it was easy to tell; it was shaped like a shield.

‘Because it’s partially buried, its hard to see up close.’ It had a smooth surface, impossible to climb in the midst of a battle, and it was much too thick to break. In this world of small people, it was invincible. He wondered if maybe this world’s ability to make everything small had a role in why the inhabitants were weaker.

“They’re coming again!”

“They’ve come to offer us more treasure!”

“God’s allowing us to plunder today too!”

Voices began to rise up from the fort, met by Milan's retort.

"Today, Orde's Water Orb will be restored!"

"Ooooooh!" Kang Shin-hyuk thought it was an excellent idea. He cut off the enemy's provocation and managed to inspire his troops at the same time. His voice was much more dignified now, too; he had clearly been practicing.

"To protect the honor of Orde! For our future! For Anvil! Charge!"

The two-hundred and eighteen soldiers ran forward at once. The soldiers atop the fortress looked like they were going to start shooting as soon as they were in range.

"Is it this way?"

"Yeah, move quickly."

"I know. Just a little more forward." However, the Orde soldiers weren't charging in ignorantly as they had before. They suddenly stopped, still at a distance much too far for an arrow to reach.

"Ready!" Milan took up his javelin first, pulling his arm back in a throwing stance.

"Throw!"

"What?!" Confusion briefly sprouted atop the fortress, the allied warriors perplexed as to what was happening. It took them little time to confirm, however, as one of them was collapsed on the wall with a javelin through his chest.

"Attack! They're attacking!" The alarm went up, soldiers running about to prepare for their counterattack. Orde's soldiers stood still for but a moment, confirming the javelin had worked and began to throw their own. The soldiers of the fortress reacted sluggishly, trying to lift their shields or fire back arrows. The Orde soldiers were prepared, the ones wielding large shields moving into position to defend the spear-throwers. It mattered little in any case, as the range of the bows made in this harsh environment could not match the javelins created by Anvil's reincarnation.

“Okay then...shall we start?” Orde’s soldiers were following the plan exactly, and the stronghold soldiers had no choice but to focus on them. Kang Shin-hyuk rushed forward, aiming for the gap that had been created for him. Some of the fortress soldiers noticed him, but it was too late for them to turn their attacks toward him.

“It looks like I didn’t waste my time here.”

-Yes, it seems that the weapons you made were certainly worth the cost.

The administrator still gave strict evaluations to everyone but him. He couldn’t help but laugh as he picked up speed towards the Wall of Despair- the Heroic Shield.

-How will you do it?

“I’ve thought about it, but there’s really only one way I can.” That was, he had to make the shield small. It had to be a size he could carry if he wanted to collect it.

-How are you going to do that?

“I don’t know. I thought I’d ask you...” For the past ten days, he had been forging iron and thinking quite a bit. He even asked other Hero Universe members for ideas. But, in the end, the reincarnation of Anvil had no choice but to figure it out himself. He created it a lifetime ago, and he had spiritual power. He would have to try to talk to the Heroic Shield, just as he usually did with the Godslayer sword.

-It’s the right direction, at least.

The administrator’s response was positive, as always.

-Even if not, you can always try a few things until it works. As I said before, you’re safe here.

“I don’t plan on taking it easy like that.” He had ten whole days left, but he wasn’t going to let these people he had been talking to and working with die as he stood by and watched.

“I’m here.” He laid his hands on the huge wall before him, activating his spiritual power. The reaction of the wall, or rather the Heroic Shield, was

instantly dramatic. Tremors and vibrations echoed through it, yet given the size of it, those same tremors echoed throughout the entire battlefield, frightening the soldiers.

“He’s trying to do something to our wall!”

“Kill him!”

“You do it, I’m not lowering my shield!”

He ignored the reactions of those around him, knowing they couldn’t harm him even if dozens of them attacked him at once. There was too wide of a gap between them.

‘Can you hear my voice?’

-Vwoom.

The will of the shield was similar to the sword when he first encountered it. He began to think it would be easy after all, but he suddenly felt an overflowing sadness come through to him.

“The energy cannon! Can’t you use it?”

“It can only be used when it’s triggered by a direct attack! They’re throwing the spears at us, not at the wall!”

-Vwoom.

The Heroic Shield vomited forth countless emotions, like a child who was seeing his parents for the first time in a long while. It was too complex and disorganized, however, as it overwhelmed his mind.

“Get down there!”

“Fuck...!”

“Everyone get down now! The wall is too dangerous!”

“I’ll kill him myself!”

-Vwoom.

Kang Shin-hyuk managed to sort through the emotions he was feeling from the shield, his brain on the verge of exploding. Sadness, anger, more sorrow...he wondered if this shield was upset that it was being used by these people. As he thought this, he felt the shield's sadness more intensely.

'I'm sorry...'

-Vwooom.

The shield seemed to be complaining, crying out to its long-lost parent. It was the same with the Godslayer sword. From the beginning, it considered him to be Anvil and treated him as such, just as the sword did.

'I'm so sorry I left you alone in a place like this.'

-Vwoooooom.

'Will you come with me?' The shield let out another brief cry, affirming the question.

'It's okay. It'll work out somehow.'

-Vwoooooooooom.

The moment the shield accepted his will, it began to shine brightly. Synchronized with it, Kang Shin-hyuk could feel his spiritual power being drained rapidly from his body. He pulled out an Eiren jelly in a panic, consuming it quickly. He couldn't help but appreciate his spiritual power developing so much, knowing that it would've been really dangerous without it.

-Vwoom, Vwoom.

The Heroic Shield that had been vibrating violently began to reduce in size. Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't help but think of how easy it was, minus the sudden draining of his spiritual power. But for those watching from afar, it was a truly overwhelming sight.

"It really is getting smaller..."

"Does Anvil really own that wall...or shield, I guess?" The battle calmed down, the soldiers all standing slack-jawed. Zeke quietly approached Milan as everyone else was focused on Shin-hyuk and the wall.

“Sir, are you okay? We originally meant to occupy the citadel once we pushed out the collation...”

“What would you have me do? Kill Anvil and take it away?”

“No, that’s...” Milan let a bitter smile play across his lips as Zeke dropped his head. It was impossible for them to compete against Anvil, who had done so much for them already.

“It was meant to be this way. We lost our Water Orb due to greed, but thanks to Anvil, we have recovered our precious treasure and way of life. If we stayed in that fortress...we would eventually be no better than the Alliance.”

“Sir...”

“Milan. Just call me Milan.”

“Okay, Milan...what?”

“What is... it...?” Milan looked in the direction that Zeke was pointing, a frightened scream leaking from his mouth. He thought it might be the Alliance attempting to rally once more, but...

“The land... it’s moving...”

“Because of the wall...? No...” Anyone who lived in this world knew what was happening.

“Anvil, run!” Milan let out a desperate shout, hoping he would make it in time.

Where the wall had been, moving up through the earth, appeared the mouth of a huge monster.

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Chapter 39 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (5)

Chapter 39 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (5)

[Guahhhhh!]

The moment the shield was in his arms, the earth began to vibrate violently, and a deep cry erupted from below the ground. Kang Shin-hyuk understood what was happening immediately, remembering the monster Milan had told him.

-Vwoom

The shield in his arms confirmed it, letting out a silent scream. What the Heroic Shield hated was not the humans fighting between themselves. It was initially an armament meant for fighting after all. What it hated was the monster below it, using it as bait to acquire prey. It had felt an intense sorrow and anger for failing to fulfill its duty of protecting people, instead of aiding in their destruction.

“Anvil, run away!” Kang Shin-hyuk was flying through the air before the warning cry reached him. Like a prickly fence, teeth began to rise out from the ground seconds later, right where the wall had been. The buildings built next to the wall started to collapse underneath the beast. It had a black chitinous body, with cockroach-like legs protruding out from all over it. A huge mouth occupied more than half of its face, disgusting Kang Shin-hyuk.

“Ahhhhhhh!”

“Save me!”

“Help!” Those who were stuck inside the fortress buildings were consumed, chewed up by this monster’s fangs. They told him the Survival Coalition had no interest in protecting those who couldn’t fight, but that appeared false. No doubt, they simply rejected and plundered Orde to protect their group.

‘They’re not the first.’ He recalled what Milan had told him of this monster, how it waited for prey, and mimicked things. That was what had happened here; it used the shield as bait to attract prey. When enough gathered here, it would

come up and consume them all just to hide again, waiting for the next group. How many times had that scene repeated here in this valley?

‘This is the disaster that drove this world to ruin...’

-Stay back, dear member. It will be a formidable enemy to defeat. You have already completed the quest, so it would be better to practice metallurgy with your remaining time in a safe place.

The administrator’s advice was certainly ideal. There was no need to fight that huge enemy, now that the quest had been completed. But Kang Shin-hyuk wondered if he could do that. If he could finish the quest while this monster that had been tormenting his shield was still alive and tormenting humans.

-Vwoom.

The Heroic Shield in his arms cried out again, and Kang Shin-hyuk knew its intent. He was tormented by what he should do, but Milan’s voice echoed across the battlefield before he could reach a decision.

“Attack it!” Shin-hyuk raised his head, witnessing dozens of javelins flying toward the head of the monster at once.

“Let no more humans get eaten by that monster!”

“Kill it!”

“It will fool us no longer!”

“We can worry about the rest after we kill it!” It was a strange sight. They could save their lives if they ran away, but Orde’s soldiers were throwing their javelins at the monster with no consideration of retreating. Those with spears threw them, and those without them grabbed swords to charge it. The monster was entirely above ground now, a giant monster with a body longer than ten meters in length, but they didn’t hesitate.

‘Because of the Water Orb? No...’ If that had been the reason, they could just recapture it and flee. It was as if they had forgotten all about it and the Survival Coalition, their only intent to attack the beast.

“Fall back there!”

“Damn it...!”

“Get back!” Perhaps it was because they were human that he could not sit still and see the sight of them being devoured by a monster. Maybe it was the anger of the entire human race and unbridled hostility toward this monster that had hunted them for so long. Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t know why, but he knew what he had to do.

-Vwooom.

“Yes, I’ll see your vengeance through.” Perhaps, in the end, it was the intense anger of the shield in his hands. Kang Shin-hyuk took a step forward towards the monster.

-If I determine your life is at risk, I will immediately return you to My Room.

“Thank you.” The administrator said nothing about his choice but chose to support him anyway.

-As a bonus for today’s login, you’ve received an Instant Spirit Booster!

Kang Shin-hyuk smiled. It was paid according to Earth’s time, but he wondered if his timing was convenient.

“Thank you.” He immediately took out the spiritual booster and drank it. He suddenly felt as if his soul had been pulled out forcibly from a deep cave it resided in, thrust into a large and vast world. His senses were amplified, revealing to him a new world that he had never seen before.

-Your spiritual power is temporarily amplified (10 minutes) to B+.

Kang Shin-hyuk felt as if he were possessed, holding both the steel and Brenite javelins in hand. The symbol of a wriggling dragon engraved itself on both of them as he readied them, his spiritual power reinforcing them. The spears sailed through the air, one after another, at the monster’s head.

-The special ability Split has been triggered.

-The special ability Split has been triggered.

Both of the spears’ split abilities were activated at once, several more versions of the spears breaking off from them and colliding with the monster all at once.

[Kuohhhahh!]

The monster let out an annoying sound at the javelins thrown by the soldiers, but it soon twisted into a terrible scream as it was hit by the artifact spears. Some people who were not yet consumed fell out of its mouth, and the soldiers with swords moved up quickly to save them.

“I can’t do this.” However, Kang Shin-hyuk’s heart wavered. That attack he hit it with was the best he could manage, his with spiritual power amplified to B+ rank backing the strongest javelins he had. Even the split ability had been activated on both of them. Nevertheless, it was not enough to drive back the enemy. Surely, it had been an effective hit. Yet it would require at least ten more people like him using that attack again to finish the monster off. It wouldn’t be possible to end this with a single attack, but less than nine minutes remained on the potion.

[Guahhh!]

-Vwoom.

The monster recognized Kang Shin-hyuk as the clear enemy here, twisting its body to face him. However, it was a monster built to hide underground and wait for its prey, so its movements weren’t fast. Kang Shin-hyuk avoided him, flying up into the air again as he evaluated his options.

‘Even if I cut a hole through it with Godslayer...that wouldn’t be enough.’ Even those javelins wouldn’t have been enough if that had pierced through. It meant nothing for him to risk his life by getting close to poking it with his sword.

‘So should I just keep throwing javelins? No.’ A fundamentally different solution was needed. If only he could feed this beast a large spear. Kang Shin-hyuk wracked his brain for the best way to defeat this monster with his amplified spiritual power.

-Vwoom.

The Heroic Shield let out a strong cry, but Kang Shin-hyuk dismissed it as childish pleading. It just wanted him to defeat that monster quickly,

“Is Godslayer the answer? But can I wield it while holding you?”

-Vwoom.

The shield let out another strong cry. Kang Shin-hyuk was determined to find a way through this, and he considered the shield. An artifact was able to maintain its original size in this world, where everything else became smaller. Just like this shield was a wall, his sword was also incomparable to the size it had become. Could the Godslayer become a giant sword? If that could happen, it would be a simple matter to take care of this monster. The problem was that the sword was weakened; it wasn't in tip-top shape like the shield was.

'No, is it worth trying?' Kang Shin-hyuk thought about it, checking his amplified spiritual power. It would disappear in the next few minutes, but currently, it was immeasurable. If he invested all of that power into it, maybe he could recover a little bit of the Godslayer.

"Okay, fine. Let's do it." Kang Shin-hyuk pulled out his sword, and with a thought, pulled out a javelin to go with it. There was a hole in the handle where the decoration had fallen off, so he was able to loop it around the javelin with ease.

-Vwoom.

"No, don't struggle." The sword told him not to treat it as junk, and he had no choice but to laugh. Since the level of his metallurgy and spiritual power had risen, they had become more friendly.

[Kuohahah!]

He took a deep breath, the monster holding guard for his attack. It couldn't approach, given the humans still going all out to attack it, however. The source of this content is NOVEL_FIRE.net

"Get back. It's about to attack!"

"Pull the injured away from the battlefield!"

"Kill the monster!"

He thought it was fascinating how they moved in unison, despite several of them being enemies just a little while ago. When it came to struggling against monsters, truly, little else bound humans as tightly. It would be easy for Shin-hyuk to dismiss it as stupid or trivial, but he didn't want to belittle these people who were just struggling to survive.

“Please.”

-Vwoom.

Even if it failed, he could run back to My Room. But it would mean he failed. He was trying to become a superhuman so he wouldn't have to run away. He rained his abilities to fight and win, so he was sure.

“That damn monster...kill it!” He launched the sword into the air with all his strength, backed by his spiritual power. It soared into the sky, faster than the eye could see. It flew quickly, more than a few kilometers.

-Vwoom.

“Let's hope it works...” His head became blank as he exhausted all of his spiritual power, unable to move one step as hunger wracked him. He desperately endured it, consuming the recovery potion he acquired to keep himself going. He could feel the soaring Godslayer, according to his will, begin to descend.

‘It's not over yet...’ The sword's rank had not yet increased, and thus, had not yet enlarged. If that didn't happen, it would all be for nothing.

‘Be strong.’ Kang Shin-hyuk muttered to himself, relying on that faint connection of spiritual power between himself and the sword.

‘Get stronger.’ He felt as if he could hear the faint cry of the sword, so far away. He somehow had to give it more power, but he wasn't sure how. Kang Shin-hyuk clenched his teeth and focused on that connection.

‘Get your original form back!’ If the power of the sword was not enough, he had to add his own power to it. If his spiritual power wasn't enough, then he had to give it everything. He concentrated with all of his might, pulling out the potential of all of his characteristics and abilities, pouring them through his spiritual power into the Godslayer sword.

[Kuoahhhh!]

The monster wriggled, devouring two more people. Warriors wielding swords and spears ran past Kang Shin-hyuk, running toward the monster. Both the surviving Alliance warriors and Orde soldiers were driving their weapons into its body.

“All...” Kang Shin-hyuk raised his head, his eyes shining golden.

“Get away from it.” He had no energy left, but a scream ripped through his throat with all the might he could summon. The humans around the monster reacted to him instinctively, retreating. A huge shadow was cast upon the ground.

—Talent [Awakened Wyrms (A+)] satisfied all the conditions for evolution and has evolved into [Golden Eye Dragon (S)]. All stats will grow significantly. The characteristic skill [Warrior Dragon Dance (S-)] evolved to [Fantasy Dragon Dance (S+)].

—The Godslayer has regained some of its original characteristics and has grown to B-class.

The sky opened up, a massive blade descending to the ground. It was so large, its entirety couldn't be captured by sight alone.

[Kuha....]

It smashed through a petty bug that was wriggling on the ground.

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Chapter 40 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (6)

Chapter 40 - Heroic Shield, the Wall of Despair (6)

-Kwaang!

The moment the giant sword cut through the body of the monster and cleaved into the ground, a terrible tremor ran through the earth. Everyone on the battlefield hit the ground, unable to move. No one could understand what just happened. The monster, which had been running amok, was pierced through by a huge sword that suddenly fell from the sky. What could this be, if not a divine event?

-Vwooom.

The Godslayer, having cut through the entirety of the monster with a single blow, cried out loud as if it were happy to be active after such a long time. The Heroic Shield shone with jealousy in response. Kang Shin-hyuk stood up with a bitter smile, unable to enjoy the evolved characteristics of his sword.

“Yes, good job.”

-Vwoom.

The sword vibrated low with joy, returning back to Shin-hyuk’s grasp. Because it had exhausted his spiritual power, the sword was once again bound to the laws of the world and reduced in size.

-Vwoom.

“Uh...”

“It’s dead.”

“That huge monster is dead!” Only once the sword that had been supporting up the monster’s body disappeared, and it fell to the ground did people realize it was dead. They had succeeded in slaying this absolute evil, which overwhelmed humanity at its strongest.

“It is God.” One of the soldiers cried out, realizing the sword that had killed the beast was now in Shin-hyuk’s hand.

“He is an apostle of God!”

“Oh, God!”

“We’re sorry!”

“Forgive us...!”

“I will never kill again...”

Kang Shin-hyuk, who had apparently become an apostle of God, looked around in embarrassment and saw everyone looking at him. Objectively, he just appeared out of nowhere and shrunk their fortress wall. He then threw a sword and enlarged it to destroy that monster. Having decided not to deny it, Kang Shin-hyuk chose to act as if he were an apostle of God, at least just for a moment.

-You have suppressed the ones that were harming the order of things. You have received a bonus due to your membership level! You have received 30,000 HP. AS a VIP bonus, you receive an additional amount of HP equivalent to 50% of the reward, for a total of 45,000 HP.

-The dimensional quest has been resolved perfectly. The synchronization rate has accelerated to 10.4%. The light and tile functions of My Room has been unlocked. You have received a 20,000 HP bonus for overachieving on the quest. The choice of new dimensional quests has been expanded.

The message from the administrator hit his vision. The HP he had just acquired was nothing compared to the HP he recovered before, but at least it was something he earned by himself.

“The reward is big.”

-Because you did a great job. I can't say anything about your choices, but if you wanted me to share my personal impressions, you also looked great.

“Thank you...” After seeing the administrator's message, Kang Shin-hyuk was relieved. His eyes that had been shining gold had returned back to their original state now that the battle was over. The fact that he had just unlocked the lighting and tiles of the room made him think he should quickly increase the rate of synchronization. But first, he had to help the survivors of this messed-up battle.

It took a long time to clear out the battlefield. There had been many casualties in the original skirmish, and several had been devoured by the monster. Thanks to the Godslayer sword being dropped on it, however, some of them could be saved. Mainly, it was thanks to the abilities of the sword.

[Godslayer]

[B Rank]

[Special Abilities: Edged Predation, Regression]

[Open special ability: Flesh Control]

* Flesh Control: The sword will only cut and kill what the sword's master wants to.

'Now it's actually worthy of its name.' While the new ability wasn't focused on attack power, it was a rare and useful ability that would give him a tactical advantage going forward.

-Vwoom.

"Yes, you're a lot stronger now. It's a shame I couldn't rely on that javelin, though..."

-Vwoom!

Although the spiritual power imbued in it was temporary, it was thanks to that, that the sword was able to regain some of its lost abilities. In the process, its condition had been restored to near perfect. The empty space in the crossguard was still there, but it looked brand new. The sword was acting the part as well, and Kang Shin-hyuk let out a laugh as he sheathed it. The sword wasn't the only thing to evolve, however, as did his abilities.

[Kang Shin-hyuk: B rank] (10.4% synchronization rate)

[Characteristic]

Golden Eyed Dragon (S): Unable to deal with mana, but will master all kinds of martial arts very quickly. It can greatly amplify the effectiveness of self-learned martial arts and the performance of weapons under its influence.

[Physical ability]

Force: C- → C+

Agility: B- → B+

Health: C+ → B

[Special ability]

Spiritual power: C+ → B-

Regeneration: E- → D-

[Skill]

Dragon Fan Dance (S+): B- → B

Metallurgy: C-

All of his physical abilities had grown two stages, and his spiritual power had grown one. Regeneration, however, had grown three whole stages. Shin-hyuk could already feel his fatigue recovering, confirming it did get stronger. Even his sword dance skill evolved as well. All of it was only possible because he didn't run away from that monster. Shin-hyuk couldn't help it, but he happy he could stay true to his desires.

“Good...”

“Anvil!” As he was drunk on checking out his new status, a voice called him from behind. He looked around, quickly finding Milan. The prince did not think Shin-hyuk as an apostle of God, though his respect for him had grown.

“That was really...amazing.”

“Is the clean-up done?”

“Yeah, thanks to your help. Thank you for everything.” Milan was still wearing his helmet, though Shin-hyuk could tell what sort of expression he was making. He shrugged, tapping the sheath that Godslayer was in.

“It wasn't that impressive. Just like that shield had grown big, so did the sword. It was so hard I'll probably never do it again.” That was partially a lie. If his spiritual power kept growing, he could probably pull it off again. But he was afraid they might start expecting more things from him, so it was best to try and deceive Milan.

“I have no doubt it took a tremendous amount of skill to pull it off, but thanks to that, many people were able to survive. Once again...thank you very much.”

“Don’t worry about it. It was necessary when recovering the shield. It looks like this guy suffered a lot at that damn bug’s hands.”

-Vwoom.

Milan couldn’t say anything while he watched the Heroic Shield vibrate in response to Shin-hyuk’s words.

“Then, now you have the shield back. Are you heading home?”

“Well...what should I do...”

-Since you’ve completed the quest early, you can still stay here until the originally scheduled deadline. That would be more convenient.

Kang Shin-hyuk nodded at the message and decided to accept it. They considered him to be an apostle, so they wouldn’t have any problems with him staying here in the future. Milan, for his part, seemed delighted that he would be staying another ten days.

“Milan, the survivors of the Alliance are looking for you.” Zeke came up as they were talking, delivering a brief report to the prince. The source of this content is NovelFire.net

“Did you gather them all together?”

“Yes.” They had all unified to fight the monster, but they had just been fighting a fierce battle against each other just before. Neither Kang Shin-hyuk nor Milan thought they would try to keep fighting, however.

“If we had a lord like you...”

“Please, give us a chance. If you lead us, we’ll never betray you!”

“...We were desperate to survive. We have no excuses.” The group of survivors from the Survival Alliance handed the Water Orb to Milan, declaring these things in unison. Milan accepted their offering.

“You will be my servants from now on. We will live together in this dying land, and we will surely survive and sprout new life.”

“Thank you!”

“Sir!” At their core, humans were simple. They were able to reconcile after fighting together just once. In this world, that simplicity might be integral to survival. Kang Shin-hyuk took a step back with such thoughts in mind, not wanting to interfere as he was just a guest.

“Hey, Anvil.”

“Yes?” It was Zeke, pointing toward the destroyed battlefield. Kang Shin-hyuk glanced over, seeing that he was pointing toward the remains of the monster.

“We’ve cleaned the body, so please take the remains of it. You finished it off by yourself, so it’s all yours.”

“Oh, I see. You did all of this?”

“It’s the least we could do.” He had hunted monsters before, but he hadn’t thought of saving the corpse. Kang Shin-hyuk’s jaw dropped as he examined the remains of the monster that had accumulated. Sharp teeth, eerie chunks of flesh, pieces of black shells, and a huge mana stone. It was the largest mana stone he had ever seen.

-It will be difficult to sell without authenticating your identity first.

“What should I do with it?”

-It would be best to use it as materials for metallurgy. Using it to make an enchantment would be best, but you probably can’t handle that right now.

Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t know how to use mana stones in metallurgy, just as the administrator had said. But he thought to ask Lee Manwoo about it next chance he got. At least, he could do something with the carapace and teeth in the meanwhile.

‘If I go back with this, will it suddenly become huge?’

-If your metallurgy reached the extreme, it might be possible to create something like that. But now, don’t worry. It won’t get any smaller either.

‘But how will I collect all of this?’

-Don’t worry! Among the items that you can now purchase on the trading board, there is the Hero Universe service system. Among these services, there is an inventory feature! It is a sub-space like the shop inventory.

Thinking back, Shin-hyuk did remember Claire pulling things out of empty space. That must've been her personal inventory.

-That's right. With no volume limitation, you will receive an inventory that can hold up to 200 kilograms per compartment at the VIP 50% special discount of 1.5 million HP!

"..." Shin-hyuk trembled. Even with the discount, it was so expensive, which meant it was originally three million HP per slot? And two-hundred kilograms...that wouldn't be enough to store all of these materials.

'I'll buy...three spaces.'

-Please note that the purchase price becomes more expensive after five slots!

'Alright, hand them over quickly.' He could immediately tell that he had gained access to the inventory. It felt like he had access to a personal drawer that only he could tell was there.

'But I can't take everything.' He took the remains he had in hand and pushed them in his inventory, and then wrapped up the rest in a cloth to put in his backpack.

"You can have the rest."

"Well, there's not much we can do with it..."

"I see..." Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh.

"I will process it somehow, so leave it be then. Please move it to the barracks if you would."

"Certainly, Apostle." Seeing that what he wanted was done, he gave a bloody smile. He planned to spend the remaining ten days practicing metallurgy non-stop.

Ten more days passed, Kang Shin-hyuk was steadily devoting himself to his training. He made weapons, primarily in the form of javelins, for the people who were treating him as an apostle.

-Metallurgy has grown to C rank. Strength has grown to B rank through skill growth. Your resistance to heat has increased. Working speed will increase by 30% in the future.

Through this way, he reached the skill of C rank he had been aiming for.

-As today's log in bonus, you have received a monster attraction system (C+ grade)!

The day had come for him to finally return to Earth.

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It was said that among the many monsters, there were a few cases of insectile monsters having metallic shells. However, the monster that Kang Shin-hyuk had just slain wasn't of that variety. Therefore, to process the carapace and turn it into a weapon, he had to physically break it down. Fortunately for him, it was easier to break down once he applied heat to it.

"But, when I think about it, this isn't really metallurgy, is it?"

-Metallurgy is a skill that spans a very wide area. Even if you're not dealing with metal, processing materials to make weapons is influenced by it.

"It's not metallurgy...but it is..." It was thanks to the metallurgy skill that he could process the carapace so easily, so Kang Shin-hyuk wasn't going to complain. No doubt, this would serve as a good foundation for the future, in processing all sorts of non-metals to make weapons.

-Janus's whisper: What are you doing?

"I'm trimming the shell of an insect."

-Janus's whisper: You are working hard, that makes me happy.

"But the Godslayer sword is still far away, so please wait, Sir Janus."

-Janus's whisper: Just Janus is fine.

Kang Shin-hyuk idly chatted with Janus while he ground away at the shell, succeeding in making an oval-shaped ring. He attached the small, sharply ground teeth to both sides of it. The finished object looked almost like the mouth of the beast it had come from.

-You made a Sudden Monster Trap (C) with a little spiritual power. Metallurgy proficiency has slightly increased.

-Synchronization has accelerated. Current rate of 11.2%.

“Done!” The moment he created this new object, a trap, Kang Shin-hyuk was delighted to see the notification window in front of him. This was the first artifact he created that wasn’t a weapon or armor.

“I think it’s because my metallurgy is now C rank, but I’m gradually getting a sense of how to make artifacts. I have to pay attention to the source of the object as well as my own will to imbue it with spiritual power.”

-Not just anyone can casually create C rank artifacts and talk about it in that way.

[Sudden Monster Trap]

[C rank]

[Special ability: Stealth]

*Stealth: When deployed, this trap is immediately assimilated into the surrounding environment and concealed, slightly increasing the damage of the trap. It cannot be detected by search abilities below rank B.

“Ooh...” It was a special ability that really fit a trap. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a satisfied laugh as he examined the completed trap, but it occurred to him it would hurt if he accidentally activated it. He safely stored it away in his inventory.

“So, that’s it.”

-If you return now, it will be Monday, at 8 AM.

“Wow...” He was alright with being a little late, as he wanted to stay there longer. He had taken to metallurgy rather quickly, and it wasn’t boring, no matter how long he worked.

'But that's just an escape.' To become a superhuman recognized by everyone, he couldn't slack off when it came to classes. He was eligible to come back here after completing the quest, so he resolved himself to come back the following weekend. He quickly organized his luggage and prepared to leave.

"Anvil, are you awake?"

"...Yeah." With good timing, Milan entered the barracks as Shin-hyuk was packing up.

"Leaving without a heads up?"

"It's night. Besides, I said I would be leaving sooner or later."

"Nevertheless...no, I suppose that's true." Milan approached him with a small sigh, taking off the gauntlets he was wearing and offered him a handshake.

"Anvil, you've helped us so much...thank you."

"You paid me to do it." The prince's hand was delicate, but his voice was strong.

"You charged us nothing. If we survive on this land, it will be because of you."

"If you think so."

"No, You have no idea how grateful we are. You are, uh..." Milan hesitated, then put both of his hands on his helmet. Kang Shin-hyuk realized he had not taken it off in front of anyone as far as he had seen. As the helmet was lifted off, what Shin-hyuk saw was the face of a beautiful girl with dazzling blonde hair and clear eyes.

"...?!"

"It was worth taking off my helmet just to see that expression." Milan gave him a smile upon seeing his face. Her voice was different now, and he realized that the helmet she wore must have been an artifact of some sort.

"I will introduce myself formally. My name is Milia Van Orde, the last princess of the kingdom of Orde. To rally my soldiers and have them follow me, I was imitating my brother, who died." Shin-hyuk was immediately convinced, but also a bit curious.

“With just that helmet?”

“I’ve also had some help from Sir Zeke and a few others. But at this point, who can say? Maybe I won’t need to hide anymore.” Milia clapped my hands loudly.

“But such concerns are luxurious. You gave us this opportunity, and as my benefactor, I felt that I shouldn’t deceive you.”

“As you wish...”

“Is this not enough? It won’t be enough, so...” She came to some sort of conclusion all by herself, without a word from Shin-hyuk, and lightly gripped his shoulder. She kissed him briefly on the cheek, the scent of her clear to him.

“This is the best way to express myself as I plan on continuing to live as a man in the future.”

“Are you okay?”

“This is a breathtaking feeling.” She laughed and stepped back toward the entrance of the barracks. She put back on her helmet and returned to being Milan without any regrets.

“Thank you for everything, Anvil. I hope the day will come when we meet again.”

“I do too.”

“Well.” She nodded firmly and left the barracks, and Shin-hyuk felt the spot on his cheek she kissed.

