

Gourmet 1001

Chapter 1001

When Minhyuk heard through the notifications that Rocado was in a critical situation, he did not waste any time and immediately rushed to where the Eight Pillar was.

‘If Rocado dies, then I won’t be able to receive any other rewards.’ This thought flashed in Minhyuk’s head. When he arrived, he was greeted by the sight of Herakel crying in front of Rocado, who had already collapsed on the ground and was on the brink of death.

The collapsed Rocado was mumbling something unintelligible. “Ten thousand paintings... Eirin, I want to see you again... The God of Death is not easy to talk to...”

Minhyuk looked at Rocado in confusion as the man, sporting a dreary smile, continued to mumble to himself. However, mentioning the “God of Death” caught Minhyuk’s attention.

Minhyuk had met the God of Death Louis before. He also knew that this dark, dreary, and dull god held a beloved woman named Hella dearly in his heart.

“Rocado, dying! Minhyuk, help!” Herakel cried out to Minhyuk.

Minhyuk slowly approached the mumbling Rocado. He had various divine potions made by God of Alchemy Mandala in his inventory. However, Minhyuk realized, *‘Even if Rocado drinks these potions, he will still die.’*

Even if God of Alchemy Mandala made the potions he had on hand, that did not mean they were omnipotent. A potion was more like a trauma treatment and could not be used to treat a disease. Of course, the *pain potion* that Mandala had created not only had the power to reduce the pains accompanying whatever disease they had gradually but also had the power to prolong life.

Minhyuk gently fed Rocado the pain potion.

Glug, glug, glug—

‘He won’t be able to get back up right away after taking this potion.’

The pain potion was different from ordinary potions. Its power would slowly and gradually reduce the pain, often taking a few days to take full effect. However, as mentioned before, it was only a potion that could extend life for a bit longer.

“Fwaa...”

The pained expression on Rocado’s face straightened out. He looked more comfortable after drinking the potion. As he grew more relaxed, his unintelligible murmurs gradually grew more apparent.

“I miss you. I miss you so much, Eirin.”

“...”

Minhyuk looked down at Rocado. “Do you want to meet her that badly?”

Only after hearing Rocado’s murmurs did Minhyuk realize why he hid his existence from the world. It was because he wanted to paint. And he has been painting countless portraits of *her* for a very long time just to get to see her again.

Rocado’s head slowly leaned to the side. Amazingly, he could still convey what he wanted, even when standing between life and death.

Minhyuk said, “I can let you meet her.”

That may have been the case. After all, Minhyuk was the only god with a bit of favorability with God of Death Louis. Of course, it would still be challenging for Minhyuk, too.

“However, there are things that I want you to do for me instead. I want you to make the decorations for my temple. Build a statue in my likeness, paint my portrait, and make samples of my artifacts.”

“Al... right... as... long as I... can... meet her...”

However, Minhyuk just grinned. He knew that he was talking to a delighted man. At that moment, he recalled something.

“And...”

Minhyuk stared at Rocado. He had fought with Rocado during the Restriction of Frustration and knew full well that he was indeed the best regarding things related to DEX. He also could tell that he would never be able to find anyone else in the world who could surpass him when it came to DEX.

Because of that, he said, “Cook the Pillar Ingredient for me.”

Minhyuk usually would cook the ingredients that he obtained by himself. But this time, it was different.

‘This is a dish that Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado would make.’

And it would even be made from one of the Pillar Ingredients. Minhyuk had tried to cook various God-grade ingredients and found that multiple factors always hindered him. Minhyuk judged that the Pillar Ingredient would likely be like that and would not be less.

Since that was the case, there was a chance that Minhyuk would not meet the conditions and be unable to cook the Pillar Ingredient. That was why he asked Rocado to do it for him instead.

“Al... right...”

Ring!

[Sudden Quest: Rocado and Eirin's Reunion.]

Rank: SSS

Requirement: The one who received Rocado's request.

Rewards: Rocado will cook the Pillar Ingredient for you. Other rewards cannot be confirmed yet.

Penalty for Failure

: Favorability with Rocado will drop

Description: Rocado wants to meet with his departed lover, Eirin, for one last time. He had tried to meet her by painting ten thousand portraits of Eirin. But with only a few days left to live, he could no longer do so. Help Rocado reunite with Eirin using all means possible. Because you have negotiated with a delirious Rocado, only the reward 'Rocado will cook the Pillar Ingredient for you' has been recognized. The other rewards would depend on Rocado's choice. Minhyuk nodded. According to the explanation, it would be up to Rocado if he would help him complete his new temple. Then, Minhyuk looked at the tower rising in the sky.

[Tower built by Rocado.]

[This tower built by Rocado is filled with 3,313 God-grade items, 32,310 legendary-grade items, and 3,107,897 epic-grade items.]

[The tower built by Rocado would soon become his life's masterpiece.]

He had already felt it before but was again reminded of how crazy Rocado was.

'He made 3,300 God-grade items by himself?'

Perhaps he had created more than tens of thousands of items that weren't here.

'Maybe this will be the easiest and most comfortable quest that I will do.'

After all, Minhyuk knew of a straightforward way to negotiate with the God of Death.

“Rocado, will it be fine if I tell the God of Death that you will paint a portrait for him?”

Rocado nodded his head in his unconscious state.

Minhyuk, who was about to turn around, stopped in his tracks. “By the way, what's the Pillar Ingredient?”

Rocado automatically answered, “It's Snow Crab.”

“...?!”

Minhyuk's eyes grew wide from shock. Even his hands started to tremble.

'Woah, shit. Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado will make Steamed Snow Crab and many other snow crab dishes for me?'

The thought was enough to make Minhyuk's mouth water. He hurriedly turned around to go and meet with the God of Death. But at that moment, a notification rang in his ears.

[You can now view the video about Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado and Eirin.]

[Do you want to watch it?]

Minhyuk was very curious about why Rocado wanted to meet this woman named Eirin so severely, so he immediately agreed.

At the same time, the scene in front of Minhyuk changed.

[There was an extremely ordinary boy who wanted to become a knight but could not do so because he lacked the skills.]

"Why can't I...?!"

[The boy worked harder than anybody else, yet he could not pass even the most basic soldier's examination.]

[He scored exceptionally in his physical and stamina tests, but when it came to fighting and sparring against another... he failed. Every. Single. Time.]

[It was because he was a coward.]

"Why do I shake and tremble when standing before others?"

[He was so frustrated that he cried every single day.]

Although the boy had a greater physical condition than anybody else, he still lacked the qualities and qualifications to become a soldier and a knight.

A girl approached the crying boy. She said, "It's alright, Rocado. You're cool and amazing enough."

[The girl was none other than Rocado's childhood friend, Eirin.]

[She always stood by Rocado's side, consoling him every day.]

[When he failed the examination the following year...]

"I'm a useless bastard. I can't do anything."

"That's not true, Rocado."

"I want to do something big and contribute to my nation, too!"

"...If that's the case, then... Why don't you use your excellent techniques?"

[Until that moment, the boy was completely unaware of his skills. He just thought that he was slightly better than others regarding techniques.]

“You don’t have to win a war to contribute to your nation.”

With those words, Rocado ventured down a different path and began to make something. When he started making things in earnest, Rocado realized something: his hands-on skills were *exceptional*.

He manufactured weapons that were far more outstanding than the weapons created by the best blacksmith in the kingdom. He even painted a portrait that was far more beautiful than the painting painted by the most excellent painter in the empire. Then, the world began to recognize his feats.

One day, he suddenly realized that he had grown famous.

“Aren’t you tired, Rocado?”

However, Rocado knew.

[The girl continued to stand beside the boy.]

Even when he was a nobody.

[She was always together with him.]

Even after he gained everyone's respect.

[She was always with me.]

Rocado, who grew up from that young boy to an experienced man, knew this was love. And he had always taken it for granted.

Then, Rocado said, “Eirin, will you marry me?”

[The two became a couple.]

Minhyuk continued to watch the couple’s story. The scenes of them together flashed by at an incredible speed.

The two laughed together while eating and held hands while walking. They stood side by side even when dozens of kings and emperors rushed to meet with Rocado. And even though Rocado had already become the object of admiration of the world's people, he could only lower his head in front of Eirin as she nagged at him.

It sounded too ordinary for a love story with one of the Eight Pillars as the protagonist, but because of its ordinariness, it felt more beautiful.

