

# A VIP as Soon as You Log In

## Chapter 64 - Awakening (2) - -

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Shin Eunah, dressed only in a gray suit and a neat skirt, was still beautiful today. However, the chilly aura emanating from her didn't give one much room to appreciate it.

"Uh, isn't that the Empress?"

"Shh, don't let her hear you."

"Stay quiet. Don't even breathe." The veteran superhumans had gone through enough battles to sense the moon emanating from Shin Eunah, and it silenced them. It was common knowledge that she was a close friend of the Alchemist, so it wasn't unusual for her to show up at the bar she opened. But the uncomfortable look she had made it seem more like a matter of life and death rather than a friendly visit.

"Eunah, you're here."

"Why didn't you call me for the opening day?"

"Because you were working today too..." It was a lie. Claire had been delaying telling her about her relationship with Kang Shin-hyuk, so she didn't want to call her to the bar today.

"Which...with him." Shin Eunah's glanced at the stiff Shin-hyuk before turning back to Claire. He had guessed this might happen, but it seemed like he got caught right away.

"How do you know him?"

"Ah, he's my friend. Like you and I, we have something in common, right?"

"Hmm, right. Actually...I knew."

“What?” The blood drained from Claire’s face. Her head shook as she desperately looked back and forth between Shin Eunah and Kang Shin-hyuk. Shin-hyuk’s own expression below the mask was very similar.

“What? The Alchemist and the Empress have a man in-between them...”

“I should’ve brought popcorn...outside snacks are allowed, right?”

“You fool, you’ll be kicked out!” The gallery began to grow louder at the unusual air current flowing around the trio. However, they immediately became silent once more as Shin Eunah turned towards them with a look of disdain. They knew what they had to do.

“Drink quickly and go...”

“Leave a tip.”

“Have a good time...hiick!” Claire let out a sigh as people began to filter out, commemorating the opening of the Frontline Bar. Shin Eunah sat down at the counter only after confirming no one else was left except for the three of them.

“Grandpa sits here.”

“Yeah.” Kang Shin-hyuk followed along with Shin Eunah without complaint as she tapped the seat next to her. Shin Eunah made an expression like she was still dissatisfied with his reply, however.

“Hm?”

“You still have your sister Claire... no, I see.”

“Cocktail. Nonalcoholic. With sweets.”

“Huh...” Claire was neatly ignored. Shin Eunah gently closed her eyes and waited for her cocktail as Kang Shin-hyuk and Claire exchanged sharp glances at each other. It didn’t matter, however, as, in the end, it was both their fault for not confessing to her.

“Here. Virgin Pina Colada, a Claire arrangement using dungeon fruit.”

“...Are you making fun of me for still being a virgin at my age?”

“Ah! No, nonalcoholic cocktails usually have the word virgin in their names. Eunah? That look is too scary!” Claire’s greatest mistake was to laugh at her unexpected remark. Kang Shin-hyuk wanted to flee on the spot, but Shin Eunah was holding his arm so tight that he couldn’t. Claire silently asked him for help but was only met by Shin-hyuk’s only silent request for saving. Shin Eunah’s gaze hardened upon noticing the looks they were sharing.

“What sort of sign are you two exchanging like that? Are you that close? Are you dating?”

“Eh, Eunah. So how did you know we knew each other?”

“...Hm.” Shin Eunah responded to Claire’s overt topic change by clicking her tongue.

“When grandpa was isolated in the gate, I was told he lived thanks to a potion sent by an angel. I was thinking about who it was, then I remembered I told you about grandpa. At the time, I was half-crazed and had no time to think, but later I recalled that it would be impossible to send a gift if they weren’t registered as a friend.”

“An angel...” Shin-hyuk was a bit impressed at how coldly Shin Eunah could calculate such childish things. Her eyes narrowed as she regarded Claire.

“Are you trying to flirt with grandpa? Why did you try to hide it from me?”

“No, no, no. There’s no such relationship. How about taking a drink to calm down a little? I was excited, too.” Shin Eunah pouted at her words but finally took a sip of her cocktail.

“...Delicious.” Claire looked a bit relieved as Shin Eunah’s face began to relax slightly.

“My relationship with Shin-hyuk was a bit of an accident. I didn’t know he was Anvil at first, but I learned that he was familiar with spiritual power. We became friends as he taught me a little about it...in the end, I decided to leave that other stuff between you two. I just needed a little help today.”

“Yes, that’s right.”

"I see..." Strangely, Shin Eunah seemed even more displeased at Claire's explanation. It scared Shin-hyuk that he couldn't figure out what she was thinking. Claire continued to make excuses.

"Besides, you know my taste is for those older than me. Shin-hyuk is handsome, but he's eight years younger than me. Honestly, it's out of the question."

"I am only in high-school, after all..." He didn't feel great about Claire's words, but now wasn't a good time to complain.

"In other words, you weren't interested in grandpa."

"Of course not! I'll never take him away from you, so be relieved."

"...Yes, I will remember that." Only after listening to that did Shin Eunah finally relax her grip on Kang Shin-hyuk's arm. She didn't completely let him go, however.

"...Claire, it's like this because you tried to hide it from me. I'm not selfish enough to say grandpa can't have friends."

"What about romantic partners?"

"That's not allowed." She naturally made a selfish remark. This chapter is updated by NOVEL\_Fire.net

"He will live with Eunah forever, so don't do anything like marrying someone else."

"..."

"..." Claire wanted to ask, 'Then what about you?,' but the words stuck in her throat. She endured it silently, afraid that the answer would be that Eunah would marry grandpa.

"Hey...is it always like this when he's with you?"

"Yeah..." Claire was, for the first time, witnessing the child-like nature of the Thunder Empress around her grandpa. Meanwhile, Shin Eunah began to hang onto Shin-hyuk after being satisfied by Claire's false response.

"Grandpa, it's so nice to see you today. It was a difficult day for Eunah."

“Yes...I bet you had a hard time.”

“Please stroke my hair.”

“Alright.” Kang Shin-hyuk tried not to be too conscious of her as he gently patted her head. Claire stared blankly at the two.

“Don’t look at me with those eyes, sister. You’ll be fine if you meet a good person.”

“No, I don’t think Eunah has any relationships with anyone else. How about you just accept it?” The moment Shin-hyuk heard that, he couldn’t control the expression that popped up on his face. Claire unconsciously stepped back, aware of the mistake she had made.

“Goodness...”

“...” Shin-hyuk had nothing more he could say to her.

“Grandpa, your status came out.”

“Oh, the association?”

“Uh-huh. I took care of it and raised the security level. Hey, let’s take a picture later for your card.” Shin Eunah fiddled with her stick a little, and a message was sent to Kang Shin-hyuk. It had a file with information on his disguised identity and an electronic ID card.

“The superhuman level was set to B rank, and you will be assigned to Group 1 of the Special Task Force. If possible, I would like you to continue even after graduation.”

“Didn’t you say receiving support from the association didn’t mean I had to stay with them after I graduate?”

“That doesn’t count because I didn’t know you were grandpa.”

“I see.” The status was at B-rank, which was lower than his current ability, but it was still rather good.

“Then, I can enter the gate with this?”

“Normally, you’ll have to apply in advance, but it’s not illegal to enter undiscovered gates if you get lucky. You should avoid ones with higher ratings, though.” Shin Eunah added that in most cases since it would be fine because she would be there. Claire, who had remained silent, suddenly shook her head.

“Let’s choose a name for his disguise. How about Black Soul Eater?”

“Sister, that can be your name. Who the hell would give me that name?”

“It’s a pseudonym, so let’s make it cool.”

“Why do I need a pseudonym?!”

“I’ve already decided on a name. Shin Eunhyuk.” As Claire and Kang Shin-hyuk argued back and forth, Shin Eunah piped up. Shin-hyuk looked over at the document and confirmed she was telling the truth.

“... Isn’t that name too similar to yours?”

“You just need to say it’s a coincidence. I just wanted to make our names similar.”

“Your desire is leaking out.” For reference, Shin Eunah was still rubbing her body against Kang Shin-hyuk like a cat. He desperately tried his best to ignore her.

“Okay, I see. Then let’s use a code name. His name is Shin Eunhyuk, but he needs a code name. Just like I’m the Alchemist, or you’re the Thunder Empress.”

“You two are high-rankers, my cover identity shouldn’t stand out so much.”

“The most important part is to stand out as much as possible!”

“Well, that’s not possible!” In the first place, a code name was like a symbol of honor attached only to those who stood out above others. For that reason, Shin-hyuk rejected it, but Claire ignored him and said she would think of one. He was scared of what kind of codename she would come up with, but he hoped it would remain only in her mind.

“You can use that status when working at the bar. You won’t need to identify yourself in the first place, but maybe it’ll help.”

“Wait, Claire. Are you going to keep grandpa working?”

“We promised it in the first place. We’re both production workers, so we have a lot of work we can help each other with. Besides, we’re both spiritual power users.

“...” Even though Claire explaining the relationship between them was normal, Shin Eunah didn’t seem to like the idea of them spending a lot of time together. Shin Eunah barely managed to calm her anger by pushing herself closer to Shin-hyuk.

“Okay, whenever grandpa works at the bar, I’ll come too. I’ll get to see grandpa working in uniform.”

“You work too, work.”

“It’s okay because I’ll come after work. And on holidays... we’ll enter the dungeon in earnest.”

“Dungeon?”

“Grandpa wants to be strong. To be strong, it’s best to deal with monsters.” Shin Eunah’s voice softened a little bit as she laid her head down on Shin-hyuk’s knee and looked up at him.

“It was impossible when grandpa was away before, but now I can help. I will make you the strongest in the world.”

“Huh? You...” Shin Eunah grabbed his hand tightly and stuck her tongue out at Claire.

“Because it’s only us two, I won’t teach you anything.”

“You...” Claire tried to retaliate, but Shin Eunah ignored her. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a bitter laugh as she grabbed his hand with more strength. Maybe she knew about Anvil’s past; it was a past that Kang Shin-hyuk himself only knew fragments of. Maybe Janus or his other friends would know something as well, but he decided not to say that out loud.

“So let’s work hard together starting tomorrow.”

“Well, sorry. I can’t because I have something to do this weekend.”

“...” The grip on his hand became tighter, but he couldn't help it. That night, Kang Shin-hyuk returned home with the reward promised by Claire.

Of course, he didn't return home on Claire's bike but in Shin Eunah's arms.

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## Chapter 65 - Awakening (3)

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-For today's log in bonus, the skill boost buff is applied! All skills will increase by 30% for the day, and the probability of a jackpot has increased.

Saturday morning was the day Kang Shin-hyuk finally saw the skill amplification buff he had been hoping for. It felt fitting for what he needed to do today.

“With this...” Claire had given him a potion in exchange for his work yesterday. She called it a regeneration potion, but like one that returned things to their original state. It was one of the higher-level potions that only an alchemist could make.

‘But just sprinkling this on won't restore the artifact. You need to use it and repair it at the same time. Artifact repair isn't something anyone can do. Can you do it?’

Kang Shin-hyuk hadn't immediately responded to Claire's words at the time. Of course, the administrator reminded him he had already repaired the orb, but that was largely thanks to the spiritual glue.

“I have to try. After eating.”



-Myu?

"Yes, you should eat too." Kang Shin-hyuk left some food for Onyx before heading out. He was thinking about eating breakfast at the Royal Class-exclusive restaurant. He left behind his key card, but he didn't need it. It was more like an honorary identification card, and his stick carried the access codes for his room and the restaurant as well.

"Welcome. Enjoy your meal." The Royal Class restaurant was located in the Unyu hall, along with several facilities exclusive to the members of the Royal Class. It felt like Unyu hall was a facility that existed just to emphasize the difference between the students. Of course, most students didn't know of such facilities in the first place, just like Kang Shin-hyuk used to. That made him feel worse for some reason.

"This year's Rookie King..."

"I heard he received an offer from the association..."

"The association? Ha, they don't have any money." The restaurant was incomparably spacious and luxurious compared to the regular student cafeteria. The number of students here, however, was much smaller.

"Shin-hyuk, this way." A bright voice called out to him. Turning, he found Karen waving at him from a table where Eleanor R. Algiers was also sitting.

"It's just you two." Kang Shin-hyuk sat at the table with them just as a server arrived to present them with a menu board. He shook his head and handed it back, however.

"I'll take it all."

"Yes?"

"Everything. I want a big breakfast."

"That's impossible...we can increase the size of your main dish, however..."

"By a lot. Enough to feed three people."

"Okay." Karen admired his appearance as he proudly ordered breakfast in this new environment. Meanwhile, Eleanor disregarded the exchange and cut straight to the point.

“How about the repairs?”

“I found a way. I should have some results today, although I don’t know if I’ll succeed.”

“Thanks.”

“You can say that after I succeed.”

“I can’t wait.” As they waited for their meal, three men entered the restaurant. The one in the lead was Douglas Payne, captain of the Wyvern Knights. The other two were third-year students Shin-hyuk had seen with him in the measurement room. They flinched when they saw Eleanor, Karen, and Shin-hyuk sitting together.

“Vice-captain.” Douglas Payne was the first to speak up.

“You’re with an outsider?”

“...” Eleanor didn’t respond to him. He thought she was dealing with the captain’s unreasonable requests but looking at her attitude now, that didn’t appear to be the case.

“You...you were with him, then.” Douglas looked at Shin-hyuk with a slight frown. He was probably referring to Baek, who had defeated him. Kang Shin-hyuk shrugged, and he snorted a little before turning his head back to Eleanor.

“I need the dragon’s mark. I’ll go to pick it up in the afternoon.”

“Did you forget you broke the saddle yourself?” Finally, Eleanor spoke up. It was in very accurate Korean, although it had a peculiar British accent to it. Kang Shin-hyuk was a little moved at how well she spoke.

“I have a way to fix it, and I decided to seek support from the family.” Probably the dragon’s mark was the name of that taming artifact. Eleanor’s face hardened at the word family.

“That will involve outsiders.” This chapter is updated by NovelFire(.)net

“You seem to have already brought one into the training camp.” It sounded like the information was leaking out, although there was no reason for it not to. Kang Shin-hyuk disregarded the stares of the three men.

“He is a member of Shinyoung and a candidate for the knights. It’s a completely different story when it involves the captain’s family.”

“Which is why I’m thinking of having Mr. Bolton present. Wouldn’t it be alright if he and you were there to directly observe it?”

“...Do whatever you want.” Eleanor replied with a bored expression and turned away. Douglas let out a faint laugh before turning to look at Shin-hyuk. He then walked away with the other two.

“It seems that you knew he was trying to repair the saddle.”

“He’s trying to now.” Kang Shin-hyuk only spoke up once he confirmed they had sat down somewhere else. Karen shook her head.

“He wants to secure his legitimacy as the captain. Why did he entrust it to the vice-captain in the first place?”

“It may have been out of good faith.” Kang Shin-hyuk’s reflexive remark got a rise out of Karen, who turned toward him.

“Shin-hyuk, there are things in this world you can say and things you can’t. What about good faith?”

“No, you don’t know?”

“Huh?!” Kang Shin-hyuk turned to Eleanor for help, but she looked just as confused at his words. He began to faintly realize something as he connected Douglas Payne’s actions and words together.

“No, I’m still not sure, so let’s talk about it later. So, what are you planning? Shall we fix it?” Eleanor thought for a long time before lowering her head to Kang Shin-hyuk.

“I’m sorry, I think I have to return it. Repair it after they fail.”

“You don’t think they’ll be successful.”

“I’ve inquired with some trusted people back home. At least now, there’s no one who can fix it.” Indeed, in the process of asking her family for help, she had found that Douglas Payne’s family couldn’t handle it either.

“So... I’m really sorry, but I have one more favor to ask.”

"I can't really tell what you want when you stare at me like that." Eleanor's expression was serious as she bowed her head deeply to Shin-hyuk.

"It's alright even if it's only temporary, but please join the Wyvern Knights."

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It was an established rule since its founding that the Wyvern Knights maintained a maximum of twenty people. Therefore, in order for new recruits to join when capacity was full, they would have to release existing personnel and re-enter with the approval of all the executives or retake their positions by playing a fair game with the existing members with the approval of the vice-captain or captain.

-Rookie King Kang Shin-hyuk, Wyvern Knights Joining Test! A duel with Ethan Milan, 3rd year C Class, with the approval of vice-captain Eleanor R. Algiers!

The Wyvern Knight's traditions had been handed down since the founding of Shinyoung. Normally, the captain and the other executives directly selected members without any friction, but there were a few cases where recruitment had to be dealt with by duels.

"You." Ethan Milan, who had been enjoying walking around the campus wearing the cape of a Wyvern Knight rather than working, hurried to the gym as soon as he received a message that he would be disqualified as a member if he didn't fight. He had been dismissed from the halls due to his lack of skills.

"Should we really do this?"

"No hard feelings, I just need your spot."

"Huh..." There were quite a few spectators seated around the gym. The Wyvern Knights were a fairly famous group, but there were also no classes today, so there were plenty of people lying about the dorms with nothing better to do. They gladly flocked to the gym for a chance at entertainment.

"Prepare..." The teacher in charge of the basic combat training course accepted the role of judge for the selection duel. Yesterday, when they went to apply for it, he begrudgingly accepted with a tired face.

"Match...start!"

“Kh!” Knowing that Kang Shin-hyuk was the Rookie King and emerging talent, Ethan decided his best chance at victory was striking first.

“Ahhhhh!” However, at the moment, he tried to knock Shin-hyuk down with his huge war hammer that amplified his B-rank characteristic [Shock Amplification], Shin-hyuk drew his sword and jumped off the floor. The enormous wind pressure from the Warhammer would’ve been enough to crush him even before it hit him head-on. It was a powerful attack that allowed no resistance, certainly worthy of the position of a Wyvern Knight. Kang Shin-hyuk, however, evaded it all and twisted his body in mid-air. His sword collided with Ethan’s mid-section.

“Kh!”

“Now...!” Shin-hyuk landed on one foot, pivoting to kick Ethan before he could recover. Ethan collapsed with a groan.

“Winner, Kang Shin-hyuk! Ethan Milan has been disqualified as a member of the Wyvern Knights. From this moment, Kang Shin-hyuk is now recognized as a member of the Wyvern Knights.” The teacher calmly declared Kang Shin-hyuk’s victory. The match was over in less than thirty seconds.

“It was so overwhelming he had no time to judge. Was Ethan Milan really that weak?”

“It’s said he’s probably the weakest of the knights, but he was still one of them, so he had to be strong.”

“More than that... didn’t Kang Shin-hyuk become stronger?”

“Right. His movements were clearly different from before.” Kang Shin-hyuk ignored the sounds coming from around him as he sheathed his sword. Ethan Milan was very weak for a 3rd year. Karen, or Do Woojin, if he pushed his characteristic to the maximum, would have been much more dangerous.

“Shin-hyuk! Put on the cloak!”

“Ah.” Karen ran up to him, fastened a cloak on his back as if she expected this from the start. He didn’t want to wear it, but he reminded himself it was only temporary. Right. Only temporary.

“With this, I’ve met the requirements to be there in the afternoon.”

“It’ll be fun.” Kang Shin-hyuk responded with a bitter smile to Karen as she giggled. Among those who gathered at the gym, there were no Wyvern Knights from the first hall. Maybe they deliberately ignored it. Eleanor walked up and shook his hand with a faint smile.

“Please take care of us in the future.”

“It’s temporary.” Kang Shin-hyuk still shook her hand, however.

‘Now...’ He just had to wait for them to fail to fix the artifact. Kang Shin-hyuk headed to the 2nd hall with the cloak of a Wyvern Knight fluttering behind him. He was greeted by cheers.

Five hours later, Wyvern Knight captain Douglas Payne arrived.

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## Chapter 66 - Awakening (4)

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“Senior, I apologize for bothering you with this.”

“There’s no need to lower your head like that.” The first leader of the Wyvern Knights, Emil Bolton, replied to Douglas Payne. He frowned as he noticed Kang Shin-hyuk standing next to Eleanor; perhaps he had heard of today’s entrance test.

“I never thought you would join the Wyvern Knights, what kind of change of heart did you have?”

“Well, there’s some circumstances around that... I’m rather surprised to see you here as well.” Emil Bolton. In his heyday, he was an exceptionally strong

superhuman who was among the top 300 in the world rankings. Now he was in charge of Shinyoung's male dormitory. In hindsight, it made sense that he would've had a close relationship with Shinyoung before becoming a supervisor. And, if he had attended Shinyoung, it would be unlikely that he, with his reputation for his swordsmanship, wouldn't have joined the Wyvern Knights. However, it was surprising that he was their first leader. He must have a good knowledge of taming as well.

"Senior, to tell you again why we've brought you here today..." Douglas Payne stood between Shin-hyuk and Emil to switch the topic. There was no way he would be happy with his 'enemy' conversing with Emil Bolton. Not to mention, Kang Shin-hyuk had taken another member's position with the help of the vice-captain today. Emil Bolton waved his hand like he didn't want to hear any more. Follow current novels on [novel\(F\)ir\(e\).net](http://novel(F)ir(e).net)

"I know, I remember. So, who's repairing the artifact?"

"He's from my family." Shinyoung didn't normally open its doors to the outside unless it was for a big event like a sports festival. That was no exception for Douglas Payne; then, he seemed to have received approval today. Two men appeared in the direction he pointed, with their heads politely bowed. Emil stared at them as if to silently test them before nodding.

"If they're members of the Payne family, then they're trustworthy. I was surprised to hear the artifact was broken, but your attitude towards fixing it is worth noting."

"I will put it back in order so that it doesn't tarnish your name."

"But there is one small problem." Emil Bolton seemed genuinely embarrassed.

"The artifact isn't originally mine. Even if a dragon were in front of me that could fix it, I wouldn't know what to do."

"Yes?" Even Douglas Payne and Eleanor seemed embarrassed as they watched from the sideline. Shin-hyuk had roughly guessed this would happen, however, as Emil Bolton had no talent in production. Emil Bolton had acquired it, but he didn't make it.

"Well, though, you are the original owner of the artifact, so you can check it once it's repaired..."

“Of course that is possible, but will it really work? This is the first time I’m hearing it is broken. I’m not here to make it your fault, but I need to clarify why it was broken and whether it should be left to the knights in the future.”

“Oh...” Emil’s strict remarks landed heavily on Douglas. He continued without paying his appearance any heed, however.

“Douglas, you know that your actions so far bear a significant penalty. The broken artifact has been hidden so far, then you called outsiders to repair it and even called me here to verify it.”

“...”

“When did the Wyvern Knights become a group to strengthen their own authority by borrowing power from others? If you had won the hearts of your members, this wouldn’t be necessary. If you had confidence in yourself, you wouldn’t need to hide it was broken in the first place.”

“...Yes.” No matter how proud Douglas Payne was, he had nothing he could say in front of one of the world’s top 300. He had apparently thought Emil Bolton would help him save face, but things weren’t going as he wanted.

“Well, whatever the reason, you’re now trying to get the job done. I won’t blame you. Whatever the reason, if you properly repair the artifact and are recognized as the rightful owner of Meloy, I will admit it too.”

“Senior...!”

“Fortunately, the person who made the artifact is nearby. I asked him to visit. He will be better suited to this than I, who can only scare my juniors. He’ll be able to figure out what went wrong and why it’s broken, as well as if the people you brought are doing their job.”

“Yes?” For the second surprise of the day, Douglas’s eyes opened wide once more as Eleanor grabbed at Kang Shin-hyuk’s arm. Meanwhile, Shin-hyuk was convinced. The mystery before him was being solved as he realized why Claire reacted the way she did to the saddle. She recognized whose work it was...

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Twenty minutes later, an old man arrived at the Blackwood Training Center. It was Lee Manwoo, the teacher in charge of the Artifact Production Club.

"If I realized it was this, I would've told you not to bother me."

"I'm sorry, sir. It was the request of my juniors, so I couldn't leave it be." Emil Bolton bowed his head, and the other students quickly joined him in bowing to Lee Manwoo a second later. Lee Manwoo looked at Kang Shin-hyuk with an expression of displeasure.

"You need to study artifacts, what are you doing here?!"

"That's why I'm here today, sir."

"What? Hmmm? Oh, is that so?" Lee Manwoo tilted his head at the words but soon seemed convinced.

"You're cheeky. Let's see if you're up to it."

"I'm not confident, but I think I have a chance."

"How do you manage each day? Even if I didn't have the skills, I would've acted confident." Kang Shin-hyuk smiled bitterly, but he couldn't help it. As his synchronization rate increased, sometimes that old man's attitude would appear. Meanwhile, Douglas Payne was looking more disheveled as he watched Shin-hyuk and Lee Manwoo converse. He realized things weren't going as intended.

"Then, the artifact. I have to see what the hell is wrong."

"Yes." Eleanor, who had been in charge of storing it so far, brought it out right away. The badges of the previous captains were sticking to it once more. Shin-hyuk had recovered some of the energy that had weakened inside it, but a ridiculously difficult process still remained until it could completely recover.

"Ha...these superhumans. Even their brain is a muscle." Lee Manwoo lamented as soon as he saw it. As the creator of the artifact, he was able to grasp the problem immediately.

"Wasn't I clear? When the user changes, the badge changes."

"Yes, sir. I conveyed that to my juniors." Emil Bolton responded politely. However, he had yet to realize the essence of the problem. Each time the

user changed, so too did the badge. It didn't occur to him to remove the previous badge.

"Hah... I'm wrong. I was wrong for not writing an instruction manual. Yes, try to fix it."

"..." Lee Manwoo set it down, and Douglas gave instructions to the men he brought. They didn't move, however, as they stood still and stared at Lee Manwoo.

"Are you Lee Manwoo, the chief of the field?"

"No one knows such a strange nickname."

"Teacher..."

"Ah, it's loud!" The two men bowed their heads.

"It's an honor to meet you!"

"I thought it would be amazing to see the taming artifact, but I didn't realize...!"

"What, what is it?" Douglas Payne seemed embarrassed, but Emil Bolton took their attitude for granted. After all, he was familiar with Lee Manwoo back in his heyday. But what would be the response of someone who wanted to keep himself hidden?

"If you tell anyone outside, I will make you regret it."

"We will keep it in mind, sir!" The men were eager to bow, which only increased Lee Manwoo's annoyance. They finally approached the artifact to check it out as Shin-hyuk shook his head.

"The internal structure is completely twisted. I'm sorry, but it is impossible to recover even for Lee Manwoo."

"Unless you could turn back time..."

"What? I've heard several reports that it can be fixed!" Douglas Payne couldn't help himself as he angrily shouted. However, the two craftsmen shook their heads firmly.

“There are several ways to revive a low or mid-level artifact with a simple structure. You can even rebuild it from scratch. However, this is out of our reach. The number of craftsmen who could handle this...”

“Even if they could fix it, it would be temporary. It’s been used wrong, now it’s almost dead.” It wasn’t dead. Kang Shin-hyuk thought of the Heroic Shield, which had completely lost its will. It was almost dead, but he was able to recover it.

‘Actually, has the Godslayer sword finished digesting the Heroic Shield?’ He pushed the thought away, deciding now wasn’t the time to think of it as he took a step forward. Eleanor nodded and spoke up.

“If so, how about leaving it to our new member Kang Shin-hyuk this time? He is knowledgeable of artifacts and is capable enough to create his own. I don’t think it would be bad to test his abilities.”

“Didn’t you hear these guys? Even the finest craftsmen couldn’t touch it.”

“Well, can you alone create artifacts at your age?” Douglas Payne laughed her off, but the artisans shouted in anger.

“Alone? Huh, looking at your conversation with Lee Manwoo...are you his disciple?”

“Disciple? He’s already making things on a different level than me. I’m just paving the way a little for him.”

“Ah...!” Lee Manwoo responded honestly, getting a good reaction of surprise out of the craftsmen. Douglas Payne was growing upset with his plan falling apart, and Shin-hyuk hoped the craftsmen wouldn’t be treated too badly.

“Is that really okay? He’s only a freshman. It may result in the artifact being destroyed.”

“Douglas, you are the one who broke the artifact.” Emil Bolton rebuked Douglas, but he also had a look of anxiety. He wasn’t aware of Shin-hyuk’s abilities, so he looked at Lee Manwoo for confirmation. Lee Manwoo clicked his tongue.

“Where will you do it? It would be nice to get a good look.” With that, Lee Manwoo took a seat. Emil Bolton joined him, and Douglas ground his teeth

and backed off. The artisans of his family were watching with anticipation, as did Eleanor.

“Then I’ll try it.” With a deep breath, Kang Shin-hyuk approached the artifact. He began to pull out the badges hanging from it. Douglas tried to stand up angrily, but Emil Bolton stopped him.

“We shouldn’t have left them all in. I liked it because I felt that it was handed down from the generations, but it was wrong.”

“Muscle heads. These magic tools are delicate.”

“Wow.” It was a clean hit to all of the leaders of the Wyvern Knights. Kang Shin-hyuk handed the badges over to Karen, who was standing nearby and pulled a potion out of his clothes. It was the regeneration potion Claire had given him.

“What is that?!”

“Huh!” Lee Manwoo stood up and shouted. He could tell the value of the potion just by looking at it.

“This is...ah, networking.” Kang Shin-hyuk replied vaguely and poured about half the potion on the saddle. He immediately activated his spiritual power to communicate with the saddle once more.

Now it was time to wake up this artifact that slept like the dead.

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Regeneration potions were items that returned things to their best condition. This extended even to the saddle known as the Dragon’s Mark, whose interior was completely entangled due to years of misuse. However, it was important to note that if the artifact wasn’t carefully controlled, the reproduction that

would take place would have no limits. In other words, it was possible for artifacts overload due to an excessive recovery, or to even begin to decompose.

‘It’s funny.’ Therefore, repairing artifacts with a regeneration potion was a difficult process. It was delicate work that involved analyzing and reconstructing the artifact’s internal structure while simultaneously controlling the regeneration process. That was using two different types of magic at once. Or so Claire had said, but the explanation went over Shin-hyuk’s head as he couldn’t handle magic.

‘I don’t need to.’ However, he had learned about the efficacy of the regeneration potion, so he was confident. He already knew the internal structure of the artifact, as well as the perfect state of the artifact that the saddle itself knew of. The saddle was leading him to the form it desired.

‘Right?’

-Vwoom

‘Finally, it responded.’ The artifact began to resonate faintly with Kang Shin-hyuk as it began to accept the spiritual power permeating into it. His spiritual power led the potion so that it wouldn’t go berserk, aiming for that original form desired by the artifact. He smiled as he could feel the slight changes taking place in the mana circuits within the saddle.

‘I know a little more now.’ At first, he didn’t understand what exactly it had to do with taming. However, as he examined the artifact as it accepted the power of the regeneration potion, he began to understand it intuitively. Of course, that didn’t mean he would be able to replicate it. This item was made using mana craft; all Kang Shin-hyuk could do was metallurgy.

‘Still...I think this is possible.’ Once he had grasped the meaning and will of the artifact, all he needed to do was focus on creating an object that replicated that. If an enchanter heard him, no doubt they would mock him, but he felt it was possible.

-Vwoom

‘Well?’ It was then. Even after restoring it to its original state, the regeneration potion still had energy left to spare. He wanted to improve it. Kang Shin-hyuk instinctively added his own spiritual power to the artifact, pushing the potion

beyond its limits to change both the interior and exterior of the artifact. This chapter is updated by novel FIRE.NET

-Taking off the unnecessary decorations and expanding the mana circuits.

-A specific direction has been given to the saddle based on the spiritual power it has received...in this process, the Golden-eyed Dragon was activated.

-Originally, this artifact had the name of Dragon's Mark, but it wasn't originally related to dragons. It didn't matter so long as the target was a monster. It worked without differentiating between them.

-However, it obtained that name after it was used to tame wyverns over the years. Thanks to the Golden-eyed Dragon characteristic, the artifact was breaking through its limits.

"No, it's still a little lacking."

"What?!" Kang Shin-hyuk drew his sword as he kept his hand on the saddle. The people watching the vibrating and changing form of the saddle stood up, but he paid them no mind as he cut the tip of his finger.

"What are you doing?!"

"Quiet!"

"Huh?!" Lee Manwoo silenced Douglas Payne with a word, who was trying to stop Kang Shin-hyuk. Meanwhile, Shin-hyuk's blood that contained a deep spiritual power and a B-rank regeneration power fell onto the saddle, absorbed into it without a trace. Of course, his regeneration was quite lacking compared to the potion's power, but it was better than nothing. The artifact emitted a radiant light as it finished repairing with the addition of his blood. No, rather, it had evolved.

-An artifact that had completely lost its ability has evolved beyond mere restoration. You have obtained [Dragon's Mark (A+)]. If you use it yourself, you can raise your rating even further.

The luxurious saddle was shining radiantly before him. The image of a dragon was engraved onto the edges of it. He let out a sigh and put it down, messages filling his retinas as if they had been waiting for that moment.

-Communicating directly with artifacts to draw out their true power, your metallurgy skills have grown to B-rank. Heat resistance has further increased.

-Mastered the resistance skill [Resist Fire (A)]. The rarity of [Resist Fire (A)] increased due to the influence of regeneration and metallurgy, becoming [Resist Fire(S)]. Under the influence of metallurgy, skill proficiency increased to B-rank.

-Synchronization has accelerated—current rate of 17.2%.

-Congratulations on your new resistance acquisition with a 500HP bonus!

Familiar messages scrolled past him. He could understand the extent of the evolution of the Dragon's Mark, but what was even more surprising was that he gained the Resist Fire skill from his heat resistance increasing.

Resistances were very rare skills, so it was surprising metallurgy had such a hidden effect. No, of course, what he had just learned wasn't ordinary metallurgy.

'By the way...' Kang Shin-hyuk recalled the instinctive activation of his trait during the process of repairing the object, which had happened when he repaired the orb as well. He thought it was originally applied to only weapons as a simple buff, but it worked to evolve these objects. It was a reminder that it was linked to his metallurgy, although its secrets still remained hidden for now.

