

Ark Vol 6 C 2

Chapter 2

Act 2: Brilliant Debut

“Now I’m going to enjoy myself!”

“Do you think we look like beginners child? Chain of delusion!”

At that moment, Ark’s eyes lit up. Then he used Riposte! He sent the Chain of Delusion back with a violent noise.

“Ma-the magic bounced off the sword?”

Dior freaked out and hurriedly stepped back. However, Ark’s movement was several times faster. Ark simultaneously threw his body forward and kicked Dior in the chest. Dior stumbled and requested help from his partner.

“Ju-Justin!”

“Ah, I can’t. This Blue Sword guy.....is incredibly strong!

In a 1 on 1 situation, Shambala was too much to deal with even when the warrior was doped with drugs. Then Dior bit his tooth and pulled something out from his bag.

“Hell, I can’t believe I have to use this in the first match.....”

Dior held up dozens of canine teeth. He sprinkled the fangs on the floor and twenty skeleton bodies rose armed with a sword and shield or a bow. The magic eye shouted with an intense voice.

-Oh, the Necromancer has used his special racial skill. If he gathers the canine teeth of the skeletons through hunting, then the technique would allow him to summon them. Surprisingly, he summoned

twenty of them! If I have to give an additional explanation, the pairs tournament doesn't allow the use of consumption items but any skill related items are the exception. While the Dark Wolf player showed some nice movement before, it probably isn't easy to take care of that many in a swamp. Perhaps he might need the help of his colleague?

However, Shambala just continued attacking Justin without even turning his head. The magic eye murmured with a sigh.

-Ah, Blue Sword player. Even though partners can have some differences. Don't you think such behaviour isn't good for a pairs tournament? Anyway, the Dark Wolf player is in a crisis!

Dior also seemed to have the same idea as a light of mockery hovered around his mouth.

"Heh, you've been abandoned."

"Really? Who is the one that is thrown away?"

"Let's end it instantly. Skeleton unit. Attack!"

The skeleton archers fired arrows.

"Summon Deimos!"

Deimos showed up in front of Ark and shielded him. The magic eye shouted with a surprised voice.

-This is unexpected. This time, Blue Sword seems to have teamed up with a warrior who can summon. Ah.....But what is it? Is it a rag? He seems shabby compared to the skeletons that Dior has summoned. And in the end, it is only one skeleton. Is this a joke? It somehow seems like a final desperate struggle

However, it soon became ironic as the match immediately changed. Deimos was a skeleton with a really shabby exterior. But Deimos crushed all the arrows like he was a shield so all 10 arrows were stopped. He then ran up to five skeletons and engaged in close combat.

In general summoning, the summoned monster would have 60% of the player's level. But when summoning a unit like this, they only had 30%. In other words, Dior was level 100 so his summoned skeletons were only level 30~40 at most. However, Deimos was different from the normal summons. His stats rose on their own without paying any attention to the level of the summoner. After Deimos fused with Warwick, at present he was level 70! Moreover, Ark's technique was different from Dior's disposable summons and battle experience was accumulated. Double bang, Snap, Crunch! The arms of the skeletons broke under Ark's and Deimos' onslaught.

"Okay, Deimos. It isn't necessary to pay any attention to the skeletons anymore. Now....."

Then Deimos' eye colour changed. He scanned the bodies of the skeletons and examined them with his eyes. The skeletons suddenly winced with an unknown anxiety. At that moment, Deimos suddenly rushed at the tooth. And he caught a bone from one of the skeletons who struggled before it was broken off. However, he didn't stop there and grabbed other parts of the body and broke them off. The skeleton soon changed into a pile of bones.

Clack clack clack!

Deimos turned his head with a dissatisfied look. Jump, the remaining skeletons were surprised and fled in different directions. From then on, Deimos started to chase them without listening to Ark's command. It had triggered Deimos' hobby of collecting bones.

'That guy again.....!'

Ark sighed.

This was not the first time. There were many times when Deimos was engrossed in his hobby of collecting bones. Once he found a monster with a favourite bone, he would continue to chase that monster until he got the bone in his hand. Well, in any case his stats were likely to go up because of the bones and Ark had never encountered a crisis because of it. The fact that he wouldn't follow the

strategy wasn't the only problem. Sometimes he would just rush head first at the enemy without listening to Ark.

'The master should also be able to control his summons.....'

But he didn't know what he could summon as a replacement.

'Well, it doesn't matter if all the skeletons leave the battle state.'

Ark looked at Deimos who was still stupidly chasing after the skeletons. Then Dior's voice was heard from the opposite side.

"I don't understand how you can even summon a pet that doesn't even listen to its master's words. Okay, now is a chance. While a skeleton lures his summon, concentrate all your attacks on him!"

The skeleton archers simultaneously fired arrows at Ark.

-Oh, the skeleton archers are concentrating their attacks on Dark Wolf player. Even though he summoned a pet, it is pitiable that it is doing its own thing. Dark Wolf player is going to become a porcupine.....eh?

The announcer made a funny noise and held its breath. Depending on the level the speed, accuracy and power of an arrow would change. The arrows from the level 30~40 skeletons were nothing to Ark who had practice dealing with the thieves' arrows at later levels.

Ark lowered his body and grabbed his sword. He was gambling on his counter attack chain skill, Riposte! Arrows that flew within five feet of him was quickly bounced off. Ark reflected the arrows back and they flew back towards Dior.

"S-stop! Stop him!"

Dior burst out in surprise. The fifteen skeletons left took out a dagger and surrounded Ark.

‘If I use Dark Dance then I can quickly escape and land a critical hit on Dior.....’

Ignoring the number of summons and making a concentrated attack on the necromancer. That was the basic tactic when dealing with a necromancer. Yes, some necromancers who summoned had no techniques to fight without their pets. He would rather take the risk and get rid of the necromancer with weak defense. However, Ark shook his head.

‘I was mistaken. This place is different from the other places that I have fought at so far. Here I am just a beginner. Therefore, like a beginner I should learn how to fight here. If I want a positive outcome for this tournament, I must adapt to the situation.’

His first task was to adapt to the atmosphere of the Evil Silrion. The skeletons were the best opponents to practice against. Ark quickly looked around and examined the situation of the match. Deimos had finished examining four skeletons and was on his fifth one. Although his hobby of collecting bones was strange, he didn’t require any help.