“Rocado, I want to have a child with you.”

But, of course, the two also faced hardships and trials.

[She could not carry a baby.]

Even so, Rocado held her hand and nodded to tell her it was okay.

One day, when the two were walking around the imperial capital, they saw a tiny child. The child looked like he was only around five years old, yet he was fighting fiercely against dozens of beggar children. The child, who was as strong as a bull, knocked out a dozen children surrounding him.

Eirin and Rocado could not understand the situation. Why were those children bullying this small child? Eirin, with a bright smile, approached the child and said, "What's your name?"

"Herakel. My name, Herakel!"

[The two finally had a child together.]

Rocado's excellent talent was enough to intimidate others. But Herakel was different. Although he grew slower than ordinary children, Herakel was dependable as a child.

Once again, time flew by.

The wrinkles on Eirin's face started to grow. On the other hand, Rocado remained the same.

"I'm sorry, Eirin. There are far too many people in the world who need me."

He ate the Herb of Immortality. Eirin, who had now become a middle-aged woman, only smiled and said that it was fine.

Again, time flew by.

The video showed Herakel growing bigger and bigger while Rocado remained the same. As for Eirin? She grew older, her skin getting more wrinkled as she aged. In the end, Eirin, who had become an old lady, lay in her bed and said her final words to Rocado and Herakel before slowly closing her eyes and lying in eternal rest.

"..."

The video ended just like that.

Then, Minhyuk went to the God of Death. However, the moment he appeared, he was immediately surrounded by many troops. He even told Eirin and Rocado's story to God of Death Louis.

"Isn't that such an ordinary and obvious ending to the story?"

The God of Death had received Minhyuk's grace before. But he had already given rewards and compensations for all of them. Because of that, he also confronted Minhyuk, who was asking for his help.

“That’s right. It is a very common story.” Minhyuk shook his head, a bitter smile on his face. “They aged together while the other one died. The one who is left behind misses the departed one.”

It was a typical and familiar story.

“But for that reason, it can also be considered the saddest story.”

“...”

“It’s something that anyone can experience. Although Rocado’s case is a bit different since he ate the Herb of Immortality, you can say that everyone still has to go through it. And, of course, everyone always had one wish.”

“...”

“Before I die, I hope to meet them again.”

Minhyuk understood everything after watching Eirin and Rocado’s story.

“Isn’t that the most beautiful and saddest story?”

Because everyone could experience it, Minhyuk smiled bitterly as he watched God of Death Louis turn silent.

Then, the God of Death, who had remained silent for a long time, opened his mouth and said, “Will Hella’s statue that Rocado will make for me be beautiful?”

Ultimately, God of Death Louis also had an ordinary love story with Hella.

Minhyuk nodded. “It will be the most beautiful thing in the world.”

Rocado looked at Eirin, who had returned to her youthful appearance, in disbelief as she stroked his cheeks.

He could see a gloomy man wearing a tattered black robe standing beside the man named Minhyuk right behind Eirin.

Tears dripped down Rocado’s eyes. That was right. This was the most common and ordinary love story. And just like anybody else, Rocado only wanted to say one last word to his departed lover. Rocado finally spat out the words that he had kept in his heart for a very long time.

“Thank you.”

For being with me and staying by my side.

Chapter 1002

Many people shared many regrets. One was letting the precious people by their side go without doing them any better. For some, it was not being able to eat

another meal with them. For others, it was taking them for granted when they were still around. Because of that, they would often live their lives in regret.

Everyone would at least have *regrets* like that. Or if one did not have them yet, they would experience them one day. What would they always want to say if given the chance to meet the person who left their side?

“Thank you.”

That was what Rocado said. It was a shout of gratitude to her for choosing to stay by his side for the rest of her life.

Thank you for living your life as my wife.

Eirin held Rocado tightly. “Idiot. I can’t believe you ate four more Herb of Immortality so that you can meet me again. Do you know how stupid that was?”

She wept as she gently cradled Rocado in her arms.

A faint smile appeared on Minhyuk’s face when he saw how happy Rocado was in Eirin’s arms.

“And what’s this? What clothes are you wearing? I don’t think I ever bought you brown clothes...”

Murmur, murmur—

“Goodness? What is this messy hairstyle?”

Murmur, murmur—

“This is why you can’t live without me, Rocado...”

At this moment, Minhyuk realized that Eirin was a terrible nagger. Despite being nagged non-stop, Rocado looked genuinely(?) happy in her arms.

“It’s been a hundred years since I last received your nagging. I’m so happy to see you.” Rocado, who missed even her nagging, hugged Eirin tightly.

“He— Herakel wants to go too.”

Herakel seemed to want to be held by Eirin, too. Herakel immediately ran to her when he saw Eirin spread her arms wide. She patted Herakel gently.

“Urk...!” Rocado coughed another mouthful of blood.

Herakel and Eirin both looked at him in shock.

“Are you alright?”

“Ro— Rocado still hurts a lot!”

Despite their worries, Rocado ignored the blood and just turned to look at Minhyuk with a bitter look. He said, “I have another favor to ask you.”

Minhyuk nodded.

“Can I ask you to take care of Herakel for me?”

“...!”

Minhyuk was quite surprised. God of Strength Herakel was a strong and powerful man. Although he was a bit short in the intelligence department, his addition would certainly be of great help to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

‘The Herakel of today only knows how to club his opponents indiscriminately. But what if he learns some swordsmanship or martial arts skills?’

He was already speechless at the thought. Perhaps his explosive power might be comparable to Brod’s power.

However, Rocado had many worries. Could Herakel get along with ordinary people? Eirin was also thinking about this.

Minhyuk nodded. “I see. Don’t worry too much. There is someone in Beyond the Heavens Empire who will get close to Herakel quickly.”

The one that he was talking about was none other than Conir. Minhyuk believed Conir and Herakel would hit it off and become best friends.

‘Maybe they’ll even sell ramyeon together?’

Eirin looked at Rocado sadly. “Is there any way for Rocado and me to stay together in Hell?”

She already knew that Rocado was on the brink of death.

“I’m sorry for asking you for a lot of favors.”

Minhyuk chuckled bitterly. Then, he remembered something. The confirmed quest rewards only stated, *‘Rocado will cook the Pillar Ingredient for you.’* The statues, portraits, sample artifacts, and the likes of Evangel were not noted. So, Minhyuk told Rocado about Evangel.

Then, Rocado said, “I’ll do it. No, I will give it my all when making it.”

Rocado was very grateful to Minhyuk. After all, he wouldn’t be able to meet Eirin again if it weren’t for him.

“Will the God of Death allow it?”

The God of Death was known as the world's gloomiest, dreariest, most vicious, and grumpy god. It was well-known that the God of Death’s relationship with the Battle God was not so good. The fact that the two gods had appeared in this situation was already very shocking.

Minhyuk said, “Don’t worry. I’m very close with the God of Death.”

It was just like how Herakel bragged to him before. He quietly approached the God of Death, who had been watching the scene silently.

“...”

But when he reached him, he could not open his mouth.

“...”

To be honest, Minhyuk was also very scared. He clearly remembered what happened earlier. Hundreds of thousands of Death Corps surrounded him with overflowing killing intent!

Then, the God of Death suddenly moved.

Screech!

Minhyuk stopped in shock.

Rocado and Eirin, who saw the scene, thought simultaneously, *‘I don’t think they’re very close at all, though...?’*

The God of Death said, “I have been promised a statue of my beloved lover, Hella. If you can make one that satisfies me, then I will send you to the same hell. If not...”

God of Death Louis turned to look at Minhyuk. His eyes, which were devoid of emotion, seemed to say, *‘I’m going to tear you apart and kill you.’*

‘They don’t look that close?’

Rocado nodded as he slowly raised his body.

“About her features...”

“No. Please let me see her through you. Can you please reach out your hand to me?”

The God of Death nodded as he touched Rocado with his fingertip.

“I see. Your love is just as beautiful.”

[Rocado has understood the story between the God of Death and Hella.]

When making things related to DEX, the most important thing was how well one could capture the story about the subject. And Rocado was one of many who had outstanding dexterity. Several hands immediately appeared as Rocado triggered his Hand of Almighty. The hands held various tools for making sculptures, and they immediately started to carve.

Hella had spent a very long time alone just so Louis, the God of Death, could live in a place filled with warmth and vitality. And the God of Death? He loved Hella dearly.