'I thought it was a trait that stopped me from using mana, but is it related to my previous life? No, since we have the same soul, isn't that natural?' He grew increasingly confused as he wondered what characteristics Anvil had in his previous life.

-As I said before, you didn't have combat capabilities in your previous life. Until you accessed the Hero Universe, you were an ordinary person. One with no characteristics.

'I see...'

-There's no need to think too deeply about it. It means that there is no need to separate yourself from the past, nor do you need to try and match yourself. Just do what you want to do now.

‘...Thank you.’ Kang Shin-hyuk covered his embarrassment by thanking the administrator.

-1,000HP Bonus!

‘Did you read my mind?!’ While Kang Shin-hyuk was going back and forth quietly with the administrator, the artisans of the Payne family went to examine the artifact.

“My god! The energy inside is already different!”

“I’ve seen a lot of artifacts but...this is great. Lee Manwoo, this!”

“Artifact evolution. I’ve only seen it twice so far. When the connection between an artifact and its owner reaches its peak, I’ve heard that it can grow. But to think it would happen with an artifact I created...” Lee Manwoo shook his head and looked at Kang Shin-hyuk.

“This guy did it.”

“Evolving the artifact created by the great chief...!”

“Is this the ability of his disciple?!” The craftsmen overreacted to the point where it was hard to imagine them quietly repairing an artifact. Kang Shin-hyuk reddened a bit under their excited gazes.

“Haha, the effect of the regeneration potion was really great.”

“It’s an amazing item, but that’s not the only reason. You aren’t even the owner of this artifact in the first place...”

“You!” Finally, Douglas Payne stepped forward. He couldn’t believe what he had seen.

“Aren’t you trying to steal the Wyvern Knights items? Dropping blood on an artifact is often a way of registering as its owner!”

“No.” Kang Shin-hyuk responded calmly and lifted the saddle up.

“I could have used anything like that on this artifact. Still, anyone can use it, and you don’t even need to attach a badge to it anymore. You just need to meet the conditions for using it.”



“The terms of use...?”

“Yeah.” Kang Shin-hyuk felt a bit shaky as he hadn’t expected it to go this far.

“It grew during the repair process, so naturally the qualification requirements have changed. Probably, it originally had them...”

“It did.” Lee Manwoo nodded slowly.

“What I set was that only the captain of the Wyvern knights could use it. But now...it has become a standard of the artifact, not of a human.”

“Which means?”

“It’s not the person who decides... It’s the artifact that decides. The person that the saddle decides has the abilities appropriate of the Wyvern Knight commander. Only they can use it properly.”

“It’s the Dragon’s Mark now, sir.”

“This artifact is so cheeky. It’s begging you more than me!” Kang Shin-hyuk, who had deeply communicated with the artifact while repairing it, should be excluded. It would be easy to stop Douglas Payne from using it while he was working on it, after all.

“Huh, it must’ve been quite annoying to have been plagued by unqualified people. Maybe this guy can help us select the head of the Wyvern Knights in the future.”

“Huh...!” The two artisans, Douglas Payne and Eleanor R. Algiers, all looked up.

“Then it’s no problem.” Douglas Payne took the saddle away from Shin-hyuk with a confident expression and started walking away.

“Senior, since you’ve come over, why don’t we visit the wyvern? I’ll show you how I tame him.” Of course, he was walking toward the wyvern’s barn. It looked like Emil Bolton might burst into laughter, and Lee Manwoo just gazed at the artifact in his hand with his head tilted.

“That...ah...”

“Ah...” Eleanor bit her tongue, and Karen looked like everything was ruined. Kang Shin-hyuk, however, was convinced.

“We will go too. We’ll see if this man deserves to be recognized as the real captain.”

“...Huh.” Eleanor let out a deep sigh and nodded. So next up was to check on the wyvern Meloy.

-Kruuuuraaaaaah!

The results were as expected.

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## Chapter 68 - Awakening (6)

### Chapter 68 - Awakening (6)

“It wasn’t repaired!” Douglas Payne couldn’t stand the fury rising inside of him. It was because all of the Wyvern Knights watched Meloy throw him to the floor when he was climbing onto the saddle on his back.

-Kurooooooh!

Meloy was excited, screeching at Douglas Payne. It started at him with glowing yellow eyes that seemed ready to peck at his head the next time he got close. It was a lucky thing that his stamina was S-rank.

“There’s no way I can’t be recognized as the strongest of the Wyvern Knights. You! You lied to me!”

“Douglas Payne!” Emil Bolton shouted the moment Douglas Payne tried to stare down Kang Shin-hyuk. No matter how great his stats were, he couldn’t handle the look Emil Bolton shot at him. He stiffened in place.

“When did the Wyvern Knights become a kindergarten? Do you think this behavior is worth the captain badge I passed on?”

“No, sir! But, senior, I was recognized by all the members and became the captain. The reason I can’t handle the saddle properly is because of him!”

“Did you not hear Lee Manwoo? Those are the standards of humans, the standards of an artifact are different.”

“What is different between them?!” Douglas Payne really didn’t seem to know. Emil looked at Lee Manwoo and Kang Shin-hyuk in turn, asking if they would allow him to explain. The two nodded, knowing they couldn’t convince him without Emil.

“There are other factors involved in human standards other than coercion such as perspective, networking and loyalty.”

“Senior!” Douglas raised his voice.

“I wasn’t appointed captain because of my family!”

“I know, Douglas, I wasn’t referring to them.”

“Yes...?”

-Gruaaaah!

The wyvern was still temperamental, responding angrily to Douglas’s voice, so Kang Shin-hyuk sneakily approached him to calm him down. Curiously, he began to calm as soon as Kang Shin-hyuk placed a hand on him. The wyvern licked his hand and let out a small cry.

“As expected. Shin-hyuk, we will have no choice but to take care of you.”

“Funny.” He stepped back, laughing at Karen’s unstoppable drive to recruit him. He already knew his job was done.

“If it’s not my family, whose...?” Douglas Payne turned to Eleanor, who was standing anxiously nearby.

“...Vice-captain?”

“No.” Douglas looked at her blankly, repeating the same word she said to himself.

“No.” Eleanor calmed down a bit, but Douglas Payne was looking straight at her.

“Are you trying to hide your skills, vice-captain?”

“No...”

“Ride that wyvern, vice-captain.”

“Captain.”

“This is your captain’s instructions. Or can’t you follow the words of someone weaker than yourself?” Eleanor bit into her lip quietly, but now that it came to it, it was impossible to refuse. Eventually, she had no choice but to move.

-Gururu

But she wasn’t rejected. Meloy cried out in a low voice and accepted her as if it had been waiting all along. It slowly lowered itself to allow her up.

“...” Even the saddle began to glow dimly as if to prove it was activated, but Douglas didn’t react at all.

“...I see.” Douglas turned to stare at Kang Shin-hyuk. Shin-hyuk had an inkling of what he was thinking. That he made it react to Eleanor, as the one who repaired it, but soon his gaze fell away from Kang Shin-hyuk, looking back at Eleanor, who was descending from the wyvern.

“Did you know she was stronger than me? Did you insist on not joining us because of this?”

“No one says I’m stronger than you.”

“Okay, then let’s fight.” Douglas Payne touched his bracelet, summoning forth a massive greatsword. He grabbed it with one hand, swinging it lightly, and pointed it at the vice-captain. At first glance, its mass was no joke, but he was holding it with ease.

“Captain.” Follow current novels on [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

“We’re fighting to confirm it. I can’t understand right now. If you lose, I have no choice but to decide that this guy tricked me.”

“...” The tip turned toward Shin-hyuk. Eleanor let out a deep sigh.

“Okay. We’ll fight.”

“Don’t hide your abilities.”

“I will not hide.”

“If you win, I will withdraw from my position. You’ll become the captain.”

“That’s...” Eleanor hesitated.

“I’ve been humiliated enough today. You won’t continue to shame me, right?” Kang Shin-hyuk remained silent, unsure if he could win against Douglas himself. But both of them were special, even by Shinyoung’s standards. Shin-hyuk had grown miraculously, but he still lacked confidence in himself. He believed Eleanor could win, though.

“...I will accept all conditions.” Eleanor gently closed her eyes for a second, steeling her resolve, and then stared at him. The shine in her purple eyes was overwhelming. Thus, this year’s first managerial match would take place. The training center had facilities for this, and the appropriate members to referee were already gathered, so they could start right away. Emil Bolton and Lee Manwoo followed the group. Tensions were high as the two executive groups were anxious about the outcome.

“I hate Shin-hyuk.” Karen approached him with a dead expression and jabbed him in the side. However, with his A-rank stamina, it didn’t even scratch him.

“Actually, this isn’t what I intended, but I think it’s fair for you to do some heavy lifting too.”

“Let’s hope it works out.” Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t respond as he looked around. Everyone’s attention was now on the duel that would take place.

“Hey, I’m ready to listen now. You’ve been itching to tell me about a bunch of stuff, so what is it?” Even if it was temporary, he was still a member of the

Wyvern Knights. He wondered if he should know what he had been putting off. Karen thankfully began to explain.

“Eleanor is a direct descendant of Red Lake, the current British royal family.”

“You didn’t even blink when you said that. What is Red Lake?”

“It’s the name of the British royal family since the age of superhumans began. Didn’t you know this?” Well, from the start, they were famous for changing names. However, he wasn’t aware Eleanor was royalty. No, rather, why would a member of the royal family go to school in Korea?”

“We were kicked out. Now the British royal family is having quite a bit of an internal conflict. Guardians...oh, that’s the British name for superhumans, but the royal family has control over the guardians.”

“That’s enough. I don’t know what to do next. The vice-captain isn’t strong, but she’s talented. So, you came here after she fled here. Were you guys trying to stay undercover here?”

“Well, more or less.”

“Are you both stupid? That person is one of the most noticeable people in the school right now.”

“I know!” Karen looked like she might cry.

“I mean, originally she wanted to meet and defeat the captain in the finals. However, a guy like Baek got in the way.”

“Are you mad at Baek again?” Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes narrowed as he began to understand the situation a bit better.

“She didn’t want to compete in the first place.”

“If her majesty, the vice-captain, didn’t participate, it would be strange, right?”

“She didn’t need to be the vice-captain.”

“But it was natural after joining the Wyvern Knights. Specifically, because of Douglas Payne.”

“But I didn’t need to join in.”

“It was a good excuse to join the Royal Class. You wouldn’t be able to convince the other students that you deserve to be there.”

“It’s really arbitrary.”

“Yeah...” But if they hadn’t shown off their skills and kept their heads down, this wouldn’t have happened. They were like some strong protagonists in a book complaining about the power they had worked so hard to achieve. If that would be the case in the end, why bother trying to become strong in the first place?

“In fact, isn’t it okay to receive some attention?”

“...What sort of answer are you looking for? My answer as a noble? Or as someone who admires the vice-captain?”

“That’s more than enough of an answer.” In the end, the hero would get attacked by various people because they were strong. But, in the end, they solved it with their strength. Eleanor had been unintentionally revealing her abilities because she was so strong. Moreover, it probably didn’t help that she was in the middle of a struggle for power in the British royal family. She had been struggling to hold back all this time because of it.

“...I won.” Today, she was forced to face a choice between hiding or being strong.

“Fuck...” Douglas Payne knelt on the floor with a hole in the middle of his sword. She was looking straight at Kang Shin-hyuk, beyond Douglas Payne.

“Thanks to this, I was able to make up my mind.”

“ ... ”

“I will take the position of captain. Thank you for helping me decide for myself...thank you.” Douglas Payne nodded vaguely with an indescribable expression.

And Kang Shin-hyuk turned away and pretended not to hear anything.

‘Do the rest for yourself.’

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## Chapter 69 - Awakening (7)

### Chapter 69 - Awakening (7)

“The vice-captain...Eleanor R. Algiers was a woman who could’ve been my wife.” Douglas Payne, once so proud, was now crumpled on the sofa like a popped balloon. He was talking like Eleanor had died.

“I thought she could follow me, which was why I made her vice-captain... It’s why I entrusted the mark to her. I could trust her, I believed it would be the sign of that trust.” It was absurd, but Kang Shin-hyuk understood his heart without knowing. He was the image of a Korean patriarch from the 70s. He would swear at his wife and even get violent sometimes, but on the days he earned a lot of money from working hard, he would make sure to buy something extra for his wife and go back...no, wait, Eleanor wasn’t dead. Douglas had maintained that coercive attitude because he was embarrassed to open his heart up.

‘Really, there’s a limit to how frustrating you can be.’ In novels, such a man could be viewed sympathetically. But in fact, such domestic violence was criminal, and Douglas Payne, who had left all his responsibilities to Eleanor, was simply a reckless man. It was surprising to think you could convey your heart in such a way, but somehow Kang Shin-hyuk had seen through him.

“But she...brought you.” He stared straight at Shin-hyuk.

“It was unbelievable she had brought in an outsider, so I felt the need to discipline her. But she went so far as to make you a member. I thought I needed to talk to her, show her the right way.” So he decided to fix the broken artifact using his family’s connections. Although the result went without saying,



at least his family members saw something interesting before they went back home even if they couldn't repair the saddle.

"I was mistaken from the start. The woman I believed would follow me was hiding her abilities and had no interest in me...hahaha, here I thought I could protect her."

"Well...." He frowned and sipped at his coffee.

"I should've noticed when she won in the tournament, but I thought it was just bad luck I went down in the quarterfinals due to that damn Baek."

"Ah, well..."

"So, whether or not she won, she was a weaker woman than me, and that's why I have to protect her...that's what I thought. But that was just my own ego..."

"Wow..." Douglas's spirit was in a state of flux, thanks to his pride being dismantled. But, even in the midst of that, he didn't forget to mention Baek In-ha, who had beaten him. Shin-hyuk didn't want to hear anymore, nor did he want to be there in the first place. However, it couldn't be helped as he was now in a one-on-one confrontation with Douglas Payne in the common lounge of the Royal Class. It was a spacious resting room with luxurious sofas and tables, with various refreshments as well. There were only two people now in that café-esque resting room, Kang Shin-hyuk and Douglas Payne. That gorilla who was laying on a sofa smaller than himself and a weaker-looking boy.

"It's incredible, but I think she chose you. You have artifact-related abilities, so maybe you can assist her from the sidelines...but just keep in mind, I haven't given up. Don't dream of it." Maybe that was why Douglas Payne had called out to him separately. Kang Shin-hyuk shrugged, looking at the mug in his hand that he was gripping tightly. There were many things he wanted to correct about what Douglas said, but first of all...

"There's no such relationship between Eleanor and I. She doesn't view me as the opposite sex, nor do I have any particular feelings for her."

"What?" Douglas Payne's face turned red.

“To put it plainly, I just helped out a friend. The membership was just a temporary assignment.”

“ ... ”

“Please seriously consider whether you need to take the lead in your relationships or not.” Douglas Payne said he wanted to protect her, but that was all.

“You don’t have to be stronger than the target to protect them. If you consider the circumstances of why she had to hide her power, perhaps there will be a way for you to help her.”

“Hmm...” Douglas fell into deep thought, his eyebrows wrinkling. This was a bit extra for Kang Shin-hyuk, who wished for a proper conclusion for everyone. Eleanor would be facing a lot of trouble in the future, and really, he didn’t want her bugging him anymore, so he was planning on having Douglas back her up instead. He already knew very well of the feelings Douglas had for her, so he figured it would be possible to change his mindset just a little. If that wasn’t his intention, he wouldn’t be sitting in such an uncomfortable position at the moment.

“...Okay. She has some issues with her family, right? Okay.” And it was working quite well.

“You’re a guy who knows how to talk, huh? Even if I’m weaker than her, if I have the will, I can do it? I like it.” Douglas Payne jumped up on the spot, the sofa he was laying on making some disconcerting noises as the giant moved.

“Good. I won’t give up just because I failed to reach her. I’ll keep trying until my heart reaches her, and I’ll stay by her side. But it still feels bad to lose to her. Alright, I’ll propose once I surpass her. Don’t worry, you’ll be invited to the wedding too.”

“Ah, yes...” He was an enviable person who was enjoying his life. Kang Shin-hyuk blankly stared at the delusional Douglas Payne. Douglas enjoyed his fantasies for a few moments before he grabbed onto Shin-hyuk’s shoulder with a thick gorilla-like hand.

“I’ll remember you, Kang Shin-hyuk, you’re a useful guy. When she becomes my wife, I’ll have to recruit you to work for my family.”

“Well, I just...ah.” Douglas Payne left before Shin-hyuk could finish speaking. He let out a sigh, sipping at his coffee with a lot of milk and sugar alone in the break room.

“But this will reduce the annoyances.”

-This administrator is impressed by your genius tactic of attaching an ignorant gorilla to an evil fox! 1,500HP bonus!

“Administrator, aren’t these bonuses becoming weirder each time?”

-1,000HP bonus!

“What the hell...”

-2,000HP Bonus!

“I admit I was wrong.” Kang Shin-hyuk genuinely repented after being scolded by the administrator, who seemed rather happy.

\*\*\*

“Why would you do that?!” The next day, Karen had grasped the whole picture and began shouting at Kang Shin-hyuk’s strategy, which was so beautiful Zhuge Liang would cry. It was a Sunday afternoon, and he was sipping tea at her invitation. Outside of the room, the other seniors were trying to spy on them.

“He...I don’t like this very much...” Eleanor spoke up with an uncomfortable expression. Of course, Shin-hyuk sympathized with her after she was forced into this position. But that didn’t mean it was wise to throw out someone who could be of help.

“It’s not that you need to date him. Senior, please consider it carefully. That man is very strong, and many people still follow him.” Douglas Payne had been soundly defeated by Eleanor, but that was a testament to her strength rather than his weakness. Douglas fought his hardest to beat her, even though the duel had ended so quickly. He couldn’t be overlooked. As a result of that, his followers didn’t fall apart. Even though he was demoted to vice-captain, he was still a strong fighter who leads most of the men in the Wyvern Knights. It would be helpful for her going forward if they could cooperate.

“More than anything, there is also his family. Wouldn’t they be enough to protect you?” The latest\_episodes are on the [novelFire.net](http://novelfire.net)

“But that... it’s a debt.”

“It’s enough to be successful later and pay them back. Is there some law that you can only pay off debts with your body and mind?”

“Shin-hyuk, you are really amazing...” It was an unscrupulous idea possible only because of the experience and wisdom of Anvil.

“It’s impossible to hide your abilities. Besides, it seems like the battle for the royal throne can’t be easily avoided...which means you’ll inevitably have to show off your strength and grow. Find people who will cooperate with you, use them to mobilize resources and build your power so that you can’t be touched. Haven’t you played the Three Kingdoms game?”

“...I haven’t tried it.”

“Then try it now. It may give you some ideas. Anyways, I returned a valuable ally to your side, so don’t bother me anymore. Of course, fighting is helpful to me too, so let’s continue doing that...well?” Kang Shin-hyuk pushed forward and began to stand up, but Eleanor grabbed his hand.

“I agree with you. I think it’s necessary to create a force inside the school...I wish you were the first.”

“Oh, your majesty. Wasn’t I the first?”

“Oh!” Eleanor panicked at what Karen said sadly. Her cheeks were red as she denied it.

“Karen was already on my side. That’s a royal power...not a school one...”

“Ah, that’s what you meant.”

“There was no weird meaning. Shin-hyuk has good abilities and a great mentality. So I wish he could do this with me. You...I can believe in.”

-Fox.

Kang Shin-hyuk let out a quiet sigh at the administrator’s message.

“Thank you for viewing me so highly, but I still have a lot of work to do myself. I won’t be able to take care of others.

“I see.”

“But, for the time being, I’ll wear the cloak. I think you understand what that means. As long as its not annoying, if we can help each other, I want to keep talking with you.”

“...I understand.” Eleanor nodded with wide eyes at his words. It was a give and take. Besides, the cloak of a Wyvern Knight would provide enough benefits to outweigh the hassles. More than all of that, however, was that he found Eleanor likable. She had the same view as Kang Shin-hyuk since they both had the energy of one who practiced honestly and steadily.

‘This royal family business is a bit tiresome but...I can’t say I dislike her.’ Compared to a certain 25-year-old spoiled girl who called him grandpa, she wasn’t annoying to deal with at all.

“Then, I’ll go. I want to do some crafting.”

“I want to watch.”

“Maybe some other time.” Kang Shin-hyuk waved at the two and left. The seniors gathered around outside whispered and tried to learn more, but he ignored them coolly.

-Could it be...

“Yeah, I’ll be back tomorrow.”

Meloy was enjoying the freedom of the training center, walking up to him as he left. He scratched his chin a few times before leaving the forest.

“Hi, long time no see.”

“...?!” But, on the way, he was stopped by a beautiful Latin girl.

It was his reunion with Lee Na-hee, the school’s most beautiful girl who won first place in the popular vote for two consecutive years.

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## **Chapter 70 - Granddaughter of the Great Chief (1)**

### **Chapter 70 - Granddaughter of the Great Chief (1)**

“Are you in love? You’re in love. After all, you can’t help it in front of them. It would be fun to know what you’re thinking.” Kang Shin-hyuk was in an unexpected meeting. Lee Manwoo stood behind him with an expression he had never seen before. It was so different that Shin-hyuk barely recognized him.

“Ah, sir. You’re here. I was nervous that you were actually a beautiful girl who was pretending to be a grandpa.”

“...Your attitude seems to be changing slowly these days.” Lee Manwoo’s eyes narrowed at Kang Shin-hyuk’s joke. He looked back at the girl staring at him. Wearing a school uniform from the Magic Department, with a blue tie representing the second grade, she had tanned brown skin and silver hair shining like the Milky Way. Her red eyes shone ominously. Kang Shin-hyuk had a faint memory of meeting this person before, in front of Biryong Hall.

“Hello, senior. Long time no see.”

“I remember you...what about your debt?” Debt? Kang Shin-hyuk recalled he must’ve said something like that at the time. It must’ve been when he was contemplating getting help from Baek in joining a club; she had passed by him.

“Thanks to Mr. Lee Manwoo here, I managed to get by without accumulating any debts.”

“In the end, you take more care of a craftsman with a hammer in hand than your granddaughter with no ability.”

"I've already said that doesn't matter." She spoke coldly as she stared at Lee Manwoo, but he quickly responded with a laugh. But wait, granddaughter? Before Kang Shin-hyuk could ask, she pushed on.

"My close grandfather."

"Ah, your father was Korean if I remember correctly..."

"You've got a good memory. Are you interested in me?"

"Well..." He just recalled it by chance. She wasn't interested in his answer, however, as she tapped at the desk near her for them to sit down. Kang Shin-hyuk gently smiled and sat down.

-Huh, there are so many foxes in the world.

'This is normal, you know. Normal.' Kang Shin-hyuk once again had to calm down the administrator before turning to Lee Manwoo.

"Is this the enchanter you mentioned?"

"You're quick to notice."

"The one that was kicked out." The source of this content is NOVELFIRE.NET

"Well...as you know, this is Lee Na-hee. I would bet you wouldn't find a better enchanter her age."

"I'm convinced the granddaughter of the Great Chief is a genius enchanter."

"When I hear that from you, I feel like I'm getting ridiculed." While Shin-hyuk and Lee Manwoo were acting close, Lee Na-hee looked at him suspiciously.

"Is he that great? Enough to make my grandfather pick up a hammer again?"

"No, I just thought of helping this guy a little. Also, call me teacher at school."

"What kind of teacher are you?" Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't help but smile as he watched this grandfather struggle in front of him. This was a normal relationship, not having an older granddaughter who called you grandpa in a childish voice and clung to you.

"So, anyway." Lee Na-hee turned back to Shin-hyuk.

“He said you participated in the World Rookies Artifact Contest in July.”

“Yeah.”

“Then let’s take a look. I want to see with my own eyes how great your abilities are.” Kang Shin-hyuk looked at Lee Manwoo for confirmation. The old teacher nodded.

“We’ve talked about it before...you seem to be interested in creating artifacts with Alite, which doesn’t accept magic very well. So show off. Let this guy know that the world is big.”

“Well.” Kang Shin-hyuk nodded with a small groan. Given how he was talking, Lee Na-hee was as great of an enchanter as she was beautiful. If such a skilled enchanter helped him, it was no dream to create amazing artifacts. For Kang Shin-hyuk, that would be invaluable.

“The only issue is that the artifact you created uses Alite. Additional enchantments will be difficult as it repels mana...cooperation will be a problem.”

“Are you thinking about returning to the club? If you don’t like the way things are here, there’s no way.” Lee Manwoo laughed at his granddaughter’s harsh words.

“Who is the one that can’t read the situation?”

“I just wanted to see this cheeky child who hogged the attention of the Great Chief.”

“I don’t know anyone with such a strange nickname!”

“Grandpa, my grandfather, is rather shy.” Kang Shin-hyuk averted his eyes. It was normal for your personality to change when you were around family, he supposed. He felt like his understanding of Shin Eunah deepened.

“Here you are.”

“Ah.” He stepped forward to interrupt the conversation, the B- rank Perm’s Javelin in hand.

“Where did that come from?”



“Subspace artifact.” Kang Shin-hyuk thought such a lie would be alright after seeing Douglas Payne summon that sword out of thin air. Lee Na-hee made an even more ridiculous expression at his words, however.

“Grandpa, is this the heir to some big company?”

“No, but I’m getting the sense he’s sacrificed a lot.”

“Wow...” Lee Na-hee made an unpleasant face. Was a misunderstanding being born before him?

“It’s not like that.

“I see. Yes, no, I believe you.”

“Wow...” Lee Na-hee’s expression only grew worse, giving him no room to correct the misunderstanding. He let out a sigh and handed the javelin.

“Examine it carefully.”

“Yeah, yeah. This is the work of your student...hmm...” Lee Na-hee accepted the spear with a laugh. The javelin, which emitted a subtle golden color, was of a simple design, but it had solid craftsmanship. As soon as he accepted the gear, her expression became serious as she examined it closely.

“Wow...huh...?” She looked over the weapon with sharp eyes, looking every bit the craftsman. Just one look in her sincere eyes was enough to tell; they were the same as her grandfather’s.

“No...wait a minute. What is this...” Her expression soon distorted, and she looked at Lee Manwoo, who, for his part, was looking like he was holding back laughter.

“Grandpa, you knew.”

“Of course I knew. Who do you think taught you emotional skills? Well done though. Now that you’ve figured it out on your own, I can’t teach you anymore about it.”

“Oh, you...this is nonsense.”

“Uh, hello?”

“Ridiculous, nonsense...” Kang Shin-hyuk had no idea what they were discussing amongst each other. He waved in front of them.

“What makes no sense?”

“You...” Lee Na-hee looked straight at him, a spark in her eye.

“It’s said you can’t handle mana...”

“Yeah? Why are you bringing that up?”

“I should’ve noticed then...no, it doesn’t make any sense. You’re the Rookie King, right? I thought I was dealing with mana now. Ahhh...” Lee Na-hee put the spear down and rubbed her head. He wondered if there was some sort of effect on the javelin he hadn’t noticed, but she exploded before he could consider it.

“You still can’t handle mana, right?!”

“Yeah.”

“I thought as much, I can’t feel any mana in it.”

“Yeah...ah? Is that not because it’s made of Alite?”

“Alite resists mana which makes it harder to work with, but all artifacts in the world must have mana. Even ones made of Alite. But this artifact has no mana!” She yelled at him.

“Aren’t all artifacts made with metallurgy alone like that?”

“No, artifacts made my metallurgy still have mana too. It is extremely unusual for it to have no mana despite being an artifact.” Lee Manwoo shrugged and offered an explanation. Kang Shin-hyuk felt like smacking himself with a hammer as he listened. That was why he was so amazed at the beginning.

“There are no such artifacts in the world, other than what you’ve made. These miraculous artifacts with an unknown energy...” Lee Na-hee paused.

“If you can add enchantments with mana to it...it would become a multiple enchantment, not a reinforcement. It’s like a bicycle versus a unicycle, understand?”

“Kind of, yeah.”

“Grandpa, be quiet. Kang Shin-hyuk, right? Listen carefully. With your abilities, you can create artifacts that challenge the realm of gods. Can you imagine that?” It shouldn’t have surprised him all that much, given the reputation Anvil had built up before.

-I mentioned blacksmiths who deal with spiritual power are very valuable.

-I’m sure you’re a blacksmith with the greatest potential in the world. No, in the Hero Universe.

‘Okay, okay, stop praising me. I feel so dizzy I could die.’

“You.” Lee Na-hee grabbed his hand, causing him to stop. He could feel the hard calluses on her palms, which had seemed so small and soft at a glance.

“Do it with me.”

“Huh?!”

“Calm down, granddaughter. He’s not a reasonable guy.”

“No, not that!” Because of her excitement, she had omitted some pretty important words. She gripped his hand even harder.

“Make an artifact with me!” Lee Na-hee shouted at him in a sincere voice.

“Yes.” Shin-hyuk had no reason to refuse. He could tell Lee Manwoo was smiling from behind him. No doubt, he had expected this since the beginning.

“Then let’s start right now.”

And so, his first collaboration with an enchanter began.

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## Chapter 71 - Granddaughter of the Great Chief (2)

### Chapter 71 - Granddaughter of the Great Chief (2)

Two people working together to combine enchantment and metallurgy. An artifact created by Mana Craft and blacksmithing.

“There are two ways to enchant: crafting and granting. Granting enchantments to an already finished object or crafting a detail circuit into a work by engraving it as it is being produced. Of course, the latter is more difficult, but also more effective.”

“Engraving the enchantment...does that mean you need a blueprint?”

“If you’re really two people with the right skills, you won’t need one. Or if you’re a person who has both metallurgy and enchanting skills.” Lee Na-hee glared at her grandfather at that comment. Kang Shin-hyuk found it easy enough to guess why. Wasn’t Lee Manwoo the one who made the Dragon’s Mark, after all? That was an object born through Mana Craft, and he completed it alone.

“I thought you created the artifacts through metallurgy alone.”

“Metallurgy can do it alone, however it requires a deep understanding and control of the production process. Even with that, the effect will end up inferior to an enchantment.” Kang Shin-hyuk’s eyes narrowed at the explanation which he heard for the first time, but the old man called the Great Chief smiled and shrugged.

“In fact, I wasn’t sure of your abilities. I didn’t talk about it because I thought you might have an enchanting ability that I didn’t recognize. After seeing Na-hee’s reaction, I realized I was right.” The source of this content is novel(F)ire.net

“Because you’re an old man, it’s hard to tell what you’re thinking, sir.”

“Haha, like I want to hear that from you.” At that, Lee Na-hee lightly struck the table.

“I already know my grandfather is a scammer, so I have nothing more to say. What matters now is our work.”

“Yeah.” When he was working on his own, it was enough to think about what he would make while working. Even with his synchronization incomplete, Anvil’s instinct was still enough to guide his body. But this time, everything had to be decided in advance. It was an experience even Anvil was unfamiliar with.

-As a member in your previous life, you were in the realm of All-Craft, so even if an enchanter tried to intervene, it would only hurt.

‘All-Craft included not only leather work, but also enchanting? So it meant Anvil didn’t need an enchanter.’

-The objects he made were already pushed beyond their limits. One day shortly, you will reach that too.

In fact, he already had proof of that skill because he had created artifacts by himself. Kang Shin-hyuk looked over at the table on which Lee Na-hee was spreading out paper.

“I’ll start with what we will make. Of course, the javelin you made is great, but maybe it has a unique ability because of that...”

“No, I don’t think so.”

“How about we start with a sword? It’s a popular weapon, and it’s easy to enchant.”

“A sword.” The first thing he made was a sword, and he felt it was the same for Anvil. Kang Shin-hyuk nodded at Lee Na-hee’s burning enthusiasm.

“That’ll work.”

“Okay, next is the content. What should we put in the sword, what power do we pour into it.”

“Ah.” He thought of the Dragon’s Mark, an object created for the purpose of taming from the start. It wasn’t crafted by accident; that taming ability was planned from the start.

“It will change a lot depending on the ability you want to give it.”

“Sword artifacts are also divided into two types. The first is a reinforcement type that increases the power of the sword itself or the wielder. The second is something more diverse that can overcome any shortcomings it has. Like a sword that emits sparks or creates a shield.” Kang Shin-hyuk thought about it for a moment. How many artifacts had he made so far? There were ones that had increased penetration or could split apart.

‘But now with this person’s help...’

“I want to try the second type.”

“Good.” Enchantment was the work of engraving what you wanted onto the armament. He felt it while analyzing the saddle, but now, what Kang Shin-hyuk needed was to learn the various possibilities an object could have. He wouldn’t be able to grow by focusing only on simple reinforcement abilities. Lee Na-hee must’ve noticed his change in attitude as she let out a satisfied laugh. She could see the shine in his eyes.

“There are many types, what would you like?”

“Could I hear about the things you’ve crafted so far?”

“Hmm...the easiest of the abilities to craft is the ability to use mana to create a shield or heal wounds. Those have a high probability of success.”

“That doesn’t feel right.” Kang Shin-hyuk responded honestly. His focus was on making the armament itself strong, and it didn’t fit the purpose of a sword. Even Anvil focused on making weapons that didn’t deviate from their fundamental purpose. The Heroic Shield had a destructive beam, of course, but it was born through its defense.

“Well...take a look at it.” Accepting his feelings, Lee Na-hee suddenly pulled a ring off her finger and gave it to him. He tilted his head as he accepted it. It looked like a normal silver ring, although on the inside, it had some script he couldn’t understand.

“Is this an artifact?”

“I made it. With this, you can measure my skills to some extent.” It would be a good opportunity for him to confirm her abilities. He was already confident in her, given she was recommended by Lee Manwoo, but it couldn’t hurt. He set his thoughts aside and examined the outside of it.

“You have excellent metalworking skills.”

“Don’t worry about that, just look at the enchantment.”