It also wasn’t necessary to worry about Shambala. Although his health was only 40% due to the earlier damage, if he only compared the skill set than Justin was not an opponent for Shambala. Besides, as the match time became longer, the effects of Justin’s potions gradually wore off which increased the pace of Shambala’s attacks.

“As expected from the Blue Sword!”

Every time the flashy offensive of Shambala hit, the crowd would give an exclamation. Now the only thing left was Ark!

“Now, come!”

Ark’s eyes gleamed as the skeleton’s left hands rose. Then like a canine tooth, the dagger targeted his neck.

-Ah, Dark Wolf seems to be facing off against fifteen summoned skeletons alone without the help of his summon. Is he insane? That wasn't it. Did he become overconfident because he hit some arrows? If Dark Wolf loses here, then the balance of the match would collapse and it would become difficult for Blue Sword again.

'It is your mistake that you summoned skeletons.' The magic eye's condemnation was followed by the crowd's boos. But Ark had already ducked to the ground to avoid the dagger. He did a 360 degree sweep with his leg, causing the skeletons to fall to the ground. The sparkle of his sword shone and three or four skeletons lost their heads immediately.

Ark knew the reason why Dior chose a skeleton unit. In PVP, a necromancer feared close combat the most. Most magicians hated close combat but it was even worse in a necromancer. They summoned troops in a unit because they had the worst defense among all the professions. Therefore the summoned troops as soon as the battle begins to be used as a shield. In particular, they preferred to summon a small number of skeletons.

When skeletons are summoned, they have abundant numbers and they won't die even if their arms and legs are broken. Even if they only have 1% of health left, their health could be recovered using the other skeletons. Their recovery ability is the necromancer's strongest shield. However, the weak point of the skeleton unit was their balance.

When a skeleton is smashed in the skull, they become paralyzed. While the strong points were its damage and re-assembly ability, it also had a fatal weakness.

Of course, it wasn't simple to crush the skull was receiving dozens of attacks. But Ark was the opponent. He had practiced dodging dozens of tentacles and learnt how to deal with aggressive monsters. Moreover, it was the skeleton that he was sick of dealing with in the underground labyrinth. Destroying level 30~40 skeletons was as simple as using taekwondo against a child. Ark dropped a skeleton to the ground using a kick and concentrated his attacks on that skeleton.

"Pant, S-summon recovery!"

Dior frantically used recovery magic. But even when the skeleton's health was restored, its skull would just be crushed again and it was unable to fight.

Snap! In just a few minutes, Ark broke the last skeleton's skull.

"This, unbelievable.....Chain of Delusion!"

Dior shouted with his hands stretched out. But in the end nothing came out of his palm. After summoning the skeletons and recovering their health, he had no more mana left. A magician without mana wasn't so tough.

"Kkurururu"

Ark literally laughed like an animal. A vortex spun around as he kicked out his feet. Dior instantly lost 50% of his health.

"Ju-Justin!"

"Sheesh, I was trying to save this.....Berserker mode!"

When his partner was at risk, Justin immediately triggered his deadly skill. It was his racial special skill, Berserker mode! It recovered 30% of his health and was a morale skill which increased his offense and defense by 50% for 5 minutes. After the 5 minutes ended, he would be unable to move so it wasn't a skill that was often used. However in a tournament, 5 minutes was often enough time to obtain a decisive outcome. That is because the odds were high for warriors in the Evil Silrion.

"Pikyo!"

Justin swung his sword against Shambala's and pushed him back. At this time, Shambala's health was almost at the bottom. The overwhelming damage he received in the beginning was too large. Because he couldn't face the 50% increased attack power of Justin, he gave way.

-Atch, Blue Sword player, Justin has used the decisive moment to take out the better player. Then Dark Wolf player who is driving back Dior with receive the thrust of Justin's attack in the side. After that slump in the first few minutes, Dark Wolf player is again in a crisis. It is indeed a crisis!

Crisis was the magic eye's words. While Shambala was there, Ark never had to think about Justin. In fact, Ark also didn't have that much health left. Even though his level was superior, fighting against fifteen skeletons wasn't easy. In addition, Dior's attitude had changed to attack. If he receives an attack from the side, the centre would collapse and he would fall into a rigid state for a while.

'If I receive the concentrated attacks of Dior and Justin continuously then it would be dangerous!'

Ark's head thought at a frantic pace. Fortunately, the spiritual power that he used to summon Deimos was at 100% again. He could summon Dedric and have him use Dark Dash to avoid Justin's attacks. But Ark soon shook his head. He was reluctant to summon Dedric.

'Then.....'

"Release summon, summon Deimos!"

At that moment, Deimos who was piling up bones disappeared. And returned next to Ark. Deimos looked around with a confused face and discovered Justin who was rushing to attack. His eyes grew wider as he became stuck in the swamp.

'Bah, Master doesn't let me enjoy my hobby.'

"What, what the?"

Justin was confused as he unexpectedly crashed into Deimos. Justin had raised his sword too late and Ark was already gone. Ark was floating in the air. Ark's body jumped vertically into the air before it stopped and started spinning suddenly. It was an aerial spin kick which caused bursts of air. Justin was surprised and lifted his shield. But no matter how long he waiting, there was no shock wave on his shield.

"Eh? What, what the?"

Justin followed Ark's movements with a foolish expression. Although he thought it was flying to the side, Ark's leg suddenly soared up.

“A fake?”

Yes, the spin kick in the air was a trick. The real attack was when he fell down and did a windmill! Snap! His foot kicked out and hit Justin’s forehead. It was a windmill kick with all his weight put behind it. And Ark used his Sword-Hand combat to increase the probability of the attack hitting since it was a technique with a high level of difficulty. Justin was stunned by the attack and fell to his knees. Double critical chance!

“Dark blade!”

Ark used Dark Blade without any delay. Dark Blade which ignored the defense was a natural enemy of warriors which relied on high defense. As soon as damage from the double critical chance was added, Justin collapsed head first into the swamp and died from the critical hit. The inside of the stadium was as quiet as a dead mouse for a moment.