“There were some hiccups, but the finish line was great. It feels like I’ve achieved a real quest because I got a kiss from a princess.”

-...

‘If you’re not going to talk, then don’t. Why send these ellipses?’ He shrugged it off.

“Then, let’s go back to My Room now.” The next moment, he was really back there. After it had happened a few times, it didn’t feel like a dimensional shift

at all to him. Now, however, the lights were back on so he could see the floor and walls laid before him.

“This place...so.”

-It's like the shelter you used in your previous life.

Though it was blocked on all sides and he couldn't check it out properly, it was clear that this was Anvil's studio. The one he had seen in the memories.

“How...?”

-My Room is meant to resemble your own thoughts, and it can change as you grow.

“So...it isn't that world?”

-Of course not. You can go directly there by paying HP once your synchronization rate increases. However, please decide carefully if you want to go. Merba is a perilous place.

He felt equally relieved and disappointed that My Room wasn't actually that place, but both were soon overtaken by a sense of anger and the urge to go there someday. He was about to say, 'my family is there,' but he stopped himself before he could. He let his mind cool off for a moment, regaining his senses.

'It's because the synchronization has increased.' As he acquired more memories of Anvil, the sense of unity with him only increased. It seemed more and more foolish to try and separate himself from Anvil since it was his past life. Which was why he...

“I will go.”

-The more effort you put in, the faster you will get there.

“I know. Thank you.”

-...10HP Bonus!

He decided to find Merba someday and clear everything up.

At school that day, Kang Shin-hyuk was pestered non-stop by Baek In-ha all morning.

“Who did you go play with? You abandoned me!”

“Let’s say I was playing with someone. Would I tell you about it?”

“No, damn it!”

He was able to explain the situation to Claire, but he couldn’t honestly confess to Baek that he had been to a different world. However, since it was impossible to make an appropriate excuse to him since he had been trying to contact and search for him all weekend, Shin-hyuk decided to act as if nothing was wrong.

“I believed you were my friend...!”

“You were busy working on assignments all weekend anyway.”

“You were supposed to help me!”

“Do you not know how to work on your own? Are you a kid?” Kang Shin-hyuk sat down while teasing Baek, but at that point, he quit complaining and just stared at him.

“If you climb the stairs of adulthood, will your physical abilities be amplified?”

“I’ve never heard of something so stupid.”

“No, you’ve definitely gotten stronger.” A child he may have been, but a keen one. Shin-hyuk trained in another world for a month and had greatly improved all of his stats, but he had yet to demonstrate that. How could he read that change in his status?

“It’s a growth spurt, yeah.”

“No matter what, I’ll catch up to you right away. It seems like the evolution of a trait is really intense.” Shin-hyuk had no intention of telling him it had evolved again.

“I can’t lose anyway. I’m going to train non-stop today.”

“I’m going to start group training today as well.” The source of this content is NovelFire.net

It was a new week, but no changes had occurred in the teachers’ educational policies. Even if group training was going on this afternoon, the training intensity only felt as if it had increased to push the students who already had a week to adjust to the hellish physical exertion.

“Compared to the level of training the seniors get, this is easy. Some of those seniors even have lower physical statuses than you lot do, so that means the problem is your guts!”

“Oh, god...they finally said guts...”

“How is it possible that these elite superhumans were trained this way...?” Each student was complaining, but Shin-hyuk was of a similar mind to the teacher. The students were unused to handling their stats properly, but he had been training hard with his body to accommodate the fact he couldn’t handle mana.

‘But I’m also not dealing with my status properly because my growth has been too rapid. I have to figure out my limits and how to deal with my skills.’ He had entered the B rank, and at this level, it was enough to be on par with active superhumans. But if he were asked if he could use that power properly, his answer would be no. He had grown too quickly and didn’t know how far that strength could carry him. He had to push that to the limit until he couldn’t summon any more strength.

“Crazy. Kang Shin-hyuk is still holding on...”

“He’s definitely stronger than last week.”

“We’re barely holding on, but he’s not slowing down at all.”

Originally, in his class, Kang Shin-hyuk was still thought to be below Baek despite him winning the Rookie King title. Or rather, many people thought Baek was just an exception.

“My face doesn’t change so much.”

“Were you trying to make a tough expression?”

“No, it’s rather...I was going for calm?”

“Are you constipated?”

“No, look, you asshole...”

However, in today’s class, Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t seem to be lagging behind Baek in any of the training. If Baek had gone all out, maybe that would change, but right now, they were almost equal.

“I still can’t feel mana.”

“What the hell is it?”

“If you become a Rookie King, do they give you some sort of magic elixir?”

Kang Shin-hyuk was training with the wooden spear, a bloody smile on his face, as he listened to the gossip behind him. He was doing reaction training to hit incoming targets, but the training was soon over as he completely cleared the set at the maximum difficulty.

“Kang Shin-hyuk, you’re free to train as you wish with Baek. Everyone else, gather up!”

“Ahhhhh.”

“This is hell.”

“I’m not saying you need to do it like them, just do the best you can!”

It wasn’t just the 1st year C class. Since the previous week, all of the 1st years were being finely ground down. They cursed the teachers, Shinyoung, and the entire world as their bodies were broken down to be built back up. However, the thought of showing off an ugly sight in the sports competition made them hold on without giving up.

“Hey, Kang Shin-hyuk seems to be looking good today.”

“He does look different since he became the Rookie King.”

“No, it’s more like something fundamentally changed.”

As a bonus, Kang Shin-hyuk's stock price was gradually rising, although he was too busy trying to stop Baek from running off to be aware of it. Soon, the afternoon classes came to an end, but special classes awaited them after school.

"Oh no, I'm going to die!"

"If you don't want to die in the gate practice, work hard right now."

"Shin-hyuk, let's go right away! I heard a rumor that our trainer is a woman."

"Come on, let's go."

The group training for gate practice was conducted in the Blackwood. For the students' safety, the school closely monitored their training by calling in support from active supervisors from the superhuman association and several famous guilds. The superhumans, who had graduated from Shinyoung, were always willing to respond to the call of cultivating prospective youngsters, especially for the chance to make new contacts. But the supervisor of Group 7 of the 1st year C class had received a lot of attention in particular.

"I will be the supervisor of your gate practice training. I am Shin Eunah, a superhuman from the association."

"...yes?" Kang Shin-hyuk rubbed his eyes and double-checked the sight in front of him. There was no doubt that Shin Eunah was right there before him. She met his eyes and gave him a slight nod.

"It's good to see you again. Please take care of me."

'No, wait, why?!'

Chapter 42 - Our Rookie King Has Changed (2)

Chapter 42 - Our Rookie King Has Changed (2)

Shinyoung's group 7 of Class C gathered in the multipurpose room to listen to the story of Shin Eunah, their practical supervisor.

"This gate practice has been held for a long time, and it takes place in a persistent absorption-type gate- also known as a dungeon. There is no need

for me to explain the difference between persistent and single-shot gates, or emission and absorption types, yes?”

A gate was first divided into general and surprise types. A general type had signs of its appearance, and thus it could be prepared for, but a surprise gate would appear without warning. Such a gate had appeared in Seoul previously when Shin-hyuk had been meeting with Claire. The next difference was persistent versus single shot, which was merely the difference of whether the gate lasted for a long time or not. Finally, an emission type gate poured monsters out into the area, but the absorption type brought humans in when they made contact within the gate. Specifically, it brought them to a subspace environment full of monsters that existed inside.

‘But emission type gates are often difficult to measure in advance because they are usually single shot rather than persistent.’ Absorptive gates were also usually temporality deactivated once a condition was met inside the gate, such as killing all the monsters or a specific boss monster. At that point, it would spit the humans back out. That was called clearing, and some gates would be maintained after they were cleared. It was possible for humans to repetitively attack those gates, and humans had begun to refer to them as dungeons.

“I know all of that, but why were you put in charge of our group...?” Baek In-ha asked this with hearts in his eyes, dreaming of his future wedding with Shin Eunah and becoming the president of the Korean Superhuman Association. Shin Eunah glanced briefly at Shin-hyuk when she heard his question, but quickly let out a little cough and responded in a cold voice.

“Because you are the freshmen who have received the most attention so far at Shinyoung. Many guilds competed for this opportunity, and the association stepped in to prevent things from getting heated. However, many in the association feared the backlash, so the baton came to me in the end.”

“Doesn’t the association also want us?!”

“The type of talent the association wants is different from the ordinary guilds. Now, let’s get back to the gates.” Baek’s desire to be recognized by the association was neatly ignored. There was no doubt about his abilities, but in terms of personality, he was at least a million light-years away from what the association wanted. Kang Shin-hyuk took a step back from him as Do Woojin and Karen gazed at Baek with pity.

"The gate you will enter this time is the D+ class dungeon in Jongno, Seoul, known as Crow's Nest."

"Crazy..."

"No, so wait." Upon hearing the name of the dungeon, Karen murmured quietly, and Do Woojin, who had been watching Shin Eunah quietly, finally spoke up. It was a famous dungeon that had a lot of people coming and going, but it was also...

"That dungeon has flying monsters."

"Right. Frankly, all of your abilities to perform close-quarter combat is beyond the range of the 1st grade. However, by raising the dungeon's rating, it would violate education equity and increase the risk." The highest the dungeon's grade, the more likely an unexpected situation would occur. In fact, it was already sort of unreasonable to push freshmen into a D+ grade dungeon.

"The school has decided to judge how you will respond to an unfavorable environment. The main monster you will face is the D-class Gray Crow. It is a flying monster with high intelligence, and it is not prone to provocation. How you will move in response to this monster will be the core of this exercise."

"I can only feel like I'm trying to do something impossible...ugh..." Do Woojin, who was complaining, stiffened at Shin Eunah's emotionless gaze. Baek In-ha, who was holding his mouth shut after grasping the atmosphere, looked back at Kang Shin-hyuk with a proud expression that was promptly ignored.

"It is natural for a superhuman to be specialized in a single field, but it isn't something to be proud of. You must know how to respond to any situation; it is the most basic of basics to prepare countermeasures." Normally, superhumans move as a team, but higher-ranked ones often charge into gates alone. Certainly, in such a case, it would be necessary to be fully prepared for any situation. But they were still only students. These expectations were too big.

"Then what about you?"

"Call me teacher."

"Would you be able to fight using melee?" It seemed like Do Woojin was still struggling with the idea. They were being told that they, as students who used

melee weapons, should be able to fight long distances. So naturally, Shin Eunah, a student from the Department of Magic, should be able to fight using melee. It was reasonable at first glance, but she was a high ranker who was here as a teacher for some reason.

“Sure. Do you need proof?”

“Yeah, I want to know.”

“Do Woojin, that won’t really solve anything...” Do Woojin asked for proof without hesitation, and Karen could only shake her head at him. Kang Shin-hyuk sympathized with her, but Do Woojin was unable to recognize anything unless he experienced it with his own eyes and body. Shin-hyuk would have found it hard to admit out loud, but he thought it was pretty cool.

“Alright, then step forward.”

“...” There was plenty of space to fight in. Do Woojin shut up and stepped forward without a weapon, and Shin Eunah took out dozens of silver bracelets from her bag and placed them over her arms. IT was an artifact that suppressed the wearer’s magical power.

“I saw that in Dragon Ball.”

“Shut up, Baek.”

“Hm...!” Do Woojin bit his lip, feeling his pride hurt as he watched her suppress her own magical power. However, considering her position, it was a natural measure to take. Rather, it was an honor to be able to fight her.

“Then start.”

“Ha!” As soon as Shin Eunah said that, Do Woojin rushed at her. He partially activated his characteristics to raise his physical performance, running at her with the intent to see her strength. It was a fast and powerful rush, but Shin Eunah calmly took a step forward and stretched out her fist. An electric current flowed around her fist, which slammed into Do Woojin. It was a clean hit, and he hit the ground.

“...What did you do...?”

“I couldn’t see it...Karen, is it possible that her lightning ability is also enhancing her speed?”

“I don’t know. Nervous system stimulation involves the flow of electric currents, so considering my own ability to strengthen my nervous system...it is possible.” Shin Eunah’s gaze brought a stop to Shin-hyuk and Karen’s whispering. Her reflexes would remain a mystery to them.

“All abilities can develop with discipline, so don’t limit yourself.” She swung her hand to unleash telekinetic magic, moving the fallen Do Woojin back to his starting spot.

“Of course, we don’t need to worry about the specifics right now. Let everyone think about what way they should train and come up with their own answers by tomorrow. Today, I will just check the basics.”

“Check our basic abilities?”

“Next is Karen Stringfield, step forward.” In the end, everyone was supposed to fight her. As Shin Eunah talked calmly, Karen stepped forward, trembling. Just like Do Woojin, she was beaten and stunned.

“Next...Baek?”

“Yep! I’ll show you at once!” For the first time since he had enrolled, Baek was excited to show off his abilities. Shin Eunah weighed him for a moment and then loosened a few of the dampening bracelets. She was still wearing at least ten of them, though.

“Are you all talk?”

“I will go!” Baek’s talent was primarily his speed. He charged forward, just like Do Woojin and Karen. Shin Eunah, however, was surprised for the first time today by his speed. The source of this content is NovelFire(.)net

-Bang!

However, the results didn’t change much. Baek In-ha was about to be hit in the head by a fist, but as he tried to move out of the way, Shin Eunah quickly lowered herself and hit him with a leg breaker that would only appear in a fighting game. Baek hit the ground; the wind was knocked out of him as he passed out.

“He’s a real monster...how at that age...” Shin Eunah, who had laid him out on the ground like that, murmured quietly as she shook her fist. It was hard to tell who the real monster was, though. The talent that had made it to the quarterfinals was taken out so quickly in close-quarters combat by a magic-user who was suppressing their magic.

“Let’s go next then.”

“Hm? No.” Kang Shin-hyuk was determined to take his beating next but was confused by Shin Eunah’s refusal.

“I clearly grasped the extent of your abilities in the rookie exhibition. I don’t like to hit people needlessly.” Using just her index finger to move them with magic, she arranged the three fainted students’ side by side, then pulled out a can of coffee for the two of them. He accepted the can, vowing not to mention that it seemed like she had planned this.

“Oh, thank you...teacher.”

“We’re the only ones left, so you can just call me senior.” His hunch had been so right he was stunned.

“Then...senior.”

“Good.” Kang Shin-hyuk was in a strange mood as he saw the small smile she showed. He couldn’t help but wonder if he was receiving special treatment right now.

‘It must be because I’m sponsored by the association.’ The coffee was delicious, turning out to be a specially designed product for superhumans to drink inside the gate. It was a stimulant, but a superhuman’s body was able to consume it with no problem. Shin-hyuk, with his excellent regeneration power, immensely benefited from it.

“I like drinking it because it keeps me aware of my surroundings.”

“Do you always want to be tense even when you’re not fighting monsters?”

“No way. When I have to do director stuff, I always have to deal with nerves.” She said that without changing her expression, taking another drink of her coffee. She took three more cans out and arranged them in front of the fainted

students. It was no doubt due to her own sincerity, but to an observer, it almost looked like a bizarre ritual.

“What happened to you?” Her question came to him while she did this.

“Yes?”

“I apologize if I’m mistaken, but...you seem almost calmer than before.” Kang Shin-hyuk wasn’t too surprised to hear that, as even Baek noticed he had changed. Even though he had only met her once, there was no way Shin Eunah wouldn’t recognize it as well.

“I think I made some progress from the special training I did at the weekend.”

“Special training...for metallurgy?” Kang Shin-hyuk stiffened, feeling embarrassed once he realized what happened. It was only natural that she knew about it; he belonged to the Artifact Creation Club now. Anyone could access that information. Moreover, to proceed with his practice, he had no choice but to reveal to people that he was practicing metallurgy. That way, he could bring his own javelin instead of buying a bow. Kang Shin-hyuk cleared his thoughts and began to calm himself, but Shin Eunah continued in a cool voice.

“Don’t worry. I don’t plan on saying it’s useless. I think metallurgy is a valuable skill.”

“I see, I’m glad...yes, I’ve been working on metallurgy over the weekend. I achieved some good results that I think will help our combat power.”

“Of course, you...” Shin Eunah seemed to mutter something, but he couldn’t quite catch it.

“So, how about this exercise? Did you have a plan?”

“Yeah. It’s a little embarrassing, but I’ve prepared something.”

“Okay...I’m looking forward to it.” She seemed to be trying to talk to him about it, but he desperately wanted to refrain from talking about metallurgy. Finally, she packed up her bag, expressionlessly.

“I’m relieved that I was able to prepare properly. See you tomorrow.”

“Yeah...goodbye.” After saying goodbye, she left the multipurpose room without looking back. Kang Shin-hyuk, who thought he might go after her, decided to remain with his unconscious friends. He still had some coffee left anyway.

[Eunah’s whisper: Grandpa I...I think I just experienced fate.]

Later, this whisper came to him through the Hero Universe.

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Chapter 43 - Our Rookie King Has Changed (3)

Chapter 43 - Our Rookie King Has Changed (3)

When he woke up, Kang Shin-hyuk’s consciousness was once again in that cramped workshop. He couldn’t recall how many times he had seen the blacksmith’s memories in a dream by now.

-Janus’s whisper: Anvil, is it a little challenging to control your emotions?

-Noisy.

Words and actions that he could not control; a flow of thoughts that were simultaneously his own and someone else’s went through his mind. He could feel them all so realistically before they slipped away. He no longer felt uncomfortable with it, wondering if that was because he was getting used to that sense of unity with Anvil.

-Janus’s whisper: Still, you’re making more and more these days. Yes, it feels like I’m invincible with these armless armaments. Oh my, I’m laughing too hard! Hahahaha!

-I will block you.

-Janus's whisper: Wait, I was wrong! I just wanted to compliment Grandpa on a talent you wouldn't find even by searching the whole world!

Janus was talking intimately with Anvil, who felt as if the hammer had become lighter as he conversed.

-I should call you Grandpa; you must be older.

-Janus's whisper: You're Grandpa because you use such an old tone of voice! The title follows the spirit.

The relationship between the two was particularly good, or rather, Janus was oddly interested in him. He didn't express his emotions very well, but Janus would still laugh and be happy despite that.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: Ah, Anvil. The armor you made today was even better.

Meanwhile, Tsukuyo was even stranger, sending him messages that made it almost sound like they loved him.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: I want to meet you soon. If only the barriers between us disappeared, I would run to meet you right away.

No, rather, Kang Shin-hyuk thought that they definitely loved him.

-What a useless idea. I am only a filthy old man.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: No way! When I close my eyes, I can imagine how wonderful you look. Alas, I want to meet you soon.

Anvil regarded Tsukuyo as a strange person, just as Shin-hyuk did upon seeing his memories, but he figured it was just her own way of expressing herself.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: Are you a VIP yet? If you aren't, you will definitely be one soon!

He didn't know what a VIP was, so he responded carefully.

-When the time comes, I will be.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: Huh...well, I'll be waiting until then, Anvil.

Mixing with the cheerful sound of his hammering, Tsukuyo's message appeared in his retina.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: Until then.

Kang Shin-hyuk opened his eyes wide. It seemed like the message was still there, causing him to shudder, but then a familiar message instead covered his eye.

-You received 1 Roulette coin for today's log in bonus.

"Phew...good thing, that was kind of scary..." He stood up from his bed, trembling. That was the first time he had a real memory of Tsukuyo. The last time she sent a message he couldn't understand, he got quite nervous.

"If possible, I shouldn't get involved..."

-Tsukuyo's whisper: Hey, you. If you claim to be Anvil, why aren't you even posting any items on the trading board?

As soon as he thought about it, she sent him a whisper. Maybe she had the ability to spy on him? Kang Shin-hyuk thought deeply about whether he should ignore her or not, but there was what she was saying about him erasing his ID.

-I'm a lot different than the person you remember, but I was planning on posting some soon anyway.

Tsukuyo didn't answer, but ultimately, Shin-hyuk didn't care about it and instead went to the huge bag he had in the corner of the room. Onyx, having risen earlier, was whining and slammed his head against it.

"Hey, I gave you something to eat."

-Myu!

"No, how...alright, I got it." Kang Shin-hyuk decided to throw out the lowest grade item he had in the bag to Onyx. Although it was still a D class artifact, despite being the lowest grade. Onyx raised his voice in joy and began to eat excitedly.

-Myuuu!

“I can’t live like this.” No matter how much he had grown, he still couldn’t produce artifacts as Anvil had. He had stayed in Kieron for more than three weeks, hammering away the entire time, but in the end, he was only able to create three artifacts aside from the Brenite Spear and the Trap. One of them was just eaten by Onyx, so he only had two left.

“I don’t think I’ll use the trap much in practice anyway, so let’s put that on the trading board.” There was no trap in his inventory, so he wondered if he had accidentally taken it out while organizing yesterday and forgotten about it. He wasn’t as careful with it as he was the Godslayer sword.

“But, it’s not even in the bag...?”

-Myuuu!

“Hey!” In the end, Onyx confirmed he had eaten it yesterday. Shin-hyuk couldn’t forgive him so easily, picking him up and pinching his nose.

-Myu!!!

“...uh?” The next moment, Onyx’s body became transparent. Onyx, who had escaped his hand while he was surprised, screamed and began to roll around.

-Myu! Myu!

“But you were the one in the wrong. Even if it seemed like delicious food to you, it is an object that can help me in an important moment. Are you really not going to reflect on it?”

-Myuu...

As Shin-hyuk lowered his voice, Onyx curled up and laid his thorns down in reflection. He was sincerely asking for forgiveness for his inability to overcome his appetite. He didn’t appear to have any malice in him, and he hadn’t touched the really valuable artifacts. He was just like a child, unable to control himself in front of food.

“...It’s my fault for going about this the wrong way.”

-Myu?

“But I won’t forgive you again. If you want to keep eating delicious things, do better next time.”

-Myu!

Satisfied with his answer, he let Onyx crawl up his shoulder as his anger began to cool. He decided to check in on Onyx’s status while he was at it.

[Onyx: D Rank]

[Physical ability]

Power: E

Agility: C

Health: D-

[Special ability]

Gold Magic: E+

[Skill]

Iron Predation (S+): D-

Implementation (SS): F+

Defensive Position: C

Stealth (A): F

[State]

Loyalty to Kang Shin-hyuk: 58

“What...?” He assumed the statuses rose due to eating the artifact, but he also acquired a surprising skill- Stealth. That must have been from him eating the trap and was how he became transparent in his hand. Ultimately, Shin-hyuk was sure it wasn’t a bad thing that Onyx was growing.

‘An A-rank skill from eating a C-class artifact is also a steal.’ Artifacts, no matter how good they were, were just objects that retained skills. Kang Shin-

hyuk pinched Onyx's nose a little again to confirm his pledge that he would never eat another artifact without permission again.

"Okay, then..." He posted the two remaining artifacts on the trading board: an ordinary longsword and a shield he had put his heart into making after seeing the Heroic Shield. He was embarrassed because the sword was D+ rank, and the shield was C-, but he thought it was better than nothing.

"Then, what would you like to do?"

-Vwoom

The will of the Heroic Shield was weak, probably due to being used as bait for so long. Its will had been strong when they fought the monster, but like an old man waiting for death after his final wish had been fulfilled, that will had gradually weakened since then.

-Vwoom

The Godslayer hummed this time, offering the idea of accepting the Heroic Shield. Shin-hyuk was silent for a moment, considering this as he stroked the Heroic Shield.

"What do you think?"

-Vwoom

It was a weak affirmative. Kang Shin-hyuk shook his head and held the shield in his arms, but it only cried out louder. He couldn't understand it, the difference between humans and armaments being too wide for him to cross.

"It's enough for you just to be here. Why do you need to prove your worth?"

-Vwowoom

The shield appeared to harden its mind, and the Godslayer sword became quiet as it read Shin-hyuk's intent. He closed his eyes and let out a deep sigh as he unsheathed the sword.

"Damn it."

-Vwoom

“Sorry...and thank you.” He thought about what he should do but had come too far to pretend he didn’t know what needed to be done. Shin-hyuk raised the sword high and brought it down upon the shield. It was sucked into the sword without breaking, and he felt a strange emotion welling up inside of him as he watched the Heroic Shield vanish.

-The Godslayer sword ate the Heroic Shield and regained some of its strength as the shield had a large amount of spiritual power. It will take a considerable amount of time to fully digest the power of a strong armament.

Perhaps this was the moment the dimensional quest truly ended. Kang Shin-hyuk thought this with a bitter smile as he sheathed the sword.

The second group training happened after school the next day. Kang Shin-hyuk brought his javelin, and Karen brought her bow, but Baek In-ha and Do Woojin had nothing in hand. Shin Eunah calmly evaluated all of them.

“The bow is difficult to master.”

“I’ve practiced with it before, and I have the ability to strengthen my nervous system, so I am quick. Additionally, Shin-hyuk is good at handling all types of weapons and has enough skill to keep in check the oncoming monsters.”

“...” Kang Shin-hyuk thought Karen had a good response, but Shin Eunah stared at her as if to decide that she didn’t like her. Kang Shin-hyuk felt embarrassed, choosing to speak up first.

“What if we try some target practice?”

“Okay.”

Shin Eunah fiddled with a hologram device installed into the multipurpose room, and several targets popped up into the air near one side of the room. This was a state-of-the-art training facility that could detect actual blows with sensors. Karen pulled back to an appropriate distance and then began to fire her bow. The result was five hits out of five, and Kang Shin-hyuk couldn’t help but nod.

“What about that?”

“Next, let’s make it move.”

“Ugh.” It was natural that they wouldn’t be dealing with a stationary object. Shin Eunah manipulated the hologram again, and Karen, now less confident, could only hit four out of the five.

“You missed too much. But first, we should move on to measuring damage. The key is how much damage can be done to a D-class monster with your arrows.”

“I’m confident when it comes to my magic control!” As she had claimed, she successfully shot successive arrows with enough mana to complete the task. It was a difficult technique to keep enough magical power in a ranged weapon like an arrow or bullet. Kang Shin-hyuk softly applauded her skill and wondered if he could make a bow for himself instead, but Shin Eunah sounded even stricter.

“No matter how good your magic control is, if you miss an important shot, it’s over. If you really plan to carry a bow, practice until your accuracy is at least ninety-five percent. That’s the condition for your practice.”

“That’s tougher than being a special shooter…”

“Until you can, practice.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Shin Eunah’s bitter expression finally sunk into Karen as Shin-hyuk wondered how a British student knew about the Korean army’s special shooting conditions. Next up was Kang Shin-hyuk, who Shin Eunah regarded with a softer expression.

“The javelin has a big range of movement, can you manage it?”

“Yes, non-stop.” The javelin needed the weight of the entire body behind it to be incredibly powerful. Certainly, an ordinary person or even a trained thrower would feel the burden of repeating such a movement multiple times. However, Kang Shin-hyuk was hardly the same person he had been a short while ago. His physical strength had increased to B, even though it was still negative. It was of a level that could produce severely destructive power and speed without needing the use of the whole body. Added to that was his D-rank regenerative power, which helped his muscles recover from fatigue more than twice as fast.

“Then prove it.”

“Yes.” He proved it wasn’t too difficult, throwing much faster than Karen, who was practicing with her arrows. She stopped to run over and check on him after a while, concern ridden on her face.

“Shin-hyuk, is your shoulder okay? You were really throwing them. Like consecutively.”

“I’m fine.”

“Wow, that was cool. I need to pick up the pace myself.”

“Karen Stringfield, go back to training.”

“Yes!”

“And Kang Shin-hyuk, you’ve passed. Let’s think about how to work in sync with the other members in a real-world scenario.”

“Okay.” Shin Eunah passed on her decision without hesitation, skipping Baek In-ha, who was waiting with an open heart and went right to Do Woojin.

“What are you planning on doing?”

“I’m planning on learning a provocation skill.”

“A skill stone?”

“Yes, I learned it recently.” A skill stone was a crystal that forcibly awakened a skill, and it was an extremely rare type of mana stone possessed by a monster. The vast majority of them had a ridiculously expensive price range, and just possessing one wasn’t enough to obtain the corresponding skill. Depending on the compatibility with other skills, it was possible to fail acquiring the skill but still destroy the stone. However, Do Woojin was an obvious tank type with matching characteristics, so the probability of him successfully acquiring a provocation skill was high.

“You’re going to bring the enemy to the ground with your provocation.”

“There will be some enemies who attack with range, but the other two can deal with them.”

“You spent money instead of using your head?”

“I’m not confident in my ability to fight at a range. Rather than taking the clumsy way, I decided to force the enemy into my territory.”

“That’s also a good answer, but I can’t allow it until I check the level of provocation. I’ll bring equipment tomorrow, so train yourself until then.”

“Thank you.” Do Woojin looked proud, happy to be recognized by Shin Eunah.

“Okay, everyone is starting off in the right direction. Train on your own, and tomorrow I will educate you about simple formations in the dungeon.”

“Uh, ma’am. What about me? I haven’t shown off my ranged abilities yet!” Baek In-ha raised his hand high, and Shin Eunah replied with a profound feeling that conflicted with her expressionlessness.

“Do you need to?” This chapter is updated by NOVELFIRE.NET

“Please!”

“Yes, then...” Shin Eunah opened a window with her telekinesis and then launched a can of coffee out of her bag into the sky. It soared out of the window, quickly becoming a distant point.

“If you catch that, you will pass.”

“Okay!” Surprisingly, the next moment Baek jumped through the window that was clearly narrower than him and soared into the sky. Shin-hyuk thought it was a speed-based ability, but it was like even his body had transformed. His eyes were open wide in amazement as Shin Eunah handed each of them a can of coffee.

“Everyone worked hard. Good job.”

“Uh...thank you...?”

“What about Baek?”

“I don’t know. Anyway, I’ll be heading off on my own.” Shin-hyuk decided not to mention it as the rest of them disbanded and decided to head to the club room without waiting.

[Don't forget about tomorrow.]

[Baek In-ha: Oh yeah!]

He sent him a text message and received an immediate reply. In the end, he decided not to worry about it.

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Chapter 44 - Our Rookie King Has Changed (4)

Chapter 44 - Our Rookie King Has Changed (4)

-Klang! Klang! Klang!

What did Kang Shin-hyuk make the most of during his stay at Kieron? Of course, javelins.

-Klang! Klang! Klang!

He hadn't made them for his use, but to supply a large number to Orde. They were mainly made of steel, but a few were also made with Brenite.

-Hissss.

The point is that, in a short period of time, the area that Kang Shin-hyuk had mastered was the production of the javelin. It was an easy matter for him to make a better javelin and put his heart into it.

"...Done."

-You made a steel javelin (C-) with the spirit of falconry. Metallurgy skill has increased.

-The synchronization has been weakly accelerated. Current rate of 11.4%.

After a long time away from it, but really only two days, he was extremely excited to be holding onto a hammer again. In no time, he created a C-rank artifact, the highest rank he had accomplished with something made of steel. He wondered, briefly, if that were the best that steel could achieve.

[Hawk's Steel Javelin]

[C-]

[Special ability: Hit, Penetration]

*Hit: It becomes easier to hit the target. Attack power has increased slightly.

*Penetration: Increases the probability of penetrating the target by overcoming the limitations of the material. Attack power has significantly increased.

"Can I see it?"

"Yes, here." Kang Shin-hyuk, with a slight smile at the two special abilities, handed the javelin over to Lee Manwoo, who had been watching him work all the while. He looked it over seriously before sighing lightly and returning it to Shin-hyuk.

"How is it?"