“Ah, yes.” With her cold response, he decided to focus on the ring. He raised his spiritual power and injected it into the ring. He felt a bit sorry for the creator but compared to the artifacts he had encountered so far; it was of a low enough level to be easy.

‘B-rank...no, C+?’ He was able to roughly measure the worth of the object-based on the mana it held and it’s will. If it was of a C+ rank, then it was a valuable object that couldn’t be ignored.

‘But that’s not what’s important.’ He expanded his power out a bit more to analyze the ability of it in earnest. Spiritual power extended out to every corner of the ring to read its origin and scan the mana circuits flowing inside it. It didn’t have a firm will of its own like the Godslayer or the Heroic Shield, but that was probably because it was a mana-based artifact. It was similar to the Dragon’s Mark. Looking deeper, he found a corner of the ring that resembled his own regeneration ability. Maybe he could inject his own regeneration and activate his trait to increase his recovery ability permanently. With that thought, his eyes opened.

“I watched you carefully.”

“...” He silently returned her ring. However, as if she couldn’t bear it any longer, she raised her hand to point at his eyes.

“What is that? A characteristic of your production abilities?”

“Yeah? Oh, uh.” Hearing that, he quickly checked. His eyes were dyed golden. Apparently, they had immediately reacted to his momentary thought. That wasn’t a bad thing, however, as it meant his traits were becoming more natural to use.

“I didn’t do anything to the ring.”

“I know, but it sounds like you could. Grandpa, what is he really like?”

“If you work together, you’ll find out.” Lee Manwoo himself didn’t know what this was about, but he bluffed like a pro. It was only recently Shin-hyuk himself had found out he could use his traits in producing artifacts.

“How about it, would you like to try it?”

“Do second-years of the magic department get to wear artifacts like that?”

“No, I’m a special case.” Lee Na-hee said so and pointed at herself. Looking at her, she was wearing a lot of accessories all over her body. She had several earrings, two necklaces, several rings on both hands, and a garter decorated with metal on her leg. Shin-hyuk thought they were accessories to emphasize her beauty, as the idea that they were all artifacts was ridiculous.

“I thought there was a limit to wearing artifacts.”

“Didn’t you know? The limit varies depending on one’s characteristics, and enchanters are particularly famous for being able to wear a lot of them.” Hearing that, he wondered if his own traits changed how many artifacts he could use. He realized his ability to improve his martial arts could strengthen things other than weapons, maybe it extended to this?

“So, what will you do?”

“Well, yes. I would like to see the shield artifacts.”

“Good.” Lee Na-hee responded happily and sat down at the table. She bent forward to take the garter off of her thigh, lifting up her skirt tantalizingly.

“Senior, I can see your panties. Even they are gorgeous.”

“Oh, sorry. But you’re acting very calm, it seems like you have quite a bit of experience with women...”

“Who cares?!”

In the end, they decided to make a sword with a defensive ability. The blue light emanating from Lee Na-hee’s fingertips swept across the blank paper and began to draw a blueprint of magical power. Kang Shin-hyuk focused on



it, ignoring the anxiety he felt rising inside of him, which he attributed to challenging a new field and ability.

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The two immediately started working on creating an artifact using the magic metal Kenyan, which Le Manwoo helpfully prepared. Although they were collaborating, it wasn't very difficult. Kang Shin-hyuk struck at the iron without hesitation like normal while Lee Na-hee worked on activating her enchantment. However, unlike when he worked on his own, they had to manage their pace. By the end, they had worked until midnight but completed only about 20% of the work.

"...Grandfather." Kang Shin-hyuk returned to his senses only after midnight, deciding to return back to work tomorrow. Lee Na-hee and Lee Manwoo remained, however, after he left. The fire still burned in the furnace as the two stood there. At the rate they were going, with the sword coming along as it was, perhaps the contest wouldn't be a problem.

"I hate him." As the heat left the blade, Lee Na-hee spat out those words. Lee Manwoo listened to the words with a smile.

"My granddaughter is already old enough to love."

"Didn't you hear me say I hate him?"

"Sure, sure. Just having a man you hate is a great improvement."

"Ridiculous. This guy is really annoying. How...at that age..." Lee Na-hee trembled. The appearance of Kang Shin-hyuk as he worked was engraved in her mind. There were still traces of him in the polished blade sitting on the anvil. What she felt at that was an overwhelming sense of defeat.

"I was so surprised I couldn't focus. I wanted to compete with my skills..."

"It was an honorable loss."

"I know. I knew right away just by looking at him holding that hammer."

"What do you think?" She became angry at Lee Manwoo, who slapped her on the shoulder, but it quickly turned to fatigue as she lowered her head.

"I'll think about it once we've made it..."

“About a relationship?”

“No.” She slapped his back in retaliation.

“Should I offer him a partnership?”

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## Chapter 72 - Granddaughter of the Great Chief (3)

### Chapter 72 - Granddaughter of the Great Chief (3)

-You received 1 roulette coin for today's log in bonus! Since you've collected 5 coins, you can play the VIP roulette once! Would you like to play it now?

Shinyoung was a place where only talented people from all over the world gathered, but even in that crowd, there were a select few with exceptional talent. These students were called Shinyoung's Golden Generation, which Baek In-ha himself was a part of. He had soundly defeated the Knight Crown Douglas Payne, and with a bit more luck, he might've gone as far as defeating the Magic Crown as well. Even the Crown of Two Kings would've been feasible for him.

“Hey, isn't that Kang Shin-hyuk?”

“Did you hear about last weekend?”

“You heard too?”

But nowadays, there was another person who came to mind, and that was none other than the Rookie King Kang Shin-hyuk. The recent events did not serve to keep him hidden from the other students.

“I heard about it from a friend in the Wyvern Knights.”

“The captain position changed? It makes sense, she’s stronger than the Knight Crown.”

“But it’s not just that. On the same day, Kang Shin-hyuk took down a member and joined them.”

“Uh...?”

“Perhaps...?” The source of this content is NovelFire.net

Rumors had spread throughout the dormitories, inflating as they made their way through the students. Eleanor R. Algiers, the Crown of Two Kings, had gained the attention of the hot newcomer Kang Shin-hyuk. People couldn’t help but get excited about it.

“What, then, the two of them?”

“I saw them in the café before. She won’t speak to other men.”

“Hey, but there was a rumor about him and the Empress.”

“She’s pretty, but there’s a big age difference.”

“I don’t know, she’s powerful, though.”

“The Crown of Two Kings is strong too.”

Kang Shin-hyuk went to class, ignoring the people who were making noise around him. However, even after sitting down in class, the situation was the same. It was natural for students their age to gossip about love.

“Traitor.”

“Don’t, I’m tired.” He sat down while Baek greeted him. He decided to let the other students talk about what they wanted to. The person he couldn’t forgive, however, was Karen, who only fanned the flames.

“Karen is dead to me.”

“Shin-hyuk, you may be my friend but...you're really amazing.”

“Yes, we're no longer friends.”

“No, that's right! On the same day that you joined them, the Crown of Two Kings became the captain!”

“I'll tell you later about it, so shut up. Oh, wait, we're not friends anymore so I don't need to.”

“I was wrong.” The particularly noisy class froze right away as the teacher, Siara Bertrand, entered.

“The final exams will start soon.” The complexions of the students went pale at once. The rumors that Kang Shin-hyuk was in a fiery affair with the captain of the Wyvern Knights died away.

“No...didn't the athletic meet just end?”

“Please say we still have time.”

“Shinyoung's final exam lasts two weeks. To become a top-notch superhuman, you mustn't forget the importance of writing subjects. It would be good to prepare in advance. Additionally, there will also be practical exams.”

“Ahhh...!” It was mid-June now, and the exam would start at the end of June. The time had come to prepare for the exams.

“It goes without saying that the better you do, the higher you will be in the rankings. It is no exaggeration to say that Shinyoung's ranking determines your life as a superhuman. You won't have time to chat and play.”

“Last week was supposed to be my break, but I had to work...!”

“Hey, what about the practical skills? Combat training will be difficult.” The classroom atmosphere dimmed as Siara Bertrand announced the schedule with a mirthless face.

“Graduation ranking, right...”

“Well, the really good ones don’t care because their seats are already reserved in the top guilds.”

“We have no hopes or dreams.” That was where Baek was. His future was secured even before he was admitted.

“Shinyuk, is it the same for you? Are you going to join the association?”

“Ah...well.” While it was undercover, he was technically already in. However, he couldn’t say that.

“Well, who knows. We’ll see.” He would’ve had no worries of entering the association if it weren’t for a certain granddaughter.

“You are a cautious type. Who knows what’ll happen by graduation.”

“Then are you a reckless type?”

“Of course, I’m cautious too. My growth has only just begun.” Kang Shin-hyuk laughed at the triumphant posture of Baek. He wouldn’t be able to rest quietly if he wanted to surpass Baek.

\*\*\*

The teachers weren’t going to ease up on the students just because testing was near. In these extreme conditions, the students had no choice but to hunker down and endure. At the beginning of the semester, students would go to the Choin Shopping Center or the Unyu hall to play, but such a sight was now but a dream. If they had time to play, they used it to rest instead, and when their strength recovered, they went back to work.

“But you seem relaxed.” It was the fifth day since they started working on the artifacts, and Lee Na-hee was looking a little tired. Kang Shin-hyuk shrugged off his jacket and hung it on the wall.

“My resilience is high.”

“I’m going to die and I’m using artifacts to help me...besides, you’re a knight. Your physical training must be harder than mine.”

“I’m exceptionally resilient?” His regenerative power had increased to B-rank, which far exceeded that of the average superhuman. Thanks to that, he only needed a little rest to recover from his exhausting training. The teachers

noticed it and focused on him, but he still couldn't be worn out. Rather, it only sped up his growth. At this rate, maybe reaching A-rank would be possible for all of his stats.

"How can you keep this up with your metallurgy?"

"Ah, I don't know." Kang Shin-hyuk finished preparing for work and opened the door to the workshop. Lee Na-hee followed closely behind, throwing off her jacket and vest. The studio was swelteringly hot, and he could see her bra peeking out from her shirt. She wouldn't lose to even Claire in terms of beauty.

"Your underwear's the same as last time."

"Are you stupid? You don't need to say anything, just quietly appreciate it."

"If I'm busy doing that, I'll ruin my work." Kang Shin-hyuk grumbled a bit and lifted up the hammer and tongs. Once he started working, nothing else mattered.

"Whoo...!"

"...You don't seem to see me as a woman?" Lee Na-hee looked at Kang Shin-hyuk as he started working right away, but he seemed not to hear. His expression as he hammered the sword was one of absolute seriousness.

"...I don't like that either." Her eyebrows wiggled as she felt pissed off. She felt his expression held some mysterious feeling she couldn't explain.

"You're making good time." Lee Manwoo watched them from behind, muttering in satisfaction. Without a word, Lee Na-hee collected mana to the tip of her finger and fired it off at her grandfather. Having successfully hit him with a mini magic missile, she got to work herself. After five hours, the work was completed.

-You succeeded in making [Shield Guardian's Long Sword (B)] with a large amount of spiritual power and mana through collaboration with an enchanter! Proficiency in metallurgy has greatly increased!

-Synchronization has accelerated—current rate of 18.7%.

-500HP bonus from an administrator admiring this great work!

A bastard sword was on top of the anvil, silver like the magic metal used to craft it. From inspecting the item, it had a special ability called [Generate Shield], and a passive ability called [Increase Defense]. No doubt, it was an artifact that would be ranked at the top of B-grade artifacts.

“We really...succeeded.”

“...Yeah. So, it has two abilities?”

“It seems so. If I were alone, I wouldn’t have been able to manage it.”

“Is that so.” Until now, all the weapons he had made contained characteristics that were faithful to its intended function. Now, however, he had dared to create a sword with a defensive function. Restraining his impulses and working with Lee Na-hee led him into learning new things. He had been successful in making a B-rank item that wouldn’t easily appear in the market. It could be sold for billions and would be enough to win the grand prize in the contest.

“I thought we would fail a few times. Artifacts aren’t born right away just because you prepared a blueprint for them...really.” Lee Na-hee touched the sword with an odd expression, running her fingers over the engravings she had placed in it. The work she had contributed to had reached B-rank. That feeling finally hit her. Half of it was the happiness that she was able to complete her work, and half of it was resentment that she couldn’t do it by herself. Jealousy of Kang Shin-hyuk’s ability...she tried to brush it away as they worked, but once more, it was rising. It wasn’t the first time she had encountered a talent she couldn’t keep up with.

“...”

“If a student says they made this, no one will believe it...huh? Why are you making that look?”

“No.” Kang Shin-hyuk shook his head at the question and stood up to hand the sword over to Lee Manwoo.

“I’m tired, so I’ll go first.”

“It’s tiring work. Go on.”

“Yes. My senior also suffered a lot.”

“Huh? Yes, but you...” Kang Shin-hyuk wasn’t listening as Lee Na-hee tried to speak up. He went ahead and gathered up his things and took off. Lee Na-hee tried to chase after him but stopped herself after realizing what she was doing. She was wearing a shirt soaked in sweat, so she couldn’t just chase after him. She cast magic on herself to clean herself up before looking back at Lee Manwoo, who was examining the bastard sword with an expression similar to Kang Shin-hyuk’s.

“Do you know why he’s running off, grandpa?”

“His pride is hurt.” Lee Manwoo responded as if he had been expecting it.

“His pride? He made a B-rank artifact at his age. What the hell do you mean his pride is hurt?”

“Neither age nor rank matters. Was he able to create a work that used all of his power or not? That is what matters.”

“So now...are you saying this isn’t good enough? Did he run out like that because he couldn’t show off his skills?” Lee Manwoo nodded and lowered the sword.

“There was a reason I proposed the collaboration. That guy started by making weapons for himself. So he was able to make everything with all of his heart. But not this time. He had to work on design and coordination while being aware that it was all for a contest. As such thoughts collided inside of him, he failed to fully contain his will in the work.”

“I thought it fit without any complaints.”

If it weren’t for the collaboration with you, he wouldn’t have made a sword in the first place, nor would he have challenged himself. All of this was tailored to you.”

“No way, considering me...no, that’s not it. You used this as an opportunity...” Lee Na-hee’s expression upon grasping the whole picture was grim. Lee Manwoo was laughing by himself.

“It’s just proof that he’s aware his own way wasn’t as good. But now he has to work to solve the problems he faces. If you succeed in your partnership, your skills will increase tremendously once more...I’m really looking forward to it.”



“Did you use me as a way to push that guy forward?”

“What sort of things are you thinking? You must’ve felt yourself growing by seeing him.”

“Because I felt inferior!” Lee Na-hee shouted, but Lee Manwoo still had a smile on his face like he saw past it all.

“It’ll be a good partnership, make sure to work hard. Maybe you could build a business.”

“I don’t want to hear that from my grandfather...” Lee Na-hee calmed her temper and packed up. She made sure to shout back at him as she left.

“Hold your horses! I’ll have to wait and see how great he is!”

“Hah.” Lee Manwoo laughed at his fleeing granddaughter’s words. He looked back at the sword. It may be a failure for Kang Shin-hyuk, but it would be enough to steal the show at the contest.

\*\*\*

What was Kang Shin-hyuk up to as he returned to his room, struggling to suppress his own resentment?

-The Godslayer sword has finished digesting the power contained in the Heroic Shield and has grown to A-rank. All existing powers will be strengthened, and the Godslayer will be further restored.

-A new special ability of the Godslayer, [Guardian], has been unleashed.

-Some of the memories contained in the Godslayer sword have been unlocked.

“No, why now-aaaaaahhhhhhh!”

As usual, he was swept away by the flow of memories.

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## Chapter 73 - Underworld Guest (1)

### Chapter 73 - Underworld Guest (1)

He stood in the dark. In his hand, he held the sword with a dragon's heart embedded within it, cutting down the disgusting monsters rising from his shadow.

Godslayer Sword Dance.

The form which bore such a name was unfolding around him in its perfect form. The last time he had seen it was as if it were through foggy glass, but now he was wielding it himself. No, rather, his body was moving it regardless of his own will. Because of that, it was flawless.

'Let's remember.' The structure of his body and the strength of it was completely different from his own. It was perfectly memorized in this body. Each sword swing and footstep, each minor movement of the waist, and where the eyes landed, how the energy flowed from the heart to strengthen it all, it was incomparable to his own practice so far.

'Is it Janus? It probably is.' He couldn't even examine his own face, which made the experience feel stuffy. All he knew was that the master of this body had trained to the extreme and used spiritual power.

'I can feel the flow of the sword mixing with spiritual power. The movement starts in the physical realm but slowly shifts into a realm beyond sight.' It was a transcendent sword that was based on spiritual power. Even a simple motion with no power to back it could produce tremendous results. Swordsmanship that unfolded with spiritual power was an important thing for Kang Shin-hyuk. It wasn't based solely on destructive power, nor was it only a replacement for using mana. It went beyond that, somehow, though he struggled to know how. It started here, the moment when the possibility of pushing his own skills beyond was opened up to him.

-Struggling is useless.

As he tried to interpret the movement of the sword, a voice came from the man's shadow.

-Nothing changes. Because you are here, so are we.

It was the cold voice of a woman. The man put the Godslayer into his own shadow as if to try and cut it off. The dragon heart flashed gold, amplifying the man's spiritual power in the sword. As a result, the power of a dragon that could rival the gods emerged.

'Is the Godslayer originally like that?' In the message that had arrived at him before he lost consciousness, it had said the sword became A-rank and could use a new ability. Probably that new ability was something like this, which utilized the dragon heart at its core.

'But finding the dragon heart again...like that will be easy.' But it wasn't that it had to have the dragon heart as a core. Kang Shin-hyuk didn't have to kill a god in the first place, so maybe it didn't matter if he just found a core that could work to strengthen the sword. As he considered this, a voice cut off his thoughts.

-A fun weapon.

-The last work of a friend, how painful.

The woman's voice came out once more, weakened, and cracking. The shadow burst out, overflowing from all sides. The world shook and became distorted as the Godslayer emitted light to cast out the shadows.

-Janus. Janus. Stop this stupid struggle.

The man refused to listen and plunged the sword deeper into the darkness, causing a huge shock to run through the world.

-You, us...just...

The darkness began to collapse from the blow, reaching its limit. But, in one final act, it swallowed the sword whole.

-Oh.

The man reached out with a voice that recognized his own errors, but there was nothing left for him. In a world where nothing existed but him, he mumbled a curse and placed a hand on his forehead. And Kang Shin-hyuk fell into the darkness with the sword that lost its master. As he fell through the endless dark, filled with a sense of fear, his eyes opened wide.

-You gained some enlightenment while experiencing a profound level of skill. The skill proficiency of Dragon's Fan Dance (S+) has increased to A-rank.

-You've gained a deeper understanding of spiritual power's uses. Spiritual power has grown to A-rank.

"..." Kang Shin-hyuk grabbed the sword and jumped up without time to read the message. He felt like he had to swing the sword right then and there. Fortunately, since moving to the Royal Class, there was a separate room for exercise in his lodgings, so he had no need to leave his room.

-Vwoom

As soon as he entered the spacious training room, the sword began to respond to him. He filled it with his spiritual power but couldn't quite replicate that unique flow he had seen in the dream.

'Fuck, it's difficult.' So far, he had yet to use his spiritual power delicately. He would just let it flow wildly, doing what he had seen in the dream had never occurred to him.

'I can follow the sword movements to an extent...but I need to practice the use of spiritual power to replicate it.' Fortunately, the memory remained vivid in his head. Now he just had to practice to make it possible.

'I thought I had grown quite a bit, but I've only taken one step forward.' Until now, he had been wielding his sword as a pale imitation of that hazy memory. Rather than just wielding his spiritual power as a way to strengthen his sword, he had to learn a proper sword technique that harmonized with his power.

-Thank you, Janus.

-Janus's whisper: What, why so suddenly? Google search NOVELFire(.)net

-Thanks to you, I realized I could go further.

-Janus's whisper: Grandpa, is your hair, okay?

Janus replied plainly as always, but Kang Shin-hyuk knew of his greatness. After all, the Hero Universe was a space where people like him gathered.

-Up until now, I was just swinging my sword with spiritual power. But thanks to the memory of you in the sword, I've realized what real swordsmanship is.

-Janus's whisper: What? Are you enjoying my backstory at will? Wait a minute; you read the flow on my spiritual power? It's not like swordsmanship, but...oh, well. What happened?"

Janus seemed to be hesitant.

-Janus's whisper: Yes, let's do it! If grandpa understands my sword, the next one will come out even better!

-Okay, I'll definitely make it someday.

His enthusiasm quickly subsided as he remembered what had just happened. Janus, blissfully unaware, pushed on.

-Janus's whisper: If you have the ability to understand swords, then one day, you might even become stronger than me.

-Understand...

-Janus's whisper: Huh? What is it, grandpa? Did I say something weird?"

-Well.

-Janus's whisper: Oh, right. Someone was looking for you on the free board. I didn't know you had an interest in that stuff.

-Stop acting like I'm a snob.

There were several bulletin boards in the Hero Universe. Among them, Kang Shin-hyuk solely used the transaction board, but other members frequented the free board and the tip board. Kang Shin-hyuk was interested if there was anything there that could help him, but the free board was like a multi-chat, and the tip board had names of monsters and habitats that he couldn't even recognize.

‘Like a novel, I thought a master would teach me some special training method or magic.’ However, if you thought about it, there was no way he could teach others his own vision or skills. Moreover, the Hero Universe was a place for those who had already proven their abilities. Since it was that sort of place, none dared to learn from others.

‘...Well?’ Kang Shin-hyuk tilted his head while he thought about it. Something about his previous life in the Hero Universe. Anvil had proved himself as the best blacksmith, and he was a reincarnation of that very same Anvil. Yet he had only recovered his ID upon awakening his spiritual power...

‘Well, I don’t know.’ If it were important, he would remember later. Kang Shin-hyuk checked the tip board, reconfirming none of it was useful to him and laid down in bed. He decided to head over to the other board and found the article looking for him.

[The King of Jijoo is looking for the blacksmith Anvil. Our world desperately needs help!]

Kang Shin-hyuk doubted his own eyes. There was a guy here who courageously used such a childish name. When he checked the comments, it seemed no one else used a silly nickname.

[Ascaldin – If you want to talk to Anvil, you have to buy his work first. Are you new?]

[Miyang – It’s been 20 years since Anvil was active, what bullshit is this? Are you making fun of the deceased?]

[Rocky – Get it straight. Anvil started back up again.]

[Miyang – What?! When?!]

[Rocky – Just a while ago. I guess he lost a lot of skills. I still tried to buy his work, but some guy took it with a higher bid.]

[Eunah – I should’ve bought it. If I catch them, I’ll kill them.]

‘Eunah...’

[The King of Jijoo – I wanted to contact him somehow, but he didn’t post anything new. Does anyone have personal contact with him?]

[Tsukuyo – I think a girl named Eunah should shut her mouth a bit. What's Anvil to you? No, are you a woman?]

[The King of Jijoo – What?]

[Janus – Now, this is funny.]

The comments were cut off there. Kang Shin-hyuk was a bit worried about it but decided he would write a comment.

[Anvil – What is it? I don't think I'll be able to help much with my insufficient ability.]

The reply came right away.

[The King of Jijoo – Oh, thank you! Thank you! I heard that you are the only blacksmith that can perform this dimensional quest! Could you please come to our world?]

[Miyang – What? This crazy newcomer commissioned a quest from this board? How cocky.]

[Rocky – Did the administrator approve it? Wait, can Anvil do dimensional quests? Are you a VIP? Damn it!]

[Janus – Think of the weapons he's sold; of course, he's a VIP. By the way, Jijoo, what are you planning with grandpa Anvil?]

[The King of Jijoo – Our world really needs the help of a blacksmith! We have the resources, so please!]

[Anvil – Dimensional Quest...]

In a world with no blacksmith, they needed the help of one.

“Administrator?”

-It's dangerous. It can be helpful enough for you, but the reason why I didn't offer it...

-Eunah's Whisper: Grandpa, if you're going, go with Eunah! It's dangerous, so don't go alone!

“Well, can I go with Eunah?” It was said that some of the quests allowed for additional Hero Universe members. The administrator replied with a short message.

-Cheh.

## Chapter 74 - Underworld Guest (2)

### Chapter 74 - Underworld Guest (2)

Friday afternoon after class, Kang Shin-hyuk was inspecting his sword and preparing himself to depart for the dimensional quest. He had yet to confirm the upgraded performance of the Godslayer sword because he was so distracted, so he decided to do that before heading off.

[Godslayer]

[A-rank]

[Special Abilities: Blade Predation, Regression, Flesh Control]

[Open Special Ability: Guardian]

[Core: None]

\*Guardian: When the owner is in danger, it will create a shield of spiritual power to protect them. The more power stored in the sword, the stronger the shield that will be created.

He couldn't help but see the irony in it. He was frustrated about creating a sword with a good defensive ability, yet the Godslayer just naturally found one. Of course, that was thanks to absorbing the Heroic Shield, but the timing was just too good.

‘Maybe it's trying to help me.’ Kang Shin-hyuk had thought of the sword as a treasure that would allow him to grow, but the memories he saw inside of it were changing that point of view. Thinking about it, it was the last masterpiece created by Anvil in addition to being the object that helped awaken him.

“...Thank you. I'll try my best.” Kang Shin-hyuk stroked the hilt of the sword with a sense of gratitude.



'The other change is the core, the nucleus that will replace the dragon heart.' A hole was originally drilled into the center of the crossguard, where the dragon heart was once embedded into it. However, upon regaining A-rank, it began to look less like a wound in the blade. Intermittently, a spark would form in the center of the hole.

"It makes me want to put something in there..."

"Why are you saying such obscene jokes while gazing at your sword in broad daylight? Is your head okay?" Claire, who had been drinking tea in his room, commented. It wasn't something he wanted to hear from someone who was sneaking into a boy's dorm in the middle of the day.

"Shouldn't I worry about your head rather than my own? Here, you'll understand when you see."

"Hm? Oh...ohhh?" Kang Shin-hyuk displayed the sword to her, pointing at the guard. Her expression became serious.

"That'll be crazy. Whatever you put in there will be a big deal, so be careful."

"Alright."

"It'll take more than a few mana stones to fix that." Kang Shin-hyuk nodded along with the words of this professional craftsman.

"I'm guessing I'll need a very energy-rich material."

"It must have a semi-permanent reproduction property. Really high-ranking monsters generate magical power through their mana stones. It would be able to operate stably unless its at least of that quality. So...SS rank? At least S+."

"An SS rank would be difficult to find." Kang Shin-hyuk said that, but a thought came to him right away. Wasn't there something like an SS rank mana stone that he had found recently? Yes, it was the [Shinfeng Orb]. It created spiritual power and had abilities he didn't know yet, although it had yet to recover the dignity worthy of SS rank. The orb was slowly healing its wounds in his inventory, and Kang Shin-hyuk would put his own spiritual power into it every night to help in that process.

'For the time being, I should wait. Still, it's fortunate I have something that could work.' He hadn't even learned the proper form for the sword dance, so it would be best if he learned to walk before he tried to fly.

"But Grandpa, why is Claire here?" Shin Eunah had an expression of displeasure on her face as she sat on the sofa. Claire opened her mouth before Shin-hyuk could react.

"Because I also read the post. Do you think you're the only one worried about him?"

"Well, that...but grandpa is with me."

"And you, you said you would only use that title when you were alone together?" Claire continued to place pressure on Shin Eunah, who wanted to refuse her. READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT [N\(o\)VEL\(F\)ire.net](http://N(o)VEL(F)ire.net)

"But Claire is like family, so it's okay."

"Thank you for viewing me that way, but from my point of view the genealogy is too twisted. Please stop."

"Ugh." Unlike the other day at the bar, Claire now had the advantage. She had no intention of allowing Shin Eunah to continue to get away with it. Kang Shin-hyuk silently supported her.

"...Okay."

"Good." After receiving the declaration of surrender from Shin Eunah, Claire let out a victorious laugh.

"Then what should I call him?"

"Use his name. Or you can call each other senior and junior."

"Using your name is hard...then, junior."

"Yes, senior."

"...Huh." Shin Eunah blushed, causing Claire to narrow her eyes.

"Eunah, you...no way."

“What, what?”

“No, let’s start.” Shin Eunah ground her teeth but couldn’t say anything as Claire pushed on. However, there was one thing Shin-hyuk wanted to ask the two before they started. He placed Onyx on his shoulder and looked at the two.

“You’re both high-rankers, so how are you able to be here?”

“I made time for you, my valuable employee.”

“...For my precious junior, I asked for my annual leave without hesitation.” Both of them were firm in their answer. Kang Shin-hyuk was suspicious but didn’t question them further.

“Then, let’s go into My Room.”

-Entrance fees are collected from the other members. You received 200,000 HP!

Kang Shin-hyuk’s heart fluttered at this new information, but the two didn’t seem to mind as they casually paid the fee. Was that really okay? He supposed that to these experienced people, that wasn’t much at all. But they both had a look of exasperation when they saw the desolate situation of his My Room.

“You pay an entrance fee to a place that’s as empty as this?”

“If you do a lot of quests, it changes, but I’ve only done one.”

“Keep it up from now on. I’ll help you.” Claire was smiling bitterly, but Shin Eunah burned with a sense of purpose. The administrator posted the quest right in front of them, dismissing his concerns.

[Jersey’s Shadow]

[A world where life cannot be sustained as the atmosphere is full of toxic gases. Gromas instead contains abundant mana and pure oxygen in the ground. All living things in Gromas have evolved to live underground.]

[However, many years have passed, and a new evil is emerging in the underworld of Gromas. Those living underground are trying to avoid the coming destruction, but unfortunately, their sharp claws have dulled.]

[Your mission is to give them back their sharp claws so that they can break through.]

[Quest deadline: 2 months.]

[Earth to Gromas Time Ratio – 1:24]

“Wow.” Even if he stayed for two months, it would barely be Monday morning back on Earth! Kang Shin-hyuk admired this incredible chance as he asked the administrator for some information.

“How is that possible? I thought that man was in the same time zone as me.”

-The flow of time is twisted in other worlds due to various factors. It is the crises of a world that twist it the most. The more serious a crisis, the more marked the difference will be.

“Are there any penalties I’ll face?”

-The greater the difference, the more HP will be consumed to move you between dimensions. In fact, going to Kieron would cost you 1 million HP per day of Earth time.

“That’s the first time I’ve heard of it!” He thought of going to Kieron to train, but such a money trap had been waiting for him. Still, he could buy that much extra time for 1 million HP, and he wouldn’t age in the other world. It wasn’t a bad deal.

-The world was greatly stabilized thanks to the defeat of Kieron’s greatest threat, so the time ratio has been reduced to 1:5.

“Nothing is free in this world...”

-It’s free only when you first receive the quest. The first dimension was suggested by the Hero Universe, so the HP was paid by the Hero Universe. This dimension quest was paid for by the client.

“So you’re rich!”

“At first I had just expected to be helping out, but this’ll be good business for me. As I thought, Shin-hyuk is lucky.”

“Touching is prohibited.”

"I've no intention of doing that." Claire was blocked from Kang Shin-hyuk by Shin Eunah, who was acting like an idol's bodyguard. Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't help but laugh at the display of excessive love.

"No time to hesitate, let's go right away."

-Connecting to the world Gromas.

The world became dark. This time, however, it stayed dark.

"What is this?" Kang Shin-hyuk tensed, feeling something hug him from behind. A citrus-fragrance flowed around him, a scent he knew well. It was Shin Eunah.

"Senior?"

"...Yes. I was trying to make sure my junior was safe." Her voice was also a little tense. He could feel her body trembling slightly, and he wondered if she was scared. Suddenly, he felt bad for her and tried to hold her hand, but another voice cut through the dark. It was from Claire.

"Cut it out. You can see through this darkness."

"Oh, no. It's not like that." Claire was right, but he still felt relieved to know that they were both safe. He focused his spiritual power on his eyes, which made the darkness around him immediately brighten up. No, rather, now it was like his surroundings was in broad daylight.

"Wow, look at his golden eyes. It's like headlights."

"It's a trait. I didn't know it would help in this way." They were in a surprisingly large space. Metal pillars and metal walls surrounded them as they stood in a weird temple-like area.

"Well there!" Another voice arrived from under his feet.

"Can you please turn that light off? Our eyes are a little sensitive...!" Kang Shin-hyuk looked down instinctively.

"Ahhh! It's so dazzling I can't see!"

"My eyes! My eyes!"

“Which one is Master Anvil? I’m the king...no, please lower the light before that!”

There were a bunch of cute little moles assembled below him.

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## Chapter 75 - Underworld Guest (3)

### Chapter 75 - Underworld Guest (3)

Kang Shin-hyuk turned off the light flowing out from his eyes. He could still see through the darkness without making them flash, but they were still golden.

“Welcome, saviors. I’ll say hello again. I am the King of Jijoo.” The largest mole came forward to greet them. Perhaps because the light had disappeared, he had much more confidence than before. New novel chapters are published on [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

“I’m Anvil. So why did you decide to call me?”

“Sir, I’m sorry. When I joined, I didn’t know it was a place where such great people gathered...”

“Ah, I see. So why are you the king?”

“Well, that...” The mole lost confidence again! Claire shook her head.

“Shin-hyuk unexpectedly likes to bully others.”

“I’m just curious. You are too, aren’t you?”

"I am. How did this little mole come up with such a cute nickname?"

"Ah, well." He couldn't afford to hide anything since he asked for help, so the Jijoo king told them how he had joined the Hero Universe. Surprisingly, he had been born with the best excavation talent in the world.

"The deeper you go in the underworld, the harder the ground is. We've been digging deeper into the ground whenever enemies invade or when the population increases so much that we need to expand, so..." Their claws must've been sharp like metal to dig so far down. Kang Shin-hyuk was able to understand their history and culture as he nodded along roughly.

"So you became the king because of that?"