It was like watching a martial arts competition, where the opponent was overwhelmed with hard kicks. After a while, the magic eye frantically made a noise.

-Wh-what was that? That was a form of martial arts from a foreigner! Incredible! I thought Dark Wolf player was a summoner but he was instead a martial artist. Then why did he summon the trivial skeleton? Ah, such a thing doesn’t matter. Anyway, it has become clear that Dark Wolf is not Blue Sword’s sidekick!

“Un-unbelievable!”

At that time, Dior rushed to Ark with the remaining skeleton. At that moment Ark turned his body and there was an intense ringing sound.

“Blink, Light wave!”

Instantaneously, Shambala flew across the swamp towards Dior. When the mud which flew up into the sky fell down again, Shambala had already stabbed his dagger into Dior. When Dior collapsed, the skeletons turned into a powder. Shambala wiped off the mud with a shrug.

“I only did that so you could play an active part.”

“Wily guy”

A wry smile spread over Ark’s mouth. It was then that Ark understood the whole situation.

It was Shambala’s plan from the beginning. Even when Justin was doped with the drugs, he could’ve handled him faster. However, Shambala took his time. Then he also didn’t stop Justin’s final assault on purpose. Whether it was to make Ark adapt to the match or a test of his skills, Ark didn’t know.....But from the beginning, the fight had progressed as Shambala intended. Indeed, he couldn’t underestimate his 37 winning streak in the arena. Extravagant cheers continuously overflowed from the spectator seats. Unlike the first time, half the cheers were for Ark.

-Thus ends the 7th match in the tournament! The 14th team is the winner! It is Blue Sword with the reputation of 28 straight wins and his partner! In his debut match, Dark Wolf appeared like a comet and showed some surprising skills! Please clap your hands for the glorious winners!

“Wah ah ah!”

“Dark Wolf, why did you wander in the beginning when you’re so good?”

“Blue Sword, Dark Wolf! The best. I lost money but you made some fans today!”

“Dark Wolf oppa, his fang is awesome!”

He also received a thunderous ovation. Clack clack clack! Clack clack clack! Deimos had finally managed to heave himself up from the ground. Had he remembered a memory from his former life? He unexpectedly liked the showmanship. Ark cancelled the summoning and Deimos returned to the Netherworld.

‘After evolving, his character has become a little strange.....’

When they returned to the waiting room, the management NPC approached.

“Congratulations to both of you. Since the number of participants had increased, your next match is expected to take place the day after tomorrow. You can relax for now.”

Suddenly a message window appeared in front of Ark.

You have won the first fight in the Evil Silrion.

Current record: 1 win

“Kuo oooo!”

The Deadman yelled and brandished a window. The Deadman was similar to undead monsters such as zombies, but unlike zombies they managed to keep their armour and weapons intact so they were equipped with much higher stats. Well, they were still no match for Ark.

The level of Deadman was 100. At that level, it already wasn't a match. In addition, his experience from the Evil Silrion was already in effect. After the degree and complexity of a user's movements, the movement of Deadman felt monotonous and slow. Ark avoided the window with flew at him and swung his sword. The Deadman who received the concentrated attack disappeared into a powder. And after the last one died, a heavy object bounced onto the ground.

Warrior's Transcripts

Item type: Leather Shoulder Blades

Defense power: 15

Durability: 13/50

Weight: 20

User restriction: Level 80 or more

The Forest of Souls is an area with a big war took place during the Dark Century. Numerous warriors who fought against the darkness were buried here with their armour. Hundreds of years have passed since then and most of the armour is already gone, but sometimes armour with magical powers could be found. These armours add a special power to the monsters that inhabit the Forest of Souls.

Ark's eyes lit up at the sight of the information window. Three days had already passed since his flash debut match in the Evil Silrion arena. The fact that it was a different world was all the same to Ark. The participants that Hyun-woo met were chaotic players of different levels. Unlike the chaotic players who targeted low level players to decrease their burden, these ones focused on raising their skill level and equipment. In addition, the specialized fields and hands on experience in the Evil Silrion were better than being chaotic. Those users were thoroughly prepared and not really creative. Of course, he learnt a lot from the quality of the battles. But the problem was that he couldn't earn a substantial income from it. Usually he would've already entered the final match after three days of game time. However, this time the number of participants was unprecedented so the schedule of the tournament was extended by several times. Even if the number of matches increased, at the most it only had one match per day. 1 day was barely 3 hours in reality. Even if it was possible to finish all the matches at that pace, it was still more than 8 hours in reality. And he didn't know how long it would take for the other games, so if the time was accelerated suddenly then he might have to play a match that wasn't in the schedule. Therefore, they couldn't go away while the tournament was in progress. Therefore most of the participants had no choice but to wait around. However, that was no problem for Ark. 'Yes! Shoulder Blades, finally!

There was at least 8 hours every night when the Evil Silrion would close its doors. If the fight ended quickly and another match scheduled then there would be an announcement at least 1 hour before. Even if he went hunting, as long as it was within a distance of 1 hour from Selebrid then it didn't matter.

Of course, when the schedule suddenly changed and he was in the hunting ground then there was no way to receive a notification. However, that was only for ordinary users.

"From today, you will live here. And fly swiftly to alert me if anything happens."

"What? Are you asking me to sit here all day like a rock and listen to them talk?"

"If you ever doze off and delay trying to contact me.....you wouldn't be able to speak with all the dreadful things shoved in your mouth. I'll leave it to your imagination."

After Ark used intimidation, Dedric was left behind at the Evil Silrion. Dedric complained of course but followed his orders without any resistance. As soon as Ark showed him a medley he created, Dedric quickly nodded with a haggard face.

When the distance was within 1 hour, even if the schedule changed then Ark could hunt to his heart's content.

'Now, since I can't go too far from Selebrid then shouldn't I find the most efficient hunting ground? I need to find a hunting ground with decent experience and income but.....'

Shambala easily solved the problem. Shambala had been in Selebrid for a while and already discovered all the information about the surrounding hunting grounds. Shambala was glad that Ark was taking advantage of the free time to do some hunting. But he was worried about any changes to the tournament schedule. However, with the promise that Dedric would be stationed at the bulletin board, he told Ark all the information about the nearby hunting grounds.