The statue in front of Rocado slowly started to take shape. Hella and Louis shared the promise that they would be born as normal human beings in their next life. That was what took shape in front of him. The statue depicted the old and wrinkled figures of Louis and Hella. The two of them held hands tightly and looked at each other with small smiles.

[You have completed the statue: Ordinary Life.]

[It is a shocking statue that goes beyond God-grade.]

[You have an outstanding level of understanding about the protagonists of the statue, Louis and Hella.]

The God of Death was shocked that Rocado could create a full-sized version of his and Hella's old selves. And the slight smile on their faces? He could see that it fully showed their promise to meet again.

"Not bad."

However, this was the only review that Louis gave. However, contrary to his words, there was a tiny and faint smile on his face. In other words, he had fully permitted Eirin and Rocado to go together and enter the same place in hell.

Minhyuk trembled when he saw this.

'A person like this—' He gulped dryly '—will make my statue, portraits, and sample artifacts?'

He was already looking forward to it. Of course, Rocado immediately tried to fulfill his promise. He showed the *ingredient* that he promised to Minhyuk.

"This is the ingredient."

(Pillar Snow Crab)

Ingredient Grade: Pillar

Special Abilities:

- All of your stats will increase by 3.5%.
- Your DEX will increase by 11%.
- When making items related to DEX, you will obtain a 5% increase in the item's special effects.
- Your resistance to Water Attribute will increase by 22%.
- Your attack and defensive power will increase by 15% when fighting against water-attributed monsters.
- Cooking this ingredient will be much trickier and harder than God-grade ingredients.

Description: *This snow crab, the Pillar of the Sea, is a challenging ingredient to cook. Even the slightest mistake during the cooking process will result in a lower yield and a decrease in all special abilities.*

“...!”

It was an outstanding ingredient. When he saw the description, Minhyuk immediately knew, *‘It’s not an ingredient within my capabilities. I don’t think I will be able to cook it.’*

According to the description, it was much trickier and more complex to cook than God-grade ingredients.

It had to be known that a snow crab’s yield was significant. If there were a poor yield, there would be little meat in the legs once the shell had been peeled off.

There was also one fact that stood out to Minhyuk.

‘Pillar of the Sea?’

Minhyuk turned to Rocado and asked, “By any chance, is this snow crab the cooking ingredient representing the sea?”

Rocado nodded. “That’s right. There are pillar ingredients that represent the land, the sea and the air. There might be many more. But I am not aware if they truly exist.”

Minhyuk trembled when he heard Rocado’s words. Why? Because it meant that there were still Pillar Ingredients representing the land and the air that were available. Of course, Minhyuk first used the Seeds of Revolution on the Pillar Snow Crab before letting Rocado cook it. With this, he now had secured a total of two seeds.

Rocado no longer had anything urgent to do. He already had the assurance that he would be with Eirin in hell. All that was left was for him to repay Minhyuk. Not long after, Rocado started to deal with the snow crab.

[As you start to cook, the Sea Leech has begun to nibble and suck at the Pillar Ingredient.]

At that moment, dozens of unknown black leeches appeared and stuck to the snow crab.

[If you fail to remove the Sea Leech properly, the snow crab will receive bruises and scratches.]

“Look at these things.” Rocado looked at the leeches incredulously. However, the leeches had already attached their mouths to the hard shell of the snow crab.

‘Those leeches... Even if I can touch them, I don’t think I can take them off.’

No matter how Minhyuk looked at them, he could not see any semblance of an ordinary leech. However, Rocado, who had summoned his Hands of Almighty once again, began to remove the leeches accurately and adequately.

[You have removed the Sea Leeches with outstanding skills.]

[The snow crab is left in a pristine condition.]

Like that, the Pillar Ingredient presented various methods to stop Rocado from cooking it. However, Rocado’s skilled hands moved swiftly and easily removed every obstacle. Finally, he finished washing the crabs clean. After cleaning, he placed the crab in the steamer and made steamed snow crab. He even made some snow crab ramyeon, which was only made with regular snow crab.

And while doing all this, Rocado’s real hands remained still. The only ones moving were the hands created by his Hand of Almighty.

As he waited, Rocado looked at Minhyuk and thought, *‘I no longer have any regrets in this world.’*

And it was all thanks to Minhyuk. Even his worries about Herakel had been taken care of by this man. When he thought about it, he realized something.

‘I have received a lot from him.’

Of course, he had already promised to help Minhyuk to complete his temple. After pondering the matter, he thought, *‘That would be good.’*

Nodding, he walked before Minhyuk and said, “Here, this is my gift to you.”

Something appeared on the palm of Rocado’s hand. It was a symbol of a hand holding a gem. This exact symbol appeared on Minhyuk’s ankle.

[You have received the blessings of one of the Eight Pillars, Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado.]

[Your DEX has increased by 5%.]

[You have gained 2,000 REP.]

[You have obtained the Automatic Skill Creation Right for a skill related to DEX.]

[The Automatic Skill Creation Right will observe you and create a suitable skill.]

[Rocado’s power is observing you.]

There was also the reward that Rocado had promised Minhyuk before.

“What artifact do you want me to reinforce?”

“The Sword of Aeon.”

Rocado’s absolute power, which could reinforce an artifact once without fail, was now showing itself.

Minhyuk placed the Sword of Aeon, the greatest sword in the world, in Rocado's hands.

[The Sword of Aeon has been successfully reinforced!]

Rocado, who had observed Minhyuk, was able to confirm something.

‘He...’

He's an Eight Pillar Candidate? It was a shocking fact. Why? Because the Eight Pillars was a title that not even the gods wanted to become.

Rocado stared at Minhyuk. Then, with a solemn look, he mentioned the most crucial fact. “The Eight Pillars are those who support the world.”

Of course, Minhyuk knew this already.

Then, Rocado chuckled bitterly and said, “And... my seat will soon become vacant.”

[One of the Eight Pillars, Rocado, would soon die. He has chosen you as the successor to the Eight Pillar.]

[A commotion has broken out among the Eight Pillars.]

[The Eight Pillars are trying to find a new successor to the Eight Pillars.]

“And you...”

[Rocado's power protects the new successor to the Eight Pillars from the other Eight Pillars.]

“...will become one of the pillars of the world.”

Chapter 1003

*[Your **Title**: Candidate for Eight Pillars has been changed.]*

*[You have acquired the **Title**: Eight Pillar's Successor.]*

When Minhyuk heard the notifications, he looked at Rocado in shock. Rocado just chuckled. He had secretly checked the crystal ball while steaming the snow crab.

Through the crystal ball, Rocado could check what happened during the Cave of Restriction's final trial, the Restriction of Frustration. Of course, Rocado had only seen a part of the process and the results. However, what he had seen left him in shock and awe.

‘Just because one is a God does not mean that one could have a stronger mental strength and that they could endure and tolerate pain.’

No. Because he was a god, he would feel more frustrated at the fact that he could not do it, and it would make him give up faster. But this young man before Rocado could go through the trial and finish it with remarkable patience. It was truly shocking, especially since he was the Battle God.

‘I think the only person that can replace me is... him.’

However, there were other reasons why Rocado was convinced that the only one who could replace him was Minhyuk.

‘I did not expect he would win against me in the Restriction of Frustration.’

Of course, the Restriction of Frustration temporarily gave Minhyuk greater strength the longer he persevered. However, no matter how high his power had been temporarily raised, Rocado knew well that no one should have been able to exceed his score. In the first place, he had already *passed the test*.

‘The Food God becoming an Eight Pillar... it’s not so bad.’

Helenia was the Pillar of Magic.

Athenae was the Pillar of Everyone’s Support.

Rocado was the Pillar of Creating Something.

Kronad was the Pillar of the Holy Ones.

Obren was the Pillar of the Evil Ones, also known as the Pillar of Knowledge.

Then, the Pillar of Eating would be created to fill in the gaps.

‘Of course, that is still a story for the future.’

Rocado wanted to help Minhyuk, even if it was just a little bit.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk, who checked the contents of the title that had changed from Candidate for Eight Pillars to Eight Pillars's Successor, was left stunned.