"Frankly, I can't believe it was made using steel. The second I think I know the extent of your abilities, you create something new the very next moment."

"Is that a compliment? Thank you."

"You've been training quite a bit during the weekend." Lee Manwoo had noticed there had been significant changes in Kang Shin-hyuk, both in his technical skill and his mentality.

"Is it a woman?"

"What?!" Follow current novels on NOVEL_Fire.net

"That's not it. Something similar happened, I think."

“Don’t look into it.” After snorting at Shin-hyuk’s smiling face, Lee Manwoo continued.

“Do you have any plans to deal with magic metal? You’ll need it to go further in the field of metallurgy.” Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes began to shine- he had been thinking of the same thing.

“Could I, please?”

“I can’t give you much. However, if you make good things out of it and achieve an excellent grade in the contest, the school will purchase more.”

“Thank you, sir.” Lee Manwoo remarked he always had a good response, then clicked his tongue. He took out his stick and began to manipulate it in his hands.

“When did you say the practice was?”

“Friday.”

“You have to be ready by tomorrow to make something useful for practice. It’s good that your hands are fast.”

“I don’t know the average time needed, so is it a lot faster?”

“No matter how much metallurgy assists in the work, it’ll vary from person to person. Some people will take three or four days to make a sword that’s nothing to brag about.” He finished playing with the stick and put it down, giving a final glance to the javelin before nodding.

“Next time, I’ll introduce you to someone.”

“Who?”

“It’s the guy who remained in the club until the end. I have to admit I kicked them out.” Shin-hyuk wondered why he would introduce him to someone he kicked out, and Lee Manwoo had a bitter smile on his face.

“The situation was pointless if he was left alone. His skill is real, though.”

“If you are alone, there’s no point...”

“He knows that you joined the club and wanted to talk to you. So far, I’ve stopped him...but maybe with a look at what you’ve created, it’ll convince him too. Maybe he’ll even try to collaborate with you.”

“Collaboration? Like an apprenticeship?”

“You really are like someone from another world who just picked up a hammer.” Shin-hyuk’s heart stopped for a moment, but the teacher continued unaware.

“It’s common practice to create artifacts as a joint effort. It’s odd to create them with just one person’s skill.”

“...Yeah?” Lee Manwoo put a hand to his head upon seeing Kang Shin-hyuk make a face like this was the first time he heard about it.

“The blacksmith shapes it, and the enchanter gives it an ability. When the two are in harmony, an artifact is born. That’s how the majority of artifacts have been produced.”

“An enchanter...that’s right.” Kang Shin-hyuk also knew of the existence of enchanters: wizards who temporarily or permanently imparted power into objects. Of course, he even knew that they made artifacts. However, he didn’t know they were involved in the creation of artifacts made by a blacksmith, since he, or rather Anvil, had been making them alone from the beginning.

“It’s not impossible to create an artifact with metallurgy alone, obviously. The more special the material, the higher the level of the skill, and the stronger mana the blacksmith has...all of that will increase the probability of an artifact being created. I can also create them by myself...but that’s not the norm. Most can barely make one even with the power of an enchanter.” Lee Manwoo smiled at Shin-hyuk as he contemplated how he should even begin to respond to that.

“Originally, I didn’t want to say it because I thought it might make your head too big. But that guy kept waiting for me...I knew that you weren’t the type to be swayed by a word or two, so I decided to let you know.”

“That’s...thank you.”

“Moreover, it would make a good experience for you to collaborate with an enchanter. Anyway, if you collaborate with him and make a good artifact, you can submit it to the contest.”

“Yes.” Lee Manwoo left the club room with those words. Kang Shin-hyuk only nodded and muttered to himself while blankly watching his back.

“He’s a good person.”

-He has a lot of thoughts on how to make your talents bloom. It seems like you’re a big shot in this world.

“Enchanter...enchanter...” He mumbled to himself and checked the time. It was only 6:30 PM, and the group training ended at 4:30, so he had created a C-rank artifact in less than two hours.

“Let’s make something with Brenite or that monster shell.”

-Good idea.

However, before he could start, his stomach rumbled loudly. The distance between the club room and his dorm was quite far, and Shin-hyuk cursed the size of the school as he considered how hungry he was. Anguishing over this, he suddenly recalled what Baek In-ha had told him before.

‘There’s a café on campus.’ The structure of Shinyoung was extremely complicated, given its size and the number of buildings it had, so he hadn’t known it existed for quite a while. In fact, there was a multipurpose building containing a bowling alley, gymnasium, and game room right next to the cafeteria he would eat lunch at, which also included the café and other amenities. The building’s name was Unyu, but he had never gone there as he was always too busy training after classes.

‘It’s closer than the dormitory, and now I don’t have to stick to the dorm food because I have money. It’s so good to have enough cash...’

-50HP bonus for a proud member!

To the administrator, this side of Shin-hyuk was rather cute. He ignored the message as best he could and marched onward to Unyu. He found it quickly; the café was on the first floor and had seating outside for people to eat.

“That’s Kang Shin-hyuk.”

“It’s really him...I haven’t seen him before here.”

The moment he entered the café, all eyes were focused on him. That probably would’ve never been the case before he became the Rookie King. But, whether it was a good thing or a bad thing, he was used to the gaze of others. He pressed on to make an order of a café mocha with an excess of whipped cream, a lemonade, two sausage pretzels, and several butter croissants before finding a suitable seat with a buzzer in hand.

‘There are so many people in here.’

-I told you once this is a fairly elite group, but I’m honestly a little disappointed.

‘People have to rest sometime.’ Shin-hyuk responded with a bitter smile at the stubborn words of the administrator. He hadn’t spent really any downtime lately, but that was just because he was bad at it.

‘I wonder if I’m like Anvil in that regard- if it’s my way of escape by only focusing on training.’ But no matter how durable a person was, proper rest was indispensable. Moreover, it was important to take time to establish acquaintances with those who would be active in the field in the future. That was the main reason he focused on gaining the status of Rookie King, after all. Now, thanks to that, he was given special treatment in this space where elites gathered.

-It’s ringing.

“Ah.” Kang Shin-hyuk approached the counter and accepted his tray. However, as he returned to his seat with the thought that this wouldn’t be enough food, the face of someone he recognized crossed his eyes.

‘The King of Two Crowns?’ It was the 2nd year- Eleanor R. Alger. The rather small lady was sitting alone at a café table, much like Shin-hyuk had been. She was eating a croissant, much the same as Shin-hyuk had ordered, and was cutely gnawing at it while holding it in both hands. She clearly didn’t intend to look cute, however, as a serious expression was plastered on her face.

‘She looks physically weak, but she’s the King of Two Crowns? That’s great.’

-Do you want to talk to her?

'No, I hate the Wyvern Knights.'

-10HP bonus for this member!

'Why?!' He sat down, catching a glimpse of the cloak of the Wyvern Knights fluttering on her back. He thought he caught her glance at him as well, but thought it was his imagination.

"He should go ahead and say something."

"What a bunch, but it's funnier like that."

"Don't you think Alger should pay more attention?"

"Kang Shin-hyuk will be the next Crown of Knights."

"Yeah, and honestly, Douglas Payne..."

"Shh. She's moving."

He tried to ignore the voices coming from all around him, focusing on clearing out his food and drinking his lemonade. Something moved across his field of vision, and as he looked up, the figure of Eleanor R. Alger stood before him.

"..."

"..."

It felt a bit sad to him that her eye level was not so different from his while he was seated, but she gave off the impression of being strong enough to not care about that. The moment he tried to say something to her, facing her purple eyes, she cut him off.

".... you go." She mumbled in clumsily spoken Korean and placed an American muffin on his tray. He suppressed the thought he had that she was British, and it wasn't an English muffin.

"Uh, thank you..."

"Hm." She nodded a little, then picked up her tray and left. Kang Shin-hyuk was taken aback that that was all she had to say and decided to check the

muffin for a secret message before biting into it. No such thing existed, however.

“What just happened?”

“What kind of play was that...?”

The other patrons' words were rude, but to Kang Shin-hyuk, it was an amazingly effective strategy. In his mind, as he ate, he felt his affinity with her rise. Almost resentfully.

-The administrator is very worried about your future.

‘I’m sorry, administrator...’

As a bonus to those events, he received a very unexpected message on his way back to the club room.

-Tsukuyo has purchased both products. You will receive a payout of 117,300 HP!

No personal message arrived from her, but Shin-hyuk wondered if she had begun to acknowledge him in her own way. She had paid more than twice the starting price posted by him, after all.

-Eunah’s whisper: I was trying to buy something made by Grandpa, but an odd person bid above me and took them both.

-I’ll make more if I get better.

-Eunah’s whisper: Wow! Something made by grandpa just for me? How much can I pay for it? 1 million? 2?

Kang Shin-hyuk, who was in a good mood, responded kindly to the message from Eunah that immediately arrived, but it only succeeded in igniting her will. As a result, the rivalry between Tsukuyo and Eunah flared up, and eventually, it would become a war that would engulf the entire Hero Universe.

Not that Kang Shin-hyuk had any idea of that.

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Chapter 45 - Our Rookie King Has Changed (5)

Chapter 45 - Our Rookie King Has Changed (5)

“You said you met with the vice-captain yesterday?”

“Not really. Without saying a thing, she dropped a muffin on my tray and walked off.”

“Hey.”

The next morning, Shin-hyuk told Karen about his meeting with the vice-captain, and she immediately burst into laughter.

“I’m asking because I don’t know, but is there something special about muffins for the British?”

“Ahh, no. It’s just because the vice-captain is a little awkward.” From Karen’s smile, Kang Shin-hyuk knew there was something up. However, she gave no sign of answering his question.

“You must’ve done well. Did she seem like a bad person?”

“No, she seemed like a good person.”

“Alright, then I’ll see you later.”

Kang Shin-hyuk wasn’t going to join the Wyvern Knights in exchange for a muffin and decided to refuse to even consider it. Do Woojin came up to the two of them as they were entering the school.

“Hey, I’m going to hall two starting today.”

“Huh? Why did that happen?”

“Hm?” Do Woojin’s words were for Karen and seemed to have something to do with the Wyvern Knights. He apologized mentally to them, but he wasn’t going to fall for it.

“There’s a 2nd year named Yoo Minjun. You should remember him.”

“Oh, there was a person like that...” Kang Shin-hyuk recalled that there had been another reason for him going after the Rookie King title. It was to rub it in the face of that senior who had been looking down at him, but so much had happened right after that he had forgotten entirely. Thinking of that senior now, it didn’t inspire much in Shin-hyuk anymore. He had too many other things to worry about to be bothered by such a person.

“Why did I lend artifacts to you during the finals? That senior was asking about that...finally, they kicked me out of the first building.”

“What the hell is going on in hall one and two? Does this have anything to do with the split between the captain and vice-captain?”

“Right. Remember that there is a training center for the Wyvern Knights in the school forest? There are two buildings.”

“The second building is for the vice-captain.” Do Woojin had originally been picked by a senior who worked under the captain and joined the Wyvern Knights. But that senior had been disgusted by this incident, and he had been moved to join the vice-captain. It really wasn’t funny.

“I like the second building. There are fewer people, so there is plenty of free space. We’re throwing a barbecue party this Sunday, too.”

“I don’t know why this is happening in the first place, just because I lent an artifact?”

“Why don’t you just fight against it?”

“That’s not allowed.”

“I can’t. We have to help the vice-captain.” At Kang Shin-hyuk’s words, watching idly from the sideline, Do Woojin shook his head, and Karen replied a firm no. Karen then turned back to Do Woojin.

“Whatever the reason, we’ll be on the same side in the future. Let’s work hard together, Do Woojin. Ah, at times like these...if only a strong friend joined us...”

“I won’t.” He was a little sorry that he was the reason for Do Woojin being kicked out, but ultimately, he was a bit glad that he wouldn’t have to deal with such an awful senior anymore.

“Yeah, I don’t want to get involved with such an odd guy.” Do Woojin nodded, sympathizing with Shin-hyuk.

“I just don’t like someone being above me...now that this has happened, why don’t we help the vice-captain get the position of captain? It looks like she’s stronger.”

“That’s what I want to do too...”

“More than that, you two should talk without me.” Whether or not the story of an epic rebellion began here, Shin-hyuk made himself blissfully unaware. He ran away from Karen’s pursuit, who was trying to tell him about the internal affairs of the Wyvern Knights. Karen clicked her tongue and glanced at Do Woojin for help, but he just shook his head. Baek In-ha, who had just appeared behind them, decided to speak up.

“What, are you dating Do Woojin too?”

“Wow, none of you are helpful!”

“A formation means placing people in a specific structure with unique roles. It can be done in advance to cope with a fluid situation. It is not only important in large-scale battles but also when exploring dungeons.” After school, group 7 was once more gathered in the multipurpose room to listen to Shin Eunah’s lecture about the basics of exploring a dungeon.

“So, from now on, I will educate you on the basic formation that suits each situation. Your success will depend on how quickly you can adapt to a rapidly changing situation and respond appropriately.”

“Can you tell us about the appropriate formation for this dungeon?”

“If you understand the basics behind it, you’ll be able to figure that out on your own.” The actual training would occur on Friday, and today was Wednesday, so they had only two days to beat their knowledge to a level that was useful in a real battle. They were subjected to practical formation training, accompanied by response training that mimicked a battle situation.

“I feel like I’m a real superhuman.”

“The one who does the best in class often makes a mistake in the real world.” Because they were outstanding talents, Karen and Baek In-ha were able to follow through without any problem once the training switched from theory to practice. When it came to the way they moved, everyone was already a professional.

“Hmm, this much...you pass.”

“Thank you.” After the training, Do Woojin’s provocation skill was measured by Shin Eunah. Even though he had just learned the skill, it was already a considerable level.

“If Shin-hyuk and Stringfield pressure the enemies at a distance, and Do Woojin pulls them closer with a taunt, I can go ahead and clean up. Isn’t that perfect?”

“Yeah, yeah, just do what you’re saying.”

“What about our party leader? I think Shin-hyuk would be good for it.”

“Well...”

“Okay, then Shin-hyuk.” Thus, Kang Shin-hyuk became the party leader. He wasn’t confident, but he was also aware that only he would be able to control Baek at any point.

“Good.” Shin Eunah gave a satisfied nod as soon as they picked a leader.

“I’m getting used to it now. Tomorrow, we will review the things that need to be grasped when entering a dungeon and prepare for the actual battle. You are dismissed...Kang Shin-hyuk, remain here. I need to make a list of the items you will be bringing into the dungeon.”

“Okay.”

“Ah, wait a minute.” Shin Eunah stopped the others from dispersing, handing each of them a coffee can from her bag. They all accepted it without question, expecting as much, and then split up. Kang Shin-hyuk was convinced she was just being conscientious.

“Then...how many are you going to take?” With only the two of them there, Shin Eunah took out a document and pen from her bag. It may have just been because of his mood, but Shin-hyuk thought her speech was becoming more comfortable around him. He put down his canned coffee and tilted his head.

“There will be a few more...I think ten.”

“Ten, did you make all of them?”

“No, not yet, just three. I’m planning to finish the rest from now on.” Including the steel javelin he made the other day, he had three that Lee Manwoo had certified. The remaining seven would be forged from the magic metal he would prepare. He wanted to bring the Brenite Spear, but it would be hard to explain where it came from. Thinking about Lee Manwoo’s personality, he wondered if he would even be willing to give the okay sign.

“From now on? Is that possible?”

“Yeah.”

“...” Upon hearing that, Shin Eunah frowned slightly and looked at the watch on her delicate wrist. It was a brand of watch Shin-hyuk had never even heard of, and he wondered how expensive it had been.

“Is it possible to see the production myself? I’ve been interested in it for a while.”

“Uh, um...” He wondered if it would be okay. She shouldn’t have any knowledge of how Anvil actually forged, so it might be fine.

“Yes, but there is a teacher in the club...”

“That’s no problem.” There was one problem that Shin-hyuk overlooked, however, and it was how eye-catching Shin Eunah was. As she walked alongside him to the clubroom, everyone they passed had their eyes on them.

“It’s her...”

“What, why is she here?”

“Do you not know? I saw her at school a few days ago...”

“She’s so pretty...”

“Hey, it’s the Rookie King. Are you with him?”

Kang Shin-hyuk felt like he was the focus of the rumors that were spreading among the people right now, even from the little he could hear. He had already been attracting a lot of attention these days, but now that he was seen with Shin Eunah...he wished he could just grab one of these people and explain that she was his supervisor for gate practice. Maybe this was what she had been aiming for? No, it seemed that she didn’t care about her surroundings at all with her unchanging, icy expression. He sighed and proceeded as quickly as he could to the third floor of the Biryong Hall.

“Mr. Lee Manwoo.”

“Well.” In the room of the Artifact Production Club, Lee Manwoo was sitting alone and reading a newspaper. In these days where everything had been replaced by digital, it was the very image of a stubborn, old craftsman. Almost too much so.

“Well?”

“Mr. Lee Manwoo, long time no see.”

“Alright...it’s you.” The two seemed to know each other. It was only natural, as she was a graduate of Shinyoung. But he wondered why Claire hadn’t known about that fact if she suspected Lee Manwoo was here. As Shin-hyuk tilted his head, the two continued to converse.

“I heard about what happened a while ago, I’m sorry.”

“It’s not something for you need to apologize for.”

“Alright.”

“Now, why are you...hmm, yes. You are their trainer. Do you have any doubts he made it himself?”

“No, I came to watch the production process.”

"It's a demonstration then." Lee Manwoo frowned.

"Are you going to badmouth this guy's work?"

"Huh?"

"No." Kang Shin-hyuk, who was listening from the side, raising his head. Shin Eunah was quick to deny his words, and Lee Manwoo clicked his tongue.

"This student came to the club once and said that compared to what they were looking for, what we had was far short of it."

"..." Shin Eunah clamped her mouth shut. Kang Shin-hyuk began to recall what Claire previously told him about Lee Manwoo and how Shin Eunah said he could not compare to Anvil. Shin-hyuk wondered about that story, and Lee Manwoo moved forward slightly as if to protect Shin-hyuk.

"If you're going to comment about this guy's work, then just go back. I can vouch that this guy can create artifacts."

"Are you teaching him yourself?"

"...No, not quite."

"I'm relieved."

"What a terrible guy." Shin Eunah was hostile towards the old man without hesitation. Lee Manwoo clicked his tongue at her words, but only let her enter after she pledged not to bad mouth Shin-hyuk's work.

"Then look. I purchased some of the most commonly used magic metal, Kenyon, and some of the more popular metal you might look for, Alite." Lee Manwoo had prepared four kilograms of the metal total, with two one-kilogram ingots each. The Kenyon had a shiny silver look to it, and the Alite radiated a subtle golden glow. Shin-hyuk was more interested in the Alite than the Kenyon.

"Kenyon is, in a sense, the top version of steel. It is reinforced by absorbing magical power, so it is preferred by those who use magic. It also has a high rate of success in enchanting...Alite, on the other hand, doesn't accept magical power and is hard to turn into an artifact. But once completed, it is

excellent for blocking and destroying magic.” New novel chapters are published on NovelFire.net

“I see...” Lee Manwoo had known Shin-hyuk couldn’t handle magic and must’ve prepared it out of consideration for him. Shin-hyuk smiled ambiguously at him.

“It’s a waste to turn it into a javelin.”

“Every attempt has meaning. Try it.”

“If you say so.” He took the two Alite ingots without any further hesitation. Shin Eunah struck up a conversation with Lee Manwoo as they watched him turn on the furnace.

“I heard you gave up the hammer.”

“I did. Still, I thought I could clear the road ahead of him.”

“Is that so? You’re doing that much.” Shin Eunah’s expression hardened, and Lee Manwoo continued.

“So, tell me. Is it possible that you were connected to that guy...”

“Yes, Jormungand...I was informed that the anti-superhuman coalition is starting to move again.” Lee Manwoo’s expression also hardened and became grim. He had a bad relationship with the group called Jormungand.

“It’s said they are recruiting new blood after losing many members in the previous conflict. Shinyoung decided to put their prospects together after receiving that intel.”

“Are you a part of that escort?”

“We are cooperating with Vanguard as well. So even if there is another accident, the students will be safe.”

-Klang! Klang! Klang!

Kang Shin-hyuk started hammering on the molten metal as the two continued to talk.

“I still don’t like what the higher-ups are doing.”

“...It was the best choice to protect the students.”

“I won’t deny that, but it’s dangerous.”

“From the moment they enter this school, the students will be prepared to fight.”

“Aren’t those just pretty words? Well?” Shin Eunah didn’t respond, staring at the figure of Shin-hyuk while he worked. Lee Manwoo nearly passed out as he witnessed the small smile on her lips.

‘She can smile?’ Lee Manwoo had been interested in her ever since she complained about his work being bad. The Ice Princess, the Lightning Witch, and so on. Just by looking at her nicknames, you could get a sense of how beautiful she was- and her terrible personality. She never involved herself with anyone during the three years she was at Shinyoung, and no one had seen her smiling face. This continued after she graduated and became a member of the Superhuman association.

‘But she...’ Lee Manwoo recalled the day she visited the club room and spat on their work. She had said it was lacking compared to what she was looking for. So, what if she had found it? What if that was Kang Shin-hyuk? What if it weren’t to observe his work that she had come here?

‘Huh...at least I don’t have to worry about his safety.’ Lee Manwoo was surprised at the conclusion he had come to, so much, so laughter came out of him unbidden. Shin Eunah turned to him with a scary expression.

“ ... ”

“Is there a problem...?”

“...No, no...” Shin Eunah turned her head back expressionlessly, but Lee Manwoo, with the eyes of a craftsman, could see her blushing ears. Of course, he looked away without a word.

Kang Shin-hyuk was forging the magic metal, unaware of what was happening around him.

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Chapter 46 - Dragon's Yeouiju (1)

Chapter 46 - Dragon's Yeouiju (1)

-You have earned 1 Intermediate Agility Potion as a bonus for today's login.

It was a bright Friday morning on the day of the gate practice. Kang Shin-hyuk, who had continued to refine his mind until he went to bed, was suddenly distracted by seeing the log in bonus.

"Agility potion? Administrator, does drinking that increase your agility?"

-Unfortunately, it is not a permanent increase. It will amplify your agility by two levels for thirty minutes.

"Even a temporary effect is great." The administrator informed him that the lower level potion could be purchased as a basic item from the transaction board, as an item sold by the Hero Universe itself. Even a one-level increase would be great, but the price was 100,000 HP, so he decided to give it up. Today's bonus was an absurd enough win.

-Do note that it will only go so far as SS rank, given it is an intermediate potion.

"An intermediate potion covers up to SS?" As far as Shin-hyuk knew, there were rare cases where a skill or status would exceed the S rank. If one did, it was enough for one to be considered a top ranker. How could any potion that pushes someone up to an SS rank not be advanced?

"How many levels does the status go up to..." Currently, he had: Strength B-, Agility B+, Health B, Spiritual Strength B-. Now all of his physical statuses had entered the B rank since his second trait evolution, but now he suddenly felt pathetic. Even Shin Eunah, who Kang Shin-hyuk dared not compare himself

to, was treated as a newcomer to the Hero Universe. The administrator sent another message as if shaking his head.

-You will surely reach that far someday.

“Is that really true...”

-Of course. As soon as the synchronization rate reaches 20% and the second VIP privilege is released, the chance you'll receive a growth-speed buff from the log in bonus will increase.

Shin-hyuk could easily count the number of times he had received it so far. If he could get that buff more often, however, that would be great for his training.

-In addition to that, there will be a status growth potion among the basic items on the trading board. It can be applied with the growth rate buff to increase its efficiency.

“What's the price?”

-As a special reminder, the price of a lower potion that will increase your growth rate by 30% for a day is 300,000 HP.

He knew it. Even after he restored some of his VIP rights and recovered a lot of HP, it seemed like so little now. There was the issue that he also wanted to purchase more inventory space and consumables like the Eiren Jelly. There were also metallurgic materials and unknown conveniences that he might need to spend HP on.

“I have to make weapons and sell them quickly.”

-100HP bonus for members!

“Yes, thank you.” At the administrator's usual bonus, he quickly expressed gratitude. He finished getting ready before giving breakfast to Onyx and heading off to eat at the dorm restaurant himself. Originally, he would train in the morning after breakfast, but he didn't have the time today. It was the day of the gate practice, and they were supposed to gather right at 7 AM after arming themselves.

“Shin-hyuk!”

“Oh.” He met up with Baek In-ha, who was enjoying a nice meal full of popular Korean ingredients.

“Today is perfect Korean cuisine.”

“We always eat this kind of food, even though Western cuisine is popular here.”

“I think it’s a conspiracy to make the Korean students outperform the international ones.” Of course, other national cuisines were also prepared for students. But even most of the international students were eating Korean dishes. As they considered this, they could feel the presence of another person approach them. It was none other than their assistant, Do Woojin.

“Sit next to me.”

“Yeah.” Do Woojin’s meal consisted of much the same, although it was meager compared to Shin-hyuk’s large portions.

“Why are you eating so much this early? Did you forget about practice?”

“Because we have practice we should eat more. Besides, to eat like this outside of campus you’d have to pay a lot more. Eat when you can.” Do Woojin shook his head and sat down.

“The captain asked about you.”

“Captain...Douglas Payne?”

“I asked him what the hell he wanted from me after kicking me out of the second building.” He made an unpleasant expression as he popped a steamed egg in his mouth.

“I answered like that, but sooner or later they’ll probably take direct action.”

“Is it really something to get that upset about?”

“Well...” Do Woojin hesitated, chewing on some fried sprouts before letting out a sigh.

“You may not know this from Stringfield, but the captain wants to make the vice-captain his girl. Since, the first man the vice-captain has shown interest in

is you, naturally, he's interested in who you are. At least, that's the word around."

"So he seriously wants to deal with me because of that?"

"That's the kind of person he is. It's like he's from some book." Do Woojin made a face as he considered Shin-hyuk and Baek. Baek was looking between the two.

"What. Why. What?"

"Doesn't the vice-captain usually scout out and hire talented newcomers?"

"That's why it's a mess. The vice-captain is famous for having a good sense for a person's ability." Kang Shin-hyuk listened to him as he continued to eat the food before him. Do Woojin seemed a little upset at least in part by that.

"The captain didn't seem to notice that, though, which must be annoying for you because you heard the vice-captain was interested in you."

"I didn't do anything."

"It doesn't really matter. This stuff is happening because of you, regardless of whether you did something wrong or not." It bothered him to be surrounded by this, but he figured he could at least look after them since they would be in the dungeon together. But he honestly felt that he would rather them take care of it on their own. All he did was eat the muffin Eleanor gave him.

"Anyway...be careful."

"Thank you for worrying about me."

"Hmph." Do Woojin pretended like he wasn't worried and just ate his rice. Kang Shin-hyuk smiled as he emptied the remaining rice on his plate as well. Baek was eating at the fruit he had for dessert.

7 AM. All 1st-year students had gathered in their groups in the grand courtyard. They listened to a brief speech from the principal and were now on their way to their assigned gate with their supervisor. There were a total of seventy-five groups and a total of three-hundred people, including eight

classes from the Knight Department and two from the Magic Department. The only one entering Crow's Nest, however, was Group 7 of C Class.

"Morning."

"Hello." Kang Shin-hyuk, who had arrived with Do Woojin and Baek In-ha, greeted Karen, who was looking particularly good. She tilted her at the three approaching.

"When did you get so close?"

"We just ate rice together."

"Alright? Anyway, Shin-hyuk, come to our barbecue party this Sunday. Free unlimited meat!"

"I'm not going."

"Why?!" She let out a yell but surprisingly, Do Woojin moved up to side with her.

"It might be better to join us if you want to avoid all this bothersome work."

"Hey, then I would be confronted in earnest. That would be more troublesome..."

"Is there a problem here?" As Shin-hyuk refuted him, a voice popped out from behind them. At the same time, everything became noisy.

"It's the Empress!"

"She's real!"

"That's the special forces."

"How did they get that person to become their supervisor?"

Shin-hyuk turned around to see the figure of Shin Eunah, the grand-daughter of Anvil, emitting the chill of absolute zero through her golden eyes.

"Is someone picking on Kang Shin-hyuk? Who dares?" She looked straight at Do Woojin as she asked this, which was scary to me even on the sideline.

“Well, uh...that’s...”

“It’s nothing serious, just a petty dispute.”

“...” Do Woojin was embarrassed by her unflinching gaze, so Shin-hyuk intervened quickly. Shin Eunah’s eyes became a little gentle.

“A trivial dispute...alright. But if there is anything unreasonable happening, please consult with me. I will take formal action through the principal.”

“Okay.” Was she the principal now? Even if he woke up from death, he would never consult Shin Eunah.

“I’ll always be around so that nothing happens to Shin-hyuk!”

“Alright. Now, everyone. Head this way.” She responded coldly to Baek, who was trying to score points and lead the group to line up. A total of seventy-five groups were lined up side-by-side.

“Look over there.”

“It’s the Thunder Empress.”

“Pretty...”

“I’m sorry...”

She wore a plain black suit, but her luminous beauty was enough to attract attention. Exclamations erupted among the people who saw her, but she was staring straight ahead without paying it any mind. The atmosphere didn’t change at all during the principal’s admonition, but immediately after the training session started, she turned around and let out a brief shout. NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON NO(v)elFire.net

“Start!” The command rang out amongst all of those gathered, but especially in Kang Shin-hyuk’s ears. That was because of the ear microphones that each member of his group was wearing.

“Where’s that group going?”

“I’m envious.”

Groups rushed forward as if they were competing, but Shin Eunah let their group without the worry of the surrounding atmosphere. That attitude of always maintaining one's own pace was something Kang Shin-hyuk wanted to learn.

"When superhumans engage in gate operations, there are two ways they move. The first is in an emergency dispatch due to an irregular gate. The second is in a general dispatch. In the case of the second, there is no problem in taking any mode of transportation so long as you're not late." Shin Eunah quickly explained to the group as she led them off of the school grounds.

"For an emergency dispatch, all available means must be used to arrive at the meeting point as quickly as possible. The state will even compensate for damage to public or private properties due to the activation of abilities. Then, with that, we will carry out an emergency call."

"Yes?" Shin Eunah disappeared from the spot without giving them a chance to ask what she meant. Immediately afterward, Shin-hyuk's stick rang with a notification. She sent him a map with the location of the meeting point.

"Then, I'll go too!"

"Oh, you bastard!"

"Me too!" Baek In-ha quickly recognized the situation and ran. Karen bolted after him, leaving only Shin-hyuk and Do Woojin facing each other. Do Woojin already knew he would be the last to arrive.

"See you later."

"Fuck!" Shin-hyuk also hit the ground running, exerting his spiritual power to the max to increase his speed. His D rank regenerative power would keep his muscles from fatiguing.

"What are you, Shin-hyuk?!"

It didn't take long for him to catch up to Karen, who was running to her fullest. She let out a shout of fear as she noticed him passing her.

"Why are you faster than me?!"

“Well...” At the athletic meet, he had heard her agility was B rank. Now, he was B+, thanks to the rapid growth of his second awakening. That wouldn't have been enough to compete with her ability, but he had his own spiritual power.

“A scam! You're a scam!”

“See you later!”

“Ahhhh!” Shin-hyuk leisurely overtook her as she angrily sped up.

The practice had already begun.

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Chapter 47 - Dragon's Yeouiju (2)

Chapter 47 - Dragon's Yeouiju (2)

“Huh, huh, huh...”