"At any rate, you're also a guy who can't stand still. When I was in trouble in a difficult place and got lost, I found a suitable hunting ground. If you find any items that could be helpful in the tournament then that would be convenient."

The place Shambala recommended was the Forest of Souls. There were two reasons why Shambala recommended it. One reason was that it was only 30 minutes away from Selebrid. With a 1 hour round trip, he didn't have to worry about being late to the game.

And the second reason was.....

"You still haven't equipped any bracelets or shoulder blades?"

"Bracelet? Shoulder blades?"

"Selebrid is a kind of boundary spot. The bracelets and shoulder blades that aren't dropped in Giran start to show up. Even if it was dropped in Giran, the level has to be at least 80 so it is insignificant.....anyway, since bracelets and shoulder blades have a defense stat, they should be useful in the tournament."

"I can find it in the nearby hunting grounds?"

"You usually have to go a few hours away to the burial mound area, but I know that the Forest of Souls happens to drop some. Quite a lot of people have obtained bracelets and shoulder blades from the Deadman mob. But it is no joke as the drop rate is quite low."

Shambala said that he should try though. He probably thought that Ark would try for a few hours and then give up. After all, it normally took a few hours killing the same monster for an item with low drop rate to fall. Even if the information about the monster was known, it wasn't easy to find a good item. But Shambala didn't know Ark properly.

'New equipment item!'

Except for when there was a match, Ark lived in the Forest of Souls. And when he saw a Deadman, he desperately rushed up to it even though he was fighting other monsters.

However, the most that the Deadman dropped was a few japtem worth several silvers. The drop rate was so low that most would have considered stopping. Ark started to have doubts by the time that he hunted hundreds of them.

‘Are the bracelets or shoulder blades really going to drop?’

Even though the information was authentic, he would rather shift to a higher level hunting ground to obtain more experience and better japtem. But Ark soon shook his head.

‘No, it is a war of patience trying to find a useable item from a normal monster. Since others held on, I cannot give up until I get the same results as them. I have to hang in longer than others in order to get good items! Until luck follows then I have to hold on!’

Since then, Ark attacked the Deadman even more relentlessly. While he went back and forth between Selebrid, two days had passed and finally a desired item had dropped.

Amulet of Vitality (Magic)

Item type: Bracelet

Durability: 15/20

Weight: 10

User restriction: Level 80 or more

An old bracelet that was buried in the Forest of Souls.

After a long time, it is ragged and doesn't shine anymore but its magical powers still remain.

It was the item obtained after hunting nearly a thousand of the Deadman for 2 days. Well, when looking at the stats it wasn't that great. Health +50. Ark's current health was 2000. If a high level monster hit him, it would do more than 50 damage. In such a situation, he didn't know if 50 extra health was significant. But of course it was better to have it then to have nothing. In addition, the special options meant that a small but steady amount of his health would be continuously restored! 'A bracelet!'

'Two bracelets can be equipped at the same time. If I find another Amulet of Vitality that would mean +100 health and 10 health points being restored every 20 seconds! It is the jackpot!'

He wasn't about to give up half way so Ark clung even more frantically to the hunt. Sometimes online gaming was strange. Items had a probability rate of dropping. Sometimes, the item would not drop even if you died and came back and sometimes they would drop straight away. He spent one more day hunting in the Forest of Souls before he found the shoulder blades.

'Defense 15 and Strength 3.....the defense is on the low side, but the option is useable for beginners. It is trivial compared to the items being sold in Selebrid, but instead of spending 300 gold for slightly higher stats, this is the far better option. And better shoulder blades might drop in the future.'

Ark gave a warm smile and began to wear the shoulder blades. Halfway to his shoulder, he saw that it was rotting with a bad odour. If he was a user that paid attention to what he looked like, his face would have contorted but since he only cared about the added defense, Ark was happy and smiled.

'I don't care about my appearance. The important thing is the stats!'

Ark's only value was usefulness. Ark attached the shoulder blades and checked out the stat window.

Character Name Ark Race Human Alignment Good +250 Fame 1965 Level 125 Profession Dark Walker
Title Cat Knight, Caretaker of All, Jackson's Hero Health 2115 (+100) Mana 1930 Spiritual Power 100
Strength 274 (+18) Agility 324(+25) Stamina 414 (+10) Wisdom 43(+10) Intelligence 367 Luck 44
Flexibility 39 Art of Communication 33 Affection 77 (+10) Special stat: Knowledge of Ancient Relics 98 *
Equipment item effects Guardian Armour of the Merpeople: Water Attribute Resistance +100%, Penalty
based on water is nullified.

Cat Paws (Gloves): Attack Speed +10%, Agility +15, Critical Hit +10%

Raccoons Pith (Helmet): Agility + 10, Wisdom + 10*

Set effect: Strength + 10, Agility + 10, Stamina +10, Defense +20

Warrior's Transcripts (Shoulder Blades): Strength + 3

Improved Norad Boots (Shoes): Movement Speed + 15%, Evasion + 10%

Veil of Fire (Mantle): Flame resistance + 50%

Adelaine's Necklace (Necklace): Defense + 40, Affection +10, 'Blessing of the Sea' available

Resurrecting Spirit (Ring): Strength + 5, Mana recovery + 5%

* All abilities will increase by 40% in the dark

* You have the ability to hide in the darkness (20 minutes duration. Cancelled when you get into combat)* Resistance Fear, Darkness, Blind, and Seduction spells is increased by 50%.

* You can bring out the true abilities from all types of tools.

Level 125. He had increased his level by 2 after hunting in the Forest of Souls for 3 days. It was quite good since he had to play in the matches as well as sometimes hunting. The experience for the Deadman was low but he hunted quite a lot of them. In addition, the monsters weren't strong so he didn't have to take a rest every time a battle ended. Thanks to not resting and just hunting, he obtained results beyond what he expected.

'Okay, while this experience is great for a short term plan.'

However unlike Ark, Deimos sighed with a sulky face. Clack clack, clack clack clack.....

Ark had been stubborn when hunting the Deadman. When the Deadman died, it turned to powder so Deimos couldn't enjoy his hobby of collecting bones. Therefore, Deimos didn't enjoy the situation. But while raising the ability of his summons was important, it was more important that Ark's abilities rose.