"That's right. I had the strongest excavation ability, so I was able to access countless treasures in the underworld and become the king. I even entered the Hero Universe." That had been the source of his great wealth. These guys must've been selling rare metals in large quantities on the trading board. No wonder the administrator said this was a helpful world. It was a blacksmith's dream to have access to so many raw materials.

"The problem is that I was too good..."

"There's the pride again. Give me the details."

"I was alone in excavating over the years, and the others stopped working. Generations went by...they had no need to work and became lazier. They stopped using their claws...the end was that they degenerated."

"Wait, how old are you?"

"150 as of this year. Our tribe's average lifespan is thirty years, so I've lived a long life." That was probably thanks to being a member of the Hero Universe! It was still shocking news to Kang Shin-hyuk that this little mole had lived a life about ten times as long as his.

"Should I keep going?"

"Ah, yes." They had heard how he had arrived at this point; all that remained was to talk about the danger terrorizing his kingdom. The king's expression darkened.

"It is poison. A poison is entering the kingdom. I don't know if it's the same as the poison in the atmosphere, but it is clear that it is toxic."

"It's poison?!" Kang Shin-hyuk urgently checked his body, but he found no problems. He supposed his poison resistance would've kicked in, anyway.

"It's not such a strong poison. It hasn't affected the adults among us, the only problem is with the children. We found out about the poison because it started to kill off newborns." Even if the older ones were safe, if their offspring kept dying, then the future of the kingdom, and even their race, was in danger. Truly, it was a crisis.

"I tried to block off the passages and soak up the poisonous energy with products from the Hero Universe, but it didn't work."

"Did you ask the administrator?"

"Administrator...? What is that?" Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't have imagined himself surviving without the administrator, but the king seemed to have no clue what he was talking about. It was a situation where the survival of a race was on the line, it would've been nice to help out, but did the administrator have a grim side? Maybe he should stop thinking the administrator was kind to all Hero Universe members. He hadn't recommended this quest because it was dangerous, after all.

"The others don't have the ability to fight...well, they don't have any other productive qualities either. If the power of the Hero Universe couldn't help, we had only one way left." Just like their ancestors, they dug further into a place where there was no danger—abandoning their kingdoms of the past, digging until they were clear of danger.

"But it's impossible, because of their claws."

"How about you?"

"Mine too." Kang Shin-hyuk was convinced as the king raised his paws. The claws on his forefeet were worn down. He had excavated for hundreds of years, so his claws couldn't have been intact.

"So please. Make me a new, powerful claw! Let me lead the people away from this cursed land to found a new settlement...!"



“...I see. I now have a rough idea of why you needed a blacksmith.” But he still had one question left.

“Are you the only one going to excavate?”

“I can’t leave this important task to my people. It’s enough if I do it alone! If only I could get my claws back!”

“...” Kang Shin-hyuk regarded him quietly; the king’s resolve was steadfast. His eyes burned with a sense of responsibility and mission as one who had reigned for over 100 years.

“You just need claws.” In the end, Shin-hyuk nodded. He couldn’t say anything right now; at least for now, that would be enough.

“Thank you! Thank you very much! If I have claws that can pierce these minerals, we will surely escape from the poison!”

“Anvil!”

“He’ll make claws for the great king!” The moles were cheering in relief at his simple affirmation. Their belief in the king was as solid as iron.

“Then we’ll start right away. I need to know the condition of the ground first.”

“The only way to cut through it would be to make claws made of the same material...!”

“Is it all ore?” As Kang Shin-hyuk began to move under the mole’s guidance, he felt a tap on his shoulder from Claire. Her eyes were shining with an intensity that he could see even in the dark.

“I’ll start moving by myself. If the nature of this crisis is poison, my abilities will be of assistance.”

“Thank you, sister. But if you mess up while studying it...”

“I have resist poison at SS rarity and S rank proficiency.” Kang Shin-hyuk was immediately convinced. Who was worried about who? She had already earned a lot of HP by working in the Hero Universe. Looking at Shin Eunah next, she drew two S’s in the air.

“Because our enemy uses poison, it’s a skill that should be mastered as quickly as possible.”

“The enemy?”

“Jormungand.” Shin Eunah answered briefly with an unhidden hostility burning in her eyes. He wondered what happened between her and that organization in the past.

“Claire, get away from my junior.”

“Ah, that’s what it was.”

“You’ll be hated if you’re so jealous. Anyway, I’ll be on my own for now.”

“Go quickly.” Claire walked off into the dark on her own. Some moles tried to warn her, but it was pointless for one of Earth’s high rankers.

“She’s also a member of the Hero Universe, so there’s no need to worry. She’ll investigate the poison, so please treat her well.”

“The poison? I don’t know where it started from...”

“It’s her job to figure that out.” However, Shin-hyuk was also a little worried about that. Not knowing where the poison started could be dangerous. What if they made it worse by digging blindly? Not that staying still was an option. The administrator hadn’t been joking about the difficulty of this quest.

“Then, let’s go.”

“Alright.” Eventually, Kang Shin-hyuk urged the king to lead him to the outermost area of the kingdom, the last area excavated by him. It was a zone that glowed a faint purple in the dark.

“I stopped excavating because we had enough resources and space for us to live in, but also because of this unknown vein.” The king’s voice was filled with deep emotion.

“Until then, I was digging through a fairly solid vein. But this one was different. I couldn’t break through it with my claws, so we had to stop expanding.”

“Is this vein in all the boundaries of the kingdom...?”

“Yes. I thought it would be okay then, I couldn’t imagine having to dig more than we had.” Going up would be throwing away their lives, and they couldn’t dig further down. So they had no choice but to settle on this land until this unknown toxin attacked them.

“Shortsighted.” Shin Eunah let out the words with a sigh.

“I understand that you were hiding underground because of the poisonous atmosphere, but then you only dug deeper each time a crisis arrived. You never thought of solving the underlying problem, even though you had the time to study and deal with it. Even having the power of the Hero Universe, you neglected it.”

“...”

“If you had only thought rationally just a little, you would’ve known this was just an escape.” The king trembled at the chill air radiating out from Shin Eunah. She regarded the king as if he were pathetic, but Kang Shin-hyuk just stared blankly at her. Honestly, it was a ridiculous idea to view her as the opposite sex. She turned to Shin-hyuk.

“...What is it?”

“No, it’s alright.”

“Hey...” Her cold and pretentious expression collapsed in front of him.

“I regret it, I regret it. Given the opportunity, I would never do it again!”

“Yes, yes. Let’s get the materials first.” Kang Shin-hyuk decided to save his words and let out a sigh.

“The ore is really hard. It’ll be difficult to collect the materials...”

“Don’t worry about harvesting.” Kang Shin-hyuk stretched his arm forward.

“Go, Onyx! I choose you!”

-Myuuuuu!

Onyx leaped off of him without hesitation, finally free to eat to his heart’s content in this metal paradise.

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## Chapter 76 - Underworld Guest (4)

### Chapter 76 - Underworld Guest (4)

-Myu!

Onyx was chewing with a fierce momentum as he clung to the metal vein. Surprisingly, Kang Shin-hyuk could see glowing black mana subtly flowing throughout his body.

“This is gold magic. I haven’t shown him off before, but watch.”

“Gold magic...do you have a pet that handles elemental magic?” As expected, Shin Eunah knew about gold magic. Kang Shin-hyuk silently pleaded for a detailed explanation, which she was happy to provide.

“Attribute magic is a type of magic that specializes in dealing with only that one attribute. Compared to normal magic, it is more powerful and has unique characteristics, but it makes it difficult to use other magic.”

“Then, senior?” Speaking of which, wasn’t the Thunder Empress known for her destructive lightning magic? She nodded right away.

“I deal with lightning magic.”

“But you’re good at normal magic too, right?”

“That’s...a secret. I’ll tell you later when we’re alone.”

‘I don’t need to listen then.’ Shin Eunah had already turned towards Onyx, unaware of his expression.

“I’ve never seen gold magic before. This is incredible.”

-Myu!

Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t fully understand the capabilities of gold magic or Onyx, but he could roughly understand what it was doing right now. The purple ore was so hard that even Onyx’s teeth couldn’t bite into it, but it was making the metal in front of me soft and fluffy enough to chew due to his magic power. It was clear that gold magic at least had the ability to change the nature of metal.

-Myuuuuu!

“I can cut into it now? Alright.” Onyx’s magic was definitely great; the only issue was that he didn’t have much mana. Kang Shin-hyuk drew his sword and quickly went to work before the ore could harden again.

“Hm!” He activated one of the sword’s special abilities: Flesh control. It was an ability that assisted in cutting only what he wanted to, allowing him to neatly cut through only the parts he wanted to remove without getting stuck in the middle of the vein. Soil pattered down on the ground as the dazzling purple ore rolled out. Kang Shin-hyuk examined it with a frown. It hadn’t been smelted yet, but it was already extremely pure.

“It’s like the metal was already smelted and buried into the wall...this is odd.”

-Myuuuu.

Onyx slid down to the floor, having run out of magic. He was chewing heavily on the metal already in his mouth. Kang Shin-hyuk picked up the ore, but he couldn’t see the item’s information.

“Senior, is it possible to have you examine this?”

“Huh. It’s ‘Benadelite.’ Very hard...it seems to have some other qualities, but I can’t confirm it. I haven’t seen it before in the Hero Universe...”

-This is a world-specific mineral. It hasn’t been listed in the Hero Universe as the king of this area was never successful in mining it.

The administrator chimed in with some helpful commentary. Kang Shin-hyuk accepted the ore back and nodded, noticing the Jijoo king was looking straight at him.

“Please make my claws, please. That’s the only way we can survive!”

“...! Junior, this mole.”

“No.” Shin Eunah took a step towards the trembling mole king, but Kang Shin-hyuk urgently held her back.

“I’ll try. Let’s make it with this.” He knew what her concerns were; there was a fatal error in this quest they had accepted, one he had realized the moment he heard the king’s tale. But at the same time, he thought hanging out with these silly moles was a waste of time; he was confident this might be an opportunity to grow as a blacksmith. Kang Shin-hyuk sheathed his sword and placed a hand on the hilt.

“The fire and light will be intense. Please provide me a space that the Golden Hidden Mice don’t have access to.”

\*\*\*

Kang Shin-hyuk entered the cavern the moles let him into, pulling out the oven and anvil he had prepared in his inventory. He didn’t need to worry about smelting the high-purity benadelite, but he still needed to heat it up to process it properly. How would he do that, just firewood?

-Unotia’s gilded tree is the best for melting magical metal without the worry of decomposition or loss.

“I will buy it in the smallest unit.”

-As a VIP member bonus, you acquired 50kg of Unotia’s golden firewood at a discount price of 400,000 HP.

He let out a scream without hesitation. He had been expecting it, but it was still expensive. Also, 50kg was the minimum unit of sale?

“I want to watch you work.”

“It’ll be boring.”

"I'm never bored." Shin Eunah sat down in the corner of the cave and entered spectator mode. A laugh came unbidden out of him when he looked at him. She had re-entered kid mode, which made her feel pretty cute. Kang Shin-hyuk threw the firewood into the furnace, his lips tightening. The fire started quickly, burning intensely from the get-go. After confirming the temperature, he placed the benadelite into the fire to melt it down for molding.

'I have to make...claws.' Five claws made in to fit perfectly on the king's hand, and a mechanism to secure them in place. It wouldn't be difficult, the only problem was...

'Even if I make it, the results won't be good.' The king believed he could solve any crisis alone if only his claws returned, based on his achievements from over a hundred years ago. But he was too weak to see it from the outside. He was already 150 years old; the reason why Shin Eunah had lashed out was that she recognized it. That wasn't the only problem, either. As a result of their king's peaceful reign, the Moles had no intention of doing anything independently.

'Even if he gets his claws back and digs through, it's impossible to know what awaits them.' Would there be any future for this race? No, he couldn't guarantee them a tomorrow. Even knowing that, could he make a set of claws and turn away? That was nonsense too. He couldn't tolerate it. NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON N(o)VEL(F)ire.net

'If I work like this, I'll just repeat that longsword.' Through his collaboration with Lee Na-hee, he had learned that the outcome of his work could vary greatly depending on his mindset. It wasn't because the defensive ability didn't match the sword; it was because he thought so and hesitated that the result had been lukewarm. It was clearly evident by looking at the Godslayer sword, which had awakened its superior defensive ability.

'It must contain my heart.' Whatever the goal, whatever he made, it had to be able to express his sincerity. In order to become a true blacksmith that made what others needed, he had to.

'So that I don't regret it, so that this can really show its value...' What could he do to make things with all of his heart, given the conditions? He had no choice but to make something that could break through any situation. The answer was so simple he had to laugh. In the end, his mind was still a little weak.

‘There’s a saying that if you have a good body, you don’t need to suffer about having a good head.’ He would make it. Something to break through the problems around them, to connect this race together.

Kang Shin-hyuk lifted his hammer and struck the metal atop the anvil. A dazzling light sprung forth as his spiritual power enveloped the metal.

\*\*\*

Meanwhile, Onyx continued to eat ore. For him, metal was a staple food and a potion that restored his magic and stamina. When his magic power dropped, he could eat more ore to replenish it, so his meal continued. These metals were different from what he usually ate. It was incomparable to the artifacts his owner created, but the taste was excellent. If the artifacts created by his owner were a full course meal served by a 5-star restaurant, then this ore was the best ingredient. It was delicious, even when raw.

-Myuuuu!

How much had he devoured like that? Suddenly, Onyx felt his stomach rumble. His heart throbbed and burned as blood raged inside of his body.

-Myuuuu.

Onyx soon realized that the metals in his stomach were surprisingly rebellious. They resisted being digested, resisted Onyx like it was alive.

-Myu...

Onyx let out a cry of understanding and slowly retreated from the wall. What he had devoured could be digested with his gold magic, but the problem was the remaining materials. If the minerals in this wall were alive...

-Vwoooooooooom

-Myuuuuuuuu!

The earth began to vibrate violently as if the walls were crying out all at once. Onyx noticed that something had awoken before him and began to run away.

-Myuuuuuuuuuu!



The world was shaking as it would collapse. The walls of the kingdom, made of metal, began to change and turn purple. The moles panicked as Onyx passed by them to head toward his owner.

“Wait a minute, this...” Meanwhile, the moment he completed his work Kang Shin-hyuk had arrived at the same conclusion. He realized it a little too late.

-The level of emotional skill was low, so it wasn't recognized.

The administrator's message sounded a bit venomous. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh.

-Checking for damage...Deactivating sleep mode and starting up the system. Life detected. I've found someone who qualifies—granting access to the system.

An artificial voice buzzed throughout the caverns, hearable to everyone.

“Grandpa, this...”

“Maybe.”

-Commander, welcome to shelter 32. I am a facility golem made for the 32nd shelter.

It was a cute voice that came out from the claws that looked like five stacked toothpicks.

-Connection was completed. After checking the external situation, we will enter standby mode.

“...It seems that it wasn't just an ore, but a golem.” The item information came to Kang Shin-hyuk's mind as he sighed once more.

[Gromas 32nd Shelter Access Terminal]

[A-rank]

[As a result of removing the debris of the golem that formed the shelter facility, and after receiving sufficient spiritual power, it became a terminal that can re-operate the sleeping facility.]

[Special Ability: Boost]

\*Boost: It draws out the inherent performance by activating the facilities linked to this terminal. However, permanent damage to the facility is inflicted when this ability is activated.

...These days, nothing was simple.

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## Chapter 77 - Underworld Guest (5)

### Chapter 77 - Underworld Guest (5)

-Myuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu!

The ridiculously excited Onyx chattered so quickly he was impossible to comprehend as he jumped into Kang Shin-hyuk's arms. Kang Shin-hyuk quickly used his spiritual power to heal and help him deal with the golem fragments.

"It's okay now. They're not an enemy."

-Myu...

He patted the barely calm Onyx a couple more times as he looked around. The moles were crowded outside of the room, shouting, as the inside was too bright and hot for them to enter.

"Savior, please save us!"

"The kingdom is overturning!"

“Savior, the claws for the great king!” Kang Shin-hyuk extinguished the fire in the oven so that the moles could enter, recovering the unburnt firewood. It was super expensive firewood that cost 8,000 HP per kg, after all.

“Anvil, have you heard?” The Jijoo king rushed in, grabbing onto his leg.

“Yeah, I know. What surrounds this kingdom isn’t just metal.”

“if it’s not just metal, what is it?!”

“A golem.”

“...What?” The king stiffened in place. Kang Shin-hyuk turned towards the terminal he had crafted with the king hanging onto his leg.

“Is there a good place to grasp the situation?”

-I will summon an auto walk that will lead to the command room. Plug the device into a nearby wall.

Kang Shin-hyuk put one of the claws into the walls that had turned purple. Curiously, the claw sunk into the wall as it split into a hole. What was even more surprising was that the hole gradually expanded into a passageway large enough for humans. Eventually, an escalator on the floor, much like the ones at an airport, was formed.

“The level of tech in this world is incredible.”

“I can understand a golem. But the idea of making an entire facility a golem...I can’t do it.” Even Shin Eunah, who was close to the peak of magic on Earth, said so. But what was worrisome was that this facility didn’t seem to be built for the moles. In other words, before the moles had arrived here, there was already an intelligent organism with the ability to create such a facility.

‘So where did they go...?’ Shelter buried deep in the dark, designed for human proportions...Kang Shin-hyuk was able to think of a few scenarios starting from that information. This facility had probably been made by humans long before these moles had arrived. They were fighting against a crisis some time ago but couldn’t overcome it, leaving only this underground shelter behind.

“I have to call Claire.” New novel chapters are published on [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

"I'd prefer not to bother her when she's moving on her own. She'll be alright."

"Alright, then shall we go first?" Kang Shin-hyuk calmed the moles by telling them that the vibrations were just from the facility reactivating. After finally calming down, they stepped aboard the escalator. It started moving at a blazingly fast speed right away, and the king let out a scream as he hung on to Shin-hyuk's leg desperately.

"There was a passage like this in the underworld?!"

"Not originally, the golem changed his body to create it."

"Senior, it sounds cooler like that." They came to a sudden stop in front of a wall. Reconnecting the terminal to it caused the wall to disappear and open up to a huge space. Several monitors were installed in the wall opposite them, displaying the underground kingdom in real-time.

"Amazing."

"Look here." Shin Eunah quickly noticed something peculiar on one of the monitors. The entire screen was shaded over.

-Commander, the external situation has been identified. Shelter 32 is currently being attacked by monster forces with a 99.7% match of those on the ground.

Reports flowed out from the terminal as Kang Shin-hyuk stared at the monitor. Was that hazy form a monster?

"What kind of monster is it?"

-The name humanity gave it was 'swallowing fungus.' It is a parasitic monster that reproduces through spores. The spores are absorbed through the respiratory system, draining the victim of their stamina and magic, eventually killing them. Due to its overwhelming production rate and ability to pierce magical shields, it was a huge danger shortly after the outbreak.

"Oh..." Kang Shin-hyuk listened to the terminal's explanation with a cold sense of sorrow welling inside of him.

-However, it had trouble going underground, and mankind extensively studied as to why. This is because the toxins contained in the underground mineral benadelite prevented its spores from growing.

“They blocked it off?” If you shut it off, wasn’t there a possibility that fog of spores would seep into the basement? No, wait, what if moles poked holes into those defenses? The spores would slowly permeate into the underground, reproducing and descending further and further down. Kang Shin-hyuk felt a chill run through him. If the golem was correct, then they were in as much danger as the moles were. Of course, so far, it had only been able to spread among the mole children.

-Humanity built several evacuation facilities underground using benadelite, but unfortunately, only a few made it into them. Those who barely survived were divided into several shelters, which were in standby.

This is where this shelter had been waiting until Kang Shin-hyuk had inadvertently created a terminal to access the golem.

“So are you doing that now?”

-The area where the Swallowing Fungus was found was blocked off shortly after identifying the situation. However, spores may have already made it inside, so additional processing is required. Fortunately, the amount shouldn’t be large, so it shouldn’t lead to an emergency situation.

With the explanation over, Kang Shin-hyuk immediately contacted Claire using the Hero Universe’s whisper system to get her location. They took off, arriving at her location shortly after, thanks to the facility’s resources. Claire had an expression of shock on her face as the wall moved out of the way to reveal them, which turned to confusion as Kang Shin-hyuk hurriedly explained the situation.

“Is it a monster? No, I don’t feel any life. Fungus...no, I don’t that’s it either.”

-Any number of non-living monsters exist. The name is for convenience, but it is clear that they are a monster with hostility towards humanity.

“Of course, looking at the behavioral patterns...” Claire seemed a bit odd to him, but Kang Shin-hyuk pressed on after the shelter facility checked her for the spores.

“Isn’t it poisonous?”

“It is but that’s a wide category. Bacteria are living things, but biotoxins are poisons, right? Any substance that harms us is called a poison. It just depends on how this poison works.”

“I see...” As expected of an alchemist, she offered a concise explanation. Kang Shin-hyuk looked at her with admiration as she struck a pose. She’d be really cool if she didn’t do that.

“Then, Anvil, what can we do? We need to dig deeper...”

“If you do that, the shelter will collapse. Please wait.” The king was still anxious as Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh.

“If it stays like this, will the situation be resolved? Will those spores be able to enter here?”

-The temporary quarantine has been completed, and the facility is undergoing maintenance, so further inflows should be blocked. If you use benadelite to deal with the spores that have already invaded the shelter, no further damage will occur.

“Alright, let’s start working right away.”

“Then, my claws...”

“I’ll make you some later, be patient.”

-The terminal is converted to use for eradication. Insert the commander’s magic after plugging it into the marked area on the lower front controller.

Kang Shin-hyuk moved over to a switch in the command room he was directed to and plugged the terminals in with spiritual power. It had asked for magic, but he made the terminals with spiritual power, so he thought it would be fine.

-Detecting the input of high-efficiency energy compatible with magic. Your device’s performance will increase dramatically.

It was successful. The claws had grown bigger as he pulled them free of the terminal. It was shaped the same, but now it was sized to fit a human’s knuckles rather than a mole’s. There was also a small little hole at the end of the sharp claws.

-By spraying benadelite particles treated with special chemicals through these, the spores can be eradicated. It can also be injected into the body to remove any spores present. As a result of the commander's strength, it was completed as a higher-level object.

"How did you guys die off with this tech...?" Checking the item, it was now A-rank. It felt a bit absurd, but he put the claw on and left the command room.

"Then let's start working."

"That posture's pretty good! Now just turn on the light in your eyes again." He was feeling a bit better now. In a destroyed world, he held the tool that could destroy the monsters that had wrecked it. He felt it was a pretty cool scene.

-Commander, we have a problem.

However, the terminal stopped him just as he was about to move.

-The Swallowing Fungus has begun to invade through the barrier.

"...You said you can block it?"

-The Fungus appears to have mutated during the time the facility was shut down. It's moving slowly, but it is progressing through the barriers. Decision: Impossible to eradicate. Evacuate!

"This is the evacuation site?!" He had just grabbed hold of this artifact, and now it was useless! He shouldn't have believed the golem's words; this civilization was ruined, after all!

"You have to dig a hole too!"

"Are you still on about that?!" Perhaps the fact that he had operated the facility had further angered the Fungus. The king kept asking Shin-hyuk about the claws, who wanted to use them on the king's head.

"You need magic, right?" It was then that Shin Eunah let out a sigh and stepped forward.

"Then I'll do it. Maybe it'll be fine."

"Eunah...?"

“Senior?” They tried to stop her, but the administrator sent a message at that moment.

-The idiot finally realized her role. Let her go; she'll be safe.

“Yeah...?”

“What you were curious about, I'll tell you now.” Shin Eunah took a step forward as her body began to float in the air.

“Everyone get away. Especially the moles.”

“I already hid everyone inside!”

“They're fast.”

“Good. Then, I'll start.” An enormous amount of mana began to flow out of Shin Eunah. Claire grabbed Shin-hyuk's arm in fear.

“Oh, it's the first time I've actually seen it...” Shin Eunah's body emitted light that was gradually increasing in intensity. It was a highly concentrated mana.

-The activity of the Fungus becomes more intense as it senses mana.  
Evacuate from the power source!

Kang Shin-hyuk disregarded the announcement of the facility. Soon after, the walls of the benadelite collapsed, and a dark gray fog was pouring in, absorbed into Shin Eunah's body.

“Wait a minute, it doesn't matter how much mana you have, it would run out in no time...!”

“No.” Claire asserted so with a gaze full of awe as she watched Shin Eunah.

“That's her trait.”

“Trait? The nature of her lightning?”

“Huh. That's one of them. The trait she awakened when she was five is different.” Five years old? Kang Shin-hyuk recalled something about Shin Eunah when she was five. Wasn't that when she entered the Hero Universe?



“Eunah...is the only human with two traits.” Immediately as Claire said that Shin Eunah’s body radiated an even more brilliant light after absorbing all of the fog, no matter how much mana the Fungus ate, it couldn’t handle her mana. More fog began to pour in, but her expression looked relaxed as the mana kept discharging from her.

“...Wow.”

“This is my friend, but...even I have to admit this is crazy...”

“This power...”

What could its source be? She was like a god who deserved genuine reverence.

In a distant world, the true power of the Thunder Empress was revealed.

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Shin Eunah was a child born through the union of two promising elite superhumans. The union of those two with outstanding qualities was intentional, and the birth of Shin Eunah was as well. At that time, the country was focusing on a secret experiment to create artificial superhumans. Kidnapping, confinement, drugs, and body modifications...such inhumane affairs were carried out in secret. The superhuman couple didn’t hesitate to use the power of their families in such experiments.

“It’s something to be grateful for.”

“Because it will give birth to the absolute. It is a chance for those who live and die in squalor to leave a huge mark.”

All to give birth to a true superhuman who would form the bedrock on which their family and country would endure above all else. The couple moved with

desire, but not love, and projecting themselves onto the child they would have. There were countless sacrifices and failures until they reached their success by trampling on others. The one miracle that occurred in their work that deserved failure. The first, and last, that would never be seen again.

Shin Eunah.

“You’re our treasure.”

“A good child, born as we planned...”

Shin Eunah was the child who met the couple’s desires. She was born with an SS rank trait, the world’s highest rank, and superior intelligence. Even her appearance was beautiful. The couple raised their children with all their might. Thanks to the thorough education she received, she had the education level of a junior high student at the age of five and could already handle magic more skillfully than most superhumans.

“Mom, I’m tired.”

“Circulate the magic and the fatigue will go away. Didn’t you learn from Mila?”

“But I want to lie down and rest...”

“Eunah, you have to study now. Be a good girl who listens to your mother.”

“...Huh.” Of course, the child’s will would never be a factor in the process. She wasn’t allowed to play when she wanted to, or at all. Before she had even grasped the concept of play, she had learned to desire rest.

“The experiment is a massive success. You’re already dealing with this level of magic.”

“It’s natural given the hard time I had...but it’s still not enough. Just one of the many outstanding people, not the best yet.” The child was at the heart of the couple’s grand plan. There would be no deviation from their schedule. They had become educators of the child, but not parents.

“Mom, I...”

“Isn’t it time to study? Eunah, are you a good girl? Good children shouldn’t get out of studying.”

Good kid. The couple bound and brainwashed the child with that phrase. Learning that it was right that it should be done, the child blindly followed their words. In that process, the stress slowly but steadily accumulated in her mind. If it wasn't released, it would one day break her.

-You have awakened the SSS-class trait [Master of Mana]. The first man-made god with two traits! You have achieved the conditions for accessing the Hero Universe.

-Welcome, newcomer! Please write your ID!

But fortunately, that didn't happen. The moment she awakened to a new trait at the age of five, she became a member of the Hero Universe. She was able to access a community of transcendent people who accepted her as a five-year-old, not as an ability to be used.

-Janus's whisper: Hey, Eunah, don't tell other people about the second trait. Especially not your parents.

-But they said good children shouldn't lie.

-Janus's whisper: There's something in the world called a good lie. That means there are times when you have to lie to be a good child.

-A good lie...! Huh, okay!

Even the members of the Hero Universe were amazed at the possibility of the second trait she had awakened, but that was always secondary to those who learned to care for her.

-Anvil's whisper: No toys? Oh, that's not possible. Then, this grandfather will make one.

-Toy! Grandpa...toy! Eunah loves toys! I love grandpa!

-Anvil's whisper: But this is a secret from your parents. They can't find out where it came from. The Hero Universe is a secret.

-Right, a good lie! Janus said that to be a good child; you need to know how to tell a good lie!

-Anvil's whisper: ...Janus, that guy said that huh?

The members of the Hero Universe, who had lived twisted lives, knew that the most important thing Eunah needed was love, not training, so they gave her everything she needed.

-Halo's whisper: Five years old... that's short even by human standards. What can I do for you?

-Tell me about stuff. I like talking.

-Halo's whisper: I'm the worst at it, but...well, yes. Then, let's talk about the days when the world was born.

The little world of that young girl was expanded immeasurably. It was completely unlike those suffocating days where she felt like she would go crazy. For the first time, she kept a secret from her parents, which drove her to grow even more. Then, after ten years, she learned to rebel against them with a new friend her age in the Hero Universe. That, though, is another story.

\*\*\*

Shin Eunah continued to absorb the Fungus as if she had no limits.

"SSS-class trait [Master of Mana]. The ability to deal with infinite mana, as you see now. I don't really know much more myself."

"An SSS-class trait...Eunah really is the strongest." Kang Shin-hyuk listened to the explanation, but he had trouble believing it. It was too absurd. Claire continued with a bloody smile.

"The world's not so simple. Even if the resources are infinite, you can lose when it comes to output. Not the total amount of power, but how much can be exerted at once."

"So are those with the stronger output?"

"You haven't seen the number one in the world ranking?" Claire hesitated as Kang Shin-hyuk nodded.

"Eunah doesn't have the output. The top rankers from 1st to 7th aren't a joke. I couldn't guarantee Eunah could win against them. Not that will always remain the case." Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't help but laugh at the idea that

there was someone stronger than Shin Eunah, who was taking care of the Fungus with a smile.

“...I also want to get stronger quickly.”

“You’ll be strong. Maybe even stronger than Eunah?”

“I’m not happy about such blatant lip service.”

“I’m serious. You have the conditions become stronger...well?” She tried to appease Kang Shin-hyuk, who seemed depressed about the gap between him and Shin Eunah, but she was cut off by a flash of light.

“Eunah?”

“Senior!” They had been so busy conversing that they forgot that this wasn’t a solution; she was stopping them for now. They tried to ready themselves, but she stopped them while still floating in the air.

“It’s okay.”

“No, even if it’s okay now, we have to kill them to solve this.”

“Claire, you were right. It’s not a monster nor a living thing.”

“Well, then what is it...?” It was then the ceiling collapsed with a terrible roar under the weight of an enormous amount of Swallowing Fungus. Of course, the fog was still held at bay by Shin Eunah. It was like all the spores in the world were gathering towards her. No, perhaps that was the actual case.

-Communication has been restored.

“Does that even matter?” A notification sounded out from the terminal. Perhaps the communication was restored because now the ceiling was destroyed? Kang Shin-hyuk let out a laugh, fully relegated to the role of spectator.

-There was a recording left from Shelter 14. Shall I play it?

“Is it the last message of mankind? Play it.”

-Playing.

Shin Eunah smiled as if to say, don't worry about it, even though more Fungus was gathering around her. There was nothing he could do, so he decided to listen to the message.

[No matter who listens to this, we leave this message behind so that you don't repeat our mistakes.]

"Well?"

What it contained was an absurd confession.

[Is the Swallowing Fungus still in the world? Probably, because the artifact softening process is not finished yet.]

"What is this guy saying?"

[Mankind challenged the power of the transcendental realm to overcome the fight against Jormungand...after hundreds of years of research, we succeeded in developing a weapon that innately raises human power.]

"A weapon?" That seemed to refer to the Swallowing Fungus. It was a weapon, not a monster. But wait, Jormungand? Were they a force that crossed the boundaries of worlds?

[It is a weapon that synchronizes the wearer's mana with their body to grant them divine power through evolution. We tried to ascend to the throne of God by making living human weapons.]

[But it was a failure. The object made with the power of a god asked for a master that suited him...but there was no god among us. We wanted to become gods through it, but in reality, it was the opposite.]

[Everyone is dead. It went berserk and began to go through the population in search of its owner. The city's gone...so is the country too. Jormungand had to retreat, but humanity found no escape.]

[We named it the Swallowing Fungus. A lie and an excuse. The shelter is made of the same material as the weapon so that it will slow the invasion...if one day the weapon breaks through, then everything will be over.]

Kang Shin-hyuk listened to the recording as he watched the scene in front of him. No more fog appeared, all of it absorbed into Shin Eunah. Her body was still glowing, however.

“Whoo...!”

More beautifully.

Stronger.

Complete.

The fragments of a god acknowledged the potential of their host.

[I don't know how you're alive.]

[Human, if you wish to survive, don't dare challenge God.]

[They will answer you.]

The message cut off as Shin Eunah descended to the ground. Kang Shin-hyuk and Claire rushed to her, unable to help their concern after hearing the message.

“Are you okay?!”

“Do you want to kill humans?”

“It's fine, I'm used to it.” Despite absorbing all of the Swallowing Fungus, she did look alright. Of course, her face and body had subtly changed in a positive way, which Claire noticed right away.

“Eunah, wow! Your cup size...one, no, maybe two...G...?”

“Get away!” Shin Eunah shoved Claire away hard, who was trying to feel her body. She stumbled back, her friend's strength has increased immensely.

“This is important...what will we do about your bra?”

“Sister!” Kang Shin-hyuk held Claire back. Shin Eunah's cheeks were dyed a vivid red, and she ran away. Claire let out a sigh.

“Fortunately, she's herself.”

“Did you have to check in such a way?”

“That message scared me. God...living weapon.”

“Yeah.” However, Kang Shin-hyuk was relieved she was okay. She had followed him here to help out with his quest. If something went wrong and she was hurt, he didn’t know what he would do.