In downtown Jongno was the Crow's Nest, a D+ class gate surrounded by barricades to prevent the public from entering. Do Woojin, who arrived last, was gasping for breath. Shin Eunah was looking over him calmly.

“It is good to hurry at the words emergency dispatch, but keep in mind you need to be able to fight as soon as you arrive on site.”

“Okay...”

“If you're not confident in your own speed, it would be good to arrange a special means of transportation in case of an emergency call or seek cooperation from another superhuman.”

“...” He nodded silently, and Kang Shin-hyuk nodded along with him, thinking there was a third method.

‘Although that’s a special means of transportation.’ Things like magic bikes and cars were on the market, and they had superhuman-only vehicles that could speed up according to one’s magical power. The prices started in the billions, of course.

‘But I don’t have magical power.’ He did have spiritual power to strengthen himself, but it wasn’t useful for a magic vehicle. Then, he considered, there would be no choice but to make something. He decided he would have to put that off until his metallurgy reached at least A rank.

“Look, it’s Shinyoung students.”

“Are the students going in there?”

“Hey, it’s the Empress. The Empress!”

Kang Shin-hyuk raised his head to the sounds coming around him. Jongno had many people and was considered the number one political city in Korea, so it had taken especially careful measures around the gate. To enter Crow’s Nest meant you were a recognized superhuman.

“They send their students to this gate?”

“Aren’t their students special?”

“Hey, that boy is so handsome.”

“Not that one...”

It was a stable gate that didn’t have the risk of reversing flow – a phenomenon in which monsters would come out of the gate due to a failure to handle it –, but it had great meaning because it was Jongno’s gate.

“After a five-minute break, we will enter.”

“Alright.” Perhaps that was why Shinyoung assigned Group 7 to this gate. Kang Shin-hyuk shrugged as he could feel people watching them, with some even taking pictures. He struck Baek In-ha on the side, who was posing.

“Don’t do something that blatantly visible.”

“Kuhh, you got stronger...” NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON
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Five-minutes passed, and Do Woojin was able to recover back to a fighting condition at that time. The group held each other's hands to pass through the gate; Shin Eunah stood at the front of the barricade holding Shin-hyuk's hand. She used her superhuman registration card to open the barricade, which slid open for them to pass.

“Don't let go of each other's hands until we're all completely inside the gate.”

“Okay!” Kang Shin-hyuk felt a faint trembling in Shin Eunah's hand. ‘What? She's a certified S+ rank, she can't be nervous to enter a D+ gate...’ That said, he wondered if there was a hidden situation behind the exercise. While he considered it, she stepped through the vortex of pale gray floating above the ground.

-Entered the D+ level gate Crow's Nest.

The message of Gaia System, not the Hero Universe, struck his retina. The world went round and round, and the next moment he had already arrived in another world. It was his first time entering a dungeon.

‘It's similar to the dimension quest.’ He thought blankly as he looked up to the sky. Surprisingly, the sky above them was taller and bluer than the one outside the gate.

“It looks high, but it's not really. Depending on the grade of the gate, the area inside will vary.”

“I see...”

“Teacher, can we let go now?” Karen spoke up, and Shin Eunah looked surprised for a moment. She recovered quickly, nodding, and then let go of Shin-hyuk's hand.

“Yes, you can.” Freed from Karen and Shin Eunah, Shin-hyuk busied himself, preparing for battle. The armaments he had brought, with permission from the school, were nine steel javelins. They were: the D+ splitting steel javelin, the C- hawk's steel javelin, one made of Alite, and finally a D+ steel sword. He took one of the javelins out and hung a second one around his waist. He

prepared a bucket to carry the rest and put it over his shoulder. He had a bit of luggage, but he wasn't uncomfortable carrying it all.

"Did you really make all of that?"

"If I didn't, I wouldn't have received permission."

"Awesome..." Karen was armed with a bow and a long spear, where Do Woojin held a greatsword and a towering shield. No doubt it was for when he grew in size, although Shin-hyuk couldn't judge someone for overburdening themselves. Baek In-ha was the least armed, wearing only combat boots with a small metal blade protruding from the end. Aside from that, he was dressed casually.

"I will follow from behind. From now on, everything will be subject to evaluation, so keep that in mind." As soon as she finished speaking, she fell in behind the party. It wasn't a joke; she was completely out of sight behind them. They looked as if they were possessed by a ghost, but soon regained their senses and went into formation.

"Alright then, go ahead. Did you memorize all the maps?"

"Yeah. This will probably be the D pattern." Dungeons were deactivated each time they were cleared and then reactivated after a certain set amount of time called resetting. The internal structure of the dungeon would also slightly change, along with the distribution of monsters. Of course, there were limitations to this, so instead of a completely new dungeon, instead there were several similar patterns.

"Then let's go."

"Let's do it!" At Shin-hyuk's words, Karen shouted vigorously. Baek raised his arms to follow her, and Do Woojin held his weapons tighter. Shin-hyuk responded with a rough smile. However, their efforts to inspire their own spirits would soon wither in vain. Because the dungeon was too easy.

-Kuah!

"Monster!" It was a Gray Crow, the main monster in the Crow's Nest. It was as big as a human with a clever intelligence not prone to provocation. They didn't have long-range combat capabilities, however, and were easy to deal with.

“Kuh!” Shin-hyuk found it, and the moment he let out a cry, he threw his javelin with all his might. It gave the Crow no chance to escape as it flew faster than a bullet with his B rank strength, accurately piercing the Crow’s head to kill it. There was no message, which made Shin-hyuk think the Hero Universe didn’t count monsters below a certain level.

“Oh.”

“I guess it’s natural you can kill a D class monster in one hit.”

“But how do you retrieve that?”

“That’s the only downside. I can recover them after the battle.” He agreed it would be nice if they had an automatic recovery function, but it turned out that option belonged to a sword, not a javelin.

“Then I will retrieve it. I can go before the formation collapses and then get back.”

“Stop...whoa.”

“I’m back, was I fast?” Before he could even say thank you, Baek had returned with a javelin and a gray crow in hand. From him, it didn’t matter if it was a kilometer or not. He could travel back and forth within a second.

“Much faster than before.”

“Well, here you go.” As Baek returned Shin-hyuk’s javelin with a smile, Shin-hyuk realized it was still impossible for him to catch up with this guy.

“What about the monster corpse? It’s worth money.”

“Usually, we’d have a porter. But it can’t be helped...”

“It’s my job as supervisor.” Shin Eunah suddenly appeared in the air, grabbing the Gray Crow. It was immediately sucked into the air, which she explained as a rare inventory artifact, but Shin-hyuk knew the identity of the inventory.

“All corpses will be dealt with after training. If there is a skill stone, it will be distributed to the most suitable person.”

“Do skill stones actually show up?”

“Sometimes.” With a word, their motivation grew immensely. A skill stone was the fastest way for a superhuman to grow through the gate, although the probability was clearly slim. She clearly knew how to raise morale like a professional. They had no hesitation now, especially now that Shin-hyuk had someone to recover his javelins. He led the group, throwing one whenever he saw a Gray Crow. He didn’t even need to rely on his special javelins; the normal ones were doing fine.

“Hey, we don’t have anything to do.”

“I believe there is a section where the number of monsters is diversified. We’d usually come across more sooner, but Shin-hyuk is killing the Gray Crows before they can react.”

“We’ll have to kill the mobs before the boss, anyway, so let’s pull the crowds little by little from now on and fight.”

“Okay, then Karen will start first.”

“Okay.” Under the strict command of Hell Instructor Shin Eunah, Karen’s bow skills had increased remarkably over the past few days. Perhaps her ability to strengthen her nervous system had positively affected her learning ability as well, though she was still bad at studying.

-Kyaaaah!

-Kyaaaah!

“They’re calling for their friends like that.”

“Good. Do Woojin, get ready.”

“Already am.” The Gray Crow that was hit by Karen’s arrow began to scream loudly, soon met with a quick reply. Shortly thereafter, dozens of gray crows began to appear in the sky.

“So many?”

“Shin-hyuk has only been killing them one by one, so now they’re showing up in force?”

“Do Woojin, start provoking!” Kang Shin-hyuk decided to start it off with his steel javelin, which luckily triggered it’s split option from the start to tear into

three Gray Crows instantly. The party's eyes, seeing the power of his artifact for the first time, went wide open.

"Did Shin-hyuk really make that?!"

"Shoot them!" Shin-hyuk significantly reduced the Gray Crow's numbers by throwing successive javelins, backed by Karen, firing off mana-filled arrows to thin them out at a slightly slower pace.

"I'm going to clash head-on. Should I participate in the ranged attack?"

"Do Woojin will bring them down with provocation, I need you to recover javelins."

"Sheesh." Shortly after Baek recovered my javelin, the Gray Crows began to launch their attack. Their method of hunting was to use their beak, sharper than a blade, to sweep down. Do Woojin stepped forward with a tense expression, raising his shield to shout.

"Provocation!"

"Is it a skill that works by shouting like that?"

"Oh, it works." The Gray Crow was not a monster prone to provocation. However, whether the taunt he learned was of a high rarity or his skill aptitude was high, a large number of them stumbled in the air and started to move toward him. Of course, it was only about half, but that felt about right.

"It's being covered by Do Woojin and Baek In-ha."

"Shin-hyuk, please support me. I'll switch to spear now."

"Alright." Again, Kang Shin-hyuk's javelin announced the start of the battle. The Falcon's Steel Javelin, which had the hit and pierce options, stabbed through three Crows and stuck to a fourth one. It continued to fly as the one it stuck to collapsed. But now, Karen wasn't holding back anymore either.

"Ha!" The Gray Crow approaching the ground was struck by a spear and killed. It wasn't an easy thing to kill a D class monster with a single blow, and she was doing it with just a regular spear.

"Be diligent!"

“Ha!” Meanwhile, Do Woojin and Baek also fought very neatly. Baek was light on his feet, jumping up, killing crow after crow with his feet before landing on Do Woojin’s shield.

“What, you’re done already?”

“It’s not that bad of a gate.” It was probably because Baek said that, in the next moment, a bright light burst out of the stomach of a Gray Crow while Shin-hyuk was collecting his javelin from it.

“What?!” Shin Eunah, who had been watching from a distance, approached at a startling speed and began to cast protection magic. Unfortunately, Shin-hyuk was too close to the epicenter of the light to be protected by magic.

-Entered the B+ Class Irregular Gate Tomb of the Mantis. Be careful; this place has greater difficulty than your own ability.

He was swept away by the light.

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Chapter 48 - Dragon’s Yeouiju (3)

Chapter 48 - Dragon’s Yeouiju (3)

Irregular gates would appear at random, but this was the first time Kang Shin-hyuk had heard that an irregular gate would reveal its entrance through the body of a monster inside of another gate.

-She’s a great fool.

The message from the administrator was full of anger.

-If she hadn't stopped it, there would be other victims to ensure your safety.

"No, don't say such terrifying things..." Shin Eunah used her magic to save everyone, including him. All the others except for him were saved, so she was at least seventy-five percent successful.

"But what the hell?"

-An irregular gate is a gate whose timing, scale, and location cannot be predicted. However, someone who can manipulate such a gate certainly exists in this world.

"Is that so?" Shin-hyuk nodded, recalling the troll he had confronted in the previous irregular gate situation. Somehow, the troll had been wandering in search of spiritual power while wielding a weapon that was made by Anvil. It was unlikely that it had just been a coincidence. The existence of Kang Shin-hyuk and the Godslayer sword...no doubt, someone had been confirming that. Now, he was convinced of it.

"Is this about the sword again?"

-I can't be sure, but maybe not. There were too many uncertain elements. There is a high probability that all the people who entered the gate with you, or at least someone among that group, were targeted.

Aiming at people and attracting them into this irregular gate. If that proved to be true, it'd make a huge fuss. It wasn't lost on him how absurd it was that he was the first to get caught in it.

"Can you come to help?"

-It's annoying to give praise, but that woman is the highest-ranking wizard who has mastered not only her own traits but the magic allowed for humans. If you take the right action with the right product, she should come to your rescue. The problem is not her, however...

"Ah, the other's outside can't be left alone."

-That's right. However, when it comes to priorities, your priority should be yourself over anything else, so keep that in mind. Moreover, because of your own mistake, you were left alone in this dangerous place...

The administrator suddenly cut off his message. Shin-hyuk wondered what sort of things he might be telling Shin Eunah, or if he was even communicating with her. Kang Shin-hyuk speculated at will but decided he should first take a closer look at his environment.

“Big.” He couldn’t see the sky. The place where he was now was a cave full of dark and humid energy. Sticky mucus covered the floor, and there were thread strands all over. But, above all, it was big. This natural-looking cave was clearly not something that could exist on earth. Absurdly high ceiling, passages that even a troll could leisurely enter, and above all, rocks were rolling around him.

‘So the monsters that appear here will also be huge...damn it.’ B+ rank gate. Although Shin-hyuk had grown rapidly over the past month, enough to reach Class B, this gate had greater difficulty than that. It was common sense that when entering a gate, enter only the ones that were at least one level lower than yourself. It was rare, but even monsters that shouldn’t appear could. Therefore, that was the common belief established among professionals.

‘But I was sucked into a gate that is higher than me...’ Moreover, the worst part was that someone artificially created this irregular gate to pull him into it. Which meant there was someone who held malice towards him that wasn’t a monster.

-Eunah’s whisper: Grandpa...

It was then that a message arrived from Eunah. Google search NovelFire.net

-Eunah’s whisper: What would you do...Grandpa, what can I do? What do I do? Grandpa, help me...!

-Eunah’s whisper: Grandpa, grandpa. What should I do, what should I do...!

Kang Shin-hyuk stared at it blankly for a moment. It wasn’t uncommon that he thought Eunah was out of her mind, but now she was especially going at it. How did she plan on asking for help if she wouldn’t talk about the situation? That said, she wasn’t necessarily calm right now...but it was clear to him that she was really worried about Shin-hyuk, not Anvil.

-Eunah’s whisper: Grandpa, grandpa...!

-It’s okay.

Kang Shin-hyuk, who was reading her messages constantly, came through and suddenly replied. It felt only natural.

-Eunah's whisper: Yes...?

-It's okay.

-Eunah's whisper: It's really okay?

-Yeah.

-Eunah's whisper: Why, how...? I haven't said anything yet.

-That's... I'll tell you a little later.

Shin-hyuk wondered if he would be caught since he sent such a message. No, he might have been caught already. However, for him, it was more important to care for Eunah right now, who was surely worrying herself silly outside.

-It's really okay, though. So believe and wait.

He couldn't help it. As the synchronization rate gradually increased, he became more aware of Anvil's feelings, who cared for Eunah. He figured it would be more important to calm her down now than worry about what would happen if he were caught. Perhaps it was because he was feeling guilty of hiding it from her.

-Eunah's whisper: Yes...

-Eunah's whisper: Yes!

Fortunately, her answer was positive. He checked the message with a smile, but he couldn't help but worry about the future now that she had calmed down. The administrator's message flew in the next moment to comfort him.

-Your actions were appropriate. She has regained her composure at a phenomenal pace. It seems that in about five minutes, you will be able to find the entrance to the irregular gate and open it again.

"I just need to hold on for five minutes? Thank god..."

-But you have to last five hours.

He stiffened at the message that flew in right after. The administrator began to explain as if it were only natural.

-There are many cases where there is a time gap between the outer dimension and the irregular gate. This one appears to be a particular offender...in other words, you will have to be careful.

“Ha...” Perhaps that was why it took a moment for the messages to fly in from Eunah at first. There was a fair bit of time in-between them as well. He thought it was just because she was agitated, but that wasn’t it. He felt like he wanted to shout out loud but desperately suppressed it because he knew it would be foolish.

Five hours.

Three-hundred minutes.

Eighteen-thousand seconds.

He would have to endure eighteen-thousand seconds in a gate where death could come at any moment.

-Kiii...

At the same time, from the other side of the cave, a noise that distinctly belonged to a monster sounded out. He held his breath as much as he could and went to the rock wall in search of a place to hide. Immediately after, the cavity began to fill with dense mana.

-Kii...

The cry of the monster had a clear intention. Did it have something to do with the mana that just filled the room? Shin-hyuk squeezed the javelin tight in his hand, his knuckles whitening. Fortunately, he had his weapon. He could throw it or just swing it.

-Kiii.

It took another step and made a short cry. It was accompanied by the slight sound of wings. Shin-hyuk instinctively activated his spiritual power and rolled forward, the rock he was hiding behind breaking into pieces.

-Kiiii!

The monster's cry seemed to say, 'As expected!' From the beginning, it had guessed that Shin-hyuk was somewhere in this room. He focused on the creature. It was a mantis, wrapped in a gum-purple colored shell and nearly four meters tall. A long blade on its arm was flashing out.

-Venom Blade Mantis, a B+ monster.

"So it can poison me?"

-That's right.

"Great." Kang Shin-hyuk muttered and began to flee again. The moment his shoulder turned, the blade swung, and a sharp wind flew along his trajectory. The place where Shin-hyuk had been was smashed once more. Pebbles rained down all around him.

-Kiiiiii!

"Kh!" When it tried to swing the blade again, this time, Shin-hyuk swung his javelin. No matter how hard the carapace was, the joints were likely to be weak. The javelin precisely shot out towards the elbow joint that supported the blade, flying too fast for even a B rank monster to react easily.

-Ting!

It bounced off the joint harmlessly.

"Seriously?"

-Kyaaaahhhh!

He was dumbstruck by the ridiculous sight. The monster began to scream and spit something out of its mouth. Shin-hyuk jumped away without looking at what it was, something with an acrid smell passed and grazed the end of his uniform. Shortly after, his uniform top completely melted away. Looking behind him, he could see that purple saliva covered part of the floor, sizzling and breaking the rock down.

"Seriously..." He pressed his heart down and held back his desire to cry, moving again. Combining his spiritual power to his agility, he was able to escape the next attack. He still had an agility potion he could drink as well, so at least he could beat his enemy in terms of speed.

‘No.’ He had only met his first enemy; resorting to drinking potions already would be too much. He needed to save it for the direst of situations. If so...

“Fuck.” He had no choice but to fight back. He prepared a steel javelin, avoiding the attack that came as he swung it forward, once again aimed at the joints. As much as he could, he poured his spiritual power into the weapon that contained his best efforts. However, it also bounced off without an effect this time. As a result, he concluded that a normal steel javelin couldn’t do anything to this mantis.

-Kyaaaahhhhh!

The mantis rushed in with a shout, brushing away the attack. Whenever it took a step, a dull vibration resonated throughout the cavity. Kang Shin-hyuk jumped away desperately, rolling on the ground. ‘Should I close the gap instead? Would it be easier to block his arm at close range? No, he has that acid...’

Kang Shin-hyuk calmed his breathing while taking evasive movements. He had one more shot at this. This time, he prepared the falcon’s steel javelin.

-Kyaaaaah!

“Kh!” Avoiding its wind blade, he carefully threw the spear. Luckily, the javelin’s split option activated. The javelin found its target, as it stuck itself into the monster’s elbow.

-Quoooh!

It made a terrible noise, but Shin-hyuk was happy to hear it. Three javelins tore at the elbow joint, and the blade on it’s left arm fell neatly to the floor.

-Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!

The mantis screamed loudly, spraying acid in every direction. Shin-hyuk ducked behind the largest rock he could find. It melted away, but he was able to stop it from hitting him.

“It works.”

-It works.

The artifact he created had a great effect. There was no happier feeling for a craftsman. The only problem was that he just threw the only artifact he had.

-Gyoaaaahhhhh!

The mantis was thrashing about, and Shin-hyuk examined the arm that fell below it. The javelin was stuck in its joint. If he could recover that, he could get rid of the other arm too. Would that be possible? It seemed difficult, but he had to try it. However, in the next moment, his thoughts were cut off as a thread flew in.

-Gyaaaah!

The mantis screamed, yet the thread that was now connected to him never broke. More strands began to fall down from the ceiling, gradually restraining the mantis and pulling him into the air.

-Click, click-click

There was an unpleasant sound that couldn't be compared to that of the mantis. Kang Shin-hyuk held his breath as he looked up towards the ceiling. A giant spider was pulling up the mantis and began to cocoon it.

"..." He wanted to compliment himself for not making any sound. Fortunately, the spider didn't notice him as it focused on recovering the mantis.

-Very well done. 200HP bonus to members.

Even the message from the administrator sounded quiet. He couldn't say anything out of fear and only spoke once he was convinced the spider was completely gone.

"So, it's the Mantis' Graveyard."

In normal gates, monsters rarely hunt each other, but it's not uncommon in irregular gates.

"I see..." He felt dizzy after holding his breath for too long. If it weren't for his regenerative power, his limit would've arrived long ago. He moved slowly, very slowly, with gratitude for his power. He retrieved the javelin he threw and grabbed the mantis's bladed arm. At that moment, he could feel his spiritual

power permeating and resonating with the mantis blade. He was able to acquire one piece of valuable information as a result.

He realized that both a great crisis and a great opportunity had arrived

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Chapter 49 - Dragon's Yeouiju (4)

Chapter 49 - Dragon's Yeouiju (4)

Two types of monsters lived in the Mantis' Graveyard. There were bug-type monsters that were lower than C class, which weren't very threatening to Kang Shin-hyuk. The ones that he had to be concerned about, however, were the Venom Blade Mantis and their predator, the Spiders. Both were B+ class monsters, and there were quite a few of each of them.

'But the spiders are more interested in the mantises.' Using his spiritual power, Shin-hyuk once again examined what he heard from the mantis's blade he collected. He didn't think he would be able to communicate with the monster's body, but once he knew it was possible, it wasn't difficult to do. The blade contained all of the information about the ecology, combat method, and weaknesses of the creature it was just attached to.

'To think such a possibility was hiding inside my spiritual power.' Of course, he remembered the time he had used his spiritual power to figure out the momentum of the senior who was trying to take a picture of him. But at that time, he was only able to get a rough sense of some of his opponent's power. Perhaps it was because this was a piece taken directly from a living thing, or that his spiritual power had grown more than before. Maybe it was even a combination of the two.

-Member, are you okay?

The administrator sends him a worried message as he stood still there in an emergency situation. He didn't speak openly, but the administrator appeared to be seriously concerned.

"Yes, I'm okay."

-...?

Shin-hyuk's answer was calm. He was still envisioning how to use the new information he had gathered. Soon, he arrived at a conclusion, albeit one with gaps in it.

"Administrator, how much HP do I have?"

-753,090 points.

The administrator responded without delay.

"Wow." He knew it wouldn't be a lot after he had purchased inventory space per 1.5 million HP, but it was enough for now.

"Is there a potion that can refill my spiritual power at once?"

-The cheapest of that type are sold for 50,000 HP apiece.

"Then just one...no, two."

-VIP fee waiver, VIP special discount price both have been purchased for 80,000 HP. This potion has a ten-minute cooldown.

"Thank you for the easy to understand explanation." I now had 670,000 points left. I bought a few more items, including five additional trauma treatment drugs, at 4,000 apiece.

-This product cannot be purchased anywhere else. In the Hero Universe, there are magicians that have been cultivated to create potions.

Shin-hyuk wondered how they compared to the potions Claire made.

"Is there anything I can afford with my remaining money that would help me sneak?"

-Searching transaction board.

It took a little time this time. However, according to Claire, it seemed that the search function of the Hero Universe board wasn't so friendly. It was one more thing he had to thank the administrator for.

-It will take a little time. Can you wait?

"No problem, I also have a little work to do." Shin-hyuk took a seat on the floor, keeping his ears alert for any monsters. The moment he put the blade on the ground and pulled out the sword he had stored in his inventory...

"...What?"

-Myu!

Onyx popped out with a cute cry, hanging off of Shin-hyuk's face. He put a hand over him quickly.

"If you're not quiet here, we could die. Understand?" He whispered quietly, and Onyx let out a small cry to affirm that he understood the situation. Onyx settled in on his shoulder, but he was still confused.

"How the hell did you enter my inventory...was it always possible for living things to enter?"

-Inventory provides an optimal environment for everything stored inside. Keep in mind that items that aren't yours cannot be stored.

Indeed, according to that, Onyx was able to enter it because he was Shin-hyuk's pet. He hadn't even imagined that he would try to crawl in. He really was a fearless little guy.

"I guess he was trying to eat the Brenite in there.

-But I'm glad he's here. I couldn't find a product that would meet your conditions within the price offered, but thanks to Onyx, there are products that could be used. This is the Mimicry Scroll.

"Will it let me imitate his stealth skill?" Onyx had a stealth skill with a whopping A class rarity. He gained it by eating the C class trap Shin-Hyuk created. The administrator confirmed his speculation without hesitation.

-Correct. However, you must remain attached to the target. You can borrow the target's skills until the seventh time the scroll expires. The skills that are borrowed are limited to one at a time.

"That's perfect for this moment..." Onyx let out a proud cry as he realized that he was helpful. Shin-hyuk gently patted him.

"How much is it?"

-It is 560,000 HP.

"I knew it."

Fortunately, since his encounter with the mantis, he hadn't run into any other monsters. Shin-hyuk began to mobilize once more after finishing his preparations. The mantises would move quickly once they realized one of theirs had been killed.

-Mimicry has imitated the entity Onyx's Stealth (A) ability. The skill proficiency of the borrow skill is D.

"Good...I don't know when you increased your skill level, but good job." He activated the imitation scroll he purchased right away, confirming that Onyx's stealth was applied to him. It would release if he engaged in combat, but as long as he had the scroll, he could reapply it at any time.

-Member, are you prepared?

"Yeah." He nodded seriously at the administrator's obvious concern. There were many types of superhumans in this world, but Kang Shin-hyuk was the type who attacked monsters even if it was dangerous for him.

"Let's go." He had a javelin in one hand and the mantis blade in the other. After removing the flesh from the blade, which was two meters long, he sharpened it with a whetstone and used the leather he had in his inventory to make a handle. He had just done that, but a nice makeshift sword had been born. His previous experience in Kieron making armor from shell really helped him in making it.

-Do you have any reason to make it?

“To deal with the big guys, I needed a larger blade. Moreover...” The blade was highly toxic and would be able to block the webs that the spiders emitted.

-When I look back, it seems you’ve grown quite a bit. Infiltrating the enemy’s base, tearing off a bit of their body, and processing it into a weapon on the fly...300HP Bonus!

“Thank you.” Maybe the day he would receive more than 1,000 HP as a bonus was approaching. He shook the thought quickly, sensing a monster.

‘Spider.’ A giant spider was peeking out from a hole in the ceiling. It had eight purple legs and was making a creepy clicking sound. Kang Shin-hyuk held his breath as it blinked its compound eyes, then returned into the hole. His stealth had proven effective.

“Thanks to that, I’m alive.” He tried to be bolder with the next monster he met. The mantis never recognized he was there. It was only a D rank stealth ability, but it was incredibly effective.

-The skill proficiency of Onyx’s stealth skill became D+ rank, and the level of imitation has increased with it.

It was even growing in real-time. He didn’t want to imagine what would’ve happened if Onyx didn’t eat that trap he made.

‘Nest.’ He soon reached the entrance of a cave where there were a lot of mantises. Until now, they had been walking alone, but now he estimated at least thirty of them were at the front of the cave. He knew what was in there.

‘That female mantis is holding an egg. These must be the soldiers who protect the young then.’ This was a harsh breeding environment. However, they found ways to live and deal with the spiders which they coexisted with, overcoming them with numbers so that they could protect their offsprings. New novel chapters are published on NovelFire.net

‘But that’ll give me a way to catch them.’ Shin-hyuk found a wide passage within sight of them and placed a bottle in the center of it. It was the monster attractor (C+) he obtained as a login bonus before. It was a hunting aid that could attract monsters up to the B- class. By itself, it couldn’t attract B+ mantises. So, Shin-hyuk used the spiritual power potion he bought, using his spiritual power to strengthen the lure. Before, this idea would have been impossible for him. But now, he was in an environment where he had to

squeeze his brain for all the ideas he could. That was helping him learn how to use his spiritual power.

-Now, you've mastered the training of spiritual power. At this level, you can attract as many as you like.

"Thank you, then..." He quietly left the bottle and took out another in his hands. It was the spiritual glue that he obtained. When applied with spiritual power, it became a transcendent adhesive that would bind all things inconsistent with his own spiritual power.

"Is this not sold at the store?"

-Upon the third liberation, we can purchase them for 2 million HP each. When that time comes, the discount will be even better, so you could buy it for 800,000 HP!

"I asked for nothing." He grunted and spread the adhesive around the monster attractant. As expected of a product worth 2 million HP, the amount of adhesive was quite large. The entire passage could be covered without a problem.

'That should be enough. I'm now ready.' Kang Shin-hyuk carefully distanced himself from the passage while still hiding. Only then did the mantises find the lure placed in the center of the passage, making a noise to alert the others. A steel javelin, fired off by Shin-hyuk, shattered the bottle to spread the lure.

-Kiiiiii!

-Kiaaaaaa!

There was a terrible commotion. The mantises screamed and ran into the passage together. Even though his hiding was dismissed as soon as he threw the javelin, they ran forward without paying him any mind as they flew toward the attractant. Soon after, they all stopped in place where he had spread the adhesive, their feet bound to the floor.

-Kiiiiii!

-Kiaaah!

-You'll need to hurry. Once activated, Spirit Glue only works for a few minutes.

“That’s enough!” Kang Shin-hyuk ran right into the cave holding the egg clusters. A blade of wind flew out to meet him, but he rolled straight down the floor to avoid it.

-Kiiii!

A giant female mantis revealed her anger at this invader. The cave behind her was filled with mantis eggs.

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Chapter 50 - Dragon’s Yeouiju (5)

Chapter 50 - Dragon’s Yeouiju (5)

All superhumans had a limit to their growth. Traits, skills, and even stats had clear limits that could be reached, and a person’s potential could be judged by how high their limits were. Usually, that could be roughly determined by the rarity of a trait or skill, so superhumans with high rarity traits were considered elites. Kang Shin-hyuk himself had acquired an S Rank characteristic through two trait evolutions, so his limit was naturally higher.

But how did a superhuman become stronger than that limit? There were two methods. The first was to keep things simple and work hard. Deeply exploring one’s characteristics and repeatedly training the body to challenge one’s limits would slowly grow one’s status.

‘Which is what they make the students, including me, do...’

The second was hunting monsters. The Gaia system itself was a system that presumed the ability to grow by hunting monsters. Abilities would grow by absorbing bits of the monsters they defeated. You couldn’t get strong by killing

monsters weaker than yourself, but in contrast, you could get stronger quickly by defeating monsters stronger than you. It was like the idea of experience in a game.

‘Of course, you don’t see dramatic changes right away as you level up in a game, and you might feel your ability growing faster by training...’

Nevertheless, by hunting monsters steadily, your stats would surely grow. When Kang Shin-hyuk defeated the mutant troll and devoted himself to training, his status grew rapidly as evidence of this. As he had found in that case and in fighting the strong enemy in Kieron, this way of growth brought no small risk of death.

-Gyaaaah!

“If it’s just one, it’s worth trying.”

-Myu?!

“Onyx, quickly get in the inventory.” In front of his eyes now, there was a giant female mantis. This was a particularly strong one among the B+ Venom Blade Mantises, who was put in charge of guarding and raising the young. However, Shin-hyuk had already learned the pattern of her behavior through the mantis blade he had acquired. Holding it, it was like he was a mantis himself.

‘It’s odd when I feel united with the Godslayer but...this isn’t bad.’