(Eight Pillar's Successor)

Unique Title

Title Effects:

- All of your stats will increase by 9%.*
- Eight Pillar’s Protective Coating.*
- The Unyielding One*
- Double Skill*
- Successor Recognized by Rocado*

The increase in all of his stats had increased by 2%. Aside from that, the only difference that he saw was the part where it said, *‘Successor Recognized by Rocado,’* which had been added after the rest of the skills. And after checking the detailed explanation, Minhyuk was able to confirm something.

[Once you reach Level 700, the 1st quest to help you find Rocado’s power will open and reveal itself.]

[This will give you more power and help you take one step closer to becoming the true Eight Pillar.]

“...!”

Minhyuk was shocked. This meant that Rocado had opened the path for Minhyuk to become one of the Eight Pillars. At this moment, Minhyuk realized something.

‘The Food God’s growth may not yet be over.’

All of the class quests related to the Food God had already ended. But when he saw the notification about the quests associated with Rocado, he realized that the power of the Food God, which had already grown stagnant, would once again have the chance to grow even further.

‘He is the Father of Dexterity.’

In the end, the Food God class was related to DEX.

“Thank you,” Minhyuk said, his heart thumping wildly as he looked at the Sword of Aeon.

‘The lower the chances of successful reinforcement, the higher the power it could display once it is successful.’

This was a knowledge that everyone knew of. The +1 reinforcement of the Sword of Aeon, which was already reinforced once, was considered impossible. That was why he looked forward to how much stronger it had become.

(Sword of Aeon +1)

Rank: God

Requirements

: God, the One that Lifted the Second Seal

Durability:

Attack Power: 2,654

Special Abilities:

- Increase all stats by 40%.
- Reduce all skills’ cooldown by 35%.
- Passive Skill: 2.5x Basic Attack Damage
- Passive Skill: The Greatest Sword
- Active Skill: Submission and Surrender
- Active Skill: God’s Dual Sword Technique

Description: Aeon. This sword has been sealed for so long that one cannot remember when it was first sealed. Only its second seal has been lifted, and the sword still cannot exert its full power.

‘The basics have increased by a lot, right?’

The basic attack power of the sword had increased by nearly 300. Not only that, the increase in all stats had also increased by 3% while the passive skill double basic attack damage had turned into 2.5x basic attack damage. This meant that the damage of Minhyuk’s basic attack had risen by around 10%.

With his overpowered stats and the Sword of Aeon in hand, a 10% increase in basic attack damage would mean he could quickly deal with more enemies with his basic attacks alone. Minhyuk smiled in satisfaction.

Meanwhile, the steam spread out as Rocado lifted the steamer's lid. The now red snow crab, as giant and as tough as a king crab, appeared in front of everyone's eyes.

'Doesn't this look like a king crab?'

Minhyuk liked king crab, too. After all, each bite would fill his mouth with crab meat. However, he thought that snow crab was better in flavor.

'How to say this? It's more like it tastes better because of the combination of the savory and sweet flavors that would burst in one's mouth?'

But this snow crab was not only the size of a king crab; it was also overflowing with meat. Minhyuk's mouth was already watering.

Rocado moved and dealt with the crab, making it easier to eat. Minhyuk's expectations had already reached their peak as he watched Rocado work.

Snow crab was a costly ingredient. So, if one heard the words, *"We'll eat snow crabs this time!"* A few days before a family outing, one would feel excitement and anticipation.

Rocado finished dealing with the snow crab in no time. He gently placed the dish in front of Minhyuk. The shell of the crab was filled with mouth-watering crab fat, and the legs neatly placed on the sides looked meaty and good.

"Ahem, ahem. Eat well. I'm quite busy," Rocado said as he went to a corner to hug and kiss Eirin.

"He— Herakel... need to close eyes..."

Herakel covered his eyes with both of his hands. However, there was a slight gap between his fingers. The more the two shared intimate touches, the wider his eyes grew.

Of course, Minhyuk was not interested in what the two were doing. He was entirely focused on the meal in front of him. Rocado had given Minhyuk a pair of seafood scissors so that he would have an easier time dealing with the joints of the legs.

Minhyuk cracked the joints and broke the legs into two. Then, he gently pulled them away from each other. The moment he pulled them apart, the meaty and thick crab meat hiding inside the dense shell of the legs was pulled out. The steaming crab meat was as thick and meaty as the king crab's meat.

He took a massive bite of the meat. The soft meat of the snow crab immediately filled his mouth with every bite he took. The taste brought a delighted smile to his face. He finished one leg of the snow crab in an instant.

This time, Minhyuk turned his attention to one of the claws. Surprisingly enough, the crab meat was still in the shape of the pincers when he gently pulled it out.

‘The pincers are a bit chewier than the rest.’

He dipped the pincer meat in the chili sauce before taking a huge bite.

“Kghhk...”

The taste was truly divine.

Minhyuk had heard that the Pillar Ingredients represented the land, the sea, and the air. The taste of this Pillar of the Sea, the emperor of the sea, was enough to shake Minhyuk’s shoulder. What more about the taste of the rest?

Next, Minhyuk dipped the thick and fleshy crab meat in the crab fat. The moment he placed it in his mouth? The savory flavor of the fat burst in his mouth. After finishing all the snow crab instantly, Minhyuk turned his attention to the snow crab fried rice.

The savory scent of the sesame oil wafted to his nose and stimulated his appetite even further. He scooped one huge bite and put it in his mouth.

‘It’s stir-fried evenly and nicely.’

It tasted amazing. When his mouth started to feel dry, he grabbed the bowl of snow crab ramyeon and took a sip of the spicy and refreshing soup.

“Ho~ Refreshing.”

Minhyuk felt like his senses opened up with that one sip. Then, he took a massive bite of the snow crab ramyeon noodles that had been boiled well inside the metal pot.

“Sluuuuuuuurp!”

The notifications rang the moment Minhyuk’s very delightful and satisfying meal ended.

[You have eaten the Pillar’s Snow Crab.]

[Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado had made the dish surprisingly well.]

[The Pillar’s Snow Crab’s current effects will improve.]

[All of your stats will increase by 3.7%.]

[Your DEX will increase by 13%.]

[The special effects of the items related to DEX that you will create in the future will be 6% better.]

[Your water attribute resistance will increase by 32%.]

[Your attack and defensive power will increase by 19% when fighting against water-attribute monsters.]

Minhyuk's expectations were not wrong.

'The effects of the ingredients grow better when cooked by Rocado.'

This was why Minhyuk took the risk and went to meet and pick up the God of Death. Of course, another reason was that it would be more delicious if he used this method.

Then, Minhyuk suddenly turned to look at Rocado and Eirin.

Chu– Ch... slurp– Slurp–

"...?"

It was because the sounds coming from their corner had changed. Then, Minhyuk caught sight of Herakel, who was pretending to cover his eyes with his hands.

"Why are you still here?"

"I'll go later."

The God of Death was still in this place, even watching their genuine and intimate display of love.

TTBC's Go Eun-Ah came to visit the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Why? It was simple. Today was the day that they would hold the completion ceremony of the Battle God's Temple, and since this was the completion ceremony of the Battle God's Temple, it was only natural that it became a hot topic.

When Go Eun-Ah arrived near the Battle God's Temple, she saw countless reporters lined up. Even ATV Broadcasting Station's PD Kim Daeguk was also present.

Reporter Go Eun-Ah was acquainted with PD Kim Daeguk. So, she approached him and asked, "What's your take on today's matter?"

PD Kim Daeguk just chuckled at her question. "Why do you have to ask when you already know the answer?"

"Well..."

No one in the world did not know about the construction of the Battle God's Temple. All the reporters, including PD Kim and Go Eun-Ah, knew full well that

the anticipation of the masses would peak with the completion ceremony. After today? This issue would slowly die down and disappear. Since all the reporters already knew about this, they started to show impatience.

“When will it start? I have another schedule after this.”

“It looks amazing for a temple made by a player. However, it still fails to meet expectations. There aren’t as many players as we thought. Hmm...”

Indeed, the players joining the fun were less hyped up and excited than the reporters expected.

“Everyone already knows that Player Minhyuk is the Battle God. The completion of a temple will not generate many issues.”

“That’s true.” Go Eun-Ah could only nod her head bitterly.

Of course, she had always supported Minhyuk and the Beyond the Heavens Empire. However, even in her eyes, she could tell that this event would fail to make any waves.

‘Ah, if a huge issue suddenly breaks out, I will write a sensational article.’

However, everyone present was of the same mindset.