"Deimos, I don't have time for you to be sighing. Because Dedric isn't here you have to play his role as well. Hurry up! Until we can find another bracelet, there are no breaks."

Ark rushed the depressed Dedric and began hunting the Deadman again. When 30 minutes had passed, he heard alarm sounds in his ears.

'Pant, it is already this time.....!'

Ark swung his sword one more time before disappearing from the forest.

“Why isn’t it straight?”

Lee Myung-ryong shouted as he stomped on the floor. Of course, Hyun-woo also wanted to do it properly. However, what could he do if his body didn’t move fast enough to not get hit? While he wanted to fly like a butterfly, his arms and legs wouldn’t move the way he desired. Even though he could clearly see the opponent’s attack, he couldn’t even move an arm to block it. Pepepek, after a slow impact shocked him, he stopped for a while and shook his head. When Hyun-woo stopped, Lee Myung-ryong immediately raised his voice angrily.

“You idiot, how many times do I have to say it? When you are hit then don’t step back but absorb the impact. Use your lower back! Remember to use your lower back in the future!”

Although it was easy to say.....how many people would remember it when being hit with a fist in the face? However, Hyun-woo clenched his teeth and summoned more power to his legs. It was because he knew from experience would kind of trouble there would be if he didn’t follow Lee Myung-ryong’s words.

‘Damn, well since I’m going to die anyway, it doesn’t matter what state I’m in when I die!’

“This is just like being a zombie.”

Hyun-Woo rushed at the opponent like a bulldozer when the whistle blew. But at the same moment, Hyun-woo felt an intense blow to his side. Although he experienced it a lot, it was an attack that he couldn’t really adapt to. The blow to his body caused his gut to twist in pain.

How is it? Is there a lot of tingling? This is a medicine for zombies.”

Meanwhile, 1 more blow struck him on the other side. Immediately his legs started to tremble. However, Hyun-Woo didn’t even have the right to lie down comfortably on the floor.

“30 seconds left, will you manage to hold up for 30 seconds? Do you want to lie down and get disliked?”

Hyun-woo heard Lee Myung-ryong say in a sparkling voice. So he drew in a deep breath and corrected his posture. The expression of the opponent who thought it had ended turned pale. After a brief moment, he contorted his lips and started the onslaught.

Straight, hook and upper cut! It was like shower of punches that wouldn't stop! However, Hyun-woo made his defense as hard as a turtle and withstood the attacks. But eventually, his arms lowered and he gradually lost power in his legs. And when both of his arms finally lowered, the fist of the opponent rushed towards Hyun-woo's face. The person that allowed him to escape the crisis was Lee Myung-ryong.

"Stop! The 3rd round has ended."

When Lee Myung-ryong's voice rang out, the fist immediately stopped. Then Hyun-woo let out a laugh and said.

"A leader is a leader, but you're terrible too. That was a really tough 3rd round to endure."

Hyun-woo sighed and flopped down to the ground. He laid down on the floor and stared at the ceiling of the gym. The after effect of being hit was that the ceiling seemed to shake left and right.

'Whew, I dug my own grave.....I really will either become a superman or die.....'

He thought about the remaining practice schedule that was still ahead of him. After he had arrived at Selebrid, Hyun-woo had asked Lee Myung-ryong to train him specifically for the matches in the Evil Silrion. In retrospect, he didn't know why he did such a reckless thing. Special training.....it was a grave that he personally dug for himself.

The system that Lee Myung-ryong used to train Hyun-woo made Ark's training of his summons seem a hundred times more humane.

"I'm making a Superman."

He had thought it was a joke. Of course not. Who would think those words were serious? However, some humans in the world don't know common sense. This Lee Myung-ryong.....

Recently, just listening to the name was enough to make him sweat. For the last three days, the training that Lee Myung-ryong was putting him through was not something that most humans could digest. Gwon Hwa-rang said that Lee Myung-ryong was a delinquent before he became a policeman, but he introduced them anyway. It seems that Lee Myung-ryong thought of himself as a mad scientist. And it was clear that he was determined to reshape Hyun-woo into an artificial man as much as possible. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to devise such a non-humane training system.

The first day that Hyun-woo visited the gym Lee Myung-ryong just smiled and made him do exercises from the national gymnastics team.

"So let's start lightly shall we? Do one handed pushups on both sides 50 times."

"Yes? But I've never managed to do more than twenty pushups using one hand?"

Frankly, how many ordinary men in Korea would be able to do one handed pushups twenty times? He thought it was a great standard. But no sooner had he finished talking then his stomach was pushed down with a kick.

"Didn't I say this before? From the moment you entered here. The one thing that is prohibited."

"Ha, but....."

"Do you think my words are funny?"

Lee Myung-ryong smiled and spoke. He was one of the few humans who could beat a man with his smile.

"I knew a junior who was a short distance sprinter. That guy was able to run 100 metres in 11 seconds. But that wasn't enough to hand out a business card at a convention. Even when he almost died from the effort, he couldn't shorten it to 10 seconds and eventually gave up and became a policeman. So during

the first dispatch, he was a newbie and forgot the strategies and found himself surrounded by delinquents while alone. Well, at first it was all right. The guys were trying to kill him with sashimi knives so of course the guy frantically ran away. Now, can you guess what happened?"

"As a track and field athlete, didn't he get away unharmed?"

"That's right, but the important thing is what happened next."

"And then?"

"Since that day, he has been able to run it in 10 seconds."

"Yes? How.....?"

Lee Myung-ryong replied in a tone that implied it wasn't a big deal.

"Simple. From the beginning, that guy could run it in 10 seconds. He was built with those kinds of muscles. However, it was the case he couldn't run it because he thought he couldn't do it. Every time he ran, he thought that even though it was his best time, he still couldn't do it. But after that incident, the thought that he had trapped himself with disappeared."

"It's a touching story. But what does that have to do with me?"

Hyun-Woo asked, feeling uneasy. As expected, the answer made him worried.

"It seems to me that you're also a guy who could do that? How about it? Are you not proud?"

"What on earth.....what's your basis for that?"

"The eyes in this body!"

Ah, it was like that? There is no reason for him to object.