-The information lock has been released. Information on the Swallowing Fungus has been corrected. Agglomeration of microscopic mana particles originating from the same material as the facility. 67% of all particles in the world have been absorbed by the entity Shin Eunah and completely annihilated.

Again, the notification ding came out from the terminal. Kang Shin-hyuk was wondering if he could break them.

-The remaining 33% have permanent mutations.

“Huh?”

-Remnants left after the failure has permeated each facility, attempting to agglomerate all particles into a single point. It is judged that it has formed into a magic weapon in case the project fails. THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY NOVELFIRE.NET

“...Huh?”

-Commander, a final greeting. Soon, the facility will lose all functioning, and the golem’s consciousness will be destroyed.

From start to finish, unexpected things were occurring.

-Holding...benadelite...part of the river...energy condensed...Swallowing Fungus gathered around the terminal...coagulation...put the terminal on the floor....facility...

The voice flowing from the terminal became jumbled before stopping completely. After this, the facility began to vibrate.

“A magic weapon? If you plug it in, what’ll come out this time? Was that even Korean?”



"If it is, I need to relearn it." Kang Shin-hyuk shrugged as the terminal claws in his hand began to vibrate. He poured his spiritual power into them.

"Let's see."

He placed it on the floor of the facility.

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The huge underground kingdom was collapsing. The moles ran away, screaming in fear. Fortunately, the Swallowing Fungus that had been draining their mana would no longer appear.

"My... my kingdom...!"

"Build a new one elsewhere." He may have thought he built a kingdom, but really he had only excavated a shelter that was buried underground. Though, certainly, the Jijoo king's ability who had joined the Hero Universe shouldn't be underestimated.

"Wow...really, this whole facility is condensing into that terminal...the magic civilization of the people in this world was absurd. But it ruined them."

Meanwhile, Claire was examining the terminal that Kang Shin-hyuk was holding on the floor. The entire facility was condensing into that single point.

"It's a problem because it won't end with one facility. I don't know if I can handle this."

"Keep ahold of it; your sister will provide you with potions or whatever."

"...Moles, this way." Meanwhile, Shin Eunah was unfolding an intangible veil to protect the entire area with her magic. Kang Shin-hyuk and Claire, along with the moles, were all protected under her power.

-Vwoooooom

A shield the size of a small city was created and maintained by her. It was an overwhelming sight that defied human power.

“The magic manifestation...it feels faster.”

“It’s faster?”

“Hm.” Shin Eunah had infinite resources, but her output and operation were a bit insufficient. However, her body had evolved by absorbing the artifact left by the humans of this world, and her speed and power had grown dramatically, filling in for her weaknesses. Claire had said that Shin Eunah couldn’t reach the top ranks yet, but that had quickly been proven false.

“The association will be surprised to find out.”

“I’ll hide it...rank 100th at most.” Shin Eunah stared at Kang Shin-hyuk as he held onto the terminal. Her eyes hid some deep emotion that he couldn’t read.

“Thanks to my junior, I’ll return stronger.”

“I didn’t know this would happen, so there’s nothing to thank me for...also, let’s wait. We’re not done yet.”

“Everyone, hurry up! Move under the shield!”

“The kingdom is collapsing!” The moles continued to move en masse to gather under the shield. By the time they had all gathered under it, the facility had already been condensed into the terminal. It became a lump of metal now as it still pulled at the benadelite from all over the world.

“It won’t be good to stay here.”

“I was thinking the same, let’s move.” NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON N(o)VEL(F)ire.NET

“Well, what do we do?!”

“Focus on living first!” Had Shin Eunah’s mana not been infinite, there would have been numerous casualties among the moles. Kang Shin-hyuk directed them in evacuating as she maintained the shield. Even if they couldn’t break through the ground, they still had the holes their ancestors dug.

“I have to reach the ground. Senior, maybe...?”

“It’s possible now.” After ensuring the moles had escaped, Shin Eunah reduced the shield to a sphere that enveloped just them. Then, flicking her finger, the shield began to float.

“I’m going to go faster.”

“What?!”

“Hold on!”

-Bang!

There was no time to shout as the sphere soared up with the three of them in it. It crushed through the dirt and veins of ore above them, pushing its way up. With his skill in martial arts, Kang Shin-hyuk was able to take to the center of the sphere and find his balance, but Claire was bouncing around a bit.

“Ahhhh! Be a bit more considerate!”

“Oh.”

“Ugh...” Claire managed to grab onto Shin-hyuk. Shin Eunah’s eyes narrowed as she continued to use her magic to form the sphere, although it was her fault that they were in this situation. Meanwhile, the agglomeration of the benadelite particles was still taking place. They penetrated through the protective film around the trio to absorb into the mass in Shin-hyuk’s hand. As the shield sphere rose at such a breakneck speed, the fog elongated behind them as it followed.

“We’ll be reaching the surface soon.”

“...Is it really okay?”

“It should be now that the driving mechanism behind the Fungus has changed.”

“Now!” The sphere roared upwards into the sky with one final bang; it stopped in the air about ten meters above the ground. Claire took a shaky breath and let go of Kang Shin-hyuk, who felt a tinge of sadness. Shin Eunah pouted at the two.

“Claire, weren’t you too eager to touch my junior?”

“Hey, that was your fault!”

“What about normally?”

“Normally...ah, how much do I usually do?”

“Hm!” The two attractive women argued meaninglessly, but Kang Shin-hyuk was focused on the benadelite particles still coming towards the mass in his hand.

“I’m trying to focus a little right now.”

“Sorry.”

“Sorry.”

The activity of the particles was accelerating even more, all of them gathering into one point. So far, it had only absorbed one shelter, but there were dozens of them all around the world. Waves of purple fog were surrounding the sky around them.

“You two. I think it would be better to back away from me. I think the absorption will become more intense.”

“Okay, Eunah, I think it would be better to give Shin-hyuk the floating magic.”

“I already have. Then, I’ll be waiting.”

“It’ll be over soon.” They left him alone in the air after Claire took Onyx to keep him safe. He let out a sigh of relief after confirming they had landed at a safe distance away from him. The flow of particles that had been suppressed so far was released completely.

-Shaaaaaa

His body was engulfed in a purple mist. Shin Eunah let out a scream as she watched it, but Claire calmed her down. They were gathering at the lump held in his hand with no concern for him: gathering and gathering. In the process, Kang Shin-hyuk began to realize something.

“It shouldn’t be like this...!” Now that he was pouring his spiritual power into the lump, he could grasp the transformation that the benadelite particles were going through. It was incomplete, even more so than the weapons that drove this world to destruction in the past.

*‘Whoo...No, I can do this.’* He closed his eyes and focused on the flow of the particles around him. His eyes began to glow golden. The object in his hand wanted to be reborn into something. Golden hues began to mix into the purple.

*‘I can’t do this alone.’* However, that alone wasn’t enough. His trait did nothing more than amplify and strengthen the particles. The formula was unfinished, so he activated his other ability to add to it. Which was metallurgy.

*‘No anvil, no hammer.’* But he had the most important thing when crafting, and that was his mind. Didn’t he prove it when he made the claws that served as a terminal to the golem facility? Metallurgy wasn’t a skill about simply beating metal.

*‘There...’* What was in his grasp now was a mixture of magic, not metal. It was surprisingly light in his grasp.

*‘Start.’* He imagined the anvil in his mind, placing the lump on it and creating an imaginary hammer to strike at it. What would he put in each hammer blow?

*‘What sort of heart did the people who perished have?’*

They had wanted to be strong, strong enough to transcend godhood. As a result, they met their end, but he couldn’t ridicule their aspirations just because they had failed. He also had a desperate need for strength that drove him. There was no need to focus on complex concepts like ideology. He just wanted strength—the strength to be free from all restraints of incompetence. Spiritual power bloomed out from him, permeating into the magical particles. He felt connected to those who had wanted to make this armament long ago. He read their intent, brought their aspirations into reality.

He swung the hammer.

*‘The strength to keep those I have.’*

-Klang!

It was like the sound of a hammer beating iron rang out.

*'The strength to break down everything that stands in the way.'*

-Klang!

Again and again.

*'The strength to stand alone.'*

-Klang!

The hammer struck hard on the iron on the anvil.

-As expected, you are...

The administrator's message appeared briefly before vanishing. Kang Shin-hyuk didn't notice it at all. He just raised his hand and lowered it. The golden color that bloomed from him converged into the middle of the lump he held in his hands.

It exploded out with a momentum that filled the whole world.

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It was the very moment the unfinished techniques left behind by the extinct mankind had finally reached fruition. Benadelite particles from all over the world formed together, forming a metal that had reached the realm of gods to become what the civilization before called Sky God Iron as it converged into one point. When the golden light that filled the world finally dimmed, there were no benadelite particles left, only the plum-sized purple metal beads held in Kang Shin-hyuk's hand.

-After completing a magical technique that required excellent metallurgy, the magical tool [Great Heavenly Spirit (SS)] was born. There are many possibilities hidden in this treasure. As it was born of spiritual power, it also functions as an energy source that creates spiritual power.

-Talent [Golden-eyed Dragon (S)] has satisfied one condition for evolution. The moment the other conditions are met, the trait will evolve.

-You have escaped from the limitations of metallurgy to find your own possibilities. Metallurgy has grown to B-rank. Health has grown to A-rank.

-Synchronization has greatly accelerated—current rate of 20.1%.

It was at that moment that the floating magic on Kang Shin-hyuk dissipated. The reason was simple; the bead in his hand absorbed the magic.

“Ah.” He was over ten meters in the air, but the landing was light. Kang Shin-hyuk stood on the ground, examining the smooth metal beads that were a far cry from the unstable mass it had just been. He could clearly feel it dispelling the magic, too, with an ability similar to the Swallowing Fungus. As he stared at it, the item information started to appear before him.

[Great Heavenly Spirit]

[SS Rank]

[Special ability – absorption, generation]

\* Absorption – Absorbs all types of power. However, it still possesses limits on how much can be absorbed. The item needs to grow in order to absorb more energy.

\* Generation – Creates and stores spiritual power. When it absorbs energy, it generates a greater amount of spiritual power.

“I made something like this...?” It was an object beyond his understanding. He had imagined a vague sense of strength when he was using metallurgy, but an object of tremendous value had been created. However, he wasn’t able to put his intentions into it. There had been no time to capture them, unlike when he had repaired the Shinfeng Orb.

“No...still.” Kang Shin-hyuk frowned as he thought about metallurgy, but eventually, he let out a laugh as he realized it was pointless to worry about.

“Is it supposed to be this?” He could vividly remember when he touched the source of the dead mankind, wrapping their desire around the benadelite particles with his spiritual power. He was convinced he fully understood their heart at that moment.

*‘Then I don’t have to regret it.’* In the first place, he was a craftsman, not a factory. How could the outcome be set before his work was completed? He could hope for the outcome, but he couldn’t dare foresee what the end result would actually be. He finally came to that realization.

*‘I guess I shouldn’t have been disappointed with that sword. I was excited because of what I had made a few times before...’* Was there a problem with the sword he had made with Lee Na-hee? There wasn’t. Nor was there anything wrong with the claws he had made that became a terminal. Because of that, he had found the truth of this world and helped Shin Eunah grow. He had also crafted these beads.

-Member, are you okay?

“Yeah, I’m okay. Just thinking.” There was no need to worry once the object was completed. In the end, everything could be used somewhere. So, focus on making good things. Do your best, and you wouldn’t be ashamed of yourself. Kang Shin-hyuk came to this conclusion with a sense of pride.

“I wonder if Anvil thought so as he worked.”

-Well, I wonder if that realization came much later for him. Even though your assimilation rate has exceeded 20%, you’ve thought about it yourself and made your own conclusion.

“What do you mean...ah.” Synchronization was the process of dredging up his past life and matching it to his current. He supposed it wasn’t anything to worry about.

-There’s nothing more pointless than separating the two as the past and present. It’s all the same thing, anyway. However, you are living in the present and will continue to change from your experiences. So refer to the past, but don’t feel too conscious of it.



“Haha, I feel like I’ve heard similar things before but it’s still good advice.”

-For the current member, you’ll be able to handle it. This administrator is overwhelmed. 3,000HP bonus!

“Huh? What’s that, 3,000...” Kang Shin-hyuk mumbled as he thought about what the administrator said. 20% assimilation rate?

-The 2nd liberation of VIP is in progress. 100 million HP unlocked! VIP member benefits and dimensional quest rewards are increased! The time flow of My Room has been adjusted.

-You’ve awakened one of the skills of your previous life. You mastered the general skill [Emotion]. Under the influence of metallurgy and synchronization, your skill proficiency will grow to the B+ rank!

*‘If I was going to awaken to it, why did you try to make me buy a skill stone?!’*

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The city left behind by the dead mankind was well preserved. The Swallowing Fungus only attacked living creatures, so the buildings weren’t damaged at all. The design of the buildings exceeded anything on Earth, and unknown magic circles dotted the streets. It had a very creepy feel as they walked through it.

“That’s a lot of money...! So that’s why everyone told me to quickly become a VIP.”

“Eunah, I’m going to model here, help me!”

“Huh!” After confirming that Kang Shin-hyuk was safe, Claire and Shin Eunah were excitedly exploring the city. They were shopping through the empty department stores.

“Let’s check out some other places.”

“Then, let’s go check out that bell tower!”

“Yeah.” He had nothing to gain from it, especially given his lack of magic, so Kang Shin-hyuk waved at the two and stepped away from them. He had something more pressing to take care of.

“100 million HP...how can I use it effectively?”

-If the administrator should recommend...

The administrator had predicted he would want to use it right away.

-I think purchasing a resist poison skill stone would be best.

“...Administrator, that was the first thing you recommended.”

-Don't be surprised to hear that a Resist Poison (SS) Skill Stone, the most popular Hero Universe product, has an average selling price of 150 million HP!

“Expensive!” Did that mean both Shin Eunah and Claire bought one for that price? There was a chance it would be wasted!

-Currently, you can buy one for 70 million HP at a VIP member-limited price! They are sold at less than half due to various conditions. You can only buy it now!

Still expensive, but now it felt a bit more realistic.

“Do you know who the seller is?”

-Forgive this administrator who can't refuse anonymity even if she is a woman who hates her sale target.

“I knew it.” Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh but purchased the skill stone. The seller was Tsukuyo, as expected. If it wasn't her, it would've been Eunah.

“Does this person hate me or like me?”

-Don't worry, it's just one of the two stupid foxes that can't distinguish between the past and present lives. Just use them as much as you can and then throw them away.

He ignored the implication of who the other was and the radical words of the administrator.

-Previously, I told you to buy Resist Poison (B), as you didn't have the money necessary for the higher-level resistance. But learning the lower ranks will make it easier to learn the higher-ranked skill as well. The probability of the skill stone being wasted is lowered.

“That’s comforting.”

-I thought it would be.

Now with the burden of failure relieved, he broke the skill stone. The rust-colored magic contained within it was absorbed into him with some unexpected results.

-You learned the resistance skill [Resist Poison (SS)], which has inherited the skill level of [Resist Poison (B)]. The rarity [Resist Poison (SS)] has increased due to the regeneration power, becoming [Resist Poison (SS+)]. Proficiency of [Resist Poison (SS+)] increased to B-rank.

“Oh.”

-Oh.

Even the administrator was surprised.

-The SS rank is the general limit that a mortal can reach, called the prevailing limit. Surprisingly, the rarity exceeded SS rank, although it is due to your regeneration.

“How about for other members?”

-There are rather few mortals among the members of the Hero Universe.

He had asked for nothing. Come to think of it; a dark-haired girl was running around this forsaken city with an SSS-rank trait.

“It feels good. I want to use this momentum to learn other skills. Are there any of the four major attributes like wind mastery I can learn?”

-As you already know, skills that allow you to deal with the power of attributes are very rare and highly desired. They are usually sold as soon as they are released, but thanks to the slow flow of time in this world you’re in right now...

“There is one?!”

-Fire Mastery (C+) skill stone for 260 million HP. You can purchase it at 210 million HP...

“Let’s forget about it.” No matter how valuable it was, that was more expensive than the SS-rank resistance skill he had just bought.

“Wait a minute, if they learn this...”

-For these people, learning is meaningless.

“That’s right...!”

-And sold.

Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh.

“What item does the administrator recommend?”

-Now that you’ve reached the 2nd Liberation, you can now purchase status growth potions.

“Yeah, that’s right.” The chances of getting a growth speed buff as a login bonus had increased too. The administrator said it would overlap with the buff.

-The price of a lower potion that increases the growth rate by 30% for a day is 300,000 HP. Drinking it boosts the growth rate of all your stats, so don’t miss out.

“300,000 HP?”

-To grow 30% faster! With the VIP discount, it’s 240,000 HP!

After purchasing the Resist Poison, the remaining HP he had was about 33 million. He was a bit worried, but he decided to buy a bundle of 10 at an additional 10% discount.

-You’ve purchased 10 bottles of Growth Boost Potion (lower grade) for 2.1 million HP. Would you like to drink one now?

“No, I’m going to smith here rather than train...hm?” He felt something pull his foot. Looking down, his eyes met with a small creature there.

“Sir...my request still remains.” The King of Jijoo was holding onto his leg with bloody claws from digging through the ground.

“The ground is so bright...and I need a new kingdom. Can you make my claws now?” Kang Shin-hyuk responded with a smile.

“I won’t disappoint you this time, sir.”

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“Ahhh, it’s so bright I can’t even open my eyes!”

“I want to go back underground!”

“Ahhhhh! We have to go there, but I don’t want to!”

The Mole tribe couldn’t have imagined the hellish days that their ancestors had gone through, losing their claws in the peace they had known since birth. They were beginning to barely adapt to their instincts they had ignored so far, however.

“I was wondering how to reform them, but it’s good that I no longer need to.” Since the beginning, Kang Shin-hyuk was dissatisfied with the moles who had entrusted everything to the Jijoo King, but now he was happy at the sight of them. He still wanted them to stop screaming, however.

“Okay, I’ll make your claws, so go inside a building that’s not so bright.”

“I can’t stand being on the ground! The memories of our ancestors are calling out to us!”

“If all of those things died...”

“You’re noisy.” As Kang Shin-hyuk complained, Shin Eunah waved a finger in the air as she approached them. The thousands of moles floated in the air at once, thrown into the open entrance of a nearby building.

“Thank you.”

“I just put them away because they were in the way of my grandfather.” Shin Eunah then turned to hug Kang Shin-hyuk, whose consciousness was nearly blown away by how voluptuous she was.

*‘Wow, she’s grown so much you can see the difference through her clothes...stop, don’t think. Let’s not think...’* Looking around, Claire was nowhere nearby.

“Where’s Claire?”

“She found something she liked and started doing some research.” Shin Eunah said that with a proud expression. She possessed all the dignity in the world at that moment.

“Grandpa.”

“No.” The twenty-five-year-old granddaughter clung to him with a harsh voice. Kang Shin-hyuk hesitated for a moment, but soon resolved himself and pushed her away.

“Now, stop that. A grown-up shouldn’t stick to their grandpa like that.”

“But grandpa said that if we meet in person, we could hug all the time.” He wished it were a lie, but now with his synchronization at 20%, he certainly had a vague memory of something like that. It didn’t weaken his resolve, however.

“That was twenty years ago, how long will you act like a child?”

“Ugh...” Shin Eunah pulled back at his cold words. She let out a teary voice as she talked quietly to herself.

“It would’ve been nice if you visited Eunah when she was young.”

“Ugh...” This time, it was Kang Shin-hyuk’s turn to be rebuked. If he hadn’t felt he was Anvil, he wouldn’t need to feel guilty about his actions. But now that the rate had increased and the memories were becoming clearer, it was hard not to feel a bit responsible for them.

*‘That damn man... making promises he can’t keep. No, rather, my previous life is. If I had really viewed her as my own child, wouldn’t I have gone to her at least once instead of falling asleep with the world? At least once before*

*dying! But, in the end, I had died cleanly like I had no regrets. What, then, of Eunah, who had heavily depended on me until then? She never had the chance to say a proper goodbye. It feels like I'm talking about someone else, but it's me in the end!*' Kang Shin-hyuk felt confused as he tried to untangle the threads in his head. However, he couldn't leave Shin Eunah alone as she stood there all gloomy. He hugged her gently, causing her eyes to go wide.

"Ah."

"I'll only make up for what you missed when you were young."

"...Huh! Grandpa." Shin Eunah let out a voice filled with joy as she hugged him back.

*'I can't last long though.'* Kang Shin-hyuk thought so while smiling as casually as possible. Shin Eunah may view him as her grandfather, but it was a harsh ordeal for him to endure. He only hoped she could regain some of her mental composure.

"There... it's nice to have a good relationship."

"Huh?" Turning his head, there was once more the figure of the Jijoo King holding onto his leg.

"Now I really want you to make my claws..." Watching the half-crying Jijoo King, Kang Shin-hyuk whispered to Shin Eunah.

"...Senior, didn't you kick everyone out?"

"It's embarrassing. Still, I guess he's a member of the Hero Universe...!" Shin Eunah trembled slightly upon discovering the king, trying to return to her cool mode.

"It's like this in the end, so I'll start working on it." He let out a sigh of defeat.

"Yes...this still seems a little insufficient, but you can think of it as an advance payment." Shin Eunah let go of him.

"Payment?"

"Yes, an advance payment."

*'So there's still a balance left to pay for?'* Shin Eunah moved back from the confused Kang Shin-hyuk with a smile.

"I'll go find Claire, cheer up."

"Yes, yes...down payment?" He tilted his head as he watched the back of his foster granddaughter, who left without answering. The Jijoo King was staring up at him. He seemed to have learned a bit, as he was no longer asking about his claws, but it was almost more annoying as he quietly looked up at Shin-hyuk.

"I'll really make it, so stop watching me."

"Oh, oh! Wonderful! I found a place like the workshop with an oven, too!"

Three hours later, Kang Shin-hyuk had finally met the king's expectations by creating another A-rank claw-shaped artifact using the world's metal (of course, it was a metal other than benadelite). The problem was the thousands of moles that followed, all asking for claws. It was the start of two months of backbreaking labor.

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"Claire?" Shin Eunah found her friend squatting on some nearby grass, gathering rare plants unseen on Earth.

"What is that?"

"I figured it would be better to focus on what can only be studied here. Look at this." Claire tore at the grass with purple petals with an expression of excitement.

"The magical ritual that drove mankind to destruction was terrible, but there were some positives. Like these plants that were subject to magic."

"Did they mutate after being exposed to the particles?"

"Exactly. These grasses have evolved into a form that stores and maintains mana without letting it be taken away. It's an interesting by-product of its evolution." Claire began discussing the changes in the Gromas ecosystem, every bit the image of an excited alchemist. Shin Eunah felt the sight of her friend who was immersed in the things she liked really dazzling.



“But Claire, whatever you’re working on, you’ll have to finish it early.”

“Ah...yes, I predicted as much.” She had an odd expression as she put the grass in her inventory.

“It’s not over yet right?”

“The opposite; we haven’t started. We confirmed earlier that the evil of Jormungand had reached this world.” Shin Eunah let out a sigh as she sat beside Claire. The two weren’t just wandering around to explore the magical civilization of a bygone era; they had a more important purpose.

“What about Shin-hyuk?”

“...My junior isn’t ready yet. It’s great to see he has grown this much already, it might even be faster than me. Did you see him create an SS-rank artifact? The miracle of All Craft added with the talent of a fighter, I can’t wait...”

“What a fool. Act with some moderation. You’ve been lucky before....” Shin Eunah’s eyes twinkled as she recalled Kang Shin-hyuk’s actions. She had no clue that he looked at her with that same expression when she had been dealing with the Fungus. Claire decided to leave it be. Telling her would just be pouring oil onto the fire.

“Anyway, I was fortunate to follow you both. My juniors were really in danger...”

“Have you gotten used to the changes in your body?” Shin Eunah’s body, which had evolved instantly by absorbing the magical techniques left behind, continued to bother her with a sense of incongruity. But now...she twisted her lips and nodded.

“The tuning is over. I’m completely used to it.”THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY  
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“Oh, was that tuning? I thought you were trying to mark Shin-hyuk.”

“...You saw?” Shin Eunah blushed, but Claire nodded without hesitation.

“If someone saw you, they’d think you two were lovers.”

“What lovers... we’re just a grandfather and granddaughter.”

“Hmm.” Claire’s eyes became narrower as she stared at the red Shin Eunah. The thought that had been in her mind was only gaining intensity as she watched the two.

“You really think so, Eunah?”

“Of course... isn’t it true?”

“Okay.” Claire nodded. “Is it unconscious then?”

“Unconscious?”

“Yes. But conscious or unconscious... it’s not good.”

“Huh?” Eunah tilted her head, unable to understand, but Claire stood up and flicked her forehead.

“Ouch!”

“A fox either way.”

“Huh? What?”

In any case, the crisis threatening Gromas was resolved. However, the excursion to another world had just begun.

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-You’ve received a skill growth speed buff with today’s log in bonus! Over the next three days, the growth rate of all skills will be increased by 50%!

“Hah.” Kang Shin-hyuk laughed at the login message that suddenly popped up in front of him while he tapped on the metal. The fact that it had appeared in a world with a 24-to-1 time ratio with Earth proved how long he had been here.

“When exactly is the bonus given?”

-6:00 am.

“It’s like a game except for that...” It was about 4 pm when they departed for Gromas. If it was 6 am now, that meant they had been gone four 14 hours or two weeks in Gromas’ time.

“Anyway, it seems that the buffs are more common. Plus, it lasts for three days.”

-This is the real benefit of being a VIP. If you achieve the 3rd liberation by achieving a 50% rate, the bonus will be strengthened once more.

“You’re good at selling products. You don’t need to advertise it to me now.” In the period of those two weeks, Kang Shin-hyuk had invested all of his time – except for that needed to sleep – into making claws. He had quickly switched to using molds to make them, as doing it all by hand was ridiculous. After casting them, all he needed to do was trim and complete them. With that, his work had sped up nicely.

“Your majesty’s claws are shining so brightly, but why are ours...”

“We’re okay with it, but can’t it be a little better?”

However, it wasn’t easy to complete artifacts by casting. As it was impossible to arm every mole with artifacts in the first place, he made a compromise on that part. However, it was still an essential experience for Kang Shin-hyuk, who only had experience making things one by one with all his heart.

-You are starting to gain a feel for mass production. Metallurgy has increased to the B+ rank. When mass-producing goods, work speed has increased, and the quality of the finished product will increase.

“Oh, great!” In half a day after receiving the skill growth speed buff, he had succeeded in growing metallurgy to the B+ rank. His work picked up even faster.

“Today, we excavate that place!”

“Alright, your majesty!” As if he had regained his youth with his new claws, the king was working hard to rebuild his kingdom as he led his people to dig into

the earth. The holes they had dug so far were blocked by the benadelite particles, but now, digging was much easier than before. They were working on a kingdom that was larger and more sustainable than before.

“... It’s impossible.” Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t want to interfere, but he wasn’t comfortable watching them overdo it. Now that the king had started to dig, he must’ve realized his age. Maybe he had known it from the start.

“If you do it like that, you won’t last long.”

“But they’re doing well.” Suddenly, Shin Eunah came up to him.

“The Golden Hidden Mole tribe was created to be in the ground. It was better for them to live down there than to try and survive up here. For them too.”

“Hm...?” Her words were too vague for him to understand, but he decided to listen quietly for now.

“They’re working very desperately, even though they knew it won’t last long.”

“Why?”

“To teach the skill as much as he can while he can move.”

“...Indeed.” All of the Mole tribe, except for the king, had lost their claws due to the peace. Until now, the king had been unaware of any problems with that. But now that he realized he wouldn’t live forever, he began to worry about his death and taught his people the art of digging. It was a development that Shin-hyuk couldn’t even imagine.

“It’s weird...Like everything just fell into place.”

“They weren’t bad guys, they just didn’t know.”

“Was it helpful to throw them to the ground?”

“It was an extreme solution.” Shin Eunah smiled at the slightly spiteful murmur of Kang Shin-hyuk. It was a smile filled with pure joy that softened his heart. It was an odd hybrid mode of the usually distant Shin Eunah and the too childish Eunah. It wasn’t bad.

“Oh, come to think of it, are you not researching today?”

"It seems like the time has come?"

"The time? For what?"

"We haven't talked about it yet." Shin Eunah began to explain as he continued to make claws using a mold.

"There will be a monster attack."

"...Huh?" He stopped. A monster? Didn't they all die because of the benadelite particles?

"I know what my junior is thinking...these moles have survived until now, why would all the monsters have died?"The most update novels are published on [NOVELFIRE.NET](http://NOVELFIRE.NET)

"Yes, but..."

"Moreover, Jormungand is tough. When they find out this world has been resurrected, they will try to take it."

"Wait a minute..." Kang Shin-hyuk raised a hand and shouted for her to stop.

"What the hell is Jormungand? On Earth, they're called an anti-superhuman group. But in this world, the story seems a bit different."

"I was trying to tell you only a little but...yes, it'll take a while to get all the memories back." Her expression became lonely as she began to explain.

"Jormungand is, as far as Earth is concerned, just a union against superhumans. But...after hearing the story of another world, I've finally come to understand it better." Perhaps she was referring to the bulletin boards in the Hero Universe. She continued with a slight blush.

"The main force of Jormungand are monsters, not humans. Those who stand atop all monsters and know more of humanity than humans do...they use humans to destroy humanity."

"That means that there are monsters behind the forces of Earth's Jormungand? And...they can cross dimensions like people in the Hero Universe?"

“They’re a pan-dimensional giant. Most of the world’s invasions are related to them...most of the Hero Universe members have come to this conclusion.” Earth wasn’t originally a world full of monsters, but they had served as a catalyst that forced humans to awaken and become stronger.

“The purpose of the Hero Universe is to stop Jormungand. This is why we, too, have the power to cross dimensions.”

“...It feels like this is a bit too well-organized.” Usually, in situations like this, the group trying to protect humanity was actually behind it all. Kang Shin-hyuk decided to ask the administrator.

*‘So, how is it actually?’*

-If it weren’t you who asked that question, I might’ve ranted and then disqualified you from being a member. 500HP bonus!

*‘What? A rant? Why did you give me a bonus?’*

-Because talking with you is fun either way. Such bold comments...1,000HP bonus!

He decided to give up on asking the administrator.

“The Hero Universe offers us no answers, but we don’t want one either. Just as most of us disapprove of Jormungand, the only thing we can do is cooperate to deal with them.”

“So is that why you joined the association? It was the best way to find out about them?”

“That’s half of the reason. The other half is a secret.” Shin Eunah, in hybrid mode, was powerful. Kang Shin-hyuk tried to change the topic to hide his embarrassment.

“So, are you saying their forces are also hiding in Gromas?”

“Perhaps. It doesn’t matter if their numbers are small; they can control the consciousness of all monsters. If even one remains, we have to send subjugation forces.”

“What, that power’s bullshit...But if that were the case, did the disturbance last time have to do with them?”

“If only humans were involved, that would’ve been impossible. Jormungand has the ability to interfere with gates, right? Because they know how to connect worlds together, they were able to make full use of an irregular gate. Though I didn’t think they would try such a ridiculous plan. Thinking about losing my grandpa...” She was shifting back to the spoiled granddaughter mode. Kang Shin-hyuk sighed, shoving away Shin Eunah, who was trying to hug him.

“Then what about the moles?”

“That’s why its good they’re digging. If they run away, they’re less likely to die.”

“Ha, right.” But just as Kang Shin-hyuk nodded along, she stood up with a stiff expression.

“It will begin soon, I can feel a huge mass of energy.”

“How can you measure that?”

“It’s a feeling. The rest is Janus’s advice.”

“Janus. There’s no place for him to not interfere.” Kang Shin-hyuk stood up with a laugh, but Shin Eunah held out an arm to stop him with a smile.

“Before, I couldn’t show my strength properly. Leave it to me.”

“No, you showed enough last time...” Rather, if she showed more strength than that, there would be no place for him! However, she didn’t listen as she stepped forward, golden lightning wrapping around her.

“I’m enough alone, thanks to the power I gained here...then, I’ll be back.” The Empress took to the air, driven forward by the mighty mana she emanated as a huge crack began to form in the air.

The serpent’s mouth opened, spewing the poison of Jormungand into the world once more. It was faced by a goddess with lightning wrapped around her, taking the place of Thor.

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-How fun.

The woman who crawled out from the serpent's mouth that bit into the dimension mumbled to herself.

-I had already lost all hope and thought this world was left dry. How?

-It doesn't matter. Now that we've found a new foundation, we have to keep that from happening again.

The male monster that followed her replied bluntly. She let out a sigh.

-How boring. If you think like that, how can you afford to enjoy life? If you don't think more flexibly, you won't live long...huh?

The moment she stretched out into the air while talking slowly, she noticed golden sparks flying in front of her face.

-What? Why is there such a powerful thing in this world-

She was engulfed by lightning. Her reflexive defensive barriers did little to protect her as she was roasted whole.

-This dimension too...Hero Universe!

The woman in the front was killed instantly by the Thunder Empress's destructive power, leaving only the monstrous man. His boss wasn't fragile enough to die from a single blast of lightning, which meant this foe was beyond understanding. He tried to take a step back.

-Kiiiii!

-Move back at once.



“No.” The man gave orders to the monsters coming out the tear in space behind him, taking command now that their leader was killed. But it wouldn’t be so easy; he couldn’t keep track of the movements of the lightning.

“You can’t leave.” A magic circle of a complex shape moved out from Shin Eunah’s outstretched hand. The monster’s eyes went wide as the crack in space was forcibly closed behind him. The advanced technique she had used to close it was amazing, but what was more frightening was the tremendous power behind it.

-What, how...a monster!

“You’re the monster.” Shin Eunah used the magic circle to lock away the tear. It required terribly precise calculations and output of magic, but she performed the task as simple as turning a lock.