At that moment, Alvier, the core figure in the temple's construction, appeared in front of everyone’s eyes. Alvier was a well-known figure among the players and NPCs. Everyone knew he was a sought-after figure to the point that all gods had commissioned him to build a temple for them.

The reporters rushed forward and began to throw one question after another at Alvier.

“How was the construction of the temple this time?”

“Is there anything special inside?”

“Since this is the Battle God’s Temple, is the quality much better than the others?”

Alvier was an NPC. He was in a position where he could choose to respond harshly to such questions. However, what happened last time left a deep impression on him, and he felt very honored to have built this temple for Minhyuk.

“A temple that has recognized its god. That is the kind of temple the Battle God’s Temple is.”

After leaving those words, Alvier moved to leave. It seemed like he was still swamped. As for the reporters? They only needed those words to create provocative titles. After all, they were better at doing things like this than others.

[Minhyuk: The God Recognized by the Temple.]

[From a God Above Gods to a God Above a Temple. How far will Minhyuk go?]

However, even after writing such articles, these reporters still felt that it was lacking.

At that moment, Haze appeared in front of everyone. She said, "His Majesty has not yet arrived. The start of the completion ceremony will be delayed for a bit. I hope that you understand."

"Ah..."

"Ey. Just get it over with."

The reporters clamored loudly. And Go Eun-Ah? She looked at them as if they were nothing but pathetic people.

'This is the reason why reporters always get criticized.'

It was because they openly expressed their discomfort and annoyance. When they settled down and began to wait, a shocking notification rang in everyone's ears, leaving the reporters stunned.

[One of the Eight Pillars, Rocado, has descended!]

For most players, the Eight Pillars were a source of fear. This was primarily because of Helenia's influence. In addition, they did not know who Rocado was.

"Wh— What the hell?!"

"Shouldn't we log out right now?"

"It seems like he appeared somewhere near here?"

"Why does he have to appear in Beyond the Heavens Empire...? Heok?! Don't tell me he's trying to keep Minhyuk, who has become the Battle God, in check?!"

The words of one of the reporters sounded reasonable enough. Was this man coming here to destroy the Battle God's Temple? The reporters, wrapped in their thoughts, were left confused.

However, when they looked around, they saw that the Beyond the Heavens Empire soldiers stood there calmly as they waited for their emperor.

At that moment, Reporter Go Eun-Ah and PD Kim Daeguk made eye contact.

"Something's strange."

"Yes. I didn't get any warning notifications."

Those who had seen Helenia received flashing red warning notifications along with the notifications about her descent. But the notifications now? There were no warning notifications.

“I’m sorry for the delay. Unfortunately, the completion ceremony will be delayed for a bit longer.”

Then, Minhyuk appeared behind the reporters. But his words made the faces of the reporters grow ugly.

‘We’re all going to die now, but you’re just saying that you came late and there will be a delay. What the hell...’

‘Just a delay in the completion ceremony? Are you nuts...!’

‘Do you think we’re free all day?!’

Their expressions grew uglier by the second.

[You have seen one of the Eight Pillars, Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado.]

[He is the Father of Dexterity.]

[Those who have seen Rocado will experience a 13% increase in DEX and a 20% increase in EXP Acquisition Rate. The buff would remain for a day.]

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Only at this moment did the reporters realize that the new Eight Pillar that appeared before them was related to dexterity. What did being related to dexterity mean? It meant that they *would make* something.

Go Eun-Ah’s pupils started to shake. *‘Don’t tell me... The reason for delaying the completion ceremony...?’*

Minhyuk just smiled faintly and asked for their understanding. “I’m sorry, but my statue, portraits, and artifacts have not yet been displayed inside the Battle God’s Temple.”

Go Eun-Ah hurriedly asked, “You said it’s not yet been displayed. Are they still unfinished, or are they already finished?”

In response to that question, Minhyuk said, “It’s going to be made right here and now.”

“...!”

“...!”

A commotion broke out among the reporters.

Chapter 1004

The Eight Pillars were the core figures that supported and maintained the world. They were beings who possessed powers beyond one's imagination.

Most experts viewed the Eight Pillars as beings that stood above the Absolute Gods. Of course, several discussions and evaluations said that the Battle God and the God of Death possessed power on par with the Eight Pillars. However, the rest of the gods were known to exert less influence, impact, and power than the Eight Pillars.

The power of the Eight Pillars had been revealed to the world when Alexander changed his class to Weapon Master. He was the first to change into the Eight Pillar Class and achieved rapid growth when his class changed.

In one interview, the reporters asked Alexander this question.

–How will you compare to the current Weapon Master?

A bitter expression flashed on Alexander's face as he answered.

–If we're talking about my level, I'm only at the level where I had only taken my first baby step.

Everyone was shocked by his answer. Alexander, along with Minhyuk, was one of the high-ranking representatives of Athenae. However, had this very same Alexander only taken one baby step compared to the current Weapon Master?

Many players and experts were left in horror as they tried to search for information and dig deeper into the Eight Pillars. They discovered a villain who had killed millions, perhaps even hundreds of millions more if given the chance. There was someone who everyone already knew—Athenae, the god who was in charge of the entire world of Athenae.

Everyone concluded that the Eight Pillars were unreachable beings to the players. Some of the world's wealthiest were even willing to spend their money to forge a connection with them. Of course, the same was true for Alexander. However, even the world's richest man could not reach or contact the Eight Pillars.

But now, one of the Eight Pillars had appeared in front of everyone's eyes. And he was even with Minhyuk. And Minhyuk also said it himself.

–He's going to make the portraits, statues, and artifact samples right here and now?

They would understand what it meant if one was not a fool.

“Are you saying that one of the Eight Pillars will make all of the items representing Minhyuk?” One of the reporters exclaimed, his voice shaking.

The commotion that broke out among the reporters grew more and more.

PD Kim Daeguk hurriedly called the broadcasting station. He shouted, “Get the shooting team here, now!!!”

Go Eun-Ah looked at the scene with eyes as wide as a saucer. She thought, ‘*I thought it would be nice if he could surprise us. But he went ahead and dropped a bomb on us.*’

Everyone knew this was an opportunity to capture and show the world how one of the Eight Pillars made portraits, statues, and artifact samples.

One of the Eight Pillars will make various items for the Battle God’s Temple.

These words created a massive ripple like a stone thrown into the water. Various broadcasting stations hurriedly began to do live broadcasts while BJs worldwide rushed to the Battle God’s Temple.

However, the heat died down a bit shortly after. This was because of the words of the two people who had been invited by one of the broadcasting stations. One of them was God of Painting Runan, while the other was star sculptor Barden. These two were players known to have reached the highest level of their respective fields.

The conversation between the MC and the two people was broadcast worldwide.

[So, the two of you are saying that there’s no need to make a considerable fuss right now?]

The two nodded at the same time.

Runan, a woman sitting cross-legged, said with pride and arrogance, evident in her voice.

[That’s right. When I made my masterpiece, the God-grade painting “The Order of the World,” it took me almost a month. And this work could only be born thanks to the passive skills of Painter’s Soul, Extreme Concentration, Painting Harmony, and the likes being triggered.]

[I agree. It also took me two months to create the Graceful Goddess Statue, the masterpiece that made me who I am today. However, the Beyond the Heavens Empire just announced the start of this production, no?]

Their conversation revolved around the announcement that the Beyond the Heavens Empire had just made.

[It will be completed in around a day or two. So, you should wait.]

However, Runan twisted her lips. It seemed like she still found it unbelievable.

[You don't even know the "A" in art. Even if that Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado is one of the Eight Pillars and is known to possess outstanding abilities related to dexterity, there's no way he could produce an art that carries a soul in just a day or two. Don't you think so?]

Barden looked at Runan, who had begun growling her words and nodded in agreement.

[But it should be different from a blacksmith making artifacts or Player Minhyuk cooking dishes. After all, Rocado is the father of dexterity.]

However, many people viewed Father of Dexterity Rocado differently.

[Even so, he can only be as good as a god in dexterity. Nothing more, nothing less.]

That was right. That was how they evaluated Rocado. And since they only viewed him as someone equivalent to a god, they believed he could not make anything at the God-grade in just a day.

[So, the two of you are saying that Rocado will be unable to make God-grade portraits, sculptures, and artifact samples and won't be able to surprise the people?]

[Of course.]

[Since it's only a day or two, I think he'll only make legendary-grade items.]