However, the terrible thing was that Lee Myung-ryong really took it to heart and continued to make successive points. This mad scientist really believed he was a genius with a keen eye. Therefore, he was caught in the illusion that he might be able to remodel him until he became an artificial man. The even worse thing was that it wasn't entirely absurd. Once he tried it, Hyun-woo was able to increase the number of his one-handed pushups. His best record was twenty-five times, that was his limit so far. However, when he was threatened by Lee Myung-ryong and felt desperate then it was possible for him to do fifty. The fear of violence temporarily suppressed the pain of his body. But that was only a warm up exercise.

"Now, should we begin?"

Lee Myung-ryong called to the SWAT team member exercising to one side and said.

"This guy did amateur boxing during high school. He was within the top 10 in the nation so he should be suitable as your rival. The rule is 3 rounds of boxing!"

Hyun-woo's face had a look of speculation. The pushups were to such an extent that he had cramps in his arm muscles. It wasn't even taekwondo, but he was expected to spar in boxing using only his fist? Against a former boxer who was within the top 10 of the nation? He hoped it was a joke, but the word joke wasn't even in Lee Myung-ryong's vocabulary. Lee Myung-ryong fitted the gloves on him while cheering with warm words.

"If you give up then you will die."

Of course, it couldn't be a direct fight. Hyun-woo went through 3 rounds that were 3 minutes each. By the end of the 9 minutes, he had become flattened like a rice cake.

"Pathetic, being hit by such a trivial guy....."

Lee Myung-ryong clicked his tongue like he had been presented with a menu. Then it was the abs and back exercises. 200 sit ups, 200 chin ups and 200 flank movements. He made him do upper and lower

abs exercises 200 times.....the various abs exercises added up to one thousand times. Then another member of the SWAT team was summoned. They were the frontline members that defended the Republic of Korea. Since the job required stamina and skills, the various members could rival the athletes. The member who was summoned this time also had nice muscles. The degree of muscles was so much that Hyun-woo would be easily crushed by it.

“This guy used to have a career in amateur wrestling. He is slightly better than the earlier guy, since he won a bronze medal in a national competition. 3 rounds begin!”

It was really crazy. After making him go through a crazy abs workout, now he expected him to do wrestling? Against one of the nation’s top wrestlers? Wasn’t this just harassment? But he couldn’t say anything at the sight of Lee Myung-ryong’s cold eyes and started the spar. Of course, the result was that he became a rice cake. Lee Myung-ryong’s training was always like this. Hyun-woo had heard that he was a taekwondo state representative so had guessed that his training would be an intensive course in taekwondo techniques. But Lee Myung-Ryong only trained him in taekwondo for 15 minutes. The rest was all training the basic physical strength and sparring. The spars against the athletes were also unrelated to taekwondo. But Lee Myung-ryong had a firm belief for that part.

“Do you want to exercise to show a nice kick in front of your girlfriend? Or do you want to become stronger?”

“To become stronger.....I’d like to.”

“Then the taekwondo posture isn’t necessary. Because you won’t become strong with that type of practice. Strong training should be hands on experience. This situation is also going to get worse.”

Anyway, the final stage of his training was leg exercises. After stretching his legs, the final boss Lee Myung-ryong emerged.

He was able to judge the situation with the boxer and wrestler to some extent. At least they were people. However, Lee Myung-ryong wasn’t a person. Hyun-woo had to experience many times the hell that was his attacks, which battered him like a storm. There were times when he really thought that he was about to die. But Lee Myung-ryong just spoke with a smirk.

“The thing that people call the human body. It is surprisingly well made. It doesn’t die easily. And once it is broken, it becomes even stronger.”

The ideas of the mad scientist were always terrifying. Since then, he seemed to have adapted a little bit to the pain. And at that time, Hyun-woo realized that Lee Myung-ryong’s training schedule wasn’t something he had just guessed at and threw together.

‘It is similar to taekwondo. Taekwondo uses kicks but the important thing isn’t the strength in the legs. The movement of the upper body is more important. Boxing uses fist but that wasn’t all it uses. The movement of the waist and legs is more important when punching.’

Although he wouldn’t be able to spar against a boxer if he couldn’t move his arms, Hyun-woo learned how to move his waist and the steps. It was the same for wrestling. Although it only seemed to rely on the waist, the proper techniques wouldn’t be able to be used just relying only on waist power. If the power was in the lower back, he would be able to use techniques with natural posture. But even though he understood that with his head, his wrestling and boxing capabilities didn’t increase. He had no choice but to become a rice cake as he learnt with his body.

“That’s the guy? The pitiful guy that was taken by you?”

While Hyun-woo was sparring with the former wrestler again, one of the SWAT team members asked Lee Myung-ryong. Lee Myung-ryong smiled and nodded his head.

“Yes, he is working hard to be remodelled.”

“Although it has been several days, he is holding up well. It seems he is able to digest quite a lot of physical strength exercises.....Are you trying to train him to make it stick in his mind? You are.....”

“Stop saying unnecessary things.....”

Lee Myung-ryong frowned at the words, causing the member to flinch. To the SWAT team members, Lee Myung-ryong was a frightening person.

“How is it? Do you see any talent?”

“Do you think I’m a psychic? That one look would let me know whether he has talent?”

“What the? Then do you have to practice with someone to tell their talent?”

“I don’t know how to see talent like you.” I don’t believe that, but there is one thing that I know.”

Lee Myung-ryong looked at Ark who was getting flattened on the mat and said in a low voice.

“It depends on whether that guy is able to endure or not.

‘The road to become a Superman is steep and far.’

Hyun-woo led his unsteady body out of the gymnasium. He exercised at the gym for 2 hours every day. The time that he trained with the team was similar to when he exercised alone. No, if it was increased any more than he would’ve surely died. Anyway, even if Hyun-woo made up his mind to concentrate on movements for longer, his stamina was limited.

When he exited the gym, he saw on the clock that it was 5 p.m. The next fight was at 9 p.m. so 4 hours still remained. If he connected immediately then he would be able to concentrate on hunting in the Forest of Souls for 3 hours. Hyun-woo soon changed his mind.

No, since teacher Lee Myung-ryong changed the training time there has been no opportunity to visit my mother. During a quest it is hectic so I would have no time to visit, so I should visit her when I train in the afternoon. No matter how important the game is I can’t neglect my mother.’