-Kiiiiiii!

The mantis cried out and swung its front limbs. Shin-hyuk laughed quietly, avoiding the attack that had arrived just as expected. Originally, they collected mana in their limbs to fire off toxic wind blade attacks, but she wasn’t doing that. The reason wasn’t that she couldn’t, but because this space was full of mantis eggs.

‘I’ve heard rumors but...’ He had heard urban legends of superhumans who fell through single-shot absorption gates, falling into the center of a nest of insect-type monsters. They were able to gain enough experience to increase their status on the spot. It wasn’t known how high the experience value of a monster’s egg was, since those stories were relegated as an urban legend, but the egg of a B+ rank monster would no doubt be worth quite a bit.

-Monster eggs provide experience equivalent to one-eighth of an adult. However, their price remains the same.

He found out that information from the administrator.

“So...like this!” He struck the nearest egg clutch with the forelimb blade; the eggs collapsed with an unpleasant crunching sound. Whether the eggs weren’t resistant, or a direct cut was too much even for a regular mantis, the eggs quickly began to blacken and rot away from the toxic limb. As soon as he destroyed the clutch holding more than a hundred eggs, a message appeared before his eyes.

-You have suppressed a mass of beings that are harmful to the order of things. Bonus on membership level! You acquired 120,000HP! As a VIP bonus, you gain additional HP equivalent to 50% of the reward, for a total of 180,000HP!

-Your strength has grown to B rank!

At that moment, he felt a rush shoot through him. Not just because he acquired HP, but because the moment he reaped those countless lives, he could feel something absorbed into himself. The growth in strength wasn’t much compared to the monster on Kieron, but it was still incredible. Shin-hyuk was half-way occupied with those ecstatic thoughts when...

-Kiiiiii!

The blade of the mantis aimed for the nape of his neck, strong enough to kill him instantly if it hit.

‘But.’ It wasn’t difficult to avoid. He should be safe if he kept moving away from it to break the egg clutches first. The main concern was how much time he would have to break all the eggs.

‘The spiders will react after making such a commotion.’ And, more than that, the spiritual glue wouldn’t be able to hold a B+ rank monster forever. It was best to work as quickly as possible and then get out. Kang Shin-hyuk grabbed the forelimb blade with both hands before letting out a scream as he charged at the mantis.

“Break!”

-Kiiii!

The mantis spat out a glob of acid at him, faster than any bullet, but Shin-hyuk was prepared. He turned the blade to block the acid. It couldn't melt through the blade as he swung it forward, causing it to spatter on a nearby egg clutch. He hoped the experience for that would be given to him.

-Kiiii?!

The mantis crossed its forelimbs, and Shin-hyuk lowered himself as he continued his charge. He ducked under the swinging blades, waiting for the moment it tried to recover. Now that he could read the enemy's attack patterns, it wasn't difficult to evade them. He moved in close to its body as its balance was disturbed, cutting deep into the mantis's neck joints. It was a perfect attack with uncanny timing, but true to the rank of B+, the monster didn't die immediately after being dealt a fatal blow.

-Kiiiiii!

As Shin-hyuk tried to pull the sword out, the two forelimbs moved in behind him to confine him there. The mantis lowered its split head, revealing disgusting four-pronged tentacles protruding from within. It was proof that, despite looking like a mantis, there were actually monsters. It wasn't information contained in the forelimb blade, either.

"Kh..." In a split second, he considered his options. 'Can I escape if I leave the weapon? No.' He realized he had to cut through with all he had. He squeezed the blade harder, clenching his teeth as he poured his spiritual power into the blade. His skill was activated, a dragon pattern engraving itself on the forelimb blade. As Shin-hyuk's eyes turned golden, the forelimb blade began to vibrate.

-Kiiii!

"Khhh!" Kang Shin-hyuk gave up his shoulders to the counterattack of the enemy that flew in. Panic set in as he could feel his flesh being carved, but he had no time to look at the wound. Wind began to emanate from the vibrating blade, blowing the head of the mantis clean off. According to the forelimb, however, they could move for a bit without their heads.

"Hoo..." Fortunately, that was the end. There was no trace of the head or the tentacles, and the torso soon stopped moving and fell in place.

-You have suppressed a being that was harmful to the order of things. Bonus on membership level! You acquired 10,000HP! As a VIP bonus, you gain additional HP equivalent to 50% of the reward, for a total of 15,000HP!

-Your Regeneration ability became D rank.

-You are poisoned. Even taking into account your regenerative power, you should take at least an intermediate level of detoxification. An appropriate item has been purchased immediately at the discretion of the administrator. 20,000HP will be deducted.

“Thank you.” Since the message was urgent, Kang Shin-hyuk took the detoxification drug that appeared in his hand without question. Looking at his shoulder, he saw that his uniform was a mess, and flesh had been dug out of his shoulder. The drug would neutralize the poison, but it didn’t help with the actual wound. He drank a recovery potion and applied some trauma medicine to the wound, which radiated pain through him.

“Ow...still hurts less than the troll.”

-Member...

“No, I’m sorry.” The link to the origin of this information rests in NovelFire(.)net

-I’m not trying to blame you. I just noticed something outside has changed, but it isn’t good news...

“Changed? What did?”

-Myu?

He took out Onyx from his inventory and asked the administrator to elaborate.

-An irregular gate has occurred again in the Crow’s Nest. However, this time, it is an emissive type. Shin Eunah is currently engaged in a battle against unknown enemies to protect the students...I don’t think you can wait for outside help.

“So, that means...”

-You have no choice but to clear this gate alone.

“Ah...” He didn’t want to hear that, but that didn’t mean anything would change. It couldn’t be solved, so he decided to figure it out after breaking all of the eggs in this cavern.

Meanwhile, he didn’t notice Onyx approaching the fallen mantis.

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Chapter 51 - Dragon’s Yeouiju (6)

Chapter 51 - Dragon’s Yeouiju (6)

For him, it was like an open-pit flowing with gold and silver. Wherever he went, treasures awaited.

-You have suppressed several beings that are harmful to the order of things. Bonus based on membership level! You received 150,000HP! As a VIP bonus, you will obtain additional HP equal to 50% of the reward, for a total of 225,000 HP!

-You have suppressed several beings that are harmful to the order of things. Bonus based on membership level! You received 110,000HP! As a VIP bonus, you will obtain additional HP equal to 50% of the reward, for a total of 165,000 HP!

-Your Regeneration ability has grown to the D+ rank!

-You have suppressed several beings that are harmful to the order of things. Bonus based on membership level! You received 140,000HP! As a VIP bonus, you will obtain additional HP equal to 50% of the reward, for a total of 210,000 HP!

-Your Health has grown to the B+ rank!

Thinking that the spiders could arrive at any moment, Kang Shin-hyuk immediately launched the wind blade from the forelimb, which he had just learned to activate with his power. The wind blades were just like those launched by the mantises, slicing through the eggs scattered throughout the cavern with ease.

-You have suppressed several beings that are harmful to the order of things. Bonus based on membership level! You received 172,000HP! As a VIP bonus, you will obtain additional HP equal to 50% of the reward, for a total of 258,000 HP!

-Your Spiritual Power has grown to the B rank!

In the process, both HP and experience were pouring in at a tremendous rate. Even his spiritual power had grown to the point he could feel it recovering and expanding, just as he was finishing up with the last clutch of eggs.

“Huh...huh...” Kang Shin-hyuk took a moment to catch his breath after confirming there were no enemies incoming. Rather than being tired from using too much energy, the constant changes he was undergoing were wearing him down. He decided to confirm his status as he busied himself, filling his lungs with oxygen.

[Kang Shin-hyuk: B+ rank]

[Characteristic]

Golden Eyed Dragon (S)

[Physical ability]

Force: B+

Agility: B+ NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON NOVELFire.net

Health: B+

[Special ability]

Spiritual Power: B

Regeneration: C-

[Skill]

Dragon's Fan Dance (S+): B

Metallurgy: C

"Crazy..." Although his agility remained the same, his strength had grown by two stages, and his stamina and spiritual strength by one. Amazingly, his regeneration had grown by three whole stages. While the mantises were sturdy and strong, they weren't very agile. Perhaps, being insect-type monsters, they had a regeneration-like ability that had helped in developing his own.

'But the wall to A-rank is high.' The – or + after the rank indicated a difference in power, of course, but it was incomparable to the letter changing. He had acquired several B+ rank abilities, but Kang Shin-hyuk knew very well of the wall that blocked his progress now. He believed he could become an A-rank superhuman, but there had been plenty in the past who had thrown themselves vainly against that barrier with such beliefs.

'Even so, I'm easily in the top 15%...' At B+, only 15% of the superhumans, or roughly 750,000 of the 5 million, had reached that far. That number was cut in half if you went to A-rank and cut in half once more by going to A+, but Shin-hyuk was confident he wouldn't stop there.

-Don't forget to be vigilant, member. You have just reached the B+ rank, but this gate is still the same level as you.

"I know, but thank you for the good timing with that advice.

-100HP bonus for unattended members!

He knew he couldn't hope for outside help, so he had to work to clear the gate by himself. The added power he acquired here was nothing but laying down the groundwork.

"Well?" A raucous of mantis cries, and clicks filled the cavern. Rather, it had been there all along, but he was just noticing it now that his own battle had calmed down. He made sure his stealth was activated and peeked outside. The group of mantises was engaged in a battle against several spiders.

'The glue is working properly.' He expected the spiders to show up, but given it would mean decreasing his foes, he was glad to see it actually happened. The battle was fiercely unfolding before him. The mantises had been struck by surprise and were unable to move properly because of the glue, yet they had wind blade. The spiders were overwhelming them gradually, but the mantises were fighting back fiercely.

"Okay, then, you can collect the loot..."

-Myu!

"What...you've grown quite a bit."

-Myu?

Kang Shin-hyuk narrowed his eyes at the appearance of Onyx approaching him. If previously he were the size of an apple, now he was more like a pear. It was a subtle difference, but one he recognized. The thorns on his back seemed sharper now too, more like blades than thorns.

"...What did you eat?"

-Myu myu myu... (I only ate half...)

'You only ate half?' After hearing Onyx's honest confession, he looked back to find that one of the mantises' forelimbs had disappeared. While Shin-hyuk had been destroying the egg clutches, Onyx was eagerly gnawing at the forelimb blades. 'No, wait. He's treating that like metal?!'

-Myu?

"...You have to eat plenty when you're young. Good job, good job."

-Myuuuu!

Onyx let out a cry of relief, afraid he would be scolded. Shin-hyuk cut off the other forelimb blade and stowed it in his inventory for later, noticing a glint of blue in the torn neck of the mantis. He grabbed it, thinking it was a mana stone, but it looked a little different.

"Is this...a skill stone?" The words of Shin Eunah came to him as he examined it. He doubted his luck, but he had been ridiculously lucky in falling into the irregular gate. In a bad way, anyway. But this was a skill stone from a B+ gate.

-Please take it right away.

“But it might fail...” He had no idea how compatible he would be with it, but it felt stupid to just store it away when it could be useful.

‘It feels somewhat cold against my spiritual power.’ It didn’t feel bad to him, though. He closed his eyes and held it tightly, the skill stone shattering in his hands. A cool rush of energy flowed through him.

-You learned the attribute skill [Wind Master (A-)].

As the message appeared before him, he desperately suppressed a scream of joy.

‘It’s a skill that deals with one of the four major attributes!’ With the rarity of A-rank, this was the jackpot of jackpots. The skill level was still F-rank, however, so he wouldn’t be able to use it effectively. However, he had a weapon that could assist with it. Creating wind by himself was beyond him right now, but reinforcing it wasn’t so long as he used the forelimb blade. With that, he could create a blade of wind even stronger than the mantises made.

-Myu!

“Huh? What, again...?” Perhaps as an apology for eating the forelimb, Onyx placed something in front of him. It appeared to be half of some broken marble, with faint energy leaking out from it. Shin-hyuk immediately identified it as spiritual power. But why?

-Member, put it in your inventory.

“Yeah.” At the administrator’s message, which contained urgency, he immediately stowed it away.

-The enemy is coming. Hide.

“It’s over already? Onyx, come here.” Holding Onyx in his arms, he immediately activated stealth and hid in a corner. Shortly after, he watched a spider climb inside the cavern. It began to wander around the ceiling with a clicking sound, but shortly stopped in confusion when it found nothing. It clicked a few more times before leaving.

‘...Can it sense movement?’ Kang Shin-hyuk sat there for a while, not moving until he couldn’t feel any signs of movement. Careful to stay hidden, he slowly left the cavern. A sight from a horror movie awaited him. Bits of monsters were scattered about, and the ground was dug up and melted in places. However, the corpses didn’t remain, consumed by the victors.

‘The spiders won and carried them off.’ The mantises might’ve won if it weren’t for the spiritual glue, but if that happened, it wouldn’t have been good for him. It was a bit disappointing he couldn’t recover the parts, but it couldn’t be helped.

‘Well... let’s get started with this gate.’ He confirmed the amount of HP he had acquired. 3.7 million HP. It was a good bit of money; now he had to think of how to use it in clearing the gate.

-Kwoooooong

A dull and massive vibration rocked the space he was in as he was thinking. Anxiety filled him as the inner walls of the gate swayed.

-Be prepared!

Kang Shin-hyuk hugged onto Onyx and squatted down, bracing himself for the terrible shock that reverberated through the gate.

-The Mantis’ Tomb (B+) has transformed into the Queen’s Cobweb (A-) due to the change in the power structure. Be careful!

The world turned over again.

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Chapter 52 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (1)

Chapter 52 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (1)

After being dragged into the B+ irregular gate, he managed to break the enemy's nest and raise his rank to the next level. Just in time for the gate's rank to rise as well. No one would understand if he tried to explain it- even he didn't understand.

"Ha." Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh as he watched the gate's inner walls narrow and became stickier.

-Anything can happen at an irregular gate. Perhaps because of your performance, one of the two forces became superior.

"It was something I had to do to survive, so I won't regret it." Still, he couldn't help but think this was too much. The gap between B+ and A- was massive. It was like the gate itself had a will to kill Kang Shin-hyuk. He wasn't afraid, however. Instead, he set his mind to grow inside this irregular gate. He ground his teeth as he glared at the changing walls.

"Is there something useful I can buy for HP?"

-There is. You can purchase a skill stone.

Kang Shin-hyuk's eyes sparkled upon hearing skill stones could be purchased on the trading board.

-Among them, the most useful in the current situation is the 'Resist Poison.' Your status isn't much lower than the spiders, but if you are poisoned, you cannot deal with it with only C-rank regeneration. However, with the addition of poison resistance, you could overcome it without needing medication each time.

"How much is it?"

-Rare B-rank Resist Poison is currently 2 million HP. Would you like to acquire it?

It was ridiculously expensive, of course, but he had no choice but to buy it. He spent the money and broke it straight away. The greenstone shattered and

absorbed itself into his body, well worth the 1.6 million HP (thanks to the VIP discount).

-You learned the Resistance Skill (Poison Resist (B)). The rarity has increased due to the effect of regeneration, becoming [Poison Resist (B+)]. This chapter is updated by NovelFire.net

Thanks to his regeneration ability, the grade of the skill increased. That was common when the match with a skill was particularly good.

-Next, I recommend some accessories. The cheapest that gives poison resistance is 1.3 million HP...

"No, I won't be able to break through by investing HP only into poison resistance."

-But, member, it is important first of all to survive.

"There is a way to grow my poison resistance without using HP."

-Do you mean to train your immunity now?

Kang Shin-hyuk nodded and raised the forelimb blade above his hand. Only then did the administrator realize what he was trying to do.

-Are you going to harm yourself?!

"I'm trying to grow." Kang Shin-hyuk refuted the concerned administrator.

-Member...

Skills grew by using them. Poison resistance would grow by resisting poison. It would be naturally advantageous to raise the skill rank even a little if possible, rather than go into battle with an F rank skill.

...500HP bonus for brave members.

"Oh, that's a lot of encouragement." Nevertheless, it wasn't possible for him to just cut into himself without hesitation. Letting out a groan, he cut into the back of his hand.

...

“Khhh...”

-Member, are you alright?

“The poison...it works pretty fast.”

-Myu...

Kang Shin-hyuk tried to respond as calmly as possible, hugging onto Onyx as he searched for a safe place to wait. The wound recovered quickly, but he could feel the venom coursing through his veins. The venom of the mantises was on the same level as those spiders, so if he could resist it, he wouldn't have to worry anymore.

‘My head’s spinning...I feel hot...’ When he was poisoned earlier, he took the detoxifying medicine as soon as he could, so he didn't notice it. The poison made him feel as if his blood was burning, and the room was swimming around him.

-Member.

“It’s okay.” He struggled against the dizziness overtaking him for a while, but he suddenly felt the energy in his body begin to resist the poison. His regenerative power was working in tandem with his poison resistance to clear his body of the toxin.

“Whoo...” He breathed out, desperately focused on that power inside of him. He awakened his spiritual power to help with healing. In the end, he was victorious. Thanks to the harmony of the three forces that are his regeneration, resistance, and spiritual power, he was able to drive out the poison.

-Poison Resist has grown to F+ rank.

As soon as the message appeared, he felt refreshed. He let out a sigh with a faint smile. He felt an intense hunger from the vigorous activity of his powers and began to quickly eat the rations and Eiren Jelly he kept in his inventory.

“Can you let me know when an enemy arrives?”

-Originally, the administrator doesn't play such a role...but if it's a member's request, I'd be happy too.

“Please.”

-...The administrator is always on your side.

Laughing at the message, he began to draw his blade across the back of his hand again. This time, the poison felt a little more manageable.

-Poison Resist has grown to D rank. Regeneration has grown to C rank.

His head no longer felt dizzy even when he was poisoned. Unexpectedly, he had also grown his regeneration ability once more, so he felt confident in facing the spider's poison. Deciding he had finished training, Kang Shin-hyuk stood up. He still had two hours left in his mimicry scroll.

“Then, I'll use my remaining HP. Are there any items that increase your spiritual power?”

-Few people deal with spiritual power in the Hero Universe. If it is an item or artifact to increase your spiritual power, no one will be able to create it except for you...although there are items that occur naturally.

Kang Shin-hyuk picked up the meaning of the message. There was that broken marble he picked up earlier that was emitting spiritual power. Perhaps the other half was inside this gate, although that didn't help right now.

“If so...power. How about something to increase strength?”

-The Ogre Power Gauntlet, which will increase your strength to the next level, is going for 3 million HP. It's a classic and great artifact that can boost your power even further with the backing of magic or spiritual power. Were it not for the poison; I would've recommended this to you...

“... I'll give up on buying equipment, I'll take some potions.” The lower level status potion, which lasted thirty minutes and could raise it up to rank A, could be purchased for 100,000 HP per bottle. Surprisingly, he now thought that price was quite low.

-You can only use one status potion per day.

“Then, I don’t need to buy an agility one. I’ll take one for strength and one for stamina.” He felt it was lacking but still acquired two at the price of 80,000 HP per bottle after his discount.

-Member, an explosive egg that boosts your strength by one level for thirty minutes, is being traded for 1 million HP for a set of three. It is a rare product with trading restrictions based on membership level, and there aren’t many opportunities to acquire it.

It was expensive, but he knew the administrator wouldn’t have recommended anything useless. It probably didn’t have a limit to it as the potions did.

“Is it possible to eat two in a row?”

-You can eat all three in a row. However, doing so reduces the duration to three minutes, and the after-effects are severe.

“I wish Claire could make me a potion...” Kang Shin-hyuk complained about the penalty but still bought it. The discount was great, so even after that, he had 1.14 million HP left. He had to save that, though, to buy another mimicry scroll once his current one ran out.

“Good...then let’s go.”

Onyx stood tall atop Shin-hyuk’s shoulder, his blade-like thorns standing on end. It seemed like he was saying that he would pay for his own meal, but no matter how Shin-hyuk looked at him, he still didn’t appear to have the ability to fight on the frontlines. However, no, there was no fight to be found. He only had two hours until his scroll ran out, but he realized something was off.

“I can’t find any spiders...”

-Myu...

Moreover, the internal structure of the gate had completely changed. The memories inside the forelimb blade were no longer helpful. He could buy some more scrolls, but he would probably need to wander inside the gate for a while.

“Would they show up if I ran around without hiding? I’d rather not do that...” According to the information from the forelimb, the enemy was known as a Toxic Web Thrower. It was a type of monster that called out for

reinforcements immediately if things became difficult. Now that the gate had mutated, its structure was more suited for spiders. No matter how strong he became, it would be too much to expose himself. He first organized his thoughts and bought a scroll to apply to hide again.

“Are there any items to find enemies?”

-There are, but they are so popular they are out of stock. Moreover, the search artifacts and the skill stones for search are too expensive...

“Which means I have to figure it out on my own.”

-I apologize.

“No, I’ve been relying enough on the Hero Universe. I’ll figure this out somehow.” He cleared his breath and rolled his head around. It was obvious it wouldn’t work out if he just wandered around like this. ‘How can I find my enemies? What can I do with my abilities now?’ The answer came quickly. It was spiritual power. He learned about the mantises through his spiritual power, so theoretically, he could use it for the spiders. He didn’t have a spider corpse in front of him, but there was the gate itself.

‘If I fail, I’ll look stupid.’ But, if he succeeded...maybe he could experience that same growth once more. Kang Shin-hyuk breathed deeply and reached a hand out to the inner wall of the gate.

He raised his spiritual power with all his might and tried to communicate with it.

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Chapter 53 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (2)

Chapter 53 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (2)

He had experience reading the memories and experiences of objects, but this time his target was the entire irregular gate.

‘I’m asking you.’ He didn’t think deeply about it; he had nothing else he could do.

‘Please respond.’ He believed and focused. His only goal was to find out where the spiders were.

-...

Perhaps because the target’s will was so huge, at first, there was no change. However, as Kang Shin-hyuk’s spiritual power steadily flowed into the wall, a small sound flowed directly into his mind without passing through his ears.

-...Click...click...

It was a spider creeping somewhere on the ceiling. His eyes widened; it was close to him. He could faintly read the spider’s position and movement, which meant he succeeded in interacting with the gate. That was only the beginning, however, as information about the spiders flooded into him.

“Oh, huh?!” All sorts of information flowed in at once, too fast to organize. He tried to control the image somehow as it felt like his head would begin to split. He didn’t need all of this information, only where there were large groups and where they were going.

‘...!’ He clenched his teeth to prevent himself from screaming at the terrible pain radiating through his head. He mentalized himself, refining the information coming in as if he were forging a blade. Melting it down in the forge, beating it down on the anvil. Then calmly tapping away to do the finishing touches.

‘Done...!’ Finally, a beautiful blade of meticulously organized information was engraved into Kang Shin-hyuk’s mind. The gate’s structure, the safe paths, the goals of the spiders, and their routes were all condensed into a simple map in his mind. The irregular gate was starting to feel a lot more manageable now.

'But.' He took his hand away from the wall and cut off the connection with a serious expression. There was one part he wasn't able to gather information on, and that was the spiders' birthplace. It was the place that had changed the most during the gate's transformation, but the mana concentrated there was so intense that it was impossible to scan using spiritual power.

'I'm sure it's too dangerous to leave alone.' Kang Shin-hyuk was convinced he had to go there to clear this gate. There would be plenty of spiders gathered there, so why not drink his potions and take them all out at once? His potions would only last for thirty minutes, and he couldn't use more than one per status each day, so it would be the ideal environment to take care of as many enemies as possible in that timeframe. Of course, it was another question whether he could face that many enemies at once.

-Did you read it?

"Yeah, somehow." The administrator remained silent in astonishment at Kang Shin-hyuk's honest reply for a long moment.

-You're the only one who can handle your spiritual power so well.

"You told me that it is the power of communication."

-Usually, it is limited to one's specialty. Some can only communicate with their weapon or monsters. However, you can communicate with everything as if there were no limits. Perhaps it is because you're going through your second life, or it's because of your ability as a craftsman. All I can say is that it's amazing.

It was the second time that such a long and passionate message had come from the administrator. Kang Shin-hyuk thought to accept the compliment and move on, unsure of how to respond.

"I'm going to check out if I was right." He purchased some Velcro Tape using 100,000 HP from the remaining 700,000 HP. It was an item that you could attach to your shoes to stick to any surface. With it, it was possible to move around on the ceiling.

-Are you okay?

"It feels a bit weird, but it's alright. It helps that I learned about the spiders from the wall."

-Myu...

"Be patient." He tucked Onyx in his shirt so he wouldn't fall, then looking into the nearest hole in the ceiling. Evolving into a spider-friendly A-grade environment, the gate now had an internal passageway for spiders to move easily through. Now, he could use it himself.

'My stealth is still up. Good.' There were usually only a few spiders crawling throughout the inner passages, which shouldn't be difficult to deal with. The real problem was in them sending periodic signals to each other. If there were a disturbance in the passage, he wouldn't be able to cover it up.

-Click, click

Crawling through the passage, he could hear the clicking sounds of spiders coming from everywhere. Reaching an intersecting passage, a spider swung just past his nose.

'I have to keep calm.' His pulse was pounding in his ears, and he forced himself to calm down. The spiders didn't have a good sense of sight or smell; they mainly relied on their sense of touch to search for enemies. Therefore, as long as he remained calm and moved slowly, he wouldn't be caught. But was it really that easy? Another spider appeared from the crossing passage, shaking the antennae on its head up and down. Shin-hyuk held his breath to wait it out. NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON NOVE(I)Fire .NET

-Click click click

Little by little, the spider moved toward where Kang Shin-hyuk was hidden. It seemed convinced there was something nearby. He wondered if he should kill the spider and run away; however, there was the possibility he would be besieged in the passageways if he did that. The second he moved, he would definitely be caught.

'...Please, with this!' Kang Shin-hyuk acted quickly, making a gust of wind in his hand and shooting it away. Instead of hitting the spider, it caused a slight vibration on the other side of the vibration. Given that the skill was only still F-rank, that was all he was capable of doing.

'But I can do that without consuming spiritual power.' It was said that only those with magic could deal with those powers, but he could make that light

breeze without it. If he used spiritual power, he could create stronger winds, but that was pointless at F-rank.

-Click click click click

On the other hand, he had achieved his goal. The spider reacted violently, turning to face the vibration. Kang Shin-hyuk crawled out of his spot as quickly as possible.

-Myu.

“Just a little longer.” He proceeded without hesitation through the tangled passageways. In the process of encountering several more spiders, he began to learn of new ways to use Wind Mastery. He could erase his presence by artificially generating and interrupting the flow of wind. The combination of Onyx’s stealth and his wind were synergizing to make them even sneakier.

-...Dear member, we will soon reach the core of this gate.

“I see. The information I gathered seems to be accurate.”

-You need to prepare for battle. You can’t avoid it anymore.

“Yeah...” He nodded, looking forward at the spiders, still moving busily in the center of the passage.

“Onyx, hide in the inventory.

-Myu!

Onyx steadfastly refused. His loyalty had risen after eating so much, so Shin-hyuk could feel that he wanted to help somehow. He gently patted Onyx’s forehead.

“Okay, then hold on tight.”

-Myu!

Kang Shin-hyuk carefully pulled out the forelimb blade he had stowed in his inventory, concentrating his spiritual power on it. His eyes began to turn golden.

“Here goes...!” His stealth skill dropped. The spiders began to approach him with a clicking sound as he with the blade into the ceiling, firing off the blade of wind with all his might. Thanks to Wind Master’s influence, the wind blade was twice as strong.

-Kwaaaaaaah!

-Kiiiiiii!

-Kiii!

The ceiling collapsed with the roar of a bomb exploding. Cracks began to spider out throughout the elaborately constructed passageways, causing them to collapse as well. In the process of evading the debris, Kang Shin-hyuk turned to find a place to go. Naturally, the space before him was a huge cavern.

“Crazy...” The contents of the cavern were incomparable to the mantis nest. Countless eggs filled the deep, dark cavern that made up a significant chunk of the gate.

-Kiiiiii!

-Kiii!

Additionally, unlike the mantis nest, there were countless spiders there as well. Monsters were wrapped up in spider webs all over, becoming food for the unborn spiders. Empty shells of the monsters that had already been sucked dry were piled up in one corner.

-Kiiiiii!

The only positive thing was that Kang Shin-hyuk had blown up the passages effectively, killing some of the spiders and blocking the rest from accessing this cavern. However, even with the HP acquisition message filling his retina, he couldn’t laugh. Hundreds of spiders were all watching him.

-Click click click

-Kiii

-Click

A dissonance like hitting a torn drum or playing a rusted violin hit him. Ominous red eyes, twinkling in the dark, were drawing closer to him. He had no one but himself to blame for his stupidity.

-You've consumed a lower strength potion. Your strength has risen by one level for 30 minutes.

-You've consumed a lower stamina potion. Your stamina has risen by one level for 30 minutes.

-You've consumed an intermediate agility potion. Your agility has risen by two levels for 30 minutes.

Kang Shin-hyuk drank all of the potions he had prepared, raising his strength, stamina, and agility to the A-rank. He was now minimally prepared to fight against the gate.

-Kiiii!

-Click, click

"Okay, let's do it now." He had nowhere to retreat; he had to deal with them and clear the gate now. He showed a fearless smile as he brandished the forelimb blade. Beyond the spiders, he could see a huge magic circle emitting a low blue light. Inside it was one giant egg.

'That's it.' That was what he couldn't sense, perhaps the heart of this gate. But first, he would have to break through these hundreds of spiders.

-Click click click

-Click

"I won't die here...!" Drinking the spiritual recovery potion to put all his power into the forelimb blade, he swung it with all his strength toward the poisonous spider webs that were aimed at him.

The battle began.

Chapter 54 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (3)

Chapter 54 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (3)

Spider, spider, spider. There were spiders everywhere the eye could see. The poisonous webs flying in from each side were blasted away by the blades of wind. Several egg clutches had been caught in the fray, raising the ire of the spiders even further. Even though it was temporary, with his agility at A-rank, Kang Shin-hyuk's speed had risen to a level beyond the imagination. The spiders also boasted a considerably faster speed than the mantises, but they couldn't catch up. If there were only ten of them, he would be able to take care of them easily.

'Although the problem is that there are at least a hundred of them!' He did it because he thought there was no other way, but still. His feet collided with the bare ground in that space teeming with spiders, kicking off quickly as he swore in his heart.

-Click click click

The creepy noises of the monsters overlapped and assaulted his ears. They attacked him with reckless abandon, unconcerned of any spider eggs nearby. Venomous fangs and webs, as well as blade-sharp legs, came at him from every angle. He focused his eyes as he looked at the countless attacks crossing dizzily in front of him, raising the forelimb blade. In his immediate vicinity, he only had to deal with so many enemies at once. He just had to keep hacking his way through.

'My increased agility is improving my visual acuity...good!' Examining the attacks, he figured out how to evade them and which spiders to attack first.

"Kh!" He immediately charged at them. The dragon engraved on the mantis blade had its mouth wide open as the blade cleaved through the legs of the nearest spider. Cutting through one more quickly after, he fired off a wind blade to defeat some more nearby spiders and destroy the closest egg clutch.

-Kiii!

-Kyaaaak!

Quickly ducking under the spiders' legs, he drew the forelimb blade upward to cut off the poisonous web spewing toward him. Then, avoiding the blade-like limbs, he swung his blade horizontally to cut down two spiders blocking him. Several spiders climbing on the sidewall spewed out poison toward him. He

evaded what he could and blocked what he couldn't, avoiding direct hits. The attacks couldn't be completely prevented, however.