The expression on the MC's face seemed to say that he found their words reasonable enough. Since he was the Father of Dexterity, they thought he was only hailed as such because he was outstanding in all fields and not *insanely excellent and exceptional*.

Of course, the part where the MC had to relay the viewers' questions could not be excluded from the interview.

[One of our viewers asked this question: But what if the items that he will create for the Battle God temple can surpass your masterpieces?]

Runan and Barden just laughed at the question.

[That won't happen. But since we're talking about this then... If it happens, I will paint the portrait of all the executives and the outstanding NPCs of the Beyond the Heavens Empire and give it to them as a present.]

Barden also nodded, showing his agreement.

[I will also do the same.]

If Minhyuk were watching this broadcast, he would say this, 'Lucky? Aren't they trying to make it too easy for me?'

The number of reporters and players that had started to crowd in front of the Battle God's Temple to watch the situation had more than doubled.

Many of them felt depressed after the interview with Runan and Barden had been broadcast.

“Just legendary-grade?”

“But no matter how great an Eight Pillar is, it would already be amazing if they could produce three legendary-grade items in a single day.”

The reporters spoke as if they had fully understood. Just like they said, making three legendary-grade items in a single day was already considered shocking. Even though they felt like it was still lacking, now that they had already come here, they could not leave without seeing this through to the end.

Meanwhile, Rocado had sat down with Minhyuk and listened to his story from beginning to end.

“I leave it to you.”

Rocado slowly nodded.

‘This...’ Rocado looked around at the crowd around him. ‘...will be my life’s masterpiece.’

His body was already starting to rot and break. However, Minhyuk had spoken before they came here.

–Where is Eirin’s grave located? I’ll bring you two to a place with good sunlight and a view of the moon and the stars.

Preparing one’s own grave when they already knew that they were about to die was very terrifying. However, Rocado could tell that Minhyuk did not ask him this because he wanted to get something from him.

–Ah, it should be somewhere in the Beyond the Heavens Empire. That way, it would be easier for Herakel to come and visit you.

Rocado smiled faintly when he heard those words as warmth flooded his chest.

‘The new Pillar will be nothing like the other Eight Pillars.’ Rocado was sure of this, especially after he had heard Minhyuk’s story from the beginning to the end. Finally, the gathered crowd was asked to step back. Once they did, Rocado waved his hand and summoned a gigantic smithy.

Crackle—

Smoke started to rise as the molten iron inside the smithy boiled instantly. Rocado stepped forward and approached the hottest place in the smithy.

“It looks like he’s going to make the artifact samples.”

Many of the reporters turned to look at Hyemin'sDaddy.

“Samples are the same as the artifacts. They have both the attack and defensive powers as well as the unique abilities of the original artifact. However, there is a condition that it cannot be used, and because of that, it is much easier to make.

“The problem here is the level of His Majesty Minhyuk's artifacts. The level of His Majesty's artifacts is at a level that even the blacksmiths of the current era could not produce a sample of.”

All the reporters had turned their cameras to Hyemin'sDaddy and recorded his words.

Clang—

Claaaang—

Claaaaaaang—!

The sound of a hammer colliding with metal resonated in the area. At the same time, dozens of hands appeared around Rocado. Each hand moved to create a different artifact: armor, accessories, and the cape.

“This is... crazy...”

“...?”

“What the hell is that...?”

Their jaws all dropped in shock when they saw the scene.

One of the blacksmith players said, “If you use those hands, then it's only natural that the degree of completion of the artifact will be significantly reduced.”

However, the words of this player were completely overshadowed by the notifications that rang three hours later.

[Rocado has perfectly reproduced the Sword of Aeon.]

“...!”

“...!”

A commotion broke out among the crowd of people.

[Rocado has perfectly reproduced the Transcendental's Armor.]

[Rocado...]

[Rocado...]

[Rocado...]

[Rocado...]

The notifications rang constantly as the artifacts that Minhyuk had equipped were placed one after another in front of Rocado.

After that, Rocado moved before a blank canvas and began drawing Minhyuk's face.

'Eyes that are gentle but can observe and see through the world.'

'Straight and sharp nose that shows the dignity of an emperor.'

'A full and powerful chin that shows his charisma.'

With a few strokes of Rocado's brush, Minhyuk's face started to take shape. He painted Minhyuk in the armor that he was wearing with his legs crossed as he sat on a chair. The way Minhyuk crossed his legs in the painting showed his pride, majesty, and dignity as the Battle God. The fork and knife were also crossed together, and the symbol of the Beyond the Heavens Empire was painted behind him. The image of the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor himself was born under Rocado's brush.

Rocado had already fully understood everything about Minhyuk, the emperor of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. He knew how many hardships and trials he endured and overcame to reach this position. So, he made sure to incorporate his understanding and capture as much of the man's essence as he could in the painting that he was making.

Rocado lifted his brush.

[The Portrait: 'Beyond the Heavens Empire's First Emperor' has been completed.]

[You have an excellent understanding of the subject of your portrait.]

[You have perfectly reproduced the emperor's image with your outstanding skills.]

[The Portrait: 'Beyond the Heavens Empire's First Emperor' is God-grade!]

It only took four hours, but in those four hours, Rocado completed a God-grade painting. The pillar of light falling from the sky was proof of this.

This time, Rocado picked up the chisel and began to carve and sculpt at an incredibly high speed.

All the reporters and players gathered in the area held their breaths. They watched as the sculpture's figure slowly took shape under Rocado's fingertips.

The gigantic plaster slowly turned into an extraordinary and heroic figure. The figure looked exhausted; however, its eyes were filled with determination and intent to kill as it looked at the enemies. With the Sword of Aeon at hand, it looked like it was shouting for his troops to advance and charge forward.

[The Sculpture: 'The Great Sovereign who Leads the Gods' has been completed.]

[You have an excellent understanding of the subject of your sculpture.]

[You have reproduced the image of the Great Sovereign who Leads the Gods perfectly with your outstanding skills.]

[The Sculpture: 'The Great Sovereign who Leads the Gods' is God-grade!]

Another pillar of light fell from the sky.

Each of the items born from Rocado's hands slowly found their place, which had been left behind by the construction workers by themselves.

Not far from the entrance, the portrait "Beyond the Heavens Empire's First Emperor" was hung neatly. The artifact samples lined up neatly and displayed themselves in front of the portrait. Deep inside the temple, the magnificent statue of the God who would be worshiped in this temple stood in place.

"Wow..."

"Crazy."

"All of the items are God-grade?"

The countless reporters and viewers were all left in awe. However, the shocking notifications were not yet over.

[The Unfinished Evangel is scanning the entirety of the Battle God's Temple.]

A mysterious light shone from Minhyuk's body, and it began to observe and appreciate the temple. Its thoughts and impressions continued to ring in Minhyuk's ears with every item it looked at. When it observed the final piece of the temple, a world message rang out.

[The Temple from the Myths, Evangel, reveals its complete and finished appearance!]

Chapter 1005

[The Unfinished Evangel scans throughout the Battle God's Temple.]

A lot of information about Evangel had already been released to the public. This was because the video where Evangel had given buffs to the most outstanding members of the Beyond the Heavens Empire during the episode with the God of Death and allowed them to turn the situation around had received hundreds of millions of views.

In fact, it had become a video that people would watch again if they found themselves in a boring situation. After the video's release, people began to dig up information about Evangel, and they learned a lot about this temple from the myths.

[Did you hear that just now? It said the Unfinished Evangel is scanning the Battle God's Temple.]

[Evangel is an absolute temple created by Kronad. Player Minhyuk always had Evangel in his possession, but he has never used it after that day.]

[To be more accurate, it's not that he did not want to use it. Perhaps it's more accurate to say that he could not use it. It's impossible for a single player to fulfill the requirements to use Evangel.]

One was that the player had to become a god. This alone was enough to garner the praise and cheers of everyone. However, Evangel was a temple that went beyond that level. It was something that even Named NPC Gods wanted but could not have. Even the Absolute Gods and the Eight Pillars could not have Evangel.

Like that, the Unfinished Evangel moved to observe and admire the temple.

[Currently, Evangel is checking if Player Minhyuk has the qualifications!]

Everyone's attention was piqued by the words of one of the experts in one of the live broadcasts.

At the same time, a small ball of light floated in front of Minhyuk. Then, the light slowly flew inside the Battle God's Temple.