“A monster that hunts humanity.” Anyone who studied magic would know how absurd Shin Eunah’s actions were.

*‘Let’s finish this now.’* Shin Eunah quickly completed the magic around the gate, which normally required several professionals working together, and opened her hands to fire off another lightning bolt. Most of the monsters that were pouring out from the gate behind him were burned away. Shin Eunah continuously fired off lightning towards the gate while extending a hand to aim at the escaping man.

-What?!

The monster was hit directly this time, too distracted by the other monsters to avoid the lightning strike.

-Uff...shit...!

He was a bit more durable than the woman, having survived the first blow, but that didn’t matter. She emitted a stronger flow of lightning, burning him completely through.

“More...I think I can do better.” A cruel smile found its way onto Shin Eunah’s lips. She danced in the air, creating dozens of magic circles that sparkled with energy. She was exerting herself to the degree that wasn’t possible before. Thanks to the benadelite particles that harmonized with her body to make her the lord of lightning and mana.

“Whoo.” A tremendous amount of mana flowed out through the magic circles. She didn’t resist it, letting the mana leave her body. The sound of sparks filled the air.

-Kii...

-It’s a new land.

-I can feel the radiant energy of life!

In the process of preparing her magic, the lightning bombardment had stopped, and several monsters continued to flood out. It was good timing, as she had just regained control of the magic circle and set them as targets.

“Huh!” The magic circles overlapping in the air interlocked and rotated like clockwork, spewing out a terrifying amount of lightning that filled the sky with a bright radiance.

-Kugaaaaa!

-Bang!

Thousands of streaks of lightning bolts ran at the speed of light, turning the monsters into ash.

-Creeeeeak

Everything stopped as the world was filled with light and the sound of something breaking. Shin Eunah instinctively sensed that the gate had been destroyed.

“That much...” It was good that her physical performance and output were amplified, but she couldn’t get a sense of how much her maximum output was. Still, she was able to learn a bit more about her newfound strength.

“Top ranker...it’s possible.” She was referring to the world’s top rankings from 1st to 7th. She was confident she wouldn’t be pushed back if she faced them like this. Perhaps if she could adapt a bit more to the changes, she would be in another dimension altogether.

“No more traces of them.” There was no hint that the gate would reopen elsewhere. Since they had taken a bad hit, it would take them at least a few months to judge the situation and develop countermeasures. That would be

enough time for the Golden Hidden Mole tribe to find their new kingdom. Shin Eunah nodded, satisfied, and descended.

“Senior...” Kang Shin-hyuk watched the scene of the battle through the window of the workshop. He left the forge and was staring up at her with his mouth wide open. Shin Eunah smiled proudly at him.

“Did you see? What do you think? What do you think?”

“How do you sleep...” Kang Shin-hyuk swallowed, thinking of the two who opened the gate. It was the first time he had seen such a human monster. He intuitively recognized them as being stronger than he had ever dared to dream of.

*‘They had to be in a fairly high position in the organization called Jormungand.’*

No, judging from the power they exuded, they might have been executives. However, Shin Eunah blew them both away with little more than the wave of her hand, even destroying the gate that had several S-class monsters. It was an absolute power that could destroy the world.

*‘She’s still so far away.’* Kang Shin-hyuk thought so and let out a laugh. The idea of catching up to her was so far-fetched he couldn’t even feel jealous about it. It felt like he had just started to reach his goal. If he wanted to catch up, he had to practice constantly. As he thought that, another impulse hit him.

*‘I want to create a weapon that can contain such power...’* He probably wouldn’t have thought of it before, but the urge that popped up inside of him wasn’t too bad. It was a valuable source of inspiration, at least, that wouldn’t go away easily. Perhaps it even was proof that he had grown up a little bit. He squeezed his fists.

“Wow...” When he came to, Shin Eunah was staring at him with tears in her eyes, indicating she had reverted to granddaughter mode.

“Won’t you praise me? I got rid of a bunch of bad guys.”

“I’ll ask you. What sort of praise do you want?”

“Pat my hair.”

“...Well, alright.” Right now, he would’ve preferred the hybrid mode, but it was natural she would drift back into granddaughter mode. He patted her hair gently, but she had an expression like she would explode. He had trouble patting her, who had shown the power and dignity of the Thunder Empress just seconds ago.

“Then, is the battle over now?”

“No, not completely.” She started at him with an expression like she wanted more attention, but he changed the topic.

“Jormungand’s appearance is evidence that the world’s unique monsters have begun to move. They can’t be thought of as an outside invader, they’re already here.”

“It feels like they’re a cockroach.”

“Maybe similar to that.”

*‘If you found one, you should think that there are thirty?’* He felt a bit depressed at that idea. It may not be an issue for him, but it would be bad news for the Mole tribe, who would have to adapt to this world in the future.

“Don’t look like that, junior. As long as humanity is around, there must be monsters. It would be scarier if you couldn’t see them.”

“Oh, I know how that feels. The feeling of fear is different when you find traces of a cockroach versus actually seeing one...” The source of this content is [no\(v\)elfire.net](http://no(v)elfire.net)

“I think you’re fixed on the idea of viewing monsters as cockroaches...” A mole approached them as they were engaged in increasingly idle conversation.

“Anvil, there’s something you should see...”

“Huh? What, have you been watching my senior fight?”

“What? Were there monsters here too?”

“Here too?” The eyes of Shin-hyuk and Shin Eunah narrowed at the same time as the mole nodded weakly.

“While digging, they suddenly attacked from below. So the king...”

Kang Shin-hyuk listened to the words with an increasingly grim expression as Shin Eunah watched blankly. He wanted to laugh; it was so absurd, but he couldn't even smile.

The Jijoo King's funeral was held that afternoon.

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If it were a comic book or a novel, he would've thrown it away while cursing. The Hidden Golden Mole tribe had awakened their instincts due to the collapse of their underground kingdom and the help of their old king, who had a wealth of knowledge. At the end of a wonderful scene, the king was slain by monsters that had arrived without warning.

“They sent a vanguard, so that's not accurate, junior.”

“No, I know that. Still...something like this...”

“It's my fault.” Claire bowed her head to Shin Eunah and Kang Shin-hyuk. The funeral had already ended, all of the moles were milling about listlessly.

“I knew that the monsters would begin their activities soon, but I couldn't quit in my studies...I sensed it and ran for it straight away, but I was too late.”

“It's not your fault. It's not like we were on an escort quest for the king.” Shin Eunah's words sounded cold, but she was trying her best to comfort her friend.

“The quest was to complete the claws, the remaining two months of our stay here was like a bonus.”

"But you...no, no." Claire tried to refute the remark but instead went quiet. She knew that Shin Eunah was the first to face the threat that had arrived, stopping Jormungand's invasion. It hadn't just been for this world, but also to protect her friends. However, her efforts couldn't be denied.

"In the end, these guys just depended on their king. They do nothing now that he's gone."

"They haven't learned all they could from him...I don't know what they'll be able to do." Kang Shin-hyuk spoke up for Claire, but Shin Eunah's attitude didn't change.

"That's just an excuse. In the first place, it was strange that everyone rushed to the king, saying they would help. They have claws, so they can dig. Artifacts should be something you consider after the fact, not before." She wasn't wrong. The tribe relied on the king because they felt uneasy, challenging the ground with nothing more than their body.

"The monsters in this world are starting to move, it's no excuse to sit down like that just because their leader died. Even after reaching this point, their mental state is too much like a child's."

"Eunah...that's not convincing at all, even if you say so."

"Anyway! Claire, you have nothing to feel guilty about. If these guys die, that's their own fault." That was also true. Shin-hyuk didn't know what happened when the king died, but it was enough for the moles to recognize the existence of monsters. They had to deal with it in some way, whether they were brainstorming or simply moving around, but now they were rolling around like they had given up even thinking.

*'It's because the king was too big of a presence. He solved everything quickly...'* Even after they had awakened their instincts to dig, the king had led them. They were now in a new environment where he wasn't there to help them, so it was understandable that they were so devastated.

"I think they need time to take control. Senior, can you protect them for at least three days?"

"Three days?" Shin Eunah's eyes narrowed, but he nodded.

"If there is no change by then, we will leave them."

“Then, what are you planning for those three days?” Claire spoke up, a curious look on her face. He replied with a faint smile.

“I think I’ll be able to complete all of the claws in that time. I hope they’re not useless.”

“You always have one thing on your mind.” She laughed, looking a bit more cheerful.

“Okay, your sister will give you a present in that case.”

“A present?” She seemed to have liked what he had said, as she jabbed him in the shoulder with a smile.

“This is perfect for our cute Shin-hyuk, who’s working so hard.”

“Hm.” Shin Eunah glared at Claire, her eyes flashing dangerously. Shin-hyuk wondered if his eyes flashed like that when he used his trait. That would be a little scary.

“Yes, okay, space. Some space...”

“Good.” Shin Eunah stepped back, relieved with Claire’s response.

“Three days. Okay, in the meantime I will protect them. Claire, protect Shin-hyuk.”

“Eh? I have to...?”

“Yes.” Shin Eunah left without another word.

“It was surprisingly easy to convince her. She felt so cool.”

“Wasn’t she just convinced by what you said? She’s not a kid with a lot of thoughts, though even I have to admit it if these guys stay this way after three days.” Outside the workshop, you could still see the moles screaming and rolling about.

“I hate to see it either way...”

“Alright, then let’s start working. Is there anything I can do to help?”

“Ah, yes. Thank you, sister.”

"I'm going to make you work hard as a bartender in the future, so I should help this much."

"...Bartender? Sister, were you thinking of making me a bartender?"

"It's good to have a variety of skills. I've been training you so far, haven't I?"

"So far?!" Claire might not have been useful for the actual forging process, but she was still a craftsman. Preparing molds and pouring molten metal into them was enough for her to speed the process up. She even engraved some sigils onto the mold, reducing the time needed for the metal to cool.

"I think this will take less than two days, not three."

"Okay, then the rest of the time will be practice for your bar work."

"You really intend to make me a bartender..." He should've noticed that from the beginning, when she brought him in as a server. But there was no way for him to escape now. Rather, he didn't want to escape either. She was a clever woman, taking advantage of his crush to bring him into her hobby.

"Of course, you're a minor, but when you are at the bar you're Shin Eun-hyuk. Ugh...as expected, that name is a bit ridiculous."

"Could you please not use that name anymore?" Kang Shin-hyuk complained, staring at Claire. His eyes lingered on her as he thought of his feelings. After they finished their work, he decided he would speak up.

"Sister, can you really not become younger?"

"Wow, that's bold." Kang Shin-hyuk almost thought he had made a mistake, but Claire laughed and responded calmly. He wasn't willing to let it go so easily, however.

"The more I hear it's impossible, the more it hurts."

"Well, you are currently in school."

"I hate giving up." He stared into Claire's red eyes, drawing up the resolve of a warrior who aimed to grasp a miraculous victory from the jaws of defeat. "I like you a lot."

"Thank you very much, but I can't."



"Is it not possible? You can be honest with me."

"Even if I have another reason, wouldn't it just hurt you to hear it?"

"Maybe."

Claire grumbled that he was a troublesome guy before continuing.

"Shin-hyuk, it's best if you hang out with students the same age as you." Google search novel FIRE.NET

"Is it a matter of age after all?"

"It's a difference in experience."

"That's perfectly fine." It wasn't, but he decided that he wasn't going to push any further. Claire stood up with a smile.

"That's why kids shouldn't get so hot under the collar. You'll regret it later."

"..." Claire cleared her throat at Kang Shin-hyuk's blank expression, deciding to be a bit more serious.

"I'm sorry, maybe I've been too friendly. Still, I'm not trying to seduce you, I'm really just comfortable around you, so forgive me." Kang Shin-hyuk thought about how complicated topics like women and relationships were. His words flowed out of him before he could stop them.

"It's alright. I think it'll work out in the future."

"No way." That was as far as he could go. He was worried being persistent would only make him a nuisance to Claire.

"I'm a little tired from work, so I'll head off to rest first. Tomorrow, we'll finish it all and have a bartender class, so be prepared."

"Yes, got it." Kang Shin-hyuk was forced to retreat.

"See you tomorrow, sister."

"Huh." Even though he had tried repeatedly, his face had remained calm the entire time like he had been expecting this outcome. Claire waved her hand at the cold boy and left the building.

*'I almost passed out. No matter what, if we started a relationship at this stage, Eunah would murder me...!'*

She was trembling with fear

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"It's simple."

"Actually, with a little memorization and dexterity, it's easy to get certified. But you can't call yourself a bartender unless you make your own original drinks! All right, unknown bartender K?"

"It's Shin Eun-hyuk." The next day, as promised, Kang Shin-hyuk was in the bartender class Claire had planned after they had completed all of the mole claws. Even though he was still a minor, he was already in the mindset of his mysterious alter ego, who worked as a bartender.

*'Well, it seems okay.'* Claire glanced at him, confirming he at least seemed calm. Yesterday, after rejecting his confession, she was worried he would have been hurt, but fortunately, the shock didn't seem to be too bad.

*'But to think that was the case...'* Kang Shin-hyuk had expressed his desire for her outright, of course, but he was normally so calm that she had thought it was a joke.

"Sister?"

"Oh, yes." Suddenly, Kang Shin-hyuk was looking at her with an anxious expression.

"What's wrong? Is something bothering you?"

"No, no. Why, if there were such a thing, would you solve it?"

“Absolutely. But please wait a little longer for me to get stronger first, it really won’t take long.” It was a voice full of confidence, combining the freshness of youth and the leisure of an adult to give him a subtle charm. Claire spontaneously remembered the boy’s confession from the previous day and the deep eyes facing her, feeling a little thrill go through her spine. If that was a joke, this boy was a shoo-in for Best Actor at the Oscars. She struggled to hide her agitation and flicked Kang Shin-hyuk’s forehead.

“Try it again, but explain what feels natural as you do it.”

“Speaking while I do it? That’s too much after only a little practice.”

“Wow, what’s with that look, huh?”

“If you keep jabbing me, I won’t be able to concentrate!” The two continued the class with an almost flirtatious mood, but soon they could feel a huge flow of energy outside. The two stopped immediately.

“You sense it too?”

“Yeah.” The two whispered quietly. They might have different ideas about each other, but they had the same opinion on how to treat Eunah. Immediately after that, their mother-in-law...no- Shin Eunah, knocked on the door.

“I’m entering.”

“Huh.” As soon as she entered, she made a face as she discovered the cocktail glasses and tools spread out on the table. It was easy to deduce what sort of class was happening here immediately.

“Claire, our junior is still physically underage.” Mentally he wanted to refute that, but he remained silent as Claire responded instead.

“But Shin Eun-hyuk is an adult. He’s not drinking alcohol, so what’s wrong with a little bartending?”

“That’s not important. Moreover, aren’t you confused about our purpose right now?”

“Hah...” Claire let out a sigh, shrugging her shoulders.

“Don’t you want to drink a cocktail that Shin-hyuk made himself?”Google search NovelFire.net

“I do.”

“Wouldn’t you like to chat with Shin-hyuk while you sit at a bar table...you’re drinking a cocktail elegantly while he wipes the counter down with a dry towel and a soft smile on his lips?”

“I want that.” Both times, she responded immediately. Claire smiled and shook Shin Eunah’s hand. “Then, it’s okay.”

“Yes, thank you.”

“Hey!” When Shin Eunah said thank you to Claire, Kang Shin-hyuk was unable to stand by any longer. Besides, why was her description so specific?

“Please take care of the bartender training, Claire.”

“Leave it to me. I’ll implement your ideal.”

“Since when did you start nurturing me...”

“From the start.” He was filled with thoughts of blaming Claire as Shin Eunah turned to look at him.

“The moles are looking for you.”

“I guess it worked as I said.” He had a smile on his lips, but Shin Eunah’s expression was subdued.

“You shouldn’t think everyone in the world is as sincere, passionate, and incapable of giving up as you are.”

“It’s like you’re describing a game character...anyway, I know what you meant. Let’s meet them first.” He was determined to go outside. It was already night, which meant the moles could roam freely outside.

“Anvil!”

“Master Anvil!” One of the moles who found him shouted happily, and soon after, more began to pop up. In short order, thousands had appeared and began to bow around him.

“Help us!”

“I know.” He smiled and opened his inventory, laying out the large number of claws he prepared.

“I’ve prepared them for you. Now, can you excavate the land on your own?”

“Oh, oh! After all, Anvil...!”

“The former king certainly thought it through by bringing Master Anvil!”

“...Well?” The moles were enthusiastically moving around him in admiration. However, he felt something strange in their words. His question was quickly resolved as they all bowed to him once more.

“Become our new king!”

“Master Anvil...no, your majesty!”

“Sire!” Kang Shin-hyuk was confused for a moment, taken aback by their declarations.

“Become the second Jijoo King!”

“Please lead us!”

“Tell us what to do, sire!”

“Please stay here!”

“...” Shin Eunah jabbed him from behind, but he had no energy to react to her as he stared blankly at the moles. He bowed his head down.

“If I didn’t expect it in the first place, I would’ve felt betrayed. Still, I wanted to see something wonderful here...is this their limit? Is this the karma of the Jijoo King?” Claire shrugged, speaking quietly from behind him.

“Let’s go make some cocktails. Virgin...ah, non-alcoholic ones.”

“No.”

“Shall we wait a little longer?” Shin Eunah spoke up; her voice was soft and delicate as she tried to be considerate of him. However, waiting here for more

time seemed like it wouldn't change anything, and he didn't want to go and force the Mole tribe to change.

"No...I think it's pointless."

"Eunah? What are you going to do?"

"Well, what should I do?" Shin Eunah furrowed her brow and muttered inaudibly before looking at Kang Shin-hyuk.

"I'll install an alarm barrier."

"Ah, good idea Eunah."

"If it's praise, I would rather receive it from my junior. No, a lap pillow would be better."

"You're really honest about useless things."

"Master Anvil?!"

"Please don't abandon us!" The moles tried to stop him as he turned away weakly, but they were unable to. He felt too disillusioned to deal with them now.

-Myu.

Onyx, who had been sleeping quietly in his arms, suddenly escaped and jumped into the middle of the moles. The moles were confused, but Kang Shin-hyuk understood what he was trying to do. Rather, he noticed what he was holding in his mouth.

"When did this guy..."

-Myuuuuuuuuuu!

Onyx cried vigorously as he chewed what he held in his mouth. It was the A-rank claw artifact made for the Jijoo King.

-Myu!

"Ah, this guy!"

"This hedgehog has the relic of the previous king!" Onyx chewed on the artifact with an expression of delight. The moles stood by, astonished, as did the three humans. He finished eating it and let out a cheerful cry as the thorns on his back began to harden and become sharper.

"Is that okay? Somehow, I think there are game companies that might sue him for this new form."

"It'll be okay so long as we don't talk about it." Onyx cried out once more and swelled his thorns out. They began to spin like drills.

"Oh, they won't sue, thank god."

"But, it looks more dangerous?!"

-Myuuuuuu!

"Oh!"

"Unbelievable!" Onyx dug into the ground with his spinning thorns, at a speed on par with the Jijoo King. The moles let out cries of excitement as they watched him disappear into the ground.

"Then he...!"

"Let's follow! The new king is leading us!"

"Ooh!"

"Claws, grab your claws!" The moles were hurriedly following after Onyx with their own equipment. Claire shook her head as she watched the last one disappear underground.

"...Is this really okay?"

"Maybe? In two months, Onyx will disappear, but...by then, they can also settle down." If they can't adapt after all of this, then there was no helping them. He let out a sigh and turned to Shin Eunah.

"Because Onyx is with them...I'll ask you, senior."

"I'll protect them." They returned to the building they were staying in after Shin Eunah prepared her magic defenses. From then on, it would be up to them.

Kang Shin-hyuk was focused on learning how to become a bartender from Claire, and as a bonus, he learned the basics of alchemy. Shin Eunah focused on studying the magic of this world with the help of Claire in her free time.

Kang Shin-hyuk spent some time training his body and martial arts in earnest with the help of the growth amplification potions and would go back and forth to the workshop to create new weapons. He also spent some time studying the orb and the Godslayer sword when he could. This way, he managed to establish his training and develop a good relationship with his two seniors, as well as begin his activities on the Hero Universe trading board.

A month and a half passed like that before they returned after successfully completing the dimensional quest.

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-As a log-in bonus for today, you've received a buff to status increases! For two days, the growth rate of all stats is increased by 40%!

[Kang Shin-hyuk: A rank]

[Characteristic]

Golden-eyed Dragon (S)

[Physical ability]

Power: A

Agility: A+

Health: A



[Special ability]

Spiritual power: A

Regeneration: B+

[Skills]

Dragon's Fan Dance (S+): A

Wind Mastery (A-): C

Metallurgy: A-

Emotion: A-

[Resistances]

Resist Poison (SS+): A-

Resist Fire (S): A

"Hmm." After his two months in another world, Kang Shin-hyuk had managed to grow his status once more. The latest\_episode\_sodes are on\_the novel(F)ir(e).net

*'It's almost too strong.'* When he had been over there, it was hard for him to notice his own growth because he was with Shin Eunah, who was outside the category of human, and Claire, who was a high-ranker in the top 500 in the world. However, when he considered it calmly after returning to Earth, his condition was by no means normal, now that all of his stats aside from regeneration had surpassed A-rank. The problem was the time he had taken, however.

*'It's fast for two months of growth, but as far as everyone else is concerned, just a weekend has passed.'* He tried to think about it for a while before giving up on it. Unless he stopped doing dimensional quests, this would continue to happen in the future. It would be too difficult to try and hide his growth every time.

*'The status growth is incredible, but so was the skill growth.'* His Wind Mastery now made it possible for him to make a swift wind blade or even to use it to strengthen the power of his sword. However, the Resist Fire skill had grown

even faster than that. It was a high-level at the start, but it had easily broken through the rank barrier. It made sense, given how close he had been to the forge for most of his time over there. It wasn't just him who had benefited, however.

"We'll leave now. Thanks to my juniors, I was able to rest for two months...my ability has also gotten stronger."

"It was really fun. Don't forget you have a shift tonight!"

"Yes, yes. Please go." It was early Monday morning now. Of course, Shin Eunah and Claire were currently in his room because they had stayed in Gromas until the last minute. After spending two months together, Kang Shin-hyuk's attitude towards them was a bit more hesitant. The strangely embarrassed atmosphere between him and Claire had completely vanished, at least on the surface.

"I still feel sorry...Eunah, should we go eat? You know, Shinyoung's royal class restaurant has some delicious food."

"I know."

"Also, we could go in with Shin-hyuk!"

"Please reconsider." Bringing outside guests into the restaurant would be one thing, but the whole school would be overturned when they discovered the guests were the Thunder Empress and the Alchemist. Kang Shin-hyuk was genuinely frightened as Claire let out a laugh and tapped his shoulder.

"I like Shin-hyuk because his reactions are always great."

"Claire, you can't seduce my junior."

"Eunah, it seems to be the time you graduate from elementary school when it comes to relationships." Kang Shin-hyuk saw the two off with a bitter smile.

"I'll go to the bar tonight."

"Alright, then please properly finish your work." Shin Eunah hesitated a bit, but in the end, she and Claire used magic to vanish from the room, leaving behind only a faint scent. It felt odd for Shin-hyuk to see them leave after being stuck together with them for two months.

“ ... ”

-Myu...

Onyx looked up at Kang Shin-hyuk and let out a small cry. The thorns on his back were normal once more, but during his stay, they had been drills for most of the time, so it felt a bit unfamiliar.

“It would’ve been difficult if it weren’t for Claire’s special potion.”

-Myu?

Kang Shin-hyuk decided to check if the little guy’s status was any different.

[Onyx: C+ rank]

[Physical ability]

Power: D+

Agility: B+

Health: C-

[Special ability]

Gold Magic: B

[Skills]

Iron Predation (S+): C

Implementation (SS): C+

Defense Position: C+

Stealth (A): B-

[Loyalty]

Subordinate to Kang Shin-hyuk: Loyalty 74

“All your stats and magic have increased tremendously...” It made sense, as most of what Kang Shin-hyuk did in those two months was metallurgy. Most of his work wasn’t good enough to post on the Hero Universe, so Onyx ended up eating them. There were also the materials Onyx consumed when digging with the moles. Even so, B-rank was absurd. It was a level that surpassed even active superhumans.

-I understand.

As Kang Shin-hyuk was contemplating how it could’ve happened, the administrator sent him a message.

-It seems like he experienced the effect of the status amplification buff thanks to your relationship. This is my first time seeing such a thing.

“He received the effect of my potion?”

-Myuuu!

Kang Shin-hyuk patted Onyx and praised him honestly.

“You struggled to take care of those spoiled people for two months.”

-Myuuu.

The Golden Hidden Mole tribe couldn’t do anything unless they had a trusted representative. Onyx had been able to lay down the groundwork for them to return back to their lives underground after eating the king’s claws (although whether that was his plan from the start was a mystery). They had cried out and tried to keep Onyx when they learned he would be returning to Earth, but fortunately, they had taken the news better than when their king died. They would be able to survive again now that things had stabilized.

-Quest rewards were sent directly to My Room, so please check them later.

“Thank you, administrator.” Kang Shin-hyuk changed into his school uniform and took off, leaving Onyx in the room.

“Oh, Shin-hyuk. Why didn’t you come to the restaurant today? The vice-captain was waiting for you...huh?” The moment he entered his classroom, Karen happily waved to him before tilting her head in confusion. He didn’t have the time to eat after seeing Shin Eunah and Claire off.

“Shin-hyuk, did you grow taller?”

“Hm?” In fact, he was about 1cm taller, but he couldn’t tell her, so he deflected the question.

“Why do you think something has changed?”

“You feel more mature...” Karen’s eyes narrowed sharply as she regarded Shin-hyuk.

“Are you ignoring my nervous system enhancing properties?! Obviously, there’s been a change!”

“Does that actually have anything to do with your trait?”

“Woman. It was a woman! That’s the only thing that can change a boy so suddenly!”

“...It was a woman.”

“Hah.” Karen burst into laughter at his honest answer. Shin-hyuk was quick to pinch her cheeks in punishment.

“Mercy...mercy...”

“You shouldn’t laugh at a broken heart.”

“No, it’s not because of that...” Karen patted her cheeks and continued.

“Your stock price is breaking through the roof. Your personality is good, and your face is handsome enough...what? You don’t believe me?”

“Not really.”

“It’s true! So, who is it?”

“Do you think I’d tell you?”

“No way...” She shook her head, mumbling in thought for a moment.

“It’s the Empress!”

“Never.” Kang Shin-hyuk asserted in a cold voice, and Karen nodded embarrassed.

“I felt she cared about you...”

“As I said before, it’s a normal relationship between a senior and a junior.”

“Who then? Is it Na-hee? Did you even have any contact with her in the first place?”

“That’s...” Kang Shin-hyuk hesitated at Lee Na-hee’s name appearing, and Karen opened her mouth in surprise.

“You do.”

“We’re in the same club.”

“So it really is her.” Karen’s eyes changed strangely as she said it was meaningless to hide the truth.

“Don’t listen to rumors. And it’s not her.”

“Then who the hell is it? Is it an outsider?”

“Yeah.”

“Ooh...anyway, I’m glad...” Kang Shin-hyuk turned away from her, and Karen puffed her cheeks out.

“I wasn’t laughing, by the way! I just thought it would be better if you dated someone from Shinyoung! Like our vice-captain!”

“I hate the thought of it.”

“You are really ruthless.” He knew that Karen was trying to match him with Eleanor, but for at least now, there was no time for him to like anyone else other than Claire.

“Besides, Eleanor doesn’t have the time to be leisurely meeting with a man.” Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh. She was from the British royal family, and she had just been inaugurated as the captain of the Wyvern Knights. She wouldn’t have enough space mentally to entertain the notion of a relationship. However, Karen thought differently.

"I rather think that at a time like this, it would be better to have someone capable and caring like Shin-hyuk."

"Isn't that just nonsense?"

"Huh!" Kang Shin-hyuk decided to punish her by continuing to pinch her cheeks.

\*\*\*

After school, Kang Shin-hyuk got away from Baek In-ha, who was clinging to him to go to the superhuman shopping mall, he went to his club room.

"A woman, huh?"

"How the hell do you know about it?!"

"I heard from Ellie." Kang Shin-hyuk soon realized that Ellie was Lee Na-hee's nickname for Eleanor, which meant that the two were close. No, before that, Karen had told Eleanor about it.

"There's no one in this world I can trust."

"I've never seen Ellie care about a boy. I was worried about her, especially after you joined..." She was a kind person who was concerned about her friend.

"My mentality's not that strong, so please go easy on me."

"I will, I'm sorry. The expression you're making is too funny, though." Kang Shin-hyuk put his bag down and sat down, looking at what Lee Na-hee was doing. She was dropping sugar cubes into a cup of black coffee.

"So, who is it?"

"Is it common to ask that even when you know you won't get an answer?" Kang Shin-hyuk removed his summer jacket and put on a work apron, looking over at Lee Na-hee, who was smiling at him. "Rather than that, work with me."

"Work? On what? We already submitted to the Artifact Contest."

"I want to make something regardless of that." His eyes sparkled.

“Maybe we can make something better.”

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“You can make whatever you want this time.” Like Kang Shin-hyuk, Lee Na-hee threw off her summer jacket and stretched. He felt like she was doing it on purpose, but he still couldn’t ignore the sight. Lee Na-hee ignored his gaze and continued.

“Don’t get me wrong. I heard about it from my grandfather last time. He said that we made the last one according to my will, so you couldn’t show your skills properly. This time, do whatever you want. I’ll match you.”

“Thank you for the suggestion...first, let’s check the materials.” Kang Shin-hyuk produced a lump of metal that had been refined in advance from his inventory. Among the metals obtained from Gromas, it was an A-rank metal with the second highest quality after benadelite called [Lightning Urot].

“What is that? Isn’t it an unconfirmed material?”

“It’s alright. I was lucky enough to get it inside the gate we practiced in.”

“That sounds like a lie.” Lee Na-hee clearly didn’t believe him, but she shrugged and let it go.

“We only have to make something good out of it.”

“Yes, but not for the contest.”

“Then, just purely because you want to make something with me?”

“That’s right.” Lee Na-hee wondered if he was trying to get over his heartbreak after being rejected.



“It may be because of that, but... I’ll trust you.”

“I’m sorry, senior, but are you going to keep talking about it?”

“Oh, it’s fun.” Lee Na-hee clapped her hands and then placed a roll of paper on the table. She stretched it out and motioned for Kang Shin-hyuk to come over.

“So? What’s that magic metal’s characteristics? I can’t read it with my abilities yet.”

“It’s simple, it just has an electric attribute.”

“The metal itself has that property?”

“Yes.” Metal with attributes was one of the highest quality materials for weapons. A weapon made out of it would become an elemental weapon even if forged by an amateur, and thus it had a high probability of becoming an artifact. Of course, it was usually very expensive, given its rarity. Lightning Urot was a metal that wasn’t originally present in Gromas. Rather, it was created through the changes in the world made after Shin Eunah accepted the benadelite and used her lightning to stop Jormungand. There wasn’t much created in that process, but he had mined what he could find.

“Hey, hey...” Lee Na-hee’s expression changed as she looked at the metal. She had been willing to help from the start, but now she was burning with passion.

“Let’s make it!”

“You sound so motivated now.”

“Ah, you noticed?” She didn’t have any intention of hiding her greed.

“But this time, I want to make something.”

“You really know how to get someone interested...!”

“I won’t be disappointed.”

“You want to do even more?!” Kang Shin-hyuk nodded. Lee Na-hee considered his words for a moment before clapping her hands.

“Okay, I’ll cooperate with your production activities in the future, so make me a weapon with the same materials before I graduate. How about it?”

“Sounds good.” He had already confirmed her abilities the last time they worked together. There were better enchanters than her, undoubtedly, but she was the only one who could spend this much time with him in the club and who went to the same school as him. If it meant continuing their partnership in the future, such a condition was easy enough to agree to.

“Then, the negotiations are concluded. You are the first to be able to indulge me. Isn’t it an honor?”

“It’s an honor...?” Kang Shin-hyuk shook his head with a sigh.

“So, what are you going to make?”

“Oh, yeah. I’ve been thinking about a lot of things, but I wanted to experiment.” He took the pen offered by Lee Na-hee and drew a line in the center of the blank paper. He could practically see the question mark floating over his partner’s head.

“What is it?”

“A thread. Of course, I’m not intending on making just a metal thread...”

“It’s fine if you make it, but...are you telling me to draw a magic circle on a thin thread?” Kang Shin-hyuk smiled and gave her the thumbs up. She looked like she wanted to break his thumb off.

“It doesn’t matter if we fail, I want to make it. Will you help?” Lee Na-hee wanted to quit, but his eyes remained serious. She let out a sigh and made up her mind, finally nodding.

“...Yes. So, what kind of thread do you want to make?”

“I don’t want anything complicated, for now...” The two started working on the blueprint together. Lee Manwoo arrived at the club a bit later, noticed them working, and quietly walked away.

*‘Maybe there is hope for our granddaughter.’* The old man’s plan for his ambitious granddaughter was underway, unaware of the conflict it would place her in with the Empress and the Alchemist.

\*\*\*

Shinyoung's practical training became even more difficult. Assignments began to steadily increase in their writing classes as the students realized that the previous week really was their last break.

"How does Kang Shin-hyuk run so fast...!"

"He's the Rookie King."

"Why are both Kang Shin-hyuk and Baek In-ha in my class...! Hey, slow down!" Kang Shin-hyuk was moving particularly quick in the day's training, as his status was already far beyond the level of a first-year. He had no struggles from the practical writing portion, either.

"Wow...Shin-hyuk, help...!"

"Ask in Korean."

"Mr. Kang, I am completely unsure of these assignments...!" Needless to say, Baek was at the top in the physical practice but was lagging behind in writing.

"Let's go play during the exam."