-Poison has been mostly resisted with Poison Resistance. However, the effects may remain.

"But it won't interfere with the battle...Onyx, you okay?" Kang Shin-hyuk quickly evaluated the damage caused by the poison and decided it was safe, turning his attention to Onyx. Onyx was silent, however.

"Ah...I see." Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh as he cut down the spiders left and right. He had already leaped out of his arms sometime during the fight. Looking around for him, he quickly decided it would be impossible to find him in the chaos.

'He must have a plan of his own...right?' He had no choice but to trust in him.

-Kiiiiii!

-Click click click

Not giving him a chance to think about it anymore, the spiders stormed him. It was better to stop thinking and let instinct drive him. He struck out at the monsters threatening him, seizing the opportunity to counter-attack. There was no need for complex thought.

-Kiiii!

Although the weapon he was holding was not the Godslayer sword, he gradually unfolded the Godslayer swordsmanship he remembered through the forelimb blade. His efforts to replicate that sword dance with various weapons were bearing fruit. It destroyed the enemy's movement through a unique dance that even Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't interpret. It was infinitely short of the original but effective enough for spiders.

-Kyak

-Click click...click

The spiders' movements started to gain a sense of urgency as they kept dying. The poisonous webs shooting out were wrapping around the bodies of

other spiders instead of him, and their stinging blows passed by him to hit eggs instead. It was thanks to him adapting to his heightened agility.

“Break...!”

-Kiiiiiii!

The spiders screamed at the sound of the cracking of eggs. The spiders relied mainly on agility, and thus had a weak defense. It was easy enough to break through them with the forelimb bladed in his hands. He didn't know how many spiders he had already killed, nor how many eggs, but the HP gain was enormous. It was a shame he couldn't be leisurely shopping on the trading board right now.

‘I can't see the end.’ How long had it been since the battle began? He fired off another blade of wind imbued with his spiritual power and checked the time. Exactly eleven minutes had passed.

‘Right...’ He was running out of spiritual power, so he immediately grabbed a recovery potion and drank it, asking the administrator to buy two more. He had nineteen minutes to finish this.

‘If I don't, it'll be over anyway.’ He knew he couldn't end the battle through fighting blindly like he was. He was convinced he had killed plenty of them so far, but it was nothing compared to the amount still overflowing the tunnel.

‘It isn't enough, I need a different approach.’ Kang Shin-hyuk raised his head and looked at the magic circle shining from one corner of the cavern. The spiders had stopped him hard, so the distance hadn't closed at all. Rather than killing the spiders, he knew he had to get there somehow.

‘If don't get there, I'll have no choice but to lay down and die.’ He would destroy as many egg clutches as possible in the process, too. If he could raise his status before the potion ran out, he would be able to last longer.

‘Go.’ Kang Shin-hyuk, sure of what needed to be done, focused his spiritual power in his legs. At the same time, he attempted to lighten his body with Wind Mastery, which had grown to F+ rank during the battle.

-Click click click

“...Ha!” It was open for only a moment, but he saw the best path before him. Wondering if it was the result of his dragon’s dance, he intuitively followed it. Crushing the heads of spiders and firing off wind blades, he threw his body forward again and again while letting his eyes pass over the HP acquisition messages popping up in front of him.

-Kiiii!

‘Wind Mastery with my other skills... it’s not just a force that summons wind, it’s involved in the flow.’ And indeed, he flowed down the path before him. He analyzed the movements of all enemies before him so that he could respond more actively, aided by Wind Mastery. However, it wasn’t purely his skills, as it was also based on his experiences so far.

-You have realized the essence of the skill through combat. Wind Master (A-) has grown to E Rank. Spirit and agility have been adjusted, but they may not grow to the next rank.

-You have brought out the potential of your skill and embodied it. Dragon’s Fan Dance (S+) has grown to B+ rank. The effect of the trait has increased.

Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t even recognize the messages passing over his retina as he moved without hesitation. All of his experience up until now harmonized with his abilities. Each movement was engraved into his mind, materialized from a realm of intuition.

-You have suppressed several beings that are harmful to the order of things. Bonus based on membership level! You received 150,500 HP! As a VIP bonus, you received an additional amount of HP equivalent to 50% of the reward, for a total of 225,750 HP!

-You have suppressed several beings that are harmful to the order of things. Bonus based on membership level! You received 115,000 HP! As a VIP bonus, you received an additional amount of HP equivalent to 50% of the reward, for a total of 172,500 HP!

-Click click

-Kiiii!

The message covered his eyes as screams reverberated around him. Lifting his head, the magic circle was only a hundred meters away.

-The status potion has five minutes remaining!

The administrator's message seemed to announce the climax of the battle.

"What's my status right now?"

-Strength B+, Agility A-, Health A-.

"I'm still lacking in strength."

-You have to hurry, member. They appear to be hatching!

"I know, it's too noisy to stand." A vibration like a steady heartbeat emanated throughout the cavern from the egg in the center of the magic circle. He knew if it hatched, something bad would happen. The issue was the remaining one hundred meters. The spiders were desperately rallying to defend the magic circle, forming a wall around him, without defeating them. He couldn't move forward. But, he expected this to some extent. In fact, he prepared for it.

"Administrator, please buy me an Ogre Power Gauntlet."

-Sorry, member, but it was just sold...artifacts like those are immensely popular...

Kang Shin-hyuk lost any ability to blame the administrator for the sorrowful message. In that case, there was no other way. He blasted away the closest spiders with a wind blade and pulled three times from his inventory. The first was a javelin. The second was the items he bought to boost his power. The final was the javelin he forged for practice. It was the javelin made out of Alite, which could penetrate through magic. The latest_ept_sodes are on_the NOVE(l)FIRE .NET

-Are you going to eat all of it?

"I'm not going to risk failing."

-...I see.

He grunted and swallowed the three eggs in succession. His whole body began to boil without delay. With the addition of his potion, his strength had risen to the S-rank for a moment. He could feel his power overwhelming him.

"Oh, this is... this'll be bad once the three minutes are up."

-So destroy it quickly!

Since the administrator used an exclamation point, he felt like he had to hurry. Kang Shin-hyuk smiled in the midst of the chaos and prepared the Alite javelin.

Pulling it back, he threw it with all his might.

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Chapter 55 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (4)

Chapter 55 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (4)

[Perm's Javelin]

[B-rank]

[Special Ability: Perm]

+Perm: Destroys all magical power. The probability of this occurring increases in proportion to attack power.

Kang Shin-hyuk's first B-rank masterpiece, the spear, which fully expressed the ability of the metal called Alite, was stuck in the center of the magic circle, leaving a golden afterimage behind it. He could feel power bursting out of the spear in a brilliant display of light. The spear, backed by the power of an S-rank strength, shot right through the magic circle without any heed for its strength.

-Kiiii!

-Click click click

The magic circle began to splash unstable sparks, sowing confusion in the spiders flocking around it. For Kang Shin-hyuk, it was the perfect opportunity. In that gap of attention, he began to destroy all the egg clutches remaining in the cavern.

-You have suppressed several beings that are harmful to the order of things. Bonus based on membership level! You received 152,500 HP! As a VIP bonus, you received an additional HP equivalent to 50% of the reward, for a total of 228,750 HP!

-Your strength became A-rank!

Finally, his strength reached A-rank, pushing the buff even higher. At this point, he didn't have to run away to deal with them. He charged right in, wielding the forelimb blade.

"Go away!" Everything in the path of his blade fell. The spiders couldn't resist as they were split apart, still focusing on the magic circle.

-Kwooom

The magic circle began to disappear with the sound of glass breaking, unable to overcome the power contained in the javelin.

-Kwoooooom

The magic circle shattered, countless particles of light scattering in the air as vibrations shook the cavern. Each spider let out a cry of excitement, flocking forwards to protect the egg, but it only encouraged Kang Shin-hyuk.

"Get off!" He had two minutes left to destroy the egg. He moved forward, wildly swinging his sword in all directions. His wind blades cut through the spiders but weren't able to break the egg.

"How annoying...!" He picked up a javelin in his free hand as he kept cutting down the waves of spiders.

Even his javelin, backed by S-rank strength, was blocked by the bodies of the spiders trying to protect the egg.

-Myu!

Looking down, he found Onyx at his feet. In his tiny hands was the other half of the marble he found earlier.

“You...where?”

-Myu!

Onyx cried out proudly. Apparently, he found it stuck to the egg in the middle of the magic circle. He was able to retrieve it once the circle was destroyed. Kang Shin-hyuk wondered what the true purpose of the magic circle was, if not just to protect.

-It looks like it was used to instill spiritual power into the eggs. The damage is severe; it won't be usable right away.

“Did the spiders go into the mantis lair for the other half...?” Kang Shin-hyuk was convinced when he recalled the spider who searched the mantis nest. He thought it had been looking for him, but instead, it was searching for this marble.

‘Into the inventory you go.’ He stored it right away, praising Onyx. He only had one minute left and thirty meters between him and the egg. He thought it couldn't hatch without that marble fragment, so all he had to do now was smash it. However, Kang Shin-hyuk could not cross that thirty-meter distance.

-Vwowooooom

Like it suddenly sprang to life, a black tentacle came out of the egg. It groped the air in search of something, quickly stabbing through the nearest spider. Dozens of tentacles joined it, piercing and absorbing the nearby spiders.

-Click, click-click-click

-Kiiiiii!

-Click-click

The spiders didn't reject it, moving around excitedly. They were prepared to give everything to the egg. Realizing this was a part of the incubation process, Kang Shin-hyuk let another javelin sail to interrupt it, but it only broke through a few tentacles. The spiders threw themselves in his path to the end.

“Huh...!” When the tentacles finally moved back into the egg, no spider had survived. Cracks began to split the sides of the egg like lightning. Inside was, of course, a massive spider. It was the owner of this gate: the spider queen.

“Huh...Haaaaaaa!” Kang Shin-hyuk threw a javelin with the last of the power he had remaining in him. It was aimed right at the queen’s head but could not pierce the leg that was swung to block it.

-Kuoooooooooh!

At the very least, he could be a little glad he broke the leg. The queen cried out, angry over the injuries she suffered. It was a roar filled with terrible power, like the one that changed this gate to A-rank. Soon after, what he had already expected came over him.

-The effect of all status potions has disappeared.

-The effect of the eggs has disappeared. As a side effect, strength and stamina will decrease by two ranks for thirty minutes, and your body will sustain serious injuries.

The moment after the messages filled his retina, Kang Shin-hyuk ground his teeth in pain as it felt as if all the muscles in his body were contracting. It seemed like all the bones in his body were twisted and broken, blood welling up out of his body. The three minutes of invincibility had passed.

-Kuoooooooooh!

-Member!

The pain was so severe that he couldn’t respond properly to the administrator. No, rather, if he had time to react, he had to focus on the queen’s attack. She was stepping out into the cavern, pushing away the eggshell around her to shoot a web at him.

“Khh!” Even in the midst of that pain, he was somehow able to throw his body away from the attack. Instead, the webs covered over the ground where he was standing, emitting an ominous purple hue.

-Kuoooooh!

The queen spider carefully climbed out over the ground and spat out more web. Thanks to one of her forelimbs being destroyed, she was moving slower. If his agility had weakened instead of his strength or stamina, this battle would've already been over. The webs that were now filling the floor was a trap that could kill him with a touch.

'Not good.' There was no retreat. To defeat it, he would have to get closer somehow. If he continued only to dodge, his death was assured. But how? With his strength and stamina falling to B-rank, how could he confront the queen and win?

'... It's useless to think about it. I have to crush this guy even if it uses up everything I have.'

-Myu...!

His head became hazier as he continued to bleed out. Onyx began to cry out anxiously.

"Onyx...It's alright, I just had a hard time."

-Myu?!

He patted him lightly, assuring him it was all fine, then put him in his inventory. He had already done his part by finding the marbles; now, he would be in danger.

"Administrator, please recommend an item that can heal my wounds and eliminate the side effects, if you could."

-Member.

Kang Shin-hyuk hadn't given up hope yet. He needed to destroy this monster to escape this irregular gate, and he still had the Hero Universe. He had secured more than five million HP so far, that had to be enough...!

-I apologize, member. At this stage, potions that eliminate the side effects cannot be sold. Originally, I would have ignored the restrictions through my own authority.

Again, he jumped away from the spider web. The next moment, he had to fire off a wind blade to stop the next one from reaching him. If it weren't for Wind Master, he would've already been caught.

-Fortunately, there was no need for that.

"Damn...what?" The administrator who always sided with him made a voice he couldn't understand. He wondered if he was disappointed with his display of weakness. His mind was so hazy that he could entertain such a ridiculous thought.

-The bartender sent a gift. Would you like to confirm?

The angel's gift arrived without warning.

"My sister...?! Yes, give it to me right away!"

-You received the Alchemist's Special Transcendent Potion (SS-).

The Hero Universe also provided the Gift system. It allowed for the direct transfer of objects between people registered as friends. It was limited to objects not provided by the Hero Universe, and a considerable amount of HP was consumed in sending one. There was also a limit to how many gifts could be sent, so it wasn't a service that could be used lightly. However, Claire had sent him a gift right now.

'You heard.' When he contacted Shin Eunah, he knew there was a time difference between here and the outside. She must've contacted Claire after contacting him. She must've immediately begun to make potions to send his way right after. Shin-hyuk felt so moved, he thought he would begin to cry, but he had no time for delays. He picked up the potion straight away and drank it.

-The Alchemist's Special Transcendent Potion (SS-)

Explosive power ran through his body, burning away the pain of the side effects.

-All wounds below fatal have been healed. The effect has been amplified by the spiritual power contained in the potion. All wounds and abnormalities will be healed, and the remaining healing power will stay in the body for a while to protect you.

-Temporarily (10 minutes), all stats will increase by two ranks. Spiritual power has amplified the effect in the potion. Temporarily (20 minutes), all stats have been boosted by three ranks.

-With your spiritual power, you have succeeded in releasing the limit of the power contained in the potion! The rarity and proficiency of all skills have increased by one rank during the duration of the potion.

It truly was a potion to be described as transcendent. He felt a small bit of pride in his role as Claire's assistant.

-Quooooooooo!

Realizing that the atmosphere around Kang Shin-hyuk had changed instantly, the spider queen had a tense appearance to her. Thanks to the side effects disappearing and the potion, Kang Shin-hyuk's status was now at the level of S-class.

"Thank you, sister." He let go of the javelin and summoned the Godslayer to his hand. In one hand, he had the forelimb blade, and in the other, the Godslayer. With his current status and skill, he felt like he could manage it. He wanted to send a message right away to Claire, but he had to face this monster first.

"Hoo!" With a smile, Kang Shin-hyuk kicked off the floor. The queen spider's webs were blown away by the forelimb blade. He jumped up into the air with the help of Wind Mastery, narrowing the distance between them to less than three meters. The queen swung her legs to attack him, but he cut them off with ease in mid-air.

-Kuoooooooooooooh!

The wind generated by his power of Wind Mastery lifted him up a little higher; the queen was right in front of him now. A huge spider body with a slightly smaller head attached to it. Perhaps it hatched in an incomplete state.

-Member, the enemy's attack...!

"Yes, I know." Its huge body surged forward, an ominous purple haze emanating from its back. Without hesitation, Kang Shin-hyuk threw the forelimb blade forward. The link to the origin of this information rests in NOVE(l)FIRE .NET

-Kuoooooooooh!

“Ha!”

With his other hand, he thrust the Godslayer through the head of the queen spider.

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Chapter 56 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (5)

Chapter 56 - Phantom Dragon, Ride the Wind (5)

Shin Eunah, a leading superhuman in Korea's top 20s, her incredible ability matched her with beauty, made her a renowned celebrity, and, thus, many rumors circulated about her. Rumors like she was dating the second-generation member of an influential family, or that she held the real power of the association through the use of her beauty and body, or that she was even the result of a national experiment to create the strongest artificial superhuman. Most of them were mere gossip or bullshit, but there was one rumor that wasn't.

That was that she was hiding her full power. Many of her fans in Korea argued that she was only 317 in the international rankings only because she didn't have a chance to show off her skills beyond that, or perhaps because she didn't need to.

'I believe it.' Karen Stringfield wholeheartedly agreed with that sentiment as she watched the scene unfolding beyond the shield around her and her party. Her eyes were focused on the very image of the Thunder Empress, with shining golden eyes as she controlled the lightning around her.

“Thunderbolt – multiple. Reload. Thunderbolt – dispersion. Back. Thunderbolt – repeat, repeat.”

“She’s a monster.”

“Don’t group up, you idiots!” People in dark costumes with intricate patterns and masks on their faces moved in to attack Shin Eunah. They used magic in conjunction with swords, spears, and bows to try and finish her off. However, the lightning around Shin Eunah negated their offensive and was even pushing them back despite the difference in numbers. With each blink of the eye, bodies burnt by lightning fell to the floor. It was hard to tell what was actually going on, but Karen, who could enhance her reaction time, was able to understand the battle unfolding before her.

‘Amazing...I wouldn’t be able to deal with one of them properly. No, it’s weird no matter how you look at it! All of them have to be at least A-rank, what the hell?!’ She couldn’t even guess why she was being attacked by other humans while they were training inside the gate. All she knew was that Kang Shin-hyuk had suddenly disappeared, and soon after, another gate appeared inside where these unknown people came out of.

“Fuck.” Do Woojin swore quietly as he watched the battle beside her. They were safe inside a protective shield Shin Eunah activated the moment Kang Shin-hyuk was taken into an irregular gate.

“What the hell is happening?”

“They were targeting us and decided to attack. I bet they kidnap superhumans and brainwash them.” It was Baek who answered Do Woojin. He was wearing a subdued expression that didn’t fit his normal attitude, but even Karen could tell he was outrageous right now.

“Kidnap? Brainwashing?!”

“Don’t worry too much, reinforcements will probably come soon. I assumed this might happen. No...this situation will end before the reinforcements arrive.”

“Hey, wait...were we used as bait?”

“Can’t stop practicing just because you knew it was dangerous. That’s why our escort is her.” With Baek’s terse response, Do Woojin’s annoyance was growing full. He couldn’t stand how calm Baek was being.

“How can you be so calm?!”

“Does it look like that?” Do Woojin immediately closed his mouth to Baek’s sharp response. He recalled Baek’s face when Kang Shin-hyuk was dragged away into that irregular gate and bowed his head.

“I’m sorry.”

“No...alright.” Baek waved him off and crossed his arms, looking out to the fierce battle beyond the shield. Rather, he looked at the one-sided battle that Shin Eunah was fighting. The monsters that arrived were already annihilated, and only those with excellent skills had been able to hold on. The game seemed to be coming to a close, however, as she drove them back without a single gap in her defenses. Somehow, to him, she felt angrier at herself than them. He wondered if they had anything to do with Jormungand, or if she felt responsible for the student she lost.

‘...Shin-hyuk.’ Baek bit his lip at the memory of his friend. He felt like he was at fault for letting him get taken; he could barely stand it. Yet, all Baek could do was stay inside this shield. He was confident he could fight these masked enemies, but he would only get in Shin Eunah’s way right now.

“Uh, guys? Right there!” Karen grabbed onto Do Woojin and Baek’s sleeves, pointing. They turned their heads in time to see cracks forming in the air.

“What is that?”

“... It’s a gate collapsing.” Baek muttered blankly in response to Do Woojin.

“What kind of gate is that...?”

“That’s where Shin-hyuk was dragged in.” Baek prepared himself for battle. If Kang Shin-hyuk came back alive, then that would be that. But it would be arrogant to think that Shin-hyuk, or even himself, could clear a mysterious irregular gate alone after being tricked by the enemy.

'If so...I have to be careful.' As Baek quietly watched, the crack gradually increased to make a black hole the size of a person. From within...nothing came out.

'What?' His eyes grew thinner as the black hole began to shrink until it finally disappeared. If the gate was destroyed, something should have come out, whether it be the human who destroyed it or the monster that killed said human. But nothing came out.

'No, there is!' He opened his eyes wide. It felt really faint, but there was a human accompanied by a small creature. They were slowly getting closer to them. Baek looked away towards Shin Eunah, who was still fighting. She showed no sign of noticing what was happening. She was running wild with anger as her foes charged at her. Turning his head again, Baek could faintly hear a small voice in the ear mic.

-Open the shield.

It was Kang Shin-hyuk's voice. As soon as Baek heard it, all the energy in his body left.

"You... it's really you..."

-I'm Kang Shin-hyuk, who came back alive thanks to the 1.5 million won sword you bought me as a birthday gift, so open it up quickly.

"Huh? Baek, what did you say?" Baek ignored the gaze of Karen and Do Woojin as he stretched his arms out of the shield. It would attract people from outside the shield into it. It was dangerous and couldn't be used while being attacked. But the enemies dealing with Shin Eunah weren't in a situation where they could focus on Baek. Quickly, someone who grabbed onto his hand was pulling into the shield. At that same time, his hiding was completely released, and the appearance of Kang Shin-hyuk wearing rags that were once his school uniform was revealed.

"Thank you." He was clearly exhausted, but alive regardless.

"Shin-hyuk, is that really you..."

"What?!"

“Kang Shin-hyuk!” Karen and Do Woojin didn’t give him a chance to say anything. Those outside the shield also began to realize that someone else had joined them.

“How did he make it out of that gate?”

“Focus!”

“Hey, report to headquarters...!” The fighters of Jormungand seemed visibly embarrassed at the scene before them.

“Lightning – multiple links!” Shin Eunah swept them all away with golden lightning. She seemed to calm down a bit after confirming Kang Shin-hyuk’s safety. As such, Jormungand’s elite combat unit was neatly taken care of.

Reinforcements arrived shortly after all the work was done. Of course, it wasn’t because they were late, but because Shin Eunah’s response was too fast.

“A magic tool that forcibly generates an irregular gate... I’ve heard the rumors, but it could form a gate inside another gate...”

“It appears that the rumors of them working with intelligent monsters was true.”

“This is a problem. If a raid like this is possible, anyone who enters a gate is in danger.”

“We have to manage the gates more thoroughly... there’s no excuse. Damn it.” The elite troops of various guilds, including Vanguard and Baekyang, were gathered in the D+ gate for a meeting.

“This countermeasure meeting is important, but right now, the students need a break.”

“Yes, that’s right. Sorry.” Baekyang’s guild submaster, Lee Jin-young, shuddered at the anger in Shin Eunah’s voice. He knew she had turned Jormungand’s elite unit into charcoal.

“It’s best not to discuss this in front of the children.”

"I'll send them back to the school dormitory right now. Shin Eunah, why don't you accompany them? You've fought a fierce battle and should take a break too. We'll contact you later."

"Yes, I will." At the words of Lim Hoon, leader of Vanguard's 1st team, Shin Eunah nodded and led the children to the gate's exit.

"Are you really okay, Shin-hyuk?" Riding in a limousine arranged by the association on the way to the dormitory, Karen carefully questioned him. Just by looking at the condition of his clothes, you could tell how seriously he had suffered. His jacket was torn, and the armor he wore underneath his shirt had holes in it. His pants were torn as well, and what remained of them also had holes in them. Strangely, there were no wounds on his flesh.

"I'm okay. Actually, I wasn't, but thanks to that potion I drank, I'm fine."

"Where did such a potion come from?!"

"An angel sent it." In response to Kang Shin-hyuk, Shin Eunah, who was sitting in front of them, flinched. Karen puffed her cheeks at Shin-hyuk, who wouldn't answer her properly, but she has pushed away as Baek jumped in.

"Were there any bad guys there?"

"There were only monsters. I guess... wasn't it meant to isolate us?"

"Maybe...it was meant for Shin Eunah? Were they trying to quarantine the teacher to kidnap us?"

"Perhaps originally, but it got me instead." If that were the case, it meant their ability to control monsters and generate irregular gates wasn't perfect. Kang Shin-hyuk thought that was the most plausible case. The monsters inside the gate had been too strong to deal with a couple of students; no doubt, it was intended to contain Shin Eunah.

"What was the difficulty level?" Do Woojin asked next, and Kang Shin-hyuk smiled at the concern he could feel from him. But he couldn't be honest. It would've been impossible for him to clear that gate without the Hero Universe.

"It was difficult, I barely survived."

"What was its rank?"

“Ah, Woojin? Stop bugging this boy who had a hard time clearing the gate! Look at the state of his uniform and read the mood!”

“No, but...sorry.” Do Woojin apologized honestly, dropping his shoulders. Kang Shin-hyuk shook his head to let him know it was okay.

“Actually, it was so crazy that I can’t remember the difficulty level. There’s no need to apologize.”

“...I see, it must’ve been hard.” Do Woojin looked a little depressed. Kang Shin-hyuk looked over at Shin Eunah. It was astounding to see her fight with those enemies outside of the shield. It was a battle that matched the expectations of the title Thunder Empress.

“...” Shin Eunah was in the front seat staring back at him. Her eyes were filled with confusion and impulse. The latest_episodes are on_the NOVELFire.NET

“... I’m glad you’re okay.” She finally said that and turned away from him. They arrived at the entrance to the school, and the car quietly climbed the hill past it. He wondered how he should interpret her words just then. Everyone in the group could sense the strange atmosphere between them and wondered the same.

Meanwhile...

“I told you.” Kang Shin-hyuk smiled bitterly as he spoke to Shin Eunah. He had no intention of avoiding her anymore, so he decided to confess.

“Because it’s okay, trust and wait.”

“...!” Shin Eunah turned to him so fast he was worried her neck would break.

“That...so after all...”

“Teacher, I need to talk to you about something. Could you please set aside some time in the afternoon?”

“...Huh. Okay.” Before she could react, he decided to push forward. She desperately suppressed her words and nodded a few times. Unfortunately, they weren’t the only ones there.

“...Guys, what are you trying to really say?”

“What? What the hell? Why do I feel like you’re stabbing me in the back?”

“No, it’s a report on the gate. All of you calm down.”

“Aren’t you the one furthest from reality?” The students began to argue as they sensed the two’s unusual atmosphere. A spark from Shin Eunah quieted them, however.

The limousine came to a halt, the main school building was right in front of them.

The long practice had finally concluded.

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Chapter 57 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (1)

Chapter 57 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (1)

-Thank you so much, sister. No joke, if you didn’t send the potion at the right time, I would’ve died.

-Bartender’s whisper: I’m glad you’re safe. It was worth the rush.

Claire’s response to Kang Shin-hyuk’s gratitude-filled message was elegant and stylish. Diving into a bathtub full of warm water after throwing his raggedy uniform into the trash, he once again expressed his gratitude.

-I love you, sister.

-Bartender’s whisper: I said before you’re too young, give up.

Despite the decisive rejection, his indomitable will wasn’t broken.

-This grace will be paid back.

-Bartender's whisper: That's a bit tough... let's go to our bar regularly.

-Oh...

He had been caught up in the blink of an eye. He didn't want to get too close to the space full of those heavy drinks she was creating. However, it was true that she saved his life, so he couldn't refuse. Moreover, any time spent with her was purely enjoyable.

-Bartender's whisper: Good?

-Y-yeah, good...

-Bartender's whisper: Good. From now on, you are the server responsible for the mysterious Frontline Bar.

-You're in charge of the mystery...but aren't you in America? How will I get there?

Claire laughed and replied as if to ask him what he was talking about.

-Bartender's whisper: Aren't we setting it up in Korea? Google search NOVELFire.net

...Yeah?

-Bartender's whisper: I'm tired of the US government labeling me an alchemist and trying to control me. Didn't I say I wanted to become a bartender? But if I did that in New York, it would bother them.

-Well, sister? Wouldn't it be bothersome in Korea too?

-Bartender's whisper: I bet it'll be fine. Korea will want me there, anyway.

He admired Claire's absurd willpower and sheer optimism. Would the day come when he could be as flippant about the government? Maybe when he reached SS rank.

-Bartender's whisper: The important thing right now is Eunah, not the government. What are you going to do?

-Sorry, sister, but I've already been half caught. I decided to stop playing around.

-Bartender's whisper: Whoa, I thought it would be like that one day, but what's serious right now is that Eunah is actually...ah.

Claire decided to cut off the message and send one that was a bit calmer.

-Bartender's whisper: Maybe it worked out for the best. Maybe Eunah decided to cut it out before it went too far...

-...What?

-Bartender's whisper: Nothing. Take good care of your granddaughter.

Claire ended the conversation, leaving Kang Shin-hyuk puzzled about what she meant. Maybe it was related to his sponsorship by the association? Shin Eunah had judged him as a great talent and tried to force him into joining them but gave up because she learned he was Anvil.

'What an excessive granddaughter.' Thinking of meeting with Shin Eunah made him feel like something heavy was sitting on his chest. Looking down, Onyx was sitting on his chest, splashing in the water.

"You."

-Myu!

He was so cute he couldn't stay mad at him. He closed his eyes with a satisfied expression.

'It would've been really dangerous if it weren't for this guy...do as you will for the time being.' He slowly patted Onyx. He realized that he hadn't checked his status in a bit, so he decided to check that while relaxing.

"Status window."

[Kang Shin-hyuk: A-rank]

[Characteristic]

Golden-eyed Dragon (S)

[Physical ability]

Power: A-

Agility: A-

Health: A-

[Special ability]

Spirit: B+

Regeneration: B

[Skill]

Dragon's Fan Dance (S+): B+

Metallurgy: C

Wind Mastery (A-): D-

Poison Resist (B+): C

"Ha, that's crazy."

All of his physical stats had risen to A-rank in addition to gaining the Wind Master and Poison Resist skills. His spiritual power grew to B+ rank after slaying the spider queen, and now his regeneration was also at the B-rank. That was thanks to slaying all those insect monsters who had excellent regenerative powers.

'My status raised significantly while I was struggling to survive in that dungeon.' He was unsure how others would react if they could see his status window. No doubt, they would faint if that happened. He would have to be especially careful around Baek.

'It was dangerous but...still, I hit the jackpot.' It wasn't a simple urban legend that people would find nests full of monster eggs. Today, Kang Shin-hyuk had proven it to be true.

-In addition to your growth, you also have the automatic routing function.

“...” Intoxicated with the joy of growth, his expression quickly faded away at the administrator’s words: the automatic routing function. It was a service provided by the Hero Universe that allowed one to separate and obtain monster by-products quickly. It even stored the obtained items automatically into the inventory.

“It’s completely a game. It’s like an automatic looting feature.”

-I won’t say we didn’t refer to it during development, but it’s a great feature. It will be helpful to you as well.

“It was today...” It instantly secured everything it could from the spider queen in the short time he had while the gate was collapsing. It even acquired the loot from the spiders he killed in the cavern leading up to it. It was a great function; the problem was its price.

“I didn’t know it would cost 4 million HP.”

-That is thanks to the VIP 50% special discount. The original price is 8 million HP. It is also a feature that cannot be purchased unless one’s membership level is quite high. Please do not be discouraged; it will be helpful in the future.

“I also had to purchase two additional inventory slots...”

-Inventory space will also be quite helpful to you in the future.

Of course, Kang Shin-hyuk knew that. Both were useful things to have, but neither were things he could use in front of other people.

-The routing function is also referred to as an artifact or skill.

“...Oh, that makes sense.” There was no law that there would be no artifacts that could automatically dismantle monsters. Kang Shin-hyuk quickly understood and became quiet. Upon evaluating, he spent 7 million HP to purchase those functions and had 2.25 million HP remaining.