At this moment, the entire world discovered that Evangel had an ego and a consciousness of its own.

[Evangel is looking around the entrance of the temple.]

[Evangel is observing the trees that have taken root deeper into the soil, the fresher air, and the shinier and harder rocks surrounding the temple.]

After a few moments of observation, Evangel slowly ventured deeper. The small ball of light floated before Minhyuk's portrait, hanging near the temple's entrance. Like a person watching and enjoying an exhibit, it stopped before the picture.

Then, an unexpected notification rang.

[Evangel silently looks at the portrait of the young emperor.]

The small light floated in front of the portrait for a very long time, not moving at all, which increased Minhyuk's anxiety.

'I must reach the final level to obtain the finished and completed Evangel.'

This would determine whether he could or could not have Evangel.

Thump—

Then, at that moment, a tiny transparent jewel fell from Evangel.

[Evangel saw many things from the portrait of the young emperor.]

[After viewing one portrait, Evangel is left contemplating many things.]
[This was a feat only made possible because of the 'Beyond the Heavens Empire's First Emperor' born under the hand of an outstanding painter.]
It was just one portrait, but what did Evangel see in this portrait?

Then, something happened that brought even greater shock to everyone present.

“You’re still so young.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Evangel’s voice rang from within the ball of light and resonated worldwide.

“But you’re already standing tall and firm.”

[Evangel begins to talk as it stares at the face of the figure in the portrait.]
“Sometimes, you’re like a weak young man. Other times, you’re like a flexible and pliant old man. There are also times when you’re like an outspoken man.

“You...”

[...are an insignificant and small emperor.]

“But you...”

[...are also an influential and prominent emperor.]

Evangel floated in front of the painting for a very long time. Then, it opened its mouth again to say, “From the lowest position.”

[You have become an emperor who has reached the highest place.]

“That’s amazing.”

Evangel finally moved deeper into the temple. Dozens of drones followed Evangel until they stood before the artifact samples. Evangel stood in front of the samples and observed them thoroughly, one after another.

[Evangel is evaluating the artifacts that it has seen.]

“They’re too much.”

The viewers and commentators could not help but agree with those words. Minhyuk’s artifacts were obviously far too much for a player to possess. A common term perfectly described what Minhyuk was enjoying: *Overgeared*.

[But...]

Everyone listened carefully to Evangel’s words.

“It’s enough.”

[Every artifact only came to his possession because the young emperor received recognition.]

[And those who produced them...]

“Everything is because of your tireless efforts and hard work.”

[They must have judged that you are deserving enough.]

“Even I find it difficult to judge something like that. But...”

[It's amazing.]

[Even though he lacked the qualifications, he persevered and continued to work hard until he earned the right and the qualifications to have them.]

[That sword...]

“It can cut even the sky.”

[That armor...]

“It can face any danger.”

[That helmet...]

“It can conceal the young emperor's immaturity and allow him to look at his enemies with sharp and cold eyes.”

[Evangel looks at all the artifacts he possesses in admiration.]

Once again, Evangel floated in front of the artifact samples for a long time. For some reason, it looked like the ball of light was stroking each artifact gently as it hovered above them.

After some time, Evangel slowly moved until it stood in front of the emperor and master of the temple. The young emperor's figure looked like he was shouting, “Charge!” as he held his sword high in the sky.

There was an imperceptible shaking in the small ball of light as Evangel stood before the statue.

[Evangel is trembling.]

“I have seen the master of the young temple.”

The entire world held its breath as they watched the shaking Evangel.

“And...”

[I have seen an undeserving man who lacks the qualifications receive these artifacts.]

“In fact...”

[I thought along those lines, too.]

[The temple master is not yet deserving and cannot sit in this position yet.]

[He does not deserve to become the master of the most significant temple.]

“But...”

[The sword that you raised proved me wrong.]

“You...”

[...are much greater than what I thought.]

“Under the sword that you raised...”

[Ten thousand, millions, hundreds of millions...]

“I can’t even fathom how many there are.”

[...they stand by your side and fight together with you.]

“I can see it in my head.”

[The image of the young man, the Great Sovereign, raising his sword and leading thousands of gods to cut down the enemies.]

“At his cry...”

[I can see the image of the poor and pitiful soldiers holding their weapons tightly despite the tears and the fear that were gnawing at them.]

“Now, I know.”

[He is an emperor that I dare not and should not assess.]

“This young emperor, this god.”

[I finally understand the reason why he became the master of this temple.]

“So, today...”

The ball of light slowly descended on the ground. It bowed and worshiped the God standing in front of it.

Everyone understood the meaning of its actions.

[I am beyond honored.]

The light grew even brighter the moment it made contact with the ground.

[This young man...]

“...is a strong man.”

[He might be lacking as an emperor...]

“But he is also an emperor who can fill in his gaps and shortcomings.”

[I will serve the Great Sovereign who will lead countless men...]

“...and the Battle God.”

[Is something that I am beyond honored to do so.]

The entire world was in shock. The temple from the myths, Evangel, the very same temple that all the gods wanted to possess, was worshiping one man.

[From me to you.]

“No.”

[For accepting me...]

“Thank you.”

Then, a series of notifications rang all over the world.

[Evangel has leveled up.]

[The Temple from the Myths, Evangel, is now completed.]

[The Temple from the Myths, Evangel, shines a brighter and greater light in the world to honor the master of the temple.]

[The Temple from the Myths, Evangel, wishes for an audience with the temple's master!]

Minhyuk, who was standing outside the temple, walked slowly until he entered. With every step, the light shone brightly and spread even further. Evangel burst into cheers, a sense of joy and fulfillment hanging in the air. It seemed like the temple was truly glad to serve him.

[Evangel, which had shown its true and complete appearance, grants all foreigners present Evangel's Protection.]

[All of your stats will increase by 5%. Your EXP Acquisition Rate will increase by 20%. The duration of the blessing is one week.]

For some reason, Minhyuk felt like Evangel was smiling softly as he strolled until he reached the light of Evangel. At that moment, an unknown power washed over him.

‘The will to protect my temple.’

‘The determination to serve and worship my religion.’

‘The heart to cherish and love me.’

These various forces embraced Minhyuk as he stared at the smile on Evangel, who had attached itself to the ground. Then, the small ball of light slowly spread and permeated the ground. Not long after, the entire Battle God's Temple was covered with light.

[Evangel has leveled up.]

[The Temple from the Myths, Evangel, is revealing its complete and finished appearance!]

[The powers of the Unfinished Evangel have changed into the complete version.]

Ring!

[Evangel exerts a stronger power for the master of the temple.]

[The unfinished Evangel has been completed. The Finished Evangel's Level is at Level 1.]

[The restriction on the number of Evangel Knights has disappeared.]

Minhyuk was very shocked.

‘Evangel’s level returns to Level 1?’

This meant he could increase its level and bring it to Level 9 again. In other words, it was like announcing to the world that this was only the beginning of the Temple from the Myths, Evangel.

Then, the details about the Level 1 Evangel rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[If a follower of your religion enters your temple, Evangel will grant them a 6% increase in attack and defensive power. The buff would last for an entire week.]

[If a follower of your religion enters your temple, Evangel will grant them a 10% increase in DEX. The buff would last for an entire week.]

[If a follower of your religion enters your temple, Evangel will grant them a 6% increase in EXP Acquisition Rate. The buff would last for an entire week.]

[If a follower of your religion enters your temple, Evangel will grant them a 5% increase in abnormal status resistance. The buff would last for an entire week.]

[Those who have been bestowed with Evangel’s power will only be able to receive this power again after three months.]

[With every increase of Evangel’s level, all buff effects will increase by 20% while the buff cooldown will decrease by 20%.]

‘At first glance, one would say that the increase in the effects is only minimal.’

However, they would understand what this meant if one was not a fool.

What would happen if every time the temple level increased, there was a 6% increase in attack power, defensive power, and EXP acquisition rate by 20%?

Simply put, if Evangel leveled up by only 1, the increase in the attack and defensive power and the EXP acquisition rate would become 7.2%. What would happen if it reached Level 9?

‘That’s crazy. By entering the temple, they would receive around a 20% increase in their attack and defensive power? Not only that, but they will also receive the same increase in EXP Acquisition Rate?’

Minhyuk was rendered speechless. The temple was genuinely crazy. However, it was not limited to that. If he could increase Evangel’s level, he could unseal more of the power hidden within the temple.