"It was an act. You've been preparing for the election, haven't you?" The student council election would be held at the end of the final exam, and he was planning on taking part in it.

"Hmm...okay, I'll help you."

"I love you!"

"If you say that again, you can kiss your royal class future goodbye."

"Sorry, Mr. Kang, I was wrong." If Baek became the vice president of the student council, Shin-hyuk's school life would become a little easier. With such a goal, he decided to help out a little bit with Baek's work. Of course, that didn't mean he could help him with the actual tests.

"Guys, they say there's a fight for 3rd class today."

"It's a way to relieve the stress of studying for exams against your classmates."

"If you lose, your score will be reduced." NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON novelFire.net

"It's the worst." The subject of the third class of the day was [Non-Skill Training 2]. That was the class Kang Shin-hyuk had defeated Do Woojin in before.

"Are you my partner today as well?"

"Won't you stick with me?" Baek In-ha lowered his voice and smiled at Kang Shin-hyuk.

"I know you're stronger. Isn't it worth testing with me now?"

"Well..." He knew Baek's words weren't wrong. If it was before Gromas, it would've been impossible, but now his status was above the average A-rank. Assuming their results from before hadn't changed, Baek was still one step ahead of him in agility, but Kang Shin-hyuk was a step ahead in strength. There was a big difference between A and S rank, but it might be doable. He could also boost his own agility with his spiritual power...which meant all that remained was magic power.

"I thought it would arrive someday, but not so quickly. How the hell did you grow so fast?"

"Well, maybe you can tell if you stick with me." A friendly tension arose between the two. At that moment, the bell sounded, indicating that five minutes of class time remained, and the two stood up as one.

"Shall we go?"

"Yeah."

"Hey, I think they're going to fight today."

"Oh!" The students in the class stood up as they saw the two burning with passion. The students followed after them, hoping to see the big match between them. However, their expectations were not to be fulfilled.

"Today, I will be seeking the help of the Magic Department seniors to test your abilities to cope with more diverse situations." Gong Joonpyo, the teacher in

charge, said so, but the students wondered what the hell he was talking about. There were magicians in school uniforms wearing black ties nearby.

“You will battle with your 3rd-year seniors and train in responding to magic. Thank you, 3rd years, for helping your juniors despite the final exams.”

“Oh, yes...yes...?” The teacher then led the students in clapping. Something didn’t feel quite right about the training.

“Shin-hyuk.” Baek jabbed him in the back.

“The Magic Crown is staring at you.”

“The Magic Crown?” Kang Shin-hyuk looked up, noticing a handsome blonde man staring at him.

“Are you the one who’s been flirting with my fiancée?” It was Nathan Bodin, the top student in the Magic Department. Kang Shin-hyuk strode forward, facing the man staring him down and feeling a sense of déjà vu.

“...Who’s your fiancée?”

“Lee Na-hee, 2nd year in K class.”

“I think you’re misunderstanding...of course, you won’t believe me either way.” Kang Shin-hyuk responded with a hesitant smile.

“Come on.” Nathan’s voice was dripping with arrogance.

“I’ll teach you some proper manners.”

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The Magic Crown, a 3rd year senior and one of Shinyoung’s strongest students, was provoking Kang Shin-hyuk. Although the 3rd years seemed to

have known this would happen in advance and were acting like it was normal, all of the 1st year C class students felt odd about the scene before them.

“Why is he doing that?”

“What is Kang Shin-hyuk doing?”

“His fiancée?” In the past, it was neatly ignored when people would go against Kang Shin-hyuk, but now it was different. It was the result of his new social life and the power of his allies. As the 1st-years began to gossip and look at them strangely, Nathan coughed as he realized his behavior was strange.

“We’ll start the duel. Come on.” Without any further explanation, he entered the battlefield and beckoned for Kang Shin-hyuk to join him. It was absurd, but it was clear the teacher was going to play along with it, at least for now.

“Baek, do you have any advice?”

“Yeah.” Baek had been sizing Nathan Bodin up from the second he locked onto Kang Shin-hyuk. He nodded, satisfied with Kang Shin-hyuk’s resolve.

“The most irritating thing is that kids trait [Magic Interference]. It allows him to interfere with magic outside of the body, but it can also disperse and neutralize his opponent’s internal magic.”

“You were hit by that?”

“If only I had a plus to my magic rank...” Dispersing the target’s magical power. It was a terrifying ability, although it probably wasn’t effective against opponents who had stronger magical power than him, which was how he took out Baek. It wasn’t a joke when he said if he only had a +, he would’ve been able to win; he had magical power on par with the best 3rd-year magician.

“But you don’t have magic power. The first thing you need to watch out for is gravity magic, which is probably born from his trait. It’s tricky to avoid, as it crushes anything within a certain range instantly. I had no choice but to avoid it by watching the flow of magic.”

“So, it’s avoidable.”

“The second is a tremendous magic fire born purely from his sheer power. It is designed to be used on a large scale, so you don’t need to worry about it in a duel.”

“That would be dangerous.”

“Will you not come out? I understand you’re scared, but it’s class time now. Try to understand the heart of your senior who deliberately set aside time for you.” At that, Gong Joonpyo began to rush Shin-hyuk. Kang Shin-hyuk grabbed a wooden training sword, readying himself mentally. It was a normal duel, so neither of them would be wearing artifacts. That would prove favorable for him.

“I was preparing my mind to face the Magic Crown.” Kang Shin-hyuk retorted at his teacher, who had brought the 3rd year to bully the 1st year. A barrier was activated to prevent them from being hurt.

“I expected you to run away, but I’m glad I won’t need to chase you down.”NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

“That is fortunate. I don’t want to make a hobby out of being stalked.”

“There’s nothing about you that seems like a Rookie King. Just a bit of martial art skills, but no pedigree or patron...such trash dare touches my fiancée.”

“Does that fiancée know that you call her that?” The question was born of pure curiosity, but Nathan Bodin was struck speechless. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a regretful sigh. It would be more constructive to spend your time finding a different way to approach her instead of trampling on a man she knew.

“If you had a good relationship with Lee Na-hee, you would’ve heard there’s nothing going on between us. Don’t you think you’re being a nuisance to her by calling her your fiancée?”

“Uh...anyway, she will be mine someday! What’s wrong with setting the title a bit in advance?!”

“Wow...” Why were the boys in this school like this when it came to love? No matter how strong they were as superhumans, they weren’t adults yet. That was why they had to be in school, although it seemed to be useless when you looked at this guy.

*'The Knight Crown was better than this. He was wrong in the way he expressed himself, but he didn't want to cause any harm.'* Of course, he had also been a nuisance to Kang Shin-hyuk and Eleanor. On the other hand, however, this guy treated Lee Na-hee like she was his fiancée from the start and was bothering Kang Shin-hyuk, who just happened to be in the same club.

"Then the duel will start now."

"Ha!" Nathan created countless arrows in the air without any preparation as soon as the duel started. Even Yuta Mitsui, whom he fought in the rookie matches, couldn't hold a candle to him. The power in each one of them was enough to eradicate a D-rank monster instantly. No wonder he was the peak of the Magic Department.

*'But...'* The duel was advantageous to Shin-hyuk from the start. Now that he had refined his technique of dispersing magic through that divine sword dance, he held a powerful card against wizards that wasn't subject to interference. That only left one avenue for Nathan to defeat him – gravity magic. He had to be careful of that.

*'My reflexes and speed won't be enough. If so...'* His eyes flashed golden as he watched the hundreds of magic arrows fly toward him with enough force to smash the battlefield. He rushed forward in a straight line, brandishing the wooden sword.

"Ha." Nathan Bodin mocked him with a laugh, watching him recklessly charge. No doubt, he was comparing Shin-hyuk with Baek at that moment. Baek had rushed him the exact same way, avoiding all of the magic arrows and even a direct hit from his gravity magic. Of course, Kang Shin-hyuk wasn't as fast as Baek. He could see that in an instant.

"Ha!" Kang Shin-hyuk's sword cut through all of the magic arrows in front of him as he rushed for Nathan. Even the arrows nearby that weren't directly in the way of the sword were extinguished. Dozens more aimed for his back, but Shin-hyuk was prepared for that and dealt with it easily. That was what Nathan had been waiting for.

*'Nowhere to run!'* Nathan Bodin fired off more arrows as he activated the magic he was chanting. It was highly destructive magic that turned the floor into rocky thorns that pierced upward. It took a while to activate, but it did immense damage once it connected. However, the build-up for it was quite



noticeable, and as an extension, if you had a good eye, you could avoid it. Therefore, it was common practice to use it after restraining the target. Otherwise, you could purposely force your opponent to move by activating it.

*'You can't escape in the air!'* The moment Shin-hyuk floated into the air, Nathan activated his gravity magic. Shin-hyuk would get stuck in it, forcibly driven to the rocky thorns below. True to his title, the Magic Crown was chanting two high-ranking magic spells simultaneously to activate at different moments. It was a tremendous ability, but unfortunately, he had no chance to show it off.

"Kh!" This was because Kang Shin-hyuk broke through the thorns rising up from the arena and ran towards him. It was so fast that Nathan couldn't grasp what had happened. Even though he knew Shin-hyuk had the ability to disperse magic, he couldn't imagine he would be able to break through top-level magic.

"Crazy, he broke through!"

"The ground spikes of the Magic Crown!"

"It's too fast. I can't see his sword...!"

Of course, it wasn't that simple for Kang Shin-hyuk. If it weren't for his B+ rank regeneration, he wouldn't have tried it. He imbued all his spiritual power into his wooden sword, backed by his trait to raise its performance beyond the limit. He backed that up with his muscles powered by his regeneration.

*'I can't keep this up...but it's okay!'* Kang Shin-hyuk hit the floor, reducing the distance between him and Nathan to less than one meter. Nathan's gravitational magic was incredible, but the range was limited to the area specified, so it was hard to readjust at the moment. Nathan tried to disperse Kang Shin-hyuk's power with his trait [Magic Interference] but soon realized that Shin-hyuk had no magic power.

"Huh?! Kahak!" As Nathan missed his chance to counterattack, Kang Shin-hyuk's wooden sword fell with enough force to split his skull. Of course, Nathan had the magic barrier to protect his body, but he was still hit in the head with a great force.

"Kh!" The Magic Crown crumpled with a groan, and Kang Shin-hyuk followed up his sword strike with a swift kick that propelled Nathan out of the arena. It

wasn't intentional, but rather he moved instinctively in case he was pretending to be defeated. That appeared not to be the case, however, as he slid outside of the arena.

"...Huh?"

"Yes?" The duel had taken less than a minute. Everyone watching questioned their eyes. He had defeated the Magic Crown, one of the most talented students in Shinyoung, the head of the Magic Department. However, now he was passed out on the ground.

"No, what kind of...!" Gong Joonpyo muttered in thought. He had a similar expression on his face when he watched Do Woojin lose in the previous fight. Kang Shin-hyuk didn't notice any of it, however, as he watched the fainted Nathan Bodin.

*'What was that? It was clear what he was trying to do...and the movement of his magic was so clear I just moved instinctively.'* Kang Shin-hyuk had yet to realize his own growth, as he had been comparing himself to two high-rankers in Gromas for the past two months.

-Your spiritual power increased to the A+ rank. You've learned about the potential abilities hidden in your soul.

Of course, that wasn't the only reason he was able to read his opponent's movements so easily...but he had no way to know that.

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The rumors that Kang Shin-hyuk had demolished the Magic Crown in a duel quickly spread through the school. It spread so badly that if Kang Shin-hyuk had been in Nathan Bodin's position, he would've dropped out. Of course, Shin-hyuk's popularity was ascending with enough speed to pierce the sky. It had done wonders to boost the entire Knight Department as well, putting them

above the Magic Department. Douglas Payne, the Knight Crown, who had a favorable opinion of him after the advice he had received, even sent him a message saying well done. However, he had no memory of telling Douglas his email address.

There was one other person who was elated at the fact that Kang Shin-hyuk defeated the Magic Crown.

“Whoahahahahahaha!”

“It’s the first time I’ve seen someone laugh so intensely, senior.” Lee Na-hee was doubled over the desk in the club room, laughing hard enough to start crying. The image he had of her so far was completely destroyed.

“I, Nathan Bodin, was defeated by being clubbed in the head with a wooden sword! Hahaha!”

“What should I do...?” Seeing Lee Na-hee laugh so hard confirmed that she wasn’t, in fact, Nathan’s fiancée. As soon as he brought that up, her smile vanished from her face without a trace.

“Listen. Who would like such a guy?”

“He did accuse me...”

“Are all men like that? Clinging so annoyingly and pretending to be my boyfriend. A fiancée? What? I told him not to talk to me, and he was doing that behind my back?”

“I’m guessing that he was mistaken that he could have everything he wanted because of his power. But to be sure, guys like that aren’t common.” Lee Na-hee shrugged in response with a strange expression.

“I’m originally from an all-girl middle school. It’s only after entering Shinyoung have I gotten any experience with guys.”

“Oh.”

“You know Jihwa Girls’ Middle School in Seoul? I’m from there.”

“...Jihwa Girls’ Middle School? Isn’t that a private middle school?” From what he knew, it was a private school that allowed only exceptional students born to exceptional families. Most of their graduates ended up in places like

Shinyoung. There were similar private schools for men, but Kang Shin-hyuk had no experience with them being an orphan.

“...Are you actually a rich daughter?” No, if you thought about it, wasn’t that natural for the granddaughter of the Great Chief? Still, it must mean that both her parents must be incredible superhumans as well.

“Well...something like that.” However, Lee Na-hee, who had been speaking energetically, suddenly closed her mouth at his question. Watching her face distort, he realized it would be best not to ask any questions about her family.

“But anyway, there was no problem with that senior.”

“Don’t lie. I hear you smacked him in the head then kicked him.” In the end, they had to mobilize Shinyoung’s world-class treatment facilities for the Magic Crown, but he was so hurt he couldn’t attend school for three days. However, it was officially done in a duel, and the 3rd year was taken down without any handicaps by a 1st-year.

“Actually, I could’ve fit in eighteen more combos in the meantime.”

“How’d you win so easily? Your opponent was the Magic Crown.”

“Would you believe me if I was honest?”

“Yes, though I might not understand it.” Lee Na-hee looked at him silently. As he caught her gaze, she tilted her head in concern.

“You’re in good condition, with good abilities and excellent metallurgy. Now you’re even handsome.”

“That’s just flattery.”

“No, it was just my sincere judgment. You’ll become very annoying in the future. All the women will run up to try and catch you.”

“Like how the Magic Crown bothered you?” She nodded frowning.

“This school...it’s like a paradise for beasts in human skin. They’re supposed to be building their strength to fight monsters, but all of them are immersed in useless things.” Kang Shin-hyuk didn’t disagree with her, having thought similarly to the school. In Shinyoung, power was revealed physically, and as the students were young, they couldn’t skillfully hide their desires.

"The same goes for popular voting. Why does that even matter for a school that raises superhumans? Because of that last year, Nathan Bodin began to chase me in earnest, and this year..."

"Senior, please calm down." It was clear that she wasn't happy about winning the top vote for the past two years in a row.

"He won't be able to do so in the future."

"I'm glad then...anyway, I apologize for the trouble." Lee Na-hee brushed off her clothes and bowed her head to Kang Shin-hyuk. He decided to ask her something that was worrying him.

"Do you know why Nathan Bodin came at me this time?" He gave her a brief rundown on what he had said to him, as Lee Na-hee seemed to be genuinely sorrowful about it. His eyes narrowed as she confessed what had happened.

"Well, I jokingly told my classmates that I had a junior who pampered me..."

"I see!" At least 50% of it was her fault! Because she had said it so provocatively, Nathan had come to hate him!

"No, I was just talking to my class friends! Besides, you can pamper me as much as you want..."

"Reflect on it."

"Yes, I will reflect on my actions. Sorry..." Lee Na-hee had no choice but to back down against Kang Shin-hyuk, who had access to materials she wanted.

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Time passed quickly as Shinyoung's trials continued. At the same time, election activities were beginning to take place. Baek, who was participating in that as well as preparing for exams, was looking more and more exhausted each day.

"No matter how I look at it, you seem to be the worst off. Are there any problems with the election itself?"

"I just need to back the president, so I don't need to bother with all the public stuff..."

"That's not what I meant." The most important position in the election was the president. The rest of the executives were determined by the president.

"Cheer up. Tell me if there's anything I can do to help."

"Please introduce me to a woman."

"Do that by yourself." Baek In-ha stretched his arms out with a resentful expression to grab onto Kang Shin-hyuk and shake him.

"You! I'm also close with the Empress! You're also hanging out with Algiers, and Lee Na-hee alone in the club?! Are you kidding? Switch with me! SWITCH WITH ME!"

"Because of that, Baek, you're not popular..." Kang Shin-hyuk stared at Baek, who was shaking him with a sad expression. Baek looked embarrassed at his serious mood and backed off.

"No, I wasn't really angry...Shin-hyuk?"

"I'm not angry, I just had an idea." Kang Shin-hyuk recalled his conversation with Lee Na-hee the day before, about the popularity vote.

*'What about Baek...?'* Baek was a handsome man, with considerable ability. But now his popularity had hit rock bottom, as every time he opened his mouth, it would drop. Was that what he had intended from the start? Did he reduce people's opinion of him so he could move around easier?

*'It's something he would do.'* Kang Shin-hyuk looked at Baek with astonishment he couldn't hide. It would be great if that were his plan from the start. He would have to re-evaluate him. The source of this content is [NovelFire.net](http://NovelFire.net)

"You..."

"No, I won't tell you to introduce a girl to me now!" Baek drew close to Shin-hyuk, lowering his voice.

"So..." It might've been the first time he heard Baek being sincere.

"After the exams, let's go hunting for a sister of my own, eh? Ouch!"

"..." Without a word, Kang Shin-hyuk reached out and slapped Baek.

A week later, the final exams began.

Kang Shin-hyuk passed his writing classes with ease. All that was left for him was the official battle that awaited him in the practical exam.

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-The duel is over. First-year C Class student Kang Shin-hyuk is victorious and has earned additional points.

Kang Shin-hyuk hefted his wooden training sword as the broadcast sounded out in the second gymnasium. On the other side of him was a student from the Magic Department, who collapsed on the ground. He soon stood up and left with tears in his eyes.

“He could’ve said we fought hard.”

-That’s a funny joke, member.

“Yeah.” The Knight Department had won both the Rookie of the Year and the Two Crowns during the sports competition, causing the Magic Department to suffer great shame. That had ignited a competitive spirit in them for the final exams. They came out swinging against the Knight Department, with enough force that some of the students in the Knight Department couldn’t even demonstrate their abilities.

“But what should I say...no, it sounds too cocky, so I’ll stay quiet.”

-It was a clumsy attempt.

Kang Shin-hyuk nodded at the administrator’s words, in complete agreement. Because of the Hero Universe, Kang Shin-hyuk had a wealth of experience now that his peers lacked. Now he could easily deal with enemies that had lost their cool, no matter how vehemently they attacked him.

“Not that I’m really any different, but I’m acting all proud.”

-2,000HP bonus for shy members!

“I’ll accept it for now, but I will continue to devote myself to growing stronger...”

-3,000HP bonus!

Sooner or later, it seemed like these bonuses would exceed 10,000 HP. He was beginning to grow concerned for the balance of the Hero Universe. Kang Shin-hyuk returned his wooden sword and left the battlefield. Since all five of his battles had ended in victory, his ranking would increase. He felt like he might even receive some additional points.

*‘I think this will make up for my grade during midterms.’* Now that he had acquired the title of Rookie King and entered the Royal Class, it wasn’t actually something he needed to worry about. But he was the type to give it his all no matter what. Besides, it could only help him in the future if he continued to build his position.

-Is that the end of the exams?

“Yeah, I’m free.” The next semester would be busy with gate practice and events like school festivals and exchange meetings, so he planned on relaxing a bit. The only thing left was the student council election, then a month and a half of summer vacation awaited him.

*‘I don’t know if Baek is doing well.’* After the exam, Baek had said he was heading off to a hunting trip. Kang Shin-hyuk felt a bit alienated from him, but he had his own secrets to keep from him so he couldn’t judge.

*‘When we’re both free, we should go play somewhere.’* Kang Shin-hyuk headed straight to the Blackwood Training Center once the teachers dismissed him. Eleanor had asked him to talk to her, but he was too busy with exams to find time sooner. He was hoping to battle her again, so there was no reason for him to refuse.

“Hello, Shin-hyuk.”



“Hello, senior.” Eleanor had arrived just before him and was already drinking tea with a pleased expression. He didn’t see Karen anywhere; she probably hadn’t finished her own exams yet.

“Congratulations on your victory.”

“It just concluded.”

“Huh...the updates are in real-time.” Eleanor let out a short laugh at Kang Shin-hyuk, tilting his head. He looked at his stick; a hologram popped out from it with a page listing names.

“Is this the 1st year ranking?”

“It was updated after the matches. You’re sixth.” Eleanor idly thought out loud that maybe in the next exam, he would contend with the top five students. Yuta Mitsu’s name was up there, who was his opponent in the final match.

“Karen’s not there.”

“She’s still fighting. Oh, now they’re concluded. She’s in seventh, so I’ll have to congratulate her.” Karen was seventh now. Even if she had entered the royal class using her connections, she still had the skills appropriate for that position.

“Do Woojin...if he wins against his opponent...”

“He’s in fourth place.”

“I guess he won.” Do Woojin was ranked fourth. He had a high ranking from the start, so he had been matched against other high-rankers.

“I’m envious.”

“Hah.”

“Why are you laughing?” Eleanor burst into laughter at Kang Shin-hyuk’s idle thoughts. As he looked back at her with a puzzled expression, she stared back at him.

“You’re paying attention to the freshman rankings at your level.”

“That’s, but...” In fact, the only other freshman who could properly fight Kang Shin-hyuk was Baek In-ha. No, even if you expanded that to the whole school, there were only a few students who could.

“Always keep your vision wide.” Eleanor spoke quietly as she met his eyes. They were filled with a resolve that made her seem bigger than she was.

“It’s a waste of time to compare yourself to the students at this school. You can look further beyond and move.”

“Are you doing that too?” She laughed quietly. He didn’t think he needed to ask. Her abilities had been at the top of the school long before she became the captain.

“Thank you for the advice, senior Eleanor.” Kang Shin-hyuk finally nodded.

“Well, I have a suggestion...”

“Yeah?” It was then she suddenly avoided his gaze and drew in a long breath.

“Would you like to accompany me on vacation? Dungeon exploration, that is.”

“Dungeon? Did you get permission?”

“The school has given the Wyvern Knights some discretion for their training...we can make a reservation right away.”

“What about the others?”

“It would be nice if they joined, but they are weaker than us. We will be alone.” What about the Knight Crown? He was stronger than anyone else in the school, but he knew it would be rude to ask. It wasn’t like he liked him either.

“Uh...no, wait. Just us?”

“It is a great opportunity...personally, I want to fight together with you.”

“You’re speaking quite blatantly again.” Kang Shin-hyuk had been the one who told her she should gather her forces inside the school. She had even asked him if he could be on her side. He had thought he had refused firmly at the time, but now...it was the chance at a dungeon with Eleanor. He planned to work with Shin Eunah over the vacation, but she couldn’t always be there.

Moreover, exploring dungeons with other types of fighters would be a valuable experience for him.

“It’s a good opportunity, so I’d appreciate it.”

“Good.” Eleanor squeezed her small fists, letting out a quiet shout.

“But isn’t it a problem if we enter the dungeon alone?”

“Believe.”

“Well, it’s not a problem of believing...”

“Believe.” Kang Shin-hyuk was pushed by her firm voice and eventually nodded along.

-Fox...The latest\_episodes are on\_the NovelFire.net

He also decided to pretend like he didn’t see the administrator’s message appearing right in front of his eyes.

\*\*\*

“Oh.” It was afternoon now. Lee Na-hee was listening to Kang Shin-hyuk as she chewed on sugar cubes.

“That’s our Ellie.”

“I think you might be misunderstanding.” Lee Na-hee had a close relationship with Eleanor, but she might’ve not grasped her true identity. If she had, she would have realized the reason Eleanor had offered for him to join in the dungeon exploration. However, Lee Na-hee pushed on as if she wasn’t interested in what he was thinking.

“Dating, at night, all alone in the dungeon? She’s practically begging you.”

“Senior, hasn’t your personality changed a lot?” In the first place, did she always have such an uncle-like personality? Lee Na-hee clicked her tongue and threateningly gestured at him.

“It’s because I was uncomfortable back then. Things have improved a little now.”

“That’s not helping it.” With a sigh, Kang Shin-hyuk hung up his jacket.

“I’m not talking about that kind of stuff.”

“Junior, you should be careful with her. Don’t rush in just because she wants you to.”

“I know, don’t worry.” Kang Shin-hyuk responded politely as he opened the door to the club.

“Let’s finish it today.”

“Okay. Oh, before that.”

“Hm?”

“The artifact contest.” Lee Na-hee put her stick in front of his face. A message with the date of the contest was displayed on it.

“This Friday? That soon?!”

“Yup. They’ll announce the grand prize then too.”

“You’re acting like it’s natural.”

“Of course. But it’s a waste we couldn’t submit what we’re working on now.”

“We don’t even know if it’ll turn out good.”

“A waste, a waste…” She grumbled as they entered the workshop. In front of them were tens of meters of a long, translucent metallic thread. A very small magic circle was engraved across it, so thin that it was difficult to see with the naked eye. Imbued inside of it was a sharply refined magical power and a warm spiritual power.

Only one step remained until the completion of Kang Shin-hyuk’s new armament.

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The metal thread shimmered with a translucent golden color. Kang Shin-hyuk was carefully stretching it out with his tongs to process it with a polishing tool carefully. They were working with a concentration so intense that they were barely breathing. Now all that remained was the finishing touches.

“Hey junior, praise me. Quickly praise this genius’s magic circle creation ability.”

“Wouldn’t it be better to praise my processing power above that?” The two young craftsmen fussed with each other as they reached the end of their work. If Lee Manwoo were there, they would’ve been too embarrassed to talk so candidly, but these days he hadn’t been showing up out of consideration for them.

“Apart from the processing ability... you’ve changed a lot in the short time since you’ve made that sword.”

“How so?”

“The second collaboration feels more comfortable?” Perhaps that was because Kang Shin-hyuk wasn’t focused on accommodating Le Na-hee anymore.

“Yes, your expression has improved. It was a woman, after all...” New novel chapters are published on [novel\(F\)ire.net](http://novel(F)ire.net)

“Do you really want to fight?”

“I’m joking.” The conversation between the two had also become smoother, not just their work together. But he did really wish she would stop making fun of him. Kang Shin-hyuk stood back up after their break, stretching out.

“Let’s get back to it. I want to finish up quickly.”

“Okay~” Lee Na-hee yawned, taking out a can of coffee from the club fridge. She took a sip before taking out several sugar cubes from a box on the desk,

chewing on them one at a time. It was a peculiar sight, although one he was getting used to.

“Why don’t you add it to the coffee from the start?”

“It’s different.”

“Is it...?” He laughed off her response and entered the workshop. He placed the objects they had made on the workbench. The first was a black glove with metallic trinkets attached to it. If the metal thread they made were like a bullet, this glove could be called the gun. Each metal thread was ejected through a small hole in the tip of the glove fingers, and by touching buttons on the joints of the glove, it was possible to perform more complex operations like pulling the thread back or changing directions.

“How’d you come up with this?”

“Just look at comics. There are tons of people who can manipulate threads to cut through their enemies.”

“Wow, an otaku...”

“I just looked at that for reference. This should be a bit more manageable.” To be specific, the design had been taken from a comic called the Death Doll Company Dark Spider, which he had burned two years ago. There were many other weapon designs in there, like the God-King Sword or the Heaven-Hell Break Hammer, but most of them would remain quietly asleep without ever seeing the light.

“It’s easy to handle...I think it’s great, but it’s more like art.” Lee Na-hee examined the gloves seriously.

“It can be used to fight monsters, and even defeat them. But it’s a work of art that can’t be properly utilized without a specific trait or ability. It’s fun, for sure, and unique...but can it really be used?” It was an important point to consider, but Kang Shin-hyuk could only laugh.

“You don’t know my traits in detail.”

“Does this support your traits?” Lee Na-hee tilted her head as if it asks, ‘Is shooting a thread a martial art?’ While his Dragon’s Fan Dance would

certainly be helpful in using it, that wasn't quite what he was thinking. Kang Shin-hyuk raised his tongs with a sly expression.

"Let's complete it, then I'll demonstrate it later."

"Alright, then..." She wasn't convinced, but she nodded. She couldn't understand its potential as a weapon, but she still acknowledged it was a great piece of work.

"Don't waste any..."

"We calculated this from the start." The last task was to cut the finished 100m long metal thread into five 20m parts that could shoot out from the glove. They would be stored in a combat case that was larger internally so that the thread could be stored without any problems. By attaching that case to the forearm and connecting it to the glove, the glove could fire the thread through the fingertips at any time. The work was completed once Lee Na-hee carved the final magic circle into the glove. At that moment, a message appeared in front of both of them at once.

-You've succeeded in creating [Lightning Spider Web (A-)] using both mana and spiritual power. Your proficiency with metallurgy has greatly increased.

-You've succeeded in creating [Lightning Cobweb (B)] with both mana and spiritual power. Your proficiency with metallurgy has increased.

-Synchronization has increased—current rate of 23.2%.

Kang Shin-hyuk let out a deep sigh. The spider web referred to the metal thread they made using the Lightning Urot, and the cobweb referred to the glove itself. He thought the rank might be lower because it was made with leather she had brought as the main material.

"I thought it was just cowhide."

"It was from a lesser gorgon."

"Lesser gorgon?!" Lesser was the name given to monsters that were of a lower class of their species. A lesser gorgon was a lower class of Gorgon, a bull monster that was at least S rank. It was a terrible monster that spewed a petrifying gas out of its massive metal body. The lower class had less power

than a proper one, but it was still of good enough quality to ensure a B-rank artifact.

“I had nothing to worry about.”

“That’s why you should collaborate with me.”

“Alright.” She said it was just lying about the house. Did she really have such a thing just laying about? Her parents must be incredible, but he couldn’t bring that up. Lee Na-hee was focused on the artifacts they created, unaware of his internal struggles. He decided to examine them himself as well.

[Lightning cobweb]

[B rank]

[Special Abilities: Acceleration, Hardening]

\*Acceleration: Speeds up the ejection and recovery speed of the thread.

\* Hardening: Increases the hardness and binding force of the thread.

Honestly, he hadn’t been expecting much for the gloves. They were to handle the thread, and he had created them with the vague thought that it would be nice if they were strong. But they had ended up with a useful power that enhanced the ability of the thread. On the other hand, acceleration was probably from Lee Na-hee. She didn’t understand the concept behind the gloves, so she had just desired that the gloves would be easier to use.

“Senior, look at this too. It came out better than expected.”

“It’s B-rank. It’s a great thing to carry even for an active superhuman.” Unlike last time, when he had made the B-rank sword, he was more content with the end product this time.

“Look...it has a special ability.” Lee Na-hee let out a cry of excitement as she examined the thread.

“It’s crazy...” She handed the [Lightning Spider Web (A-)] over to him. Intrigued by her expression of joy, he confirmed the status of it himself. His expression soon mirrored hers.

[Lightning spider web]



[A-rank]

[Special Abilities: Lightning Stroke, Lightning Warfare, Wishful]

\*Lightning Stroke: At the user's will, the power of lightning can be added to the thread.

\*Lightning Warfare: The speed of the thread doubles when lightning is added to it.

\*Wishful: Spirit or mana can be injected to lengthen or shorten the length of the thread. The weight can also be adjusted.

"Oh..."

"Isn't it great?"

"It's amazing..." He had just thought it would be nice if it had the power of lightning. He thought that would be possible with his current abilities. But he had gone above that, thanks to his cooperation with Lee Na-hee.

"I was expecting it because it's A-rank, but this much is incredible."

"Three special abilities...and two of them enhance its lightning properties!" Lee Na-hee became excited when it came to artifacts.

"But this last one...maybe by studying it, we can reproduce one of the legendary artifacts. My enchantment and your ability has such an absurd possibility..." Kang Shin-hyuk understood why she was excited; he could feel it too. This was the first time he had made an artifact with three special abilities.

"But, I wish I could make a staff or sword with this instead!"

"Well, I can handle this properly." Kang Shin-hyuk put the thread in the case and attached it to his forearm, putting on the glove afterward. It was light enough that it could be concealed in a coat.

"I'll try it now."

"It's dangerous, so point it away from me." Kang Shin-hyuk turned the glove around, checking to make sure his trait was applying to it. Once he confirmed it, there was no problem with the rest.

“Then...” Kang Shin-hyuk snapped his fingers with a loud popping sound. His jacket, which was across the room, was now wrapped in a translucent golden thread. He lifted his index finger, and it quickly flew toward him.

“Ah?!” Lee Na-hee let out a loud scream, unable to deny what she witnessed with her own eyes. She rushed over to him to check the jacket he had caught. The thread was already retreating back into the glove, not a trace on the jacket itself.

“How’d you do it?!”

“This is fun. I can move it at will, so next time I can check the multi-management and attack capabilities.”

“So how’d you do it?!” From the start, it was manufactured to be a tool to assist Kang Shin-hyuk’s mobility and power, but it was also possible to use it for more delicate operations. Maybe that was thanks to its third special ability. Kang Shin-hyuk stood up with a satisfied look.

“Thank you for helping me, senior. Thanks to you, I made a good weapon.”

“That’s it, so let me know in detail how you handled it...!”

“Then I’ll go. Actually, I have something to do.”

“Tell me!” Kang Shin-hyuk stood up and ignored Lee Na-hee, whose eyes were sparkling.

His weapon was finally complete.

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A blacksmith all alone in a shelter somewhere in the perished world was pounding metal today as well.

-Janus's whisper: Where do you work, Anvil Grandpa?