‘It’s a huge amount, but it’s not quite enough for an Ogre Power Gauntlet.’ He decided to clear away his regrets about the artifact. Rather, buying various materials and crafting his own might be more beneficial in the long run. No, before that, he had the by-products of the spider queen he killed...wait, wasn’t there something more important than that?

“The marble!” He hadn’t checked the pieces of the marble yet. It was clearly a key object from the gate, but he hadn’t figured out its functions yet.

‘... Let’s take a look...’ The moment he tried to get the two marbles out of his inventory, his stick vibrated. He wondered if it was Shin Eunah. He left the bathtub with a bitter smile at the timing, Onyx still clinging to him. Now he had to have a conversation with this overbearing granddaughter.

The meeting place was on campus. It didn’t make sense to head out of school right after being attacked by strangers. It was a place where he could chat with Shin Eunah without attracting other people’s attention. Their meeting place was the Artifact Production clubroom.

“I’m glad you’re back safely.” Lee Manwoo greeted Kang Shin-hyuk. Seeing Shin Eunah standing beside him, Kang Shin-hyuk nodded quietly. She had already told him about the situation.

“Yes, somehow. The Alite javelin I made turned out to be pretty helpful.”

“You recovered it, right?”

“Of course.” He almost lost it, but thanks to the automatic routing function, he recovered it.

“It’s an item for the contest, so keep it safe.” Lee Manwoo glanced at Shin Eunah one last time before standing up. He paused at the door and glanced back at the two.

“It’s not a romantic thing, right?”

“No!”

“Alright, then. That’s fortunate.” Kang Shin-hyuk wondered if he knew something about Shin Eunah as he left with a look of relief. Shin Eunah stared at him as he considered this. He sat at the table opposite to Shin Eunah. She was wearing a black leather skirt and a white blouse, revealing the charm of an adult woman, which only served to pressure him. He knew something was wrong.

“... ”

“...” Shin Eunah was silently staring at him. He twisted his body, unable to withstand the awkward atmosphere, as she examined him closer.

“That...”

“Grandpa?” The moment he opened his mouth to speak, Shin Eunah struck like lightning with a fastball. Kang Shin-hyuk stared into her golden eyes as numerous thoughts ran through his mind, but in the end, he nodded.

“...Yes, I’m Anvil. As I said last time, I still only have a few memories of my previous life.”

“You knew I was Eunah?” The fastballs kept coming.

“Yeah.”

“Why did you hide it?”

“It was a burden. Moreover, I didn’t think revealing my identity would help you...”

“Right.” Her words hardened. The words that followed, however, were not what he was preparing for.

“...Eunah.”

“Yes?”

“Call me Eunah.” He felt if he didn’t call her Eunah, she would be inclined to rip his throat out. However, he hesitated to do so, and she reluctantly suggested a compromise.

“When it’s just us two.”

“Then...Eunah.”

“Huh.” Suddenly, it felt like the room had brightened, but it was just because she was smiling wide. It was a beautiful smile none had ever seen before. It was a smile so bright that it could even purify the undead.

“So that’s it now.” Shin Eunah stood up with a refreshed expression.

“Yes?”

“Hm.”

“What happened...hey?” She ignored him and moved to sit right next to him.

“Uh, huh?”

“Whoo...so.” Kang Shin-hyuk sat stiffly as she laid her head on his knee.

“Well... we’re not done with this yet.”

“What?”

“I’m mad.”

“Ah.”

“I’m angry that you could recognize Eunah right away, but Eunah couldn’t immediately recognize her grandpa.” As it became clear he was Anvil, she began to regress immediately to this childish form. The imbalance between her mannerisms and her mature beauty was too much. His head began to swim as he could smell her fragrant shampoo.

“But I shouldn’t be mad at grandpa for that. Eunah is a good child, so she doesn’t blame others for her own faults.”

“...” Kang Shin-hyuk couldn’t say anything to Shin Eunah, who looked like an adult but was acting so childish. He wanted to ask her how she grew up like this, but he knew that wouldn’t go over well.

“Hick.” Instead of saying anything, he looked down, but she quickly raised her head. He could see her underwear through the gap in her blouse, and his heart began to pound. She reached out to grasp his hand gently. He tried hard not to make a sound.

“So that’s it for now. This is it.”

“...Sorry.”

“Yes... I’m glad grandpa is safe.” As if she didn’t hear his apology, she muttered, gently squeezing his hand.

“I’m so glad grandpa visited Eunah.” Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively extended his hand to her forehead as he heard that. That memory of Anvil was evoked.

“Huh...hugh...” He gently swept her bangs. It was an act that would be very rude and unpleasant for anyone else, but she gently closed her eyes and smiled comfortably. She was the very image of a granddaughter infatuated with her grandpa.

‘This one’s really weird.’ While thinking that, he didn’t stop gently brushing her hair. He thought it was weird, but now he was filled with a warm feeling. Maybe it was Anvil’s influence, but he didn’t hate it.

“Grandpa...I love you.”

“Stop calling me grandpa...”

“Grandpa, I kept the hairpin you gave me as a birthday present. Are you proud?”

“...Yes, yes.”

“I love grandpa...” She suddenly turned outside, wondering how long they sat like that. He thought it was unfortunate he couldn’t see her face, but he could feel something wet on his knee. Her shoulders were shaking quietly. He didn’t dare ask if she was crying. He only kept brushing her hair.

“...In the future...” Before long, she quietly spoke up in a voice choked by emotion.

“In the future, we will continue to be together...”

“...” Shin Eunah laid crying on his knees for three hours.

Kang Shin-hyuk thought it would be better if she was angry at him, but he couldn’t dare do anything but sit and wait quietly for her.

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Chapter 58 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (2)

Chapter 58 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (2)

-Janus's whisper: Honestly, it was impossible to keep hidden. Eunah, she must've been holding onto some pretty rough wounds. Even if I had helped, it would've cost 100 million HP.

It was evening now. Eunah was barely satisfied, but she was finally removed as he returned to the dormitory. Janus, who heard about the situation from Kang Shin-hyuk, was making fun of him. Kang Shin-hyuk took out the by-products accumulated in his inventory one by one, cleaning them and sorting them by type.

-Do you have 100 million HP?

-Janus's whisper: Ha, 100 million HP is a lot. Anvil was really good, though. He made a weapon that was worth hundreds of millions. Have you recovered your skills?

-C rank.

-Janus's whisper: Ah, it's still far away. I'm growing old and dying. When will the Godslayer be done?

-I'm still working on it diligently.

-Janus's whisper: Come on, grandpa. Dimensional quest, dimensional quest!

Janus offered an unexpected proposal. Kang Shin-hyuk, who was curing the monster's shell from the previous quest, tilted his head at the unexpected words.

-Janus's whisper: They're perfectly suited to the aptitude of Hero Universe members.

-The administrator said that there are a lot of dimensional quests to recover weapons I made in my previous life...ah.

The administrator immediately affirmed him.

-The dimensional quest is a noble task of bringing balance to the world, but it is also a privilege only granted to VIP members. It opens the door to the most suitable environment for those few members who want to push their limits. You are just adding your special recovery quest to it.

“Well, it sounds like a win-win no matter how I look at it...”

-You only need to trust the administrator. We will guide you through the dimensional quests that aren't dangerous. It is also the fastest way to recover your skills.

Kang Shin-hyuk knew well that the administrator wasn't trying to trick him.

-Janus's whisper: Dimensional quest. Got it?

-Yeah, if I have time.

Shin-hyuk couldn't happily agree to his words as he would need a few days free to head off to a place like Kieron.

-Janus's whisper: Did you say it was school? It is bothersome you didn't come back to this world with your abilities.

-I need to lay down my foundation at school. If you hurry too much, you'll make yourself sick. I'll make a new sword later somehow, so don't complain too much and wait patiently.

-Janus's whisper: ...That old grandfatherly tone came out for no reason.

Shin-hyuk was ready to end the conversation, but another message arrived.

-Janus's whisper: By the way, you will have a hard time in the future.

-Why? [READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT NOVE\(l\)FIRE .NET](#)

-Janus's whisper: Eunah.

-That's...yes, it seems like it will be annoying.

-Janus's whisper: You don't know Anvil yet, but as a third party, I have a clear view.

-Anything else to tell me?

-Janus's whisper: It will be more fun if you look forward to it! Welp, I'm going to catch the Chaos Dragon!

-Hey! Don't just ask me to make you something then run off! If you catch something like that, send me some of its materials!

Janus left without a reply. Both Tsukuyo and Janus, or rather all members of the Hero Universe, were like this. Kang Shin-hyuk grumbled as he finished organizing his inventory. He had a large number of mantis blades and carapaces, as well as various bits of the spiders. Even the parts from the queen alone weighed about 200 kilograms.

"With this, the rough cleanup is over...let's take a look at this guy."

-50HP Bonus for members!

After organizing all the by-products, the last thing to examine was the two fragments of the marble. It was an unknown bit of energy, but he thought it was the biggest harvest he acquired. When he put the two cross-sections together, they fit so well he could laugh, but they didn't fuse together.

"Hmm." It wasn't like him to give up so easily, though. He tried to communicate with the fragments with his spiritual power while aligning them once more. He could feel the aggregate of spiritual power that existed in the marble fragments, connecting them together. He wondered what sort of power would be produced when they were fused together. However, his spiritual power only allowed them to communicate back and forth; it didn't connect them.

"If so..." Shin-hyuk retrieved the spiritual glue he used at the last gate. He had just enough for one more use.

-Spirit adhesives don't have any basic restorative properties. I do not recommend this.

"But currently, I have no other option."

-Your spiritual power will increase, and if you hunt more monsters, you can secure materials like mana stones...perhaps with that, you can repair this...

"Even if this fails, I can just try that later. The worst that'll happen is I'll be out of spiritual glue."

-I'll observe it then.

The administrator seemed sure he would fail; however, Kang Shin-hyuk clearly remembered his own abilities. He carefully spread the adhesive against the marbles and fit them once more. They were perfectly interlocked.

'Good...now.' As the administrator said, the spiritual adhesive temporarily connected the beads but didn't restore it. However, he recognized the flow of spiritual power rotating in the marble and began to lead it. As the broken passage was temporarily restored and spiritual power circulated through it, the connection became more natural.

'But it's still weak.' Kang Shin-hyuk's eyes lit up as he watched the spiritual power circulated inside of it. The radiant lights in it were like a collapsed galaxy. He began to add his own spiritual power into it, speeding it up and repairing it. His trait, Golden Eyed Dragon, activated. The marble resonated with the gold in his eyes, strengthened by his influence.

-...Amazing.

Kang Shin-hyuk was unaware of the administrator's message, completely focused on pouring his spiritual power into the marble as his traits activated. He was struggling hard just to focus. If he could activate this marble, maybe his characteristics would be able to take another step forward...!

'It's sticking.' Thanks to the spiritual glue and his own characteristics, he was able to restore the marble. The incomplete surface was filled in, fully bonded now as the adhesive dissolved away. The flow of spiritual power smoothened as countless sparks of spiritual power moved in the marble, slowing the power leaking out. The marble began to radiate an intense golden color.

And at the moment, Kang Shin-hyuk injected all of his remaining power into the marble; a dazzling light burst from it. It was like the Milky Way had been released inside of his room.

-After restoring the damaged item beyond perfection, you obtained [Shinfeng Orb (SS)]. However, since it was damaged, some energy has been lost. A lot of effort will be needed to restore it to its original state.

-Talent (Golden-eyed Dragon (S)) has satisfied one condition for evolution. As soon as the other two conditions are met, the trait will evolve.

-Acquiring experience in restoring valuable artifacts, your metallurgy skill has grown to C+ rank! Heat resistance has further increased.

-Synchronization has accelerated—current rate of 14.1%.

Kang Shin-hyuk's eyes opened wide, a smooth marble of gold floating in the air in front of him. It was the size of his fist.

“SS rank...” The words leaked out of his mouth at the message.

-Even that level is lower than its true form. Depending on your efforts, it can be restored beyond that.

“Why was such a treasure in that gate...?”

-Wouldn't those who attacked you know? No, maybe not. It may have been so long that no one knew of its value.

Could it be that they knew information about this orb and tried to find it using Shin Eunah? No. Rather, Onyx easily found it. Was Onyx special? As usual, he found no answers.

‘Nothing could be done about it.’ The administrator asked him to store it away, and he complied. Now that it was regaining its power, he knew he had to be careful in using it.

“But it's still a jackpot.”

-That's not an item available even in the Hero Universe. I'm surprised that you've successfully restored it.

“My metallurgy has grown too because of that.”

-It's not an armament, but it is a great artifact. It's surprising that it didn't grow more than that.

Kang Shin-hyuk placed his hand on the orb to check its information, but only the message, ‘Unable to confirm’ appeared. He wondered what it was, but he still couldn't figure it out even after he restored it. Perhaps it was because the rank difference was too extreme.

“Then, let's focus on acquiring some other skills.”

-You have the ability to create and enhance things, so you will be compatible with most emotional skills. The cheapest is 5 million HP. With your VIP discount, it will be 4 million.

“I’ll take a look at it later.” After all that, he had no choice but to work on his own spiritual power to communicate with this marble. It was an SS-rank item, so he had to be incredibly careful in touching it.

‘I need a space where others can’t see me...My Room.’ However, the moment Kang Shin-hyuk had that item, his stick began to ring. Glancing at it, the caller was Karen.

“Should I answer it?” He couldn’t ignore it in the end. This was because he had a message saying that if he didn’t go to the female dorm, she would come directly to him, accompanied by the vice-captain of the Wyvern Knights.

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Chapter 59 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (3)

Chapter 59 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (3)

It was 10 PM now. The incident during the day’s practice wasn’t widely known, but the school stopped students from leaving the campus for three days. That meant people were crowded inside the dormitory. No, rather, at 10 PM, most students would be in the dormitory, anyways. Kang Shin-hyuk was heading toward the girl’s dormitory with no small amount of embarrassment. It would usually be impossible for a male student to enter such a place, especially when no permission was granted.

“Welcome to the Royal Class.” It was Karen who greeted him. She stood in front of the elevator at the entrance of a place completely different from the

general dormitory. She motioned for him to enter the elevator and flashed a key card. The elevator started moving them up to the top floor.

“Royal class?”

“What, you haven’t heard? It’s a special space for only the top 1% of Shinyoung’s top talent. It even has a restaurant.”

“1%? You?”

“I’ll chide you later...I was originally listed to enter the Royal Class on the condition of attending to the vice-captain.” Serving Eleanor R. Algiers, decided before she enrolled? Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes narrowed.

“What sort of aristocrat is she?”

“She’s not a noble, but a noble among nobles. They wanted to send her to the Royal Academy of British Superhumans, but she was hoping to go to Shinyoung. Should I tell you I’m a noble too?” He was surprised to find out about that. The nobles of England had been grooming superhumans for several generations, so having a title was enough to assure people you were an extraordinary superhuman.

‘I thought her ability was incredible, but to think it was because of that...however, she seems a little too friendly for a noble.’ Karen, who had no idea what he was thinking, continued to explain. Follow current novels on novelFire.net

“Originally, the Royal Class was one of the three organizations representing Shinyoung...it was allowed only for the executive level students belonging to the student council, the Wyvern Knights, and the Magic Society. I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for the vice-captain.”

“Wow. It’s the first time I’m learning about this.” He was stunned. However, Karen continued to look at him with a strange expression.

“For reference, those at the top of each field in the solo exhibitions will also join the Royal Class.”

“What?”

“Anyway, usually the title of King is occupied by someone from the Wyvern Knights or the Magic Society. But that wasn’t the case with the Rookie King.” she added.

“Is that so?”

“Some people will look badly at those who don’t belong to any organization. Still, I would like to guide you this week.” At that moment, their sticks began to ring. The teachers would be mobilized for external assignments, so there would be no classes Friday. Kang Shin-hyuk received one more message; the decision made to move him into the Royal Class.

“Isn’t this timing too good?”

“Not really. Wasn’t it pushed forward because of what happened at the gate?”

“Ah, right.” Kang Shin-hyuk nodded, convinced. There was no reason to refuse an offer of a good room.

“What happens if there is a new Rookie King next year?”

“The same that happened before. Would you be kicked out if you took a different seat? For reference, the last Rookie King was the vice-captain.”

“I see.” The elevator arrived at the top floor. The interior of the top floor was much different than the rest of the building.

“The vice-captain’s room is this way. Come quickly.”

“But...”

“Come on!”

“That should be my line...” Kang Shin-hyuk followed after Karen and soon arrived in front of an ornate door. He admired it as Karen gracefully used the door knocker. It was engraved with a lion and dragon entangled together.

“Enter.”

“Can she not talk?”

“She has trouble pronouncing Korean sometimes. It’s usually fine, but it pops up when she’s nervous.” The door opened to reveal a spacious and luxurious

room. Kang Shin-hyuk was focused on Eleanor R. Algiers; she was drinking tea alone at a table in the center of the room. She was wearing a Wyvern Knight outfit, appearing the very image of a noble as she elegantly held her teacup.

-Cheh.

‘Administrator?’ Strange, he felt he had just seen the administrator’s message. However, no message answered his call, so he assumed it was his understanding.

“Hello. Eleanor R. Algiers. Knight Department, sophomore B class.” She lifted her head and nodded at Kang Shin-hyuk, offering a brief greeting. Acknowledging she was his senior, he bowed his head back.

“Hi. Kang Shin-hyuk, first-year C class in the Knight Department.”

“Come, sit down.”

“She says she’s sorry for suddenly calling. Please make yourself comfortable.”

“I don’t think I just said that...” Kang Shin-hyuk sat across from Algiers. He wanted to know why she called him in the middle of the night right away. If she wanted to recruit him, he was ready to bail.

“I roughly told you what happened before.”

“Ah, right.” Karen poured him a drink and began to talk to Algiers instead. Kang Shin-hyuk felt like he was in some medieval English noble’s reception room, but the atmosphere evaporated as Karen winked at him.

“So...you were attacked?”

“Yes, but I told you about his fighting skills and specialties. He also made his own weapons.”

“A craftsman in this school...that’s rare.” It was certainly true; no one entered Shinyoung to increase their production capacity. If Kang Shin-hyuk had that ability from the start, he would’ve gone to a specialized school.

“I have something to ask.”

“Yeah?”

“Artifacts...can you make them?”

“Yes.”

“Wow.” There was no need to hide that fact as it could be easily found out, but Karen and Algiers opened their eyes wide in surprise at his quick response.

“Then, repairs?”

“Well...” He hadn’t learned professional repair skills, but he had his experience from earlier.

-Your metallurgy has a wide range of coverage. In the past, repairing the armaments of other Hero Universe members was easy to do.

‘But now I don’t have that ability...’ Algiers seemed to understand the subtle expression he was making and nodded.

“I understand.”

“Wow, honestly it was just an excuse, but Shin-hyuk can do it.”

“Can I leave?”

“I have something to ask for...oh.” Algiers covered her mouth with a resentful expression, taking a deep breath before speaking again.

“The artifact passed down from generation to generation within the Wyvern Knights is currently broken.”

“Hey, the inside story finally came out.”

“If you fix it, I can take the title of captain. I will owe you.” Algiers’s purple eyes glowed mystically. He wondered if that was the artifact he had heard of before.

“Is that the one that tames the wyverns raised by the knights?”

“Huh.”

“You’re leaving it to an outsider?”

"I'm holding onto the artifact right now." Kang Shin-hyuk looked at Karen instead of Algiers. She let out a sigh and began to explain more concisely.

"The captain broke the artifact in the first place. Then, he left the job of fixing it to the vice-captain, saying it was the role of a woman to support a man." Kang Shin-hyuk briefly doubted whether or not he was listening to people of the modern era.

"What an anachronistic idea..."

"I know, right? He really thinks and talks like that. In the first place, except for the vice-captain, he won't allow female members to take an executive position." Kang Shin-hyuk turned to Algiers.

"What do you think?"

"I don't put my status first." Kang Shin-hyuk wondered if that was the pride of a noble. It seemed like she was stronger, so why didn't she just beat the captain and take his position? There seemed to be something they weren't telling him yet. Of course, he didn't want to know.

"I didn't intend to follow his command right away...so I left it unattended. But, if by any chance it goes well, I can get rid of this debt. That will make things easier."

"I said from the beginning this was just an excuse. The vice-captain also likes you, so-" Algiers blocked Karen's mouth. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh and drank his tea. It was delicious.

"If you're not trying to make me join the knights, I'll see to it at least once. There's no guarantee I can fix it." A taming artifact. He was interested in it. Whether he succeeded or not, it would make for a great experience. At his agreement, Algiers and Karen looked surprised. They weren't ready for their request, a mere excuse, to be accepted so simply.

"Good. Besides that, I think you have something else to tell me." The excuse was over. Algiers nodded firmly with a twinkle in her eyes.

"...I want to ask you about something."

"Well?"

“It’s the first time since I’ve come to this school that I’ve seen someone with an ability stronger than me.” He wondered if she was referring to the Dragon’s Fan Dance movements he demonstrated. Her eyes were sparkling intensely, an immense passion hidden away in her small form.

“Please. Fight me.” Algiers asked sincerely, not even recognizing she had the pronunciation wrong. Only then did he realize why she was interested in him—his ability based on martial arts, built up from the bottom, not his characteristics or skills.

‘Well, it’s thanks to my traits that my understanding of martial arts improved so much.’ Just as he had struggled over the years due to his lack of magical power, there must have been those who couldn’t practice the skills they set their minds too, no matter how much they trained.

“Okay. Take good care of me.” Kang Shin-hyuk was more than happy to test his skills against her.

“Great...!”

“Our vice-captain is so...” Karen let out a sigh from the sidelines as Algiers nodded satisfied.

So tomorrow, on Thursday, Kang Shin-hyuk would visit Hall 2 of the Wyvern Knights to examine the broken artifact and fight Eleanor R. Algiers.

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Chapter 60 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (4)

Chapter 60 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (4)

-You received 1 roulette coin for today's log in bonus. If you collect 1 more in the future, you can play the VIP Roulette!

Early Thursday morning, Kang Shin-hyuk woke up energetically, fed Onyx, and went straight to the training room. Today, he wasn't training his spiritual power or martial arts, but rather to learn the limits of his physical status, which had gone through rapid growth in the gate.

'Measurement room, then. I never thought I would need it.' The space, commonly referred to as the status measurement room, was where people could indirectly prove their status without showing off their status window. It could also be used to directly identify the limitations of one's body, which was what Kang Shin-hyuk was interested in using it for.

'Not too many people around...' For that purpose, he got up and ran to the training center at dawn. He was getting more attention lately, so he didn't want to attract anymore. He immediately went into the measurement room, closed the door, and began operating the measuring instrument. It would find one's limit through all sorts of tests related to power, speed, and physical functioning, all the while gradually increasing in difficulty. For Kang Shin-hyuk, it started at C-rank but quickly moved all the way up to B.

"Whoo...!" The basic function of the measurement system was to maintain balance on a moving floor while detecting and hitting a moving target that would quickly fly in. The gradual increase in difficulty served to help acclimate the user to their own level, which was incredibly helpful to Kang Shin-hyuk.

"Hoowoo...hoowoo...!" Not long after he started, the measurement system had quickly reached the B+ rank, then A-rank. He could see his strength, agility, and stamina were marked as A-. Magic couldn't be used when measuring one's limits, and the system would shut down if you tried to. You could probably get away with using spiritual power to raise your limits artificially, but that wouldn't have helped his purpose.

'It's getting tough.' The target kept flying through as the floor pushed him back. He wasn't aware of it, but the speed of the conveyor belt exceeded tens of kilometers per hour. In other words, he was running faster than a car, catching the position of a target flying past in all directions to intercept it. Even the target weight, which seemed light, was now well over 100 kilograms. It was designed to stop working just before hitting, but it was still a ridiculous measure.

‘Kh...!’ He had no room to think; he just let his instincts move his body. He hadn’t used his spiritual power yet, but undoubtedly his regenerate power allowed him to exert his physical abilities for a sustained time.

‘No, but now...’ Kang Shin-hyuk began to lower the intensity. He had now barely learned the limits of his physical abilities, but it wasn’t good to run wild. After getting used to his body, he would have to practice with it just like a weapon.

“Okay, stop.” The targets and floor stopped. He wiped the sweat off his forehead and checked the monitor. All physical abilities had gone from A- to A on the monitor, showing that he was in the top 7% of the world’s superhumans. It was an achievement he could barely believe.

“Even if I graduate right away, I could be selected by a large guild.”

“Huh?!” Hearing a voice nearby, he looked back to see Baek In-ha standing in the open door. Kang Shin-hyuk was visibly embarrassed as Baek let out a sigh.

“I’ll forget what I saw. You didn’t set up security.”

“Security...ah!” The measurement room could hide or reveal the measurement results. He closed the door but forgot to enable the security setting to stop the display on the monitor attached to the outside of the room.

“I wondered if you were just proud of your strength by the way you were gathering people together.”

“Ahh...!” Kang Shin-hyuk was filled with loathing at his own forgetfulness. As he let out a silent scream, Baek entered the room with a smile.

“Let’s distract you from what has already happened.”

“Are you going to do it too?”

“After seeing you, I wanted to try it too.” Well, if Baek did it, surely the other students would be distracted.

“Do your best.”

“Look forward to it.” Kang Shin-hyuk thanked him and left the room, to the gathering of students in front of the monitor.

“Was he originally that strong?”

“Without magic...”

“Can your status even grow like that without magic?” The students who couldn’t talk to him but only behind him gossiped nearby. He let out a sigh and looked up at the monitor, which was reflecting the image of Baek. Baek, who started measuring at B rank, boasted a peculiarly fast speed that quickly reached S-rank.

“Wow, better than Kang Shin-hyuk. S-rank in the first grade? What the hell is he?”

“He’s so extra.”

“A monster, that’s what he is: a monster.”

“Isn’t that the top level in our school?”

“Close enough.” Thanks to Baek’s performance, the interest in him was decreasing.

‘That monster child.’ He was a person living in a world different than his own...but hadn’t he begun to catch up? He still had a long way to go, but he firmly pledged to surpass him one day.

‘I’m also nearing a new trait evolution.’ He felt inspired as the people to his sides parted. A huge, breathtakingly large man with bulging muscles was walking toward him. He had dark brown hair and gray eyes covered by stylish glasses.

“ ... ”

“Ah, long time no see.” Baek greeted him in a friendly manner as he left the measurement room, but the man passed him by and strode into the measurement room himself.

“What?”

“That’s Douglas Payne, captain of the Wyvern Knights and Knight Crown.”

“Ah, that’s why.” He was so huge, Shin-hyuk hadn’t even noticed the cloak of the Wyvern Knights.

“Wow, he’s great.”

“I heard that Kang Shin-hyuk and Baek In-ha are measuring. Isn’t that funny? Who cares about first graders.”

“Are they normal first graders? One is Baek, after all...ah.” Several more students stepped out of the way as more Wyvern Knights arrived to look at the monitor. Kang Shin-hyuk couldn’t help but mentally compare them to gangsters.

“Not knights, but a gang.”

“Hey, you two.”

“What?!” One of the members yelled and turned around as Baek and Shin-hyuk were sharing the same sentiment. It was Yoo Minjoon, the second-year senior who had shouted at Kang Shin-hyuk last time.

“...”

“Senior Yoo Minjoon, it’s been a while.”

“...”

“Did you see my game last time? I tried hard to check if you were there, but I don’t know if you saw my performance.” Yoo Minjoon turned away silently, his shoulders shaking. Kang Shin-hyuk tried to grab his attention once more, but Baek tapped on his shoulder and pointed at the monitor.

[Measurement result: Strength S-, Agility B-, Stamina S-]

“Wow...”

“He’s a tank.”

“Don’t call him that out loud, or he’ll break you.” It wasn’t only Kang Shin-hyuk who was surprised to see the results. People were scrambling about the results. Sure, they were marked by a negative, but he had two physical stats that were S rank. Although his agility was a bit low, he was still an elite among elites even compared to superhuman society as it was now. If he could find an artifact that supported his agility, he would be on par with the superhumans representing the country.

“Are there only monsters like this in Shinyoung?”

“This year is particularly strange, including us.”

“Aren’t you ashamed of saying that yourself?”

“Are you embarrassed by your friend?”

“You’re really too much.” As the pair joked together, Douglas Payne walked out.

“Huh...” It was hard to tell if he was satisfied with the results or not, then left.

“I have a sense of how you beat him now.”

“His reactions were too dull. Honestly, I was bored.” Only Baek could say he was bored against a monster with S-rank strength and stamina.

‘What could I do to beat him...?’

“Welcome to Blackwood Training Center Hall 2!”

“Wow!”

“Everyone clap, clap!”

“Ahahaha...” As promised, Kang Shin-hyuk visited Hall 2 of the Wyvern Knights training center after class that day. It turns out that a simple magical barrier was installed to prevent anyone who wasn’t wearing the cloak of a knight from entering. Fortunately, it was as simple as holding another person’s hand to enter without one.

“It’s like a subspace.”

“Maybe similar to that? Can you hear it now?”

“Hear what...Ah?” He could hear the faint cry of a dragon mixed in with the applause. That guy was nearby!

“No, why is it nearby?”

“Actually, caring for the wyvern is the role of those in the second building. So, from generation to generation, Hall 2 is a bit more difficult and annoying than Hall 1. It is common for those without power to be sent here.”

“So why is the vice-captain here?”

“Hey, Karen!” Some of the second-years interrupted Karen, who was telling Kang Shin-hyuk about their internal affairs, but she didn’t hesitate.

“It will be easier later if we tell him these things now.”

“Is that so? Operation: Sympathy?”

“I suppose so.” There were seven members that made up Hall 2. Excluding the vice-captain, Karen, and Do Woojin, that would make four others. Three of which were women, but the other male member didn’t even show up today. Noticing the composition was mostly women, it was easy to notice Douglas Payne’s thought process.

“You’ve been in a harem until now.”

“Shut up.” Do Woojin ground his teeth quietly in the corner. Apparently, he was embarrassed to be around this many women. Somehow, Kang Shin-hyuk had expected as much.

“So, where is the other one?”

“That senior isn’t very cooperative. It was one of the reasons he was relegated here.”

“I see.” Since all humans could be reborn as superhumans, it was hard to find differences in the abilities between men and women. However, in terms of pure physical status, men tended to be a bit stronger than women in many cases.

“But the story is different when traits and magic are involved... wasn’t the Wyvern Knights originally a structure in which focused on skills first and foremost?”

“Yeah, well, that’s not always the case.” The female members here would be able to overwhelm most of the other knights in terms of skill. Douglas Payne knew that, yet...

“How many are in Hall 1?”

“Thirteen people; all men. The Wyvern Knights total twenty people.”

“Almost twice as many...then a civil war to retake Hall 1 would be impossible.”

“Shin-hyuk, we don’t plan on filming a war movie here...”

“That’s right and taking care of Meloy is quite fun.” One of the seniors interrupted their conversation. Meloy was probably the name of the wyvern.

“Then, I would like to check the artifact and see this Meloy guy.”

“Before that.” Algiers blocked Shin-hyuk’s vision, full of motivation. Well, she was too short to block his sight, but the passion emanating from her was magnificent.

“Fight first, please.”

“It’s been a while since I’ve seen the vice-captain do that.”

“This kid Shin-hyuk must be really great. It’s a pity I couldn’t watch his match.”