The eyes of the hundreds of reporters shone as they looked at Minhyuk, who finally came out of the temple. Even the countless players gathered around were looking at him in curiosity.

What kind of power did the Finished Evangel have?

Everyone was curious about this. After all, this would become one of the deciding factors on whether they would choose to serve and worship the Battle God.

“Your Majesty, please...!” Haze said, the eagerness and desperation evident in her voice. Whatever Minhyuk said next would significantly affect the migration of the people to their empire.

Minhyuk was a very clever and sly man. He said, “First come, first served.”

The entire world focused their attention as they listened to Minhyuk’s words.

First come, first served. The impact of those words was significant. Why? Because those words would make the others think, “Ah, since he dares to say ‘First come, first served,’ then the effects might be crazy enough, no?”

“One million people.”

Everyone in the area immediately ran to join and serve the Battle God’s religion.

Chapter 1006

Compared to the other nations established by players, the Beyond the Heavens Empire displayed far more power and influence in Athenae. But when compared to the Luvien Empire, an empire standing at the top, they were nothing but shabby.

The Luvien Empire had a total population, including its troops and citizens, of around 800 million people. On the other hand, the Beyond the Heavens Empire only had around 45 million people. The difference in the size of their territories was not that large. However, the huge difference came from their total population.

Some people believed that the only reason the Beyond the Heavens Empire could compete with the Luvien Empire was because of its NPCs, who were doing the work of ten million people. Unfortunately, this was a sad and undeniable truth.

In order for the Beyond the Heavens Empire to continue standing firm and not be pushed back by the Luvien Empire, it had to accept more migrants and expand its territories even further. If it could absorb players belonging to the Luvien Empire, then the gap between the two empires would definitely narrow even further.

When Haze heard Minhyuk say, ‘*First come, first served,*’ she was in awe. ‘*If people hear something on a first come, first served basis, they will often be left in a panic even though it’s not that big of a deal. What if they were left with*

no seats anymore? And what if those seats get occupied quickly because it's on a first-come, first-served basis?'

The answer to that was simple.

'There will be a long line of people wanting to get into the waiting list to get in and be a part of those that would be first served.'

If they kickstart the first-come, first-served system right away, it would create a huge issue and attract more people.

On top of that, countless reporters and players were present at the scene. However, all the reporters had gathered right in front of the Battle God's Temple entrance so they could cover this completion ceremony better. Because of that, the first ones to enter the temple would be the reporters.

'What if we collect donations for the temple's management fund only after the first one million people join on a first come, first served basis?'

The Beyond the Heavens Empire could secure a large amount of funds. Haze was so shocked by her emperor's incredible foresight.

The soldiers of the empire immediately stepped forward to stop the charging reporters.

"Oho! You're creating a disturbance in front of the Battle God's Temple!"

"Please observe proper decorum and maintain order."

When the soldiers asked the reporters to line up correctly, surprisingly enough, Reporter Go Eun-Ah was the first in line.

Reporter Go Eun-Ah was naturally a player of Athenae. She also wrote good and positive articles about the Beyond the Heavens Empire every time. When Minhyuk saw her standing at the front of the line, a sparkle appeared in his eyes.

The temple visitors would not receive Evangel's buffs just by entering the temple. They had to see and observe everything inside the temple first.

Go Eun-Ah hurriedly stepped inside the Battle God's Temple. The first thing that she saw and admired when she walked inside was Minhyuk's portrait.

'The reason why Evangel called him "Young Emperor"...'

She seemed to understand why Evangel said those words, too. She also checked the artifact samples lined up in the temple.

'Aside from the attack power, the defensive power, and the rank of the artifact, there's nothing else we can see. We can't check any of the artifact's special abilities.'

That was only natural. Minhyuk was no fool. He was not the type of person who would carelessly reveal information about his precious artifacts. However, even if he revealed only the bare minimum, it was still enough to evoke admiration and shock from those who would lay eyes on them.

‘There are a lot of artifacts that no other players have ever seen or obtained. And the Sword of Aeon’s attack power is crazy!’

Reporter Go Eun-Ah was genuinely shocked. Finally, she reached the place where Minhyuk’s statue was standing. Standing before it, she could not help but tremble and shake.

“Wow...”

He was just one player. However, this player had become the Battle God. The statue of Minhyuk with an outstretched hand holding his sword was imposing and majestic and could easily make one’s heart feel a deep and great sense of awe.

Not long after, Reporter Go Eun-Ah came out of the temple. What she had seen inside had made her tremble up until now. Then, at that moment, she received Evangel’s buff.

“...!”

It left Go Eun-Ah in a dumbfounded state. Then, a man walked to her. The man greeted her with a slight bow and a gentle smile. Then, he said, “And it’s only at Level 1.”

“...?”

The words brought more tremendous shock to the already dumbfounded Go Eun-Ah. Reporter Go Eun-Ah, who looked like something was hot on her heels, hurriedly logged out. Then, she immediately went to her computer and began to tap away on her keyboard. Like any other reporter, she wrote a provocative title to her article.

[Three Reasons Why You’re Stupid for Not Coming to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

First come, first served for one million people. This was what Minhyuk declared. Surprisingly enough, it only took two hours for a million people to migrate to the Beyond the Heavens Empire. After that, the Beyond the Heavens Empire sent out an official announcement.

[The Beyond the Heavens Empire will accept 500,000 more migrants.]

Players from all over the world immediately filled in the 500,000 migrant quota. Then, after a meeting with Haze, the Beyond the Heavens Empire sent another announcement.

[It's becoming difficult for the Beyond the Heavens Empire to handle because of the many migrants.]

[The empire needs to secure more funds before accepting more migrants.]

[Beyond the Heavens' migrants: the impact of the buff that they had received after visiting the Battle God's Temple.]

[Minhyuk: 'It's only at Level 1.' Official Statement.]

[The Battle God Religion is requesting a one platinum membership payment to ensure that the Beyond the Heavens Empire can expand its territory and accept more migrants.]

[Beyond the Heavens Empire and its endless stream of new migrants. The players' loud clamoring forced the Beyond the Heavens Empire to make a decision. The empire is accepting another four million migrants on a first-come, first-served basis.]

[First come, first served: The four million migrant quota is filled within ten minutes.]

[More than five million people have camped out in tents and mats in front of Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

[The explosive impact of the Battle God's Temple.]

[The Battle God's Temple is still at Level 1. Experts say that the higher the Battle God's Temple level, the harder it will be to step foot and join the Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

[Players just starting Athenae's choice for their starting empire: 66% choose the Beyond the Heavens Empire, surpassing the 62% of the Luvien Empire.]

The reporters constantly sent out articles.

[Can the Beyond the Heavens Empire handle so many migrants?]

Of course, the question of whether Beyond the Heavens Empire could handle these migrants also popped up.

Haze, Minhyuk, and the executives were in the middle of talking.

“We will announce tomorrow that we will receive five million more. But our preparations are more than enough; we can afford it.”

This was all thanks to Minhyuk's words. Aside from the first come, first served system that he declared, he also announced that he would require a platinum for each member who would join the Battle God's religion. If they accepted ten

million people, then ten million platinum would enter the funds of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. They could use these funds to help the empire develop further.

One platinum was not a small amount. This was something that only intermediate-level players, not novice players, could afford. And because the level of the players was at that level, one could say that they weren't just filling the numbers.

"After a month, we will introduce a one million gold entrance fee for the temple."

Once implemented, the Beyond the Heavens Empire could secure money. However, they still had some regrets.

Haze said, "Unfortunately, 95% of the Beyond the Heavens migrants are foreigners."

"What's wrong with that?" Locke asked, with tact thrown to the wind.

Haze looked at him and explained calmly, "Most players level up by hunting. We cannot put a tax on hunting."

If they claimed rights to gold and artifacts that the players hunted and acquired themselves, it would be considered daylight robbery.

"For us to secure more funds, we need more ordinary NPCs. Ordinary NPCs contribute more to the development and growth of the empire."

The reason was simple.

"They can set up restaurants, stores, and various other businesses. We can put a tax on that. And every time someone buys food? We can also tax them on that. Although we have received a lot of migrants, it is still a very unfortunate situation for us."

That was right. Although the Beyond the Heavens Empire had encountered a considerable volume of migrants, the only thing that they had reinforced was their military power. Once they