-In my workshop.

-Janus's whisper: Oh, I see! Please tell me what your studio looks like!

-Don't act like you haven't heard.

The blacksmith laughed unintentionally at the bright tone of his friend, who was always cheery despite knowing his situation. He didn't usually look around as if he only brought back to mind the reality of his situation, but now he could look at his work studio with a lighter mind.

-This place...the only light it has aside from the furnace is a lamp. It gets dark when the furnace goes cold.

-Janus's whisper: Except when you sleep, I'm sure that you always have it burning since you're always working.

-Noisy. Anyway, it's big. The floor and walls are gray...although there are some bloodstains in several places.

-Janus's whisper: It would've been better not to list that.

There was a time he had to swallow back tears each time he reminisced about the blood on the walls, but now he was able to take it in stride. He was tired of crying.

-And... There's a desk and a bed.

-Janus's whisper: In your studio?

-I stay and eat here, as well.

-Janus's whisper: Huh, that's almost kind of cool.

-I had canned food piled up here before, but now I buy my meals from the transaction board.

-Janus's whisper: Grandpa...we'll go out and eat some delicious food, so reach VIP quickly, okay?

-You guys spoil me.

Coincidentally, on that same day, another member who liked him somewhat excessively also reached out to him.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: I hope you become a VIP. We could spend all day together, and I could hold you in my arms!

-After my wife's death, I pledged not to be with another woman.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: Ah, somehow it's a dignity like a lion...! I want to meet you soon.

-You still don't listen to me properly.

The two discussed his life as a blacksmith, much like he had with Janus.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: I'm confident in my cooking. I can't let you, my beloved, fill your stomach with weird things. On the day you become a VIP, I will help you find a proper meal.

-Fox.

After Tsukuyo's affection-filled message, a smaller one flashed before him, too quick to notice.

-Tsukuyo's whisper: There are so many things I want to do for you! I'm confident in my cooking, but I also have some good knowledge of tea. I even make my own refreshments to go with it. There's this one called yokan.

-Yokan? I haven't heard of it.[READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT NO\(V\)elFire.net](http://NO(V)elFire.net)

-Tsukuyo's whisper: It takes two days to make, but it's very delicious. The day you become a VIP, let's drink tea together with my homemade yokan.

-Thank you, but as I said, I made a vow...

-Tsukuyo's whisper: I can't wait.

-...

The blacksmith was stunned into silence. This person wasn't listening to anything he said. However, he couldn't say anything against it.

-...Yes, please do.

-Tsukuyo's whisper:...Yes.

She responded with a message that was trembling with her feelings.

\*\*\*

-Entering My Room. The ratio of time to Earth has been adjusted to 1 to 2. The amount of time you can stay is five hours a day, and it is possible to stay longer by consuming HP.

"Wow, it's definitely similar." Kang Shin-hyuk sat down on the floor, recalling his dream from earlier that day. Perhaps it was because of his increasing synchronization that his dream had been about Anvil's home.

"The wall and the lamp are exactly the same..." Kang Shin-hyuk realized he had been Anvil in his dream earlier as he watched the cold furnace begin to heat up. He had been able to bring in the furnace and anvil from his past life's workshop after completing his last dimensional quest.

"It said one to two."

-With the third liberation, the rate will further increase.

It was just like it had been in the other dimensions. Given that he would only age at the rate of Earth's time, it would be stupid not to use it as much as possible.

"Now if only it had a fitness facility."

-After restoring your previous life's workshops, I will bring one in.

The administrator happily nodded at his words. A strict blacksmith would never allow one to lift weights in their workshop, but it was fine for Shin-hyuk.

-But you probably don't want to train right now.

"Absolutely." That could be done with Shinyoung's facilities. No, he had already done his training for the day. Now he was focused on making a product that would be a brother to the one he made with Lee Na-hee.

"I wasn't confident until now..." He began to produce the materials he had gathered from the spider queen. He had thought of making the metal thread because of his encounter with the spiders. That lightning web had been

created due to that idle thought, though he had no idea the results would be so good.

-It wasn't possible to check its information before.

"I didn't have an emotion skill then." But now it was different. His training in Gromas proved fruitful, and now he had an A-rank emotion skill.

[Venom Princess Spider's Thread]

[A+ rank]

[A thread gland that can produce a vast amount of spider web. It is dangerous to handle, as it is toxic.]

[Venom Princess Spider's Spinneret]

[A rank]

[An organ that emits and manipulates the spider web. Even when re-attached, it cannot be used. This can be fixed by re-establishing a connection in another form, but a separate spider web is necessary.]

"Not a queen, but a princess?!"

-Really, it doesn't matter. However, a 500HP bonus for your show of surprise!

"Why?!" Wasn't that just spoiling him? Besides, this item was already plenty of value.

-It is a valuable by-product, but not everyone can capture its abilities. This was likely due to the special circumstances behind its birth.

It had been some odd circumstances. He wondered if he should combine the Shinfeng orb with the items, but fortunately, he didn't need to. The spider princess had left one other material.

[Venom Princess Spider's Manastone]

[S-rank]

[The source and core of a powerful organism. This mana stone emits magical power different from a normal mana stone.]

That was the spider's mana stone, which had been energized by half of that orb. Which meant it was imbued with spiritual power.

"I kind of wish it would've been a skill stone."

-True, a thread production skill would've been useful. Maybe if it came out from your wrist...

"...No, never mind." Kang Shin-hyuk gently withdrew his complaints. It was good enough that he could use this gemstone to make a powerful artifact. He was planning on trying Mana Craft for the first time in his life. No, rather, perhaps it was Soul Craft.

-It's not the first time. You restored the Shinfeng orb before, as well as the Heavenly Spirit. Those clearly went into the realm of All Craft.

"That just because I was desperate, I didn't intend to do it. But now I have a clear goal in mind." The administrator had told him that he, in his past life, had reached the realm of All Craft with only his metallurgy. But that wasn't him. If it weren't for his experiences in Gromas, he would've never considered processing these materials.

-Do you have some more confidence now?

"No, not quite...but I want to try it." At Gromas, he had learned that was enough.

-2,00HP bonus!

"Thank you." Kang Shin-hyuk readied himself. He put the thread, spinneret, and magic stone before him as he concentrated quietly. He was trying to replicate that feeling he had when he created the Great Heavenly Spirit before. That image of placing materials on an imaginary anvil and forging them to create an object. It felt different, but the situation was better this time. The materials were easier to handle for one, and less was on the line.

*'And I already know what to make.'* It was a bit regrettable that Lee Na-hee wasn't around to help, but he could ask her to enchant it later.

"Let's try." After taking control of his own mind, he closed his eyes and awakened the spiritual power inside of him, letting it resonate with the materials in front of him.

*'Now, move according to my will.'* The mana stone greedily absorbed the spiritual power Kang Shin-hyuk stretched out to it, radiating a dazzling light as it merged with the thread gland and the spinneret. Golden color began to spill out from between Shin-hyuk's eyelids, mixing with the light emanating from the materials. He was vaguely aware that his trait was activated.

*'I'm not amplifying my ability or my weapon, but all of the substances in the artifact to make it something of a higher quality...this...'* It wasn't a trait that would end with an S-rank. It still had one more condition to evolve, but he was already confident in that fact.

*'Keep focusing.'* He covered all of the materials with his spiritual power as he started his work in full. He recalled the experience making the metal threads and gloves, trying to realize it through these materials. It wasn't as difficult as he had been nervous about. Didn't he already make SS-ranked items? Moreover, since the rate of synchronization was increasing each day, he was able to approach this Soul Craft skillfully.

*'Good, I can feel it changing.'* The spinneret was formed into the same type of glove he had made with Lee Na-hee, and the thread was turning into something he could fire at any time. He focused strongly on the mana stone, trying to use his spiritual power to amplify the items with its power.

*'It'll be difficult to enchant since the material quality is so high. Lee Na-hee won't be able to process it properly.'* He could ask her if her abilities strengthened again. Kang Shin-hyuk finished the process with a smile on his lips. His golden eyes intensified as the object was completed. The glove and case for the web were combined organically, creating a more compact form than the lightning web.

-Tsukuyo wants to visit My Room. Do you want to allow it?

-A fox. Please refuse.

His concentration was almost broken by the message that arrived without warning. He managed to keep his mind together but accidentally made a mistake in focusing on his work.

-You have accepted the visit request. Tsukuyo will enter My Room soon.

-No!



It had been a while since he had seen the administrator's exclamation mark. Kang Shin-hyuk thought so blankly as he lifted his head, his task finally complete.

"What?!"

-You succeeded in making [Venom Princess Soul (A+)] using an abundance of spiritual power with excellent materials. Metallurgy proficiency has increased considerably!

-Synchronization has slightly increased—current rate of 23.6%.

[Venom Princess Soul]

[A+ rank]

[Special Abilities: Toxic, Capture, Poisonous Lady, Seal]

\*Toxic: The thread contains a strong toxic property.

\*Capture: The binding power and toxicity of the thread are strengthened.

\*Poisonous Lady: The power of the spider princess amplifies the wearer's agility by one level (max SS. Rank). By injecting energy, the thread can increase in size and toxicity.

\*Seal

[The glove contains the power of the spider princess who failed to become a queen. Due to the lack of the creator's ability, the artifact's limits were not reached. There is room for further development.]

It was a luxurious product that would be valuable even on the Hero Universe trading board. The three special abilities were incredible, and each one of them served to help increase the thread's toxicity. Although given the common nature of poison resistance, Kang Shin-hyuk wondered how useful that would be. At least one of them even directly strengthened your status, and it even had a hidden trait that had yet to be unlocked. The sentiment that his ability was lacking stung a bit, but it was true he didn't match up to the original Anvil yet. It was best if he just gently accepted it and strove for better in the future.

“Hmm.” But that wasn’t a problem. What was a problem, however, was the new presence that had appeared in the middle of his My Room, which was watching him with an overwhelming presence.

“Indeed... that’s why.” The being...no, Tsukuyo, was staring right at him. He almost screamed reflexively at the creepy feeling running down his spine.

-Member, there is no escape from reality. She’s looking at you!

The administrator’s cold words brought him back to the real world. He exhaled a deep breath and nodded. A young woman in a black silk garment embroidered with golden thread stood still before him. The silk clung to her body, emphasizing it, with a luxurious-looking wrapping around her waist that attracted attention. Further down, the silk split to the side to reveal her thighs. It was obvious she was in excellent shape.

-You’re still escaping reality.

*‘That’s right, damn it!’* Tsukuyo tilted her head, her ebony hair flowing down past her waist like a wave. His eyes were stuck to her.

“Hm.” Rouge-painted lips clashed tantalizingly with her pale skin, tilted in an odd expression as she noticed where his gaze was headed.

“Nothing comes even when I look at you.” Her impression was quiet and mysterious, like the moonlit night her name implied. It clashed with the image he had of her from her messages through the Hero Universe. She had confessed her love to Anvil over twenty years ago, yet she only looked like she was in her early twenties.

“I didn’t think you would welcome me. There’s not even a chair.”

“I’m sorry, but I made a mistake while I was working. I wasn’t even ready to serve customers.” Kang Shin-hyuk found his resolve and shook his head, trying to ignore Tsukuyo’s voice, which seemed to cling to him. He wanted to convey the meaning of, ‘I’m not ready yet, so leave,’ but she nodded as if she already knew that.

“Thanks to that, I saw something good. This time I’ll be patient.” She flicked her finger, and a nice wooden table with two chairs appeared. She clearly had no intention of leaving.

“Then... let’s talk.” She sat down and tapped on the table, signaling for him to sit down as well.

“I’ve received all of the items you’ve posted on the transaction board previously.” Kang Shin-hyuk had sat down, finding it inevitable, but he soon raised his head at her words.

“...All of them?”

“All. Of. Them.” He checked the sale messages, confirming she was telling the truth. She had bought all of them, sometimes for two or three times the listed price.

“It was difficult. All of them had traces of Anvil, but at the same time, they weren’t from him...I couldn’t honestly bring myself to resent or love you, so I thought a lot.”

“I apologize, but in my previous life, I wasn’t in a relationship with you.”

-3,000HP bonus for resolved members!

Kang Shin-hyuk received a bonus from the administrator, who was excited by him rebuking Tsukuyo’s words. She only smiled back, however.

“I remembered that I didn’t have to hesitate anymore. If I can’t confirm through the work, I can just look at the craftsman to check...”

-I tried to hide you from her.

Kang Shin-hyuk – that was the ID Anvil – was revealed to be a VIP thanks to him accepting the dimensional quest.

“The answer I gave you hasn’t changed. I don’t intend to delete my ID, even if you judge me. I don’t even know how to erase it.”

“No, you don’t have to.”

“No?”

“I thought about it a bit...” She let out a laugh that was so charming it scared him. He felt like he would be hypnotized.

"I was convinced when I saw you." She pointed to the Venom Princess Soul, the black leather glove he held in his hands. He had accidentally accepted her request in the middle of his work, and he had been too immersed in finishing to notice here. He felt a bit embarrassed suddenly.

"I see."

"I had a lot I wanted to say, but now that's enough. You have the talent to breathe life into inanimate objects and lead them to completion. The things you make... I've decided to watch you in the future." It felt great to hear she would no longer demand he delete his ID or tell him he wasn't Anvil. No, actually, it had been a while since he had received such a message.

"Now that we've taken care of that, let's enjoy some tea together."

"...Tea?"

"I'm not a proud woman, but I have confidence in that." A sense of déjà vu washed over him as he recalled the dream he had earlier. He decided to remain still, however, as the situation felt like it might be dangerous if he refused. She procured a teacup and a teapot from her inventory, with a flick of her hand, the pot filled with water. Then, with another swift motion, it began to boil. She carefully added tea leaves to it once it cooled slightly. Each movement was so delicate and beautiful that it captivated him as he watched.

-Member.

'Yeah?'

-Is this an enemy's psychic attack? If so, I will immediately banish the fox.

*'I don't think so...'*

-It's an enemy.

The teacup was placed in front of him before he could respond to the administrator's frank assertions. Tsukuyo was looking at him with clear eyes as the steam from the cup wafted a pleasant scent past him.

"Please."

“Well...thank you.” Kang Shin-hyuk gently lifted the cup and drank. It was a pleasant temperature, neither too hot nor lukewarm. He felt refreshed like his mind was clearing immediately, as he sipped at it.

“I’m glad you like it. I also brought refreshments. This is my homemade yokan. I prepared it before coming today.” He knew of that, too; it had also been in his dream. He decided not to mention that either and took a bite of it. He had thought it would be more suited to an old man’s tastes, but it was delicious. It has a soft texture and a subtly sweet taste. Kang Shin-hyuk had eaten many high-quality foods since coming to Shinyoung, but this beat them all out easily.

“It’s delicious.”

“I’m happy. I wanted to feed you this.” Tsukuyo nodded, satisfied, and sipped at her own tea. Her dark hair fluttered with each small movement, filling Kang Shin-hyuk with an indescribable emotion. For a while, the two quietly ate and drank. He had never imagined he would be able to spend such a gentle time with her given her first message she sent to him, but life was full of the unknown. As he considered that...

“Already? This damn bitch...” Suddenly, Tsukuyo muttered something and looked into the air. Kang Shin-hyuk roughly guessed what had happened. Perhaps that was the administrator’s job.

“I believe I have to go. I didn’t know visiting a My Room would be so tricky.”

“Is it not common?”

“No. The amount of VIPs in the Hero Universe can be counted on one hand, and you are the only one I’ve cared about.” Tsukuyo replied like she had heard a funny joke and stood up. She waved the table and chair away as Shin-hyuk stood up, then approached him with a large cloth in hand.

“This is a lunch box I made. I’ve wanted to hear your impressions, so I couldn’t help it. I’m knowledgeable about cooking, so it should be alright. Would you accept it?” The distance between them had disappeared in the blink of an eye, and his cheeks reddened. He quietly accepted the lunch box, carefully holding it with both hands. She held on to it as well, as if she felt unfortunate she had to leave.

“What should I call you from now on?”

“Are you saying you’re okay with me?”

“Yes. If you’ve changed, then I want to get to know the you now.” Wasn’t she much more mature than a certain granddaughter? Her first impression had been bad, but it was born from a misunderstanding. Kang Shin-hyuk took a deep breath to steady himself before answering honestly.

“I don’t intend to deny my previous life, nor do I intend to obsess over it. So, please call me whatever you’re comfortable with. Anvil or Kang Shin-hyuk...I believe it is all me.”

“Indeed... I’m satisfied. Then, I shall continue to call you Anvil.” Thanks to the administrator’s teachings, Kang Shin-hyuk felt like he had found some center inside of him. Tsukuyo nodded, apparently pleased with his answer, and quietly let go of the lunch box. Kang Shin-hyuk began to put it away in his inventory or at least tried too as Tsukuyo’s lips came into contact with his own.

-Whaaaaat?!

“?!”this chapter is updated by NOVELFire(.)net

“Huh...” It was a perfect surprise attack. The lunchbox had sealed away his hands, and the moment he moved to put it away, she had rushed right in. He couldn’t move, trembling in place like a shark struck by a harpoon. Tsukuyo moved away from him, barely satisfied with a brief taste. A thin line of saliva was broken as their lips parted.

“Heh...you and Eunah haven’t grown this close yet, right? Yes, your first kiss was not with Eunah, but this Tsukuyo...!” With that, she disappeared from his My Room. The administrator’s message filled his eyes.

-I was off guard! I thought she was satisfied with just drinking tea...!  
Appropriate punishment will be imposed on members who act unfairly to the owner of a My Room. She won’t be allowed to visit again unless you give her permission...you don’t mean to, right?

“...Administrator?”

-No?

Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't convey the emotions warring inside of him, so he kept quiet. The strongest emotion inside of him was the enormous guilt he felt towards Claire.

"Should I wash my lips with muddy water first?"

-Member, are you okay?!

"No, it's alright, so please calm down." After taking a step he hadn't been prepared for, Kang Shin-hyuk was so agitated that he didn't notice the change in the corner of his My Room.

It was a teacup with warm steam wafting off of it and a small plate with yokan.

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"Shin-hyuk, what happened?"

"Why was I caught right away?!" That night, Claire had greeted him as such when he went to the frontline bar as soon as she saw him. He stepped back in fear, but she smiled.

"By the way you walk. It's somber, but not completely...like a rainy sky."

"Are you a detective?"

"So what's going on? A woman? Oh, it's a woman." She had arrived at the correct answer immediately. Kang Shin-hyuk let out a sigh and covered his face.

"You know it's Tsukuyo."

"Ah, that one Eunah always curses."

"She came to My Room."

“Really? On Earth?”

“No, not that...” My Room was an intermediate space between dimensions, so it was easier to visit than another dimension. Although you still had to be a VIP. He wondered if she could even reach Earth.

“Still, wasn’t she threatening you? Was it okay to meet her?” Claire’s worried gaze landed on Kang Shin-hyuk’s heart. She was so innocently worried about him, which made him feel even guilty.

“Because she saw me working, it looks like she recognized me as Anvil.”

“Huh? Is that so...?” Tsukuyo loved Anvil so much that she found it unacceptable for anyone else to use his ID, last Claire had heard. She tensed slightly, and Kang Shin-hyuk knew he could not hide it from the person he liked, so he decided to confess.

“She kissed me.”

“I knew it! She’s a more aggressive sex offender than Eunah!” That sentence implied Eunah was still a sex offender, which he wondered if that was okay. Shin Eunah had never tried anything like that with him. Claire pushed on without knowing what was going on in Kang Shin-hyuk’s mind at that moment. He was genuinely worried about their friendship.

“No, I still don’t know the whole story. Was it just on the lips?”

“I felt like it went a little further...a bit more exploratory...”

“She’s the worst!” He recalled the feeling of her lips, and a chill went up to his spine. It was too overstimulating for him; if it weren’t for Anvil’s calming influence, he wouldn’t have been able to stand it. He felt a bit weird as she looked at him with eyes filled with both joy and sadness.

“...Are you not mad?”

“Are you angry at yourself?” Kang Shin-hyuk stiffened as he realized his mistake. However, before he could respond, the entrance opened up to bring him blessed relief.

“I’m here!”

“...!”



“...!” Shin Eunah arrived in a black suit that was the uniform of the Superhuman Association Special Task Force. Today she had her hair raised up. Kang Shin-hyuk and Claire exchanged a wordless glance. They both knew it wouldn’t end well if she discovered what had happened with Tsukuyo.

“Hello, senior.”

“Huh? Grandpa...what happened?” How come everyone knew as soon as they saw it? Kang Shin-hyuk desperately glanced at Claire, who nodded and was quick to jump in for him.

“I was joking around with him.”

“Hey... joking about what?”

“Eunah, why don’t you stop looking at me like that? I didn’t actually do anything.”

“...” Shin Eunah looked at Claire with a gaze colder than dry ice, but she soon turned her head away with a hum.

“Are you busy this Friday, junior?”

“Friday...yes, I’ll be participating in an artifact contest.”

“Oh yeah, he’ll be working with me that night.”

“...The contest?” Claire was clearly relieved the topic changed. Shin Eunah tilted her head at the pair.

“I thought it would be a good time to perform a mission under the name Shin Eun-hyuk. Of course, with me.” He had been planning on exploring various dungeons and gates under his identity as Shin Eun-hyuk with Shin Eunah over the summer vacation. However, it seemed that a mission had popped up sooner.

“If it’s later in the day, I can make time. I only have to stay for the presentation, then I can leave.”

“The World Rookies Artifact Creation Contest, right?”

“Yes, that’s right.” The contest would be held in the 17th-floor convention hall in the 5-star hotel Lubron, which was adjacent to the Choin shopping center. All ten teams in the finals were able to stay at the hotel for free.

“You know about it?”

“It is at the Choin shopping center.”

“A lot of people actually participate, Claire included.” Was it really such a great contest? Kang Shin-hyuk tilted his head in confusion.

“I actually became famous from it.”

“Sister Claire?!”

“Are you surprised? I am an alchemist.”

“No, not about that. Was the competition that big?”

“It is labeled ‘World.’”

“There are many cases where the world bit is an exaggeration.”

“This is a real world-class contest.” Kang Shin-hyuk had expected maybe the whole country at most, given Lee Manwoo’s words. He trembled.

“Can I replace my entry?”

“That’s the part you care about?”

“I mean, the item I submitted is only B-rank.”

“That’ll be enough.”

“Okay, enough of that.” Shin Eunah clapped her hands, trying to bring it back to their original discussion.

“Go participate normally. After you receive the grand prize, you just need to change clothes, so you won’t get caught and join up with me. The operations will actually be held at the same place as the contest.”

“Eh?”

“There has been some information that something might happen there, although it may be nothing.”

“It would be fun if an incident broke out. Kang Shin-hyuk vanishes, and suddenly in his place, an elite member of the association appears!”

“Please stop fantasizing, sister.” It sounded too ominous because it might actually happen. He ignored the goosebumps rising on his arms as Claire turned to Shin Eunah.

“Can I go too? I want to see Shin-hyuk win the grand prize.”

“Ah...” Shin Eunah was less excited about that, but Claire seemed intent on going regardless. The door opened before they could continue on the subject, the first guest of the day sitting down at the bar counter without any surprise towards the bar’s inhabitants.

“Still working as a bartender today, eh sister?”

“What can I do for you?” Kang Shin-hyuk quickly interposed between Claire and the guest. After working at the bar for a few days, he could now entertain even active superhumans casually.

“Gin Fizz. Today, I want something made by you.”

“Okay.” Kang Shin-hyuk had succeeded in honing his bartending skills thanks to his two months of training in Gromas. He lacked the ability to imbue it with powers, as he wasn’t an alchemist, but that didn’t matter for customers who weren’t going out to hunt.

“So, my young friend...”

“Yes?” The middle-aged superhuman looked at Kang Shin-hyuk as he prepared his drink.

“I know just by looking at you. What sort of girl are you sleeping with?”

“Hm?!” The top of his face was covered with a mask, how could he tell?

“Who is sleeping with whom?”

“I haven’t been!”

“Oh, then is it a man?”

“No?!” It took three hours to calm down Shin Eunah, who had exploded after hearing the customer’s idle comments. He tried to leave quietly but was caught by Claire. She imposed a month-long ban on Shin Eunah for her part. The source of this content is NovelFire.net

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The contest was held on Friday morning.

-A damage increase buff has been applied as a bonus for today’s login. For 24 hours, a 30% boost has been applied to all attacks.

The message that appeared before Kang Shin-hyuk as he awoke felt rather aggressive. The timing felt almost too good.

“Why today?”

-The login bonus is completely random, unlike roulette. Member, how about playing roulette today?

“Did you listen to me? Administrator, that makes it sound like something is sure to happen!” The administrator had been pushing him to spin the roulette as you couldn’t collect more coins until you spent the ones you had. However, he had been more focused on the status growth buff, so he had been keeping his coins to increase his odds.

-The roulette is the best reward among the bonuses. It is recommended to turn in your five coins as soon as possible.

“Okay, okay...” He decided to follow along with the administrator. He had nothing to lose by listening to his advice... most of the time.

-Play the VIP Roulette. Throw the dart whenever you want!

Pretending to be careless, Kang Shin-hyuk idly threw the dart that materialized in his hand. It hit the roulette that had appeared in front of him.

-Congratulations, member! Hero Universe’s hidden system is now open!

“Huh?” The message made his heart pound. Before he could ask any questions, the administrator followed it up.

-Momentary equipment change function is now open! You can save clothes, weapons, and other equipment all at once, then replace your current equipment by recalling it! All equipment stored in a set slot is amplified by 10%! You can specify up to three sets.

“Is something going to happen today?!” It was a function that fit the situation he was in today.

...No, of course, it was an incredibly useful feature too!

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Kang Shin-hyuk set up an equipment set while shivering in anticipation of his uncertain future. It was his two web gloves, a uniform provided to him by Shin Eunah, the mask that hid his identity, and a Shin Eun-hyuk exclusive piece of equipment he had made yesterday. He saved it away in set #2, leaving the first slot empty for his strongest equipment that he would one day make.

[Lee Na-hee: We'll meet in front of the main gate at 10.]

Lee Na-hee's message arrived as he was doing some simple training in his room. He considered it for a moment before deciding to respond.

[No matter what happens today, don't be surprised. Pretend you don't know me.]

[Lee Na-hee: What did you do?]

[Something might happen later...if it does, please pretend you don't know me then.]

Lee Na-hee took a while to reply but finally sent an emoji with stars for eyes.

[Lee Na-hee: (emoji)]

[Lee Na-hee: I'm looking forward to it!]

[No, don't expect it'll happen.]

[Lee Na-hee: I'll bring a good quality camera!]

[Don't bring it. Don't take pictures.]

He washed up after training and dressed up in his school uniform before heading off to the Royal Class-exclusive restaurant.

"Shin-hyuk!"

"Yes, yes." Eating breakfast with Karen and Eleanor very morning had now been ingrained in him. He consumed a plate of consommé soup with a sigh as Karen watched him.

"Are you going to school today?"

"No." It was still a test week, and students who had finished testing didn't have to attend. The student councils would be held next week, but there wasn't much else to do. Students freed from the exam were finally allowed to relax.

"Good, then let's go play! Vice-captain, you said you were thinking about going to the exhibition, right?"

"I did?" At Karen's words, Eleanor was one who was most surprised. Kang Shin-hyuk couldn't even retort at Karen's blatant ploys.

"You got an invitation, right vice-captain?"

"Yes, I did...shall we go together?" Eleanor was quick to agree to the proposal, which would let her spend more time with Kang Shin-hyuk. He rejected it, however, with an expression of regret.

"I already have plans. Didn't you hear from Lee Na-hee?"

"Na-hee?" Eleanor tilted her head as her eyes widened.

"Ah. You're also going to the contest. You also made it to the finals?"

"I'm going with my senior. It's a joint venture for our club."

"I heard you were in the same club." The two were close. He wondered if that was some group formed by people who were bothered by the Crowns of the school. Eleanor nodded, unaware of Shin-hyuk's rude thoughts.

"Isn't Na-hee pretty?"

"I'll ignore that. We're just junior and senior."

"I see..."

"Actually, the place I was going to was there." Kang Shin-hyuk stopped, stiffening in place.

"The World Rookies Creator Contest?"

"Yes. I got the invitation from Na-hee."

"..." Kang Shin-hyuk trembled.

"Senior Eleanor, it may be a little dangerous today. I think it would be best not to go."

"Aren't you going too?"

"...Yeah."

"Then, I will too." Kang Shin-hyuk finally conceded to her and lowered his head. He had to pray nothing would actually happen at the contest hall, or that he wouldn't be recognized if something did. And that Lee Na-hee would stay quiet, even if she recognized the lightning web.

At least the food he had for breakfast was very tasty.

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"A grand prize, gold, silver, bronze, and then just encouragement. Since the finals include ten teams, only about half will win anything."

"Just getting in the finals is enough to brag." Lee Manwoo was driving to the venue, responding to Kang Shin-hyuk's mutterings. Since they were heading there in the name of the club, it was natural for the teacher in charge to take them.

“But you told me I had to win.”

“That’s because you’re in Shinyoung.”

“Yeah.” Shinyoung was the world’s top elite education institution, though it provided no specialized training on production. If he couldn’t win a prize, he would have no right to touch a hammer again.

“Not like you need to worry about winning the prize. What matters is how much you upstage the others.”

“Grandpa...”

“Don’t get too upset now.” The group arrived at the hotel and were guided by a doorman inside. Most of the attention was on Kang Shin-hyuk and Lee Na-hee, as they wore the neat uniform of Shinyoung. Perhaps it was also due to Lee Na-hee’s beauty.

“Look, it’s Shinyoung.”

“Have they participated in the contest before?”

“Come look. Shinyoung doesn’t normally have producers.” There were quite a few other students who had arrived for the contest, amazed by the two. Kang Shin-hyuk was beginning to realize the prestige Shinyoung truly held in the world. It had often seemed so insignificant when he compared it to the Hero Universe and the people within it, but for these people, it was different.

“I’ve heard rumors that Shinyoung holds some great production skills.” It wasn’t a student who spoke up, but rather the young man leading them. Perhaps he was their teacher. His gaze was focused on Lee Manwoo.

“Teacher, are you okay?”

“Don’t worry, I was prepared for this from the moment I agreed to help you.”

“...” Kang Shin-hyuk was worried, but Lee Manwoo just snorted. Lee Na-hee glanced at her grandfather with a slightly affronted expression, but the three eventually pushed on to the convention hall under the hotel staff’s guidance.

“Wow, they have security too. Is it because of the artifacts?”



“There is that, but this is also a place to judge the future of the artifact production industry. Representatives from the industry, guilds, and even governments are paying attention here.”

“Wow...” Lee Manwoo wasn’t exaggerating. There were only ten teams in the finals, but hundreds more had come to watch. Many of them were people Kang Shin-hyuk had seen in the news before.

“Hey, junior, let’s use it too.”

“It’s already too late. Shh.”

“Hm? What are you two talking about? You’re getting along a lot better than last time.” Lee Manwoo was beaming at them happily as more people filled the banquet hall. Among them was, of course, the Alchemist and the Thunder Empress.

“It’s the Empress! Let’s go say hello. Please introduce me.”

“Ah, aren’t you working?” Lee Na-hee was quick to ask Kang Shin-hyuk for favor as she subtly mocked him. She had heard from her grandfather that the Empress had her eye on him. Shin Eunah was pushing away all those who tried to approach her with just her cold gaze, however.

“Oh, Shin-hyuk!”

“Ugh!” Instead, Claire had arrived, wearing skinny jeans and a lacy blouse. She exuded a refreshing charm that attracted attention like a magnet.

“Uh...” Kang Shin-hyuk was mentally pushed back, and Lee Na-hee physically took a step back. The people around them also seemed similarly surprised.

“Sister Claire, I thought we were pretending to not know each other...?”

“Ah, it’s okay now. Rather, you need to get out in front of people and make yourself a target. Besides, I prepared a disguise for you.”

“Is that okay? Is it really okay?!”

“Junior, you...”

“Who’s this pretty girl? Oh, a club senior? Hi! I’m an alchemist.”

"Yes...yes. Hello." Lee Na-hee nodded blankly and shook Claire's hand, who then turned to Lee Manwoo.

"Then, you must be the Great Chief."

"...Hm."

"Nice to meet you. I heard a lot about you from Shin-hyuk." Claire also asked Lee Manwoo for a handshake, which he agreed to with an embarrassed expression. She let out a satisfied laugh.

"It looks like you've been working hard with Shin-hyuk. Although he seems seasoned, he's still lacking in some ways. Having a senior in the industry to rely on is a great help."

"My sister or my mother?"

"Just the guardian of a boy with a secret. Suddenly appearing and then disappearing after playing her role."

"That's messed up." Claire's fantasizing hadn't improved at all. She smiled proudly and patted Kang Shin-hyuk on the shoulder.

"I'll buy you some chicken when you win the grand prize. Look forward to it!" Many people around them tried to approach Claire as she left them, but she waved them off. Even Lee Manwoo had a blank expression on his face after she came and left like a whirlwind.

"...Junior." Lee Na-hee was gazing at the hand she had shaken Claire's hand with.

"Now I know who my junior was scorned by."

"Let's be quiet, please."

"If the opponent is the Alchemist...wow...I'm sorry for teasing you..."

"You're still making fun of me?"

"A woman who's both prettier than me and has larger breasts..."

"You're really shameless." Lee Manwoo, on the other hand, was watching Claire as she left with a look of admiration.

“Sir?”

“Hm?”

“I’m sorry for making fun of you.”

“He is someone who will be very helpful to you. You need to work hard.”  
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“Let’s stop and sit down.” Kang Shin-hyuk felt a cold gaze on his back. It was probably Shin Eunah’s, so he tried to ignore it as he led the group.

Thirty minutes later, the final result of the contest was announced, attracting a lot of attention.

The work that won the lowest award was a D+ rank artifact.

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