“Wow, vice-captain, get him!” The members were excited about the chance to see them fight. The vice-captain ignored them and dragged Shin-hyuk into the outer courtyard of the building. There was a furnace built out there. Not a furnace sued for metallurgy, but one for barbecues and such.

“...What is this?” Algiers was the first to speak. This chapter is updated by NOVEL_FIRE.NET

“Let’s have a barbecue!”

“I thought Sunday was the barbecue party!”

“Since Shin-hyuk was coming, I rushed to make it today!” Karen winked refreshingly as she carried a plate of meat with her. Do Woojin was carrying vegetables, fruit, and seafood with him. He seemed to listen to Karen well.

“...” Algiers looked at it with an upset expression for a moment before grabbing Shin-hyuk’s collar.

“Let’s fight first.”

“Yes, that’s what I agreed with...thank you.”

Eventually, Algiers and Kang Shin-hyuk found a place far away to fight while the others prepared for a barbecue. Karen’s operation to disrupt them had failed.

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Chapter 61 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (5)

Chapter 61 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (5)

Kang Shin-hyuk and Algiers readied their weapons at each other. He was wielding his sword, while she held a long black spear with a subtle purple color to it that matched her eyes.

“Let’s finish and eat the meat.”

“Karen, don’t interfere.”

“Yep.”

“Karen, prepare the barbecue!” The referee was immediately replaced by a third-year senior, who looked at the two with an expression full of expectation and death.

“Then...match start!”

“Kh!” It took only a moment for them to clash. Algiers, from a distance, thrust out her spear. The pressure that hit him made him instinctively throw his sword out. Immediately following the violent crashing sound, Kang Shin-hyuk took a step back.

“Good.” On the other hand, Algiers was looking at him with a deep smile on her lips. She hadn’t moved an inch; only her attack had flown in. However, he didn’t feel any mana.

“A characteristic?”

“Correct.” She struck again with her answer. He was able to deflect it with a bit more ease this time. The people watching clapped at the display.

“I didn’t think there would be someone who could adapt so quickly.”

“Even the captain got hit at first.”

“Shin-hyuk is so strong. How can he take the hit head on and be fine?”

“...Senior? When did you become so interested in our Shin-hyuk?”

Kang Shin-hyuk was focused only on Algiers’s movements, ignoring the sounds coming from around him. Just watching her hold onto that spear was enough for him to feel pressured.

‘Fast and strong. This person could rival Baek.’ Shinyoung really was a den of monsters; Douglas Payne was just the tip of the iceberg.

‘But now, I am...!’ He opened his eyes, recalling his ability he had naturally exerted in the measurement room. Algiers fired off another spear that caught his eye. He took a diagonal step, the wind pressure slicing right past where he had been and threatened to push him back. He took another step forward against it. He needed to think about how to close the distance between them. She was still about twenty steps away.

“Whoo!”

“...!” Algiers screamed out, but Kang Shin-hyuk was already moving. In order to break through, he had to reach her somehow. Algiers fired off two spears in a row at him.

‘I heard she’s good at close-quarters, but this ranged ability is nearly invincible!’ Kang Shin-hyuk avoided one of the spears and knocked the other out of the air. He had reduced the gap between them to eight steps.

“Didn’t you say you’d like to see my martial arts?”

“I’m watching it. It’s admirable.”

“It’s rude to be one-sided.” Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes colored golden at that moment, the pattern of a wriggling dragon engraved on the Godslayer sword he was holding.

“Finally...whoo!”

-Chiying!

Kang Shin-hyuk struck the floor as their weapons collided. He empowered himself with his spiritual power, spurring himself forward at an incredible speed to close the remaining gap between them in one go. Algiers was smiling, despite his speed. At a glance, it would appear that he was the one dominating as she retreated from the clash.

“Ha!” She quickly retrieved her spear and fired it off. Her attack was even stronger somehow, at close range. Kang Shin-hyuk realized he couldn’t attack her from the front, slashing at her legs as he desperately evaded. With a loud crash, his sword was blocked.

“Whoo...!” Her reaction speed didn’t fall behind his; the power contained in her spear was about half of his. He was slowly grasping what her abilities were like.

“A specialty for stabbing. Traits specific to one behavior are rare.”

“But strong.” She blocked his sword aimed at her neck with her short spear, taking a step back with a smile.

“I watched your game.”

“Really?”

“...” There was no answer. She had said everything she had to, which he wondered if that meant she would come out with full force from now on. Her purples were calm as she lowered her waist a little. It was difficult for him to tell how she might attack. This would be good practice for him, however.

‘Okay, let’s do it.’ Kang Shin-hyuk also took his posture, which seemed to make Algiers happy as she recognized it.

“Also.” There was no opportunity to continue that thought. Her spear flashed out at him from close range. His golden eyes were wide open as he skillfully unfolded the Godslayer sword and clashed with her spear.

-Klang!

The two weapons sparked as they clashed head-on, but in the end, the spear tip was averted. Kang Shin-hyuk smiled as he watched Algiers’s eyes open wide as he succeeded in stopping her with his sword dance.

“Let’s continue.”

“...hoo!” Algiers came back with a similar smile after she realized her attack had been blocked head-on. She had a martial art that was trained to the limit, comparable to Shin-hyuk’s Dragon’s Fan Dance. Kang Shin-hyuk confronted her with unbearable joy.

“I lost.” In the end, the fight had ended with Shin-hyuk’s defeat. The reason was that he couldn’t surpass Algiers with his own status. Perhaps her characteristics were already beyond the S-rank. It was clear to see that in her attacks, that she was in a realm beyond him.

“At last.” When he surrendered, she tilted her head at him.

“It felt like you moved faster than your status limit.”

“Yes. If I kept that up, maybe I might’ve won.” At the last minute, he tried to forcibly raise his physical attributes by actively using his regenerative power. It was his first attempt, so it wasn’t successful. But if he could get it right, maybe he could beat Algiers.

“I was satisfied. You are strong, and your swordsmanship was clearly born from talent and effort.”

“The winner says this to the loser.” However, with how satisfied she looked, he thought it wasn’t meant to ease him. He gently bowed his head to her.

“It was fun.”

“To me also. Please, ask again next time.” Neither had gone all out, but they fought enough to understand each other better. Those who were watching the fight clapped from the sidelines.

“Crazy.”

“Wow, wow.”

“It’s the first time I’ve seen a person push the vice-captain. Isn’t he stronger than the captain?”

“He’s a balanced type.”

“If he trains with us, we’ll become much stronger.” The seniors approached them with a shine in their eyes and praise for Kang Shin-hyuk. They were subtly trying to enlist him in the Wyvern Knights, but he evaded their invitations.

“So relaxed.”

“Hahaha...” He couldn’t tell them he wasn’t nervous because he had regular contact with Shin Eunah and Claire. Karen, however, demolished that hope.

“Oh, come to think of it, what do you have to do with Shin Eunah?”

She brought it up, and the seniors around him seemed shocked.

“Thunder Empress?!”

“Why are you bringing her up?”

“Oh, right. Karen said she was their teacher for the practice. Our school closing tomorrow is related to that.”

“Right, right. But her, with Shin-hyuk?” He gazed at Karen, who whistled and turned away from him. The gaze on him was increasing, however, so he thought it unavoidable. He quickly decided to hide the truth by telling them some of what happened.

“Actually, I received an offer from the association.”

“Aha!”

"The association wants to scout me, so I've been talking to her as my senior. That's all, so please keep it a secret." Karen had her mouth wide open at his explanation.

"Shin-hyuk's ability must be wild...right?"

"As expected, she has a good eye."

"But is that really all...?"

"If we get caught talking like this, she'll burn us with lightning!"

"Shh!" Karen was still amazed, but the seniors were convinced. She agreed to keep it secret, however.

"There seemed to be something only the two of you shared, but I couldn't tell what."

"That's it." She nodded her head in agreement not to dig anymore, though she still wasn't wholly convinced.

"I've exercised, so let's eat." Algiers was already grilling meat while all that was happening.

"It's meat!"

"Woojin, go cook up some meat!"

"Yes, yes!" Karen and Do Woojin took the tongs from her and began to grill the food.

"Ah, Shin-hyuk." Karen called out to him while he stared at the scene. She was placing large chunks of meat onto a big plate.

"Can you bring this to Meloy?"

"Wyverns eat grilled meat?"

"They eat anything a person does. Go on, say hello. Be careful, it's dangerous if you get too close." He immediately accepted her request, wanting to see the wyvern for himself. The plate weighed at least ten kilograms, but it didn't bother him as he headed toward the wyvern. Soon, a large barn came into view.

-Korrumph...!

He heard a low voice cry out from the barn. It was enough to make a person go stiff just by listening to it, but Shin-hyuk was of a high enough rank that it didn't bother him.

"Let's see...ah." His eyes made contact with the wyvern, who was pushing his head out at the smell of meat.

-Kourree...

"Oh..." It was truly a dignified creature that could be called a dragon. It was well over ten meters tall, with a body covered in dark gray scales. The scales covering its neck were raised threateningly. Its head was reptilian, with vertical retinas that were observing him. It stretched its neck out a little further and looked at him.

-Kurruk

Its neck gently vibrated as it stuck its tongue out to lick his cheek.

-Kiiii

"Welcome, right?"

-It seems to be showing favor. Google search no(v)elFire.net

He had heard the taming artifact was broken, but it seemed to have an affinity for humans in the first place. Maybe that was only natural after being with them for so many years. Convinced, he reached out to scratch the wyvern's neck carefully. The wyvern let out a satisfied cry.

"Kiruk, krrr."

"Yes, I'll give you food." The wyvern wasted no time in engorging himself with the meat. After his meal, he cried briskly and spread his large wings in the barn to show off its towering silhouette. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh as he admired its great appearance.

"I wish I had acquired a wyvern instead of a hedgehog."

-If you repair the taming artifact, you can create a new one based on it. If it's you, it can definitely be done.

“Alright, I’ll raise one to be nice.

-100HP bonus!

While having such a conversation and playing with the wyvern, he was unaware of the presence behind him. Algiers stood there, with two meat skewers in hand.

“You took long, so I came to see.” Her pupils were rounder than normal. Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t know what was so surprising and tilted his head at her.

“That child...how did you tame it?”

“...Yes?”

An unexpected question arrived.

Chapter 62 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (6)

Chapter 62 - The Sound of a Dragon Calling (6)

Now that the taming artifact wasn’t working, Meloy was said only to take meals provided by the members but wouldn’t approach them. If you weren’t careful in feeding it, it would begin to riot. The barn was sturdily built and had special magic woven to help in trapping the wyvern, but it had no safety devices built-in.

“Wow, that’s amazing.”

“I think it’s the first time Meloy has latched onto a person like that. Not even the former leader got along with it that well.” Each of the knights approached with an expression of surprise at Kang Shin-hyuk and the wyvern. He looked embarrassed as he gnawed at the skewer he received from Algiers.

“Isn’t it always like this?”

“Don’t you have a taming talent?” To demonstrate, a third-year senior approached Meloy but was only met by the wyvern baring its teeth at her. Indeed, it was treating him differently.

“Is it a female wyvern that prefers men? Maybe that’s the reason why the captain has been a man through the generations.”

“Not even the captain can approach him that well.”

“Unlike Shin-hyuk, the two other men...hey, do I have to say it?”

“It looks like you already have.” Do Woojin seemed a little outraged. Shin-hyuk scratched Meloy’s chin with an embarrassed smile. The wyvern fluttered around like a cat, which caused Algiers eyes to open wide.

“I think you could ride it.”

“I’m not actually taming it, so that would be dangerous even if it likes me.”

“Shin-hyuk should accept it and throw a coup. If you’re the head of the Wyvern Knights, you should ride a wyvern.”

“Then, Shin-hyuk will be the leader?” READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT NOVELFIRE.NET

“A freshman leader...so cool.”

“It’s possible.” Kang Shin-hyuk shook his head at their story and moved away from Meloy. The wyvern let out a sad cry and went back into his cage. Even if he did tame him, he belonged to the knights.

“It would be nice if it was like that normally.”

“I hope Shin-hyuk comes to play often.”

“We’ll be good to you, so come to play in the future, huh?”

“Seniors, please stop dreaming. First, I’m going to eat.” The barbecue party continued on for another half hour. Everyone could easily eat at least three or four servings, except for Kang Shin-hyuk, who ate about as much as Meloy. His caloric intake had increased since his regenerative power grew to B-rank.

“Our Shin-hyuk eats so well.”

“Senior, you’re a little too old to speak like that.” Do Woojin was always complaining about something, but he seemed to be getting along quite well with the 2nd Hall knights. Kang Shin-hyuk ate a grilled pineapple while watching him argue with his seniors.

“Come to think of it...” Shin-hyuk turned toward Algiers at the end of the meal as he sipped at the herbal tea he was provided by Karen.

“I haven’t seen the artifact yet.”

“Oh, that was an excuse.”

“Don’t call it an excuse if it is.”

“I’ll show it to you, follow me.” Algiers led him into the training camp. The seniors gave them the thumbs up, clearly misunderstanding something.

“Where is it?”

“It’s kept in here.” Somehow he had arrived in Algiers’s private room. The office room was artfully arranged, decorated with armor on the walls and a closet. Inside the closet was a colorful saddle.

“This.”

-It’s a high-level artifact. It’s more mana crafted than metallurgy.

Mana Craft was an exceptionally rare skill among the abilities of those with enchantment. It was a specialized skill that produced artifacts using materials containing mana. It was a skill that solved everything from crafting to enchanting entirely by yourself without the need for a blacksmith.

“Be careful, okay?”

“No, just looking at it is fine with me.” The saddle seemed to be intact. It had a metal base covered by soft leather. Something bothered at him a little, those metal decorations added to it...

“What are those?”

“The badges of previous leaders. The most recent one is the badge of the now captain Douglas Payne.”

“Isn’t that a problem?”

“Why is that...does it matter?” Apparently, the general public had a slightly different view of artifacts than he did. He let out a sigh.

“Senior, can I touch it myself?”

“You can call me Eleanor.”

“Then...Eleanor.” She nodded, satisfied at what he said, and he reached out with his hand. He carefully touched the saddle and looked at her, noticing her face was turning a slight red color.

-That woman must be a fox. What an ugly world we live in.

“...?” Shin-hyuk was confused at the administrator’s malice filled message. He raised his spiritual power and ignored it, unable to understand what he was saying. After communicating with that dungeon, doing so with an artifact was much easier.

‘The badges aren’t just decoration...’ He was only trying to communicate with the saddle, but each badge had its own individuality. Originally, they contained the user’s magic and allowed them to connect to the saddle. The problem was that several of them were now in the saddle, disrupting any new connections.

“I’ll take them off.”

“Ah.” Eleanor raised a hand, but Kang Shin-hyuk boldly removed all of the badges. The saddle’s energy revived a little bit, but its original ability showed no sign of recovery. The saddle’s incorrect usage over the years had tangled its magic flow.

‘It’ll be difficult to analyze in this state.’ Eleanor was staring at him blankly as he made a face.

“Those are the badges of our predecessors.”

“I know how it broke now. When the captain attached his badge, the magic power confused inside the artifact reached a critical point. Remember when I said the badges were a problem?” She looked surprised, realizing belatedly that his ability to deal with artifacts was extraordinary. Meanwhile, he was only focused on the saddle. He attempted to grasp the flow of mana inside of it and reinforce it with his spiritual power. It was hazy, but slowly, the structure of the artifact was drawn into his mind. It was still too weak, however. While originally a high-ranking artifact, it was not properly managed over the years.

“Wow.” Kang Shin-hyuk stretched out his shoulders after trying to wrestle with the artifact a few more times.

“Can I borrow this for a while? I don’t think I can solve it here.”

“Are you confident you can solve it if you take it?”

“Maybe not fully.” He once more instilled spiritual power into the saddle, carefully grasping its exterior structure. He thought it would be possible to make the internal magic flow a bit more smoothly, at least to an extent.

“It’s worth a try.”

“Okay, then I’ll leave it to you.”

“Would it be okay?”

“The captain told me to repair it. I can’t take it outside, but you’re not an outsider.” Looking at her sincere expression, he could tell she just made a rather big decision. He nodded.

“Okay. Then excuse me for now.”

“Huh.” Kang Shin-hyuk carefully wrapped the saddle and left the building. On his way, he found Do Woojin cleaning up after the barbecue.

“Ah, Shin-hyuk’s already here!”

“Come play tomorrow! We can fight!”

“If you lose to us, join us!” All of the female seniors seemed to have taken a liking to him after his match with Algiers. Kang Shin-hyuk waved them goodbye and returned to his dormitory. Once he was there, he got to work examining the saddle. There was no immediate answer, however. If you were to compare it to a human, the saddle needed long-term medical care.

“It would be dangerous to add anything else to it...”

-In your previous life, you were quite adept at making and repairing leather products. It is certainly possible for you now.

“With metallurgy?”

-It would be correct to view it as starting from metallurgy and reaching the realm of 'All Craft.'

"That's still too far away." Once more, the administrator seemed to have identified him as the Anvil of his previous life. With a bittersweet smile, he began to trim the saddle. Right now, he was cleaning the exterior of it with a brush that contained his spiritual power and leather oil. He didn't know if the spiritual power was working, but bit by bit, it felt like it was improving.

"... It's not bad if I view it as spiritual training."

-A 200HP bonus for this member's appearance that can only be seen when cleaning leather!

Was it just him, or were the criteria for receiving a bonus becoming stranger each day? As he cleaned the saddle with a sly smile, Onyx rolled over the floor and climbed onto his knees.

"Be careful not to tear up the floor with your thorns."

-Myu!

He warned Onyx and let him take a bite out of some iron he had prepared. Working with Onyx relaxing on his lap didn't feel too bad.

"What if you were a wyvern?"

-Myu?

"Eat a lot and grow up."

-Myu!

The day ended peacefully as so.

The next day, Friday was a temporary holiday. Kang Shin-hyuk received a visit from the dorm supervisor early in the morning.

"Congratulations, Kang Shin-hyuk. I knew you'd become a resident of the Royal Class someday, I just didn't know it would be this year...it seems my eyes are getting rusty."

"Mr. Bolton...thank you."

"I want to see you take the two crowns next year. Now, it looks like your luggage is packed, so move."

"Yes, teacher." He had already packed up what others shouldn't see inside his inventory, and the rest in his suitcase. Kang Shin-hyuk pulled it behind him as he followed Emil Bolton, ignoring the curious students peeking out at him.

"Teacher, is it possible to bring a pet into the dormitory?"

"Normal ones, but I doubt this is an ordinary pet."

"It's a small monster."

"That will need a taming certificate. If you submit it to the school and receive certification, you can bring it with you to practice depending on its type."

"Thank you." Arriving at the dorm lobby, then climbing into the elevator outside. Emil produced a key card made of pure gold and handed it to Kang Shin-hyuk.

"This belongs to you. When you're no longer a resident of the Royal Class, you can return it."

"It looks expensive."

"It was made with magic. Some even say they used an alchemist in the production process. It isn't just for the elevator, but it is also your room key and restaurant access key. It will also grant you access to the special facilities available exclusively for the Royal Class, so don't forget it."

"The treatment here is incredible..."

"Shinyoung is a training center with the goal of cultivating strong superhumans. It's natural to treat talented people well." Kang Shin-hyuk could sympathize with that. The students didn't come here to be treated fairly. This was all to turn them into superhumans officially recognized by the government.

"Here you are, the 13th floor."

"This building goes up to the 13th floor...no, never mind." Kang Shin-hyuk shook his head at Emil's smile and went down the hall, dragging his luggage

behind him. There was a luxurious carpet and a sparkling chandelier, even a commons lounge.

“Let’s see...my room is 1303...” He used the key card to unlock the door. Pushing it open, the only word he could mutter was, ‘wide.’

“There are private rooms where you can exercise as well, so you don’t need to worry about going down to the training facilities. The rooms are soundproofed, so don’t worry about the noise when training.”

“What a scam...” Not even hotel suites would be as luxurious as this. He hadn’t been attached to anything in Shinyoung so far, but now he thought he wanted to live here forever.

“Should I help you unpack?”

“Oh, no, it’s alright. Thank you so much for the guidance.”

“Yes, then that’s that. There are separate restaurants for the royal class, so be careful not to forget your card. A file with additional details will be sent to you later today.”

“Yes.” After Emil left, he decided to contact Baek. He felt like he would be like abandoning him if he went to one of those restaurants to eat alone.

[Baek In-ha: It’s alright, I’ll be in the Royal Class soon.]

[Student council?]

[Baek In-ha:...Is it fancy?]

[Naturally.]

Shinyoung’s student council election was due to be held at the end of the semester, right after the final exam. The council was no place for ordinary students to intervene in, and no amount of politicking could get one in. Baek was, no doubt, one of those being considered for it.

[Baek In-ha: Let’s go out together and team-up.]

[No.]

[Baek In-ha: I knew it would be like that.]

Baek gave up easily.

[So, how is it structured? No, rather, what are you going to do?]

[Baek In-ha: According to the school, a first-year cannot become the president, so I'm aiming for the vice-chairman seat. I know one of the seniors who is a current vice-chairman, so I'll help them become the president.]

A dirty scheme was starting to unfold before him.

[Don't bother me.]

[Baek In-ha: Don't worry, there'll be no dirty tricks, so just watch.]

Kang Shin-hyuk wondered how he should respond to him but decided just to quit.

[Do whatever you want.]

[Baek In-ha: It'll be fine. So, until the election is over, please eat with me at the regular cafeteria...]

Suddenly, he was acting sneaky. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh and agreed.

[Bartender sister: You entered the Royal Class?]

While he was organizing his luggage after talking with Baek, a text came from Claire as well.

[How did you know that?]

[Bartender sister: Well, how indeed?]

The answer came that evening when Claire appeared confidently in front of his door.

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Chapter 63 - Awakening (1)

Chapter 63 - Awakening (1)

“Good evening.”

“Sister?!” Kang Shin-hyuk was wiping the leather saddle while gently exuding spiritual power all afternoon when he heard someone barge in. He shouted angrily at Claire, who appeared without warning. Today, she was wearing a leather riding jacket with a neatly tied ponytail, revealing her provocative body.

“I’m shy, so let me in.”

“No, how on earth did you get in? No one can come in here!”

“Why are you so surprised? Didn’t I tell you I was coming?”

“I didn’t know you meant to come to my room!” She had certainly sent a message saying, ‘I’m heading in.’ But, of course, Kang Shin-hyuk just thought it was a wrong number or something.

“What? Haven’t you heard? I made this system. In addition to Shinyoung, I’ve also worked with other academies and major facilities. To be precise, I provided the theory and reagents needed.” If she had made it, then certainly it wouldn’t be difficult for her to enter the Royal Class. But how did she know he joined those ranks?

“Even if you can sneak in, you couldn’t have known my room number or that I joined the Royal Class, right?”

“I installed a backdoor, of course. Don’t worry, I’m collecting information from all the organizations I lent my tech to.”

“This criminal...!”

“Correct!” Claire affirmed she was a criminal by puffing her chest out.

“But it’s okay because it’s not sold anywhere. I’m just satisfied with the fact that I can play behind the scenes of the world by myself and sleep on secrets no one else knows!”

“This is the combination of some amazing talents with the worst results...!”

“And, actually, I knew something about Shinyoung’s royal class promotion structure. Because you’re the Rookie King, I knew it was a matter of time before you ended up here. It’s actually easier for me to break into here than into the general dormitory. What?” Did that mean she would continue to intrude on him like this in the future? He loved that idea.

“But what’s the reason you came here today?”

“Today’s the first day of business for our bar, so I came to pick you up.” Her voice was excited, as she explained. Although he had roughly expected it, the place she opened her bar up was in Seoul’s Superhuman Shopping Center, which was famous for its price. There, she would run a regular bar serving cocktails to superhuman customers and provide emergency contact information to guests so they could be called to gates to sell cocktails.

“You must’ve really liked the idea of a frontline bartender...”

“Why are you pretending not to care now? It was a name created thanks to you. After all, we have the same feelings about it.” Claire laughed and tapped him on the shoulder. He did, at least until two years ago. Now he had more shame about those childish desires.

“Isn’t it expensive to find a building in that district?”

“Ah, I deliberately picked a place that was a little rundown, so it was cheaper. A bar should be in a secret place, anyway, right?”

“Oh, yeah. I understand.”

“Now, let’s go quickly.” Kang Shin-hyuk was given no chance to veto, not that he had any intention of rejecting it in the first place. He managed to stop her briefly, however, by showing her the saddle.

“I also have a job I’m working on first...sister, do you have any idea on how to recover this artifact?”

“Oh, that...wow, is it Mana Craft? There are few people with that level of skill. How did you get a hold of this?”

“It’s from the Wyvern Knights.”

“Hmm, ah. Them.” She laughed and nodded as if she understood the situation.

“Repairing it, right? I can think of a few ways to make that happen. Okay, I’ll help you. So, work hard today too.”

“I love you sister.”

“This one tires me out.” She gently pinched his cheek with a small smile at his constant confessions of love.

Kang Shin-hyuk had his arms wrapped around Claire’s waist as he rode behind her on her bike. Naturally, being in such close contact with her made his heart soar. Were it not for the calming influence of Anvil, he wouldn’t have been able to help himself.

“You’re so calm, it’s pissing me off. You don’t seem attracted to me at all.”

“Not at all. It’s just difficult to respond appropriately, sister.” Claire laughed and revved the motorcycle powered by magic. It began to float in the air like it was perfectly natural. Kang Shin-hyuk had to desperately hold onto Claire so he wouldn’t fall off.

“You didn’t warn me!”

“It has a silent function and a transparency one. Is that alright?”

“I could fly to Hogwarts like this!” They headed toward the shopping center through the sky at a speed faster than a sports car. When they finally landed in an alleyway near their destination, Kang Shin-hyuk pulled himself away with a regretful expression.

“I hope the drive during our next date is a little longer.”

“Date someone your own age.” Claire jokingly responded to Shin-hyuk and stowed the bike in her inventory. Looking out of the alley, he could see several

superhumans laughing and chatting as they walked through the shopping district.

“It was crazy a couple days ago, but everyone seems to be doing well.”

“You mean Jormungand? It wasn’t publicized, as the association and the larger guilds are taking charge of it.”

“Is it okay like this? I was also involved, after all.”

“Do you not know who’s beside you? I’m a high ranker too, a high ranker. Don’t worry, I’ll walk you home.” Kang Shin-hyuk let out a small exclamation as he realized what happened. She could’ve just messaged him to head over for work at the Choin Shopping Center, but she met up with him in person because she was taking into consideration that he was just attacked.

“Although it might be best if I didn’t go to work at all.”

“Not allowed. You’re an essential part of the bar.”

“I’m still underage...” Claire disregarded his complaints and pulled him into a nearby building. It was an ordinary two-story building, the inside was empty and unlit. A cheap neon sign saying ‘Frontline Bar’ hung above a stairwell leading down to the basement. Meanwhile, the stairs that went up to the second floor was blocked by a locked iron door.

“You bought this whole building?”

“I thought the first floor should be so desolate that they would feel something awesome is in the basement. The second floor should be shrouded in secret, so you don’t know what the hell is up there. People who enter will have no choice but to feel a slight sense of fear at this neon sign.” Listening to her explanation made it sound like there was a dungeon in the basement, not a bar.

“So, what is on the second floor?”

“My room. I decided to stay in Korea, so I thought I would need a room.”

“Only someone like my sister can treat this expensive shopping mall as their home.” He really wanted to see her private room, but it was obvious such a suggestion would be met with disgust. Claire squeezed his hand as if she

knew he was thinking of it and forced him down the stairs. Opening the door, he was greeted by an antique atmosphere. Candles dimly lit the space inside, revealing antique wooden pillars, tables, and silver decorations. He quickly located the counter against one wall, several bottles of vintage alcohols lining the back shelves behind it. This chapter is updated by NovelFire.net

“Cool, isn’t it?”

“It completely matches your taste.”

“Of course.” She replied proudly and handed something to him. It was a plain mask that covered the upper half of the face, starting from the nose.

“Try it out. It’s not a normal mask.”

“Isn’t it an artifact that hides my identity?”

“Oh, you know? It costs over 10 million HP. It can change the shape of your face, the color of your eyes and hair... it’s a ridiculously useful product that can even set defaults.”

“This mask itself is so conspicuous though...” It was full of magical energy.

“I’ve already chosen an appropriate pattern, so try it right away.”

“Yeah...” He really didn’t want to try it, but he had no choice. He sighed internally and put it on, intuiting how to use it. The pattern that Claire made...sure.

“Oh, it suits you as expected.” Was it properly applied? Claire offered a hand mirror to him with a satisfied look. What was reflected in it was a shy and unlucky looking man with dark red eyes and black hair, flowing just past the shoulders.”

“Doesn’t it look perfect? Isn’t it cool? This is yours now, it’s a gift.”

“Oh...yes. Thank you very much...”

“Did you think growing your hair out would suit you?” Kang Shin-hyuk looked at her proud expression and decided to say nothing else as she pulled out a black suit for him to change into.

“Okay, then let’s open!”

“Will anyone show up, sister?”

“If you don’t know the Choin Shopping Center, you wouldn’t know. This place is full of abilities, but its also a refuge for those who don’t catch monsters and want a new way to play. There’s no way they could ignore a place like this.” He was worried about her evaluation of the people around her, but soon a guest showed up to silence him.

“Hey, you’re the Alchemist!”

“This is the bartender, sir.”

“To see the Alchemist working as a bartender in a Korean store...!”

“If you’re not going to order, please leave.”

“Sorry! Huh...? Is this a potion?” The man tilted his head at the menu offered by Claire. She replied with a smile.

‘It’s a cocktail only available in our store. The price starts at 1,000 dollars. Would you like to try it?’

“A potion made by the Alchemist, for only 1,000 dollars...! God, please!” One customer took the bait and soon called for more friends. Soon enough, the bar was full.

“A cocktail from the Alchemist!”

“I was tired from the dungeon today, but I feel like my mana is recovering already.”

“Wouldn’t it be possible to drink this and then fight in the dungeon?”

“Alchemist, you’re so pretty. That bartender outfit is the best.”

Although some of the customers’ perceptions were problematic, the sales were successful. Some ran in to drink cocktails before heading out to hunt, and others handed her business cards, but she just gave them the business card of the bar with a laugh.

“That table.”

“Yep.”

“After that, wash the shakers and glasses.”

“Yep.” Meanwhile, Kang Shin-hyuk diligently assisted her by carrying drinks and cleaning up. He had no complaints, however. Just seeing her alchemy up close was of great help to his own craft.

‘Although her use of spiritual power is still a little underdeveloped.’

“Who’s this?” It was then that one customer became interested in him instead of Claire.

“Must be the Alchemist’s man.”

“Well? No, I heard they broke up a while ago...”

“The both of you. Leave.”

“Ah!” The two guests making vulgar jokes were immediately expelled by Claire. The others who saw them shut their mouths at once. However, Kang Shin-hyuk was worried about what they were talking about.

‘No, there’s no way my sister doesn’t have a boyfriend. Nothing odd there.’ Shin Eunah was about that age and had no interest in dating, but it wasn’t that way for everyone. He focused on becoming the Anvil that wasn’t shaken by anything, focusing on that image of forging metal in his mind. It was then that the door opened, and a woman entered. Kang Shin-hyuk shook away his anguish to greet the new customer.

“...The bar was here. I’ll take a drink too, nonalcoholic.”

“Oh, Eunah.” He found Shin Eunah and froze.

The subtle smile she was making seemed so scary for some reason.

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