Hyun-woo immediately visited the hospital carrying a basket of fruit. After his mother finished her rehabilitation, her wheelchair came into the garden.

“These days the time seems to pass quickly.”

His mother said with a bright look. Although she should be tired since her rehabilitation just finished, she showed no signs of it. Hyun-Woo wanted to let her enjoy the time so she would forget the fatigue. After seeing his mother, he was sorry that he hadn't visited in a while.

“I'm sorry I haven't been frequently visiting.”

“Don't say such a silly thing.”

His mother shook her head.

“Do you think I'm a child? Even if you don't say anything, I know you've been having a hard time. It is not necessary to come visit a sick person. I just.....want you to do what you want for a little while. Do you understand?”

“Then I'll do that.”

“You're not skipping meals?”

“Yes, I eat until I'm full.”

“But somehow I think you've become a little bit haggard. You also didn't have those wounds before, perhaps.....?”

His mother said as she looked at Hyun-woo's face. Even though he wore protective gear when sparring, there were times when his movements were rough and he received bruises. Although his face didn't hurt, it probably looked like it did.

“I’m okay, please don’t think unnecessary things. It’s because these days I’ve started training again.”

Hyun-woo scratched his head with an embarrassed expression. Prepare rice to eat and be careful. At one time he would’ve only heard it as a boring lecture.

When he had gotten tired of his mother’s lecture, he became rebellious and acted out. However, that memory was painful now. When he had been unable to listen to the nagging anymore, he realized that the nagging was a precious part of his normal life. And hearing her say those words now warmed his heart.

“You lost weight. Are you eating your rice?”

Those were his mother’s first words upon waking up in the ICU. It seemed that all she could see was the form of a child who became thin and wasn’t able to lift a finger to help himself. That was his mother. It was his mother that Hyun-woo would love for his entire life.

“Yes, I listened to Detective Gwon’s words. He said you were attending the police agency’s gym. Although.....it is good for your health to exercise, you must be careful not to get injured. Well, Detective Gwon told me that his junior is looking after you so I don’t have to worry.....”

“Hmm, you’re speaking quite freely about Detective Gwon. Did you want to see him more than me? Should I call? He would come like a knife if I called.”

“This guy, what are you saying? Because I don’t think he would go that far just for me.....”

“Ohuhuhu, are you turning red? Is my mother going to take the name Gwon?”

“You’re becoming cheekier.”

“I should let ajusshi know.”

Hyun-woo smirked as he looked for a suitable bench to sit down on. As soon as he sat down, his mother took out some apples.

“Do you want an apple? I’ll cut it for you.”

“No. I’ll do it.”

His mother shook her head and starting cutting the apples with her free hands. Although Hyun-woo was worried, he just watched and was surprised at her skilful hand movements.

It was because he understood his mother’s sentiment. Whenever he saw that look, Hyun-woo was reminded of several years ago. His mother was often on the boundaries of life and death in the ICU.....the doctors at that time gave up on his mother. There’s an 80% chance she will either die or become a vegetable, they said in a cruel voice. Hyun-woo didn’t have the courage to watch his mother die so he threw himself into the nightlife. However, his mother’s status dramatically improved. It was from the time Gwon Hwa-rang dragged him to his mother and he spent the entire night beside her praying. The doctors called it a miracle. Hyun-Woo thought so too. But he now knew. It wasn’t a miracle or a coincidence.

‘Why is my home this poor?’

During his school days, Hyun-woo used to think that his house was quite poor. His other friends changed their cell phones whenever a new model came out, or would buy lots of clothes. There was also another friend who went to study abroad during junior high. On the other hand, Hyun-woo would buy new clothes every few months. He would buy clothes that cost 200,000 won at most.....why was he so poor? That was what he thought. But after the accident, Hyun-woo realized how young he was. At that time, Hyun-woo had to travel around to the houses of the victims’ families to give compensation as well as pay for his mother’s hospital bills. Even when Hyun-woo asked for help from his relatives, he only received cold, contemptuous looks in return. After they abandoned him, he sold some household furniture to try and make some money and discovered a bankbook in a cabinet. There were 5 bankbooks that combined added up to 100 million won. However, they weren’t under his father or mother’s name. It was the insurance and savings under Hyun-woo’s name.

His father received a monthly salary of 4 million won, and he put half of it in a savings account under Hyun-woo’s name for 10 years. For 10 years, his father and mother would wear old clothes while buying meat and new clothes for Hyun-woo.

'Do you know how guilty I feel?'

That day, Hyun-woo hugged the bankbooks to him and cried all night long. His parents were strong. This also caused the child to become strong. The reason his mother got up every day was because of that. At 17 years old, Hyun-woo realized that simple fact at last. The same was true for now as well. He didn't move his hand even when her fingers started shaking on the knife. It was something that he would've once considered useless stubbornness, but now Hyun-woo knew. Even though it might seem insignificant, it was an important job that his mother wanted to do. And she finally recovered enough to directly cut the apples. The reason that his mother might be able to endure such a tough rehabilitation was because she wanted to do such trivial things. When he thought about that, his chest started throbbing. Hyun-woo erased the thought and quickly changed the subject.

"But is Gwon ajusshi stopping in frequently?"

"Is this guy hanging around just to tease his mum?"

"No. I haven't seen him in a few days that's why I'm asking."

There had been no contact between Gwon Hwa-rang and the rehabilitation members since they started searching for the thieves.

"Yes, he comes every other day. But your movements have changed a lot. Also your expression has brightened considerably.....I'll wait and see how much you get injured before judging. What did you do to get that guy to favour you?"

"I have to be attentive even if I'm not your father."

"I can't hear anything."

"Mother, that's not the sound of a joke. I'm also not a child. It isn't necessary to worry about me. Mother also knows what kind of person Detective Gwon is.

“You’re giving me that speech even though I’m considerably older.”

“My mother is still beautiful. That’s why Detective Gwon fell for the whole package.”

“Let’s stop talking about him.”

Hyun-woo spoke so seriously that his mother blushed and didn’t know what to do. She seemed like a young girl again and looked quite cute. Then, his mother suddenly asked him with a curious look.

“Why are you laughing about this?”

“Yes? What?”

“Your girlfriend. Aren’t you going to formally introduce her to your mother or are you just keeping her hidden?”

“A girlfriend? Eh, I don’t have one.”

“I’ve met her already so why are you lying?”

“Yes? Met?”

Hyun-woo asked with a stunned expression.

“I can’t believe she hasn’t told you yet. Your girlfriend visited the hospital room yesterday evening with some porridge. She looked very nice. Her name is Jung Hye-sun yes?”

“H, Hye-sung?”

Hyun-woo's eyes widened. Jung Hye-sun approximately knew Hyun-woo's circumstances. But he hadn't said that his mother was hospitalized or told her the name of the hospital. However, it wasn't difficult to know that it was Gwon Hwa-rang and the rehabilitation group who told her.

"Mother, since you haven't been very forthcoming with mother.....mother was relieved."

"Yes? You're relieved?"

"You never wanted to discuss girls or any problems you had with them."

"It's not that. Hye-sung is just like a younger sister to me."

His mother sent him a coy look and laughed.

"Originally I considered your dad as an oppa as well. Then we became your mother and father."

"It really isn't like that."

"Ho ho ho, I understand. You don't have to be embarrassed. Mother understands everything."

"It's the truth. Mother doesn't understand....."

"Then I'll act like I don't know. Let's finish it here. There is an empty container in the hospital room so bring it with you when you leave. Understand? If Hyun-woo is good then mother will be okay. Fighting!"

His mother raised her clenched fist. She had made up her mind and was determined to misunderstand.

7 p.m. It was the time that Jung Hye-sun would start her part time job. Hyun-woo had made an appointment with her before walking to meet her. He had been at the meeting place for 30 minutes and was pacing up and down with a distant look.

“Wow, I’m impressed with Oppa. I wasn’t expecting you to call and ask to meet up.”

“My mother told me to return this.....”

Hyun-woo said as he extended his bag. It was the first time they had seen each other in reality after Gwon Hwa-rang tricked him into going on a date. Even though he called and asked to meet outside, he didn’t know what to say.....

“Eh? Did Oppa just come from the hospital?”

“How did you know about the hospital?”

Hyun-woo asked in a deliberately brusque voice. Then Jung Hye-sun shrank slightly and replied in a small voice.

“I heard from Gwon Hwa-rang ajusshi.”

Damn, it was just like he thought. That fox wearing the mask of a bear!

“Actually.....I said that I would go together with oppa but Gwon Hwa-rang said it wouldn’t be good for your mother’s heart if I didn’t go with the oppas who helped me prepare the porridge. Sorry. Are you angry?”

He didn’t want to hear her apologize. No, quite the opposite.

Of course, it was a little bit taxing but the first thing he thought of when he heard his mother say Jung Hye-sun's name was thank you. After the accident, his relatives never visited so his mother was always alone. The only people that came to visit her were Gwon Hwa-rang and Hyun-woo. But now someone else has come. It was a person related to Hyun-woo.....Hyun-woo was secretly worried about his mother and welcomed other guests. Perhaps that was why he was in an exceptionally good mood today. Hyun-woo scratched his head before shaking it.

"No, I'm not upset. Although I am a little embarrassed."

"Yes? What?"

"That.....My mother fell ill. It isn't something to be proud about."

Hyun-woo had never thought about his mother while he was embarrassed. But many people had heard Hyun-woo's circumstances and sympathized. He didn't want that. Perhaps that was another reason he hadn't told Jung Hye-sun about his situation. But Jung Hye-sun hurriedly said.

"I don't care about such things. Actually, I thought Oppa was really wonderful after I heard about your mother. Really. My impression of Oppa just improves even more....."

Jung Hye-sun was surprised at her words and closed her mouth. Her voice rang loudly through the area. People passing by looked back startled while some couples giggled and whispered together. But it was Jung Hye-sun's reaction that was more interesting. He would've thought blushing was the normal reaction, but Jung Hye-sun just held her head up high and said.

"What are you looking at? Is my Oppa so wonderful?"

"Omo, what is with her?"

Although some women gave her amazed glances, Jung Hye-sun didn't even react. Hyun-woo was different and blushed as the eyes in the vicinity looked at him.

“Come on. Oppa.”

Jung Hye-sun took Hyun-woo’s arm and walked off.

“Ah, that was embarrassing.”

‘Was her original character like this?’

Hyun-woo was stunned for a short time. The Jung Hye-sun he knew was a timid girl who didn’t speak a lot, loved instruments and shed tears as the assistant section chief. Thanks to that, Hyun-woo had only thought of Jung Hye-sun as a little sister. But now he didn’t know if his impression was right. The Jung Hye-sun Hyun woo met outside was more active, tough.....and pretty.

‘This guy, what am I thinking?’

Her side profile of a raised lip and eyes were surprisingly pretty. However, there was no man who didn’t know that such a secret must be hidden. Technically, this was the first time that Hyun-woo had asked her out. Naturally, Jung Hye-sun paid attention to her outfit and make-up and was fairly nervous. There was a legend that said once women finished being made up, there was a 150% boost and women would become more daring than usual.

“Can I visit the hospital again?”

Jung Hye-sun suddenly threw a straight pitch! No matter how much Hyun-woo thought, it wasn’t a question that he could easily answer. It was an answer that he would normally refuse. However, under the effects of the 150% appearance boost, women were invincible. Hyun-woo nodded as he missed the timing to refuse.

“If mother is okay with it.....then I don’t care.

“I’m glad. I thought I would have to visit secretly if Oppa said no.”

“What?”

“Ho ho ho, nothing. Anyway, today Oppa has walked me to my part time job. The guy that I work together with often teases me. If I go with Oppa then it won’t be like that from now on.”

“Why don’t I meet with him? Do you know? He might be a surprisingly good guy.”

“What?”

Jung Hye-sun raised an eyebrow and stared.

“I’m kidding, kidding. Okay, I’ll escort you there.”

“Bah, I won’t bring a soup next time.”

Jung Hye-sun turned her head with an annoyed face. Usually it was more than this. After it was decided, Hyun-woo was dragged off to the convenience store.

“So I’ll take this and go. I have to be connected to the game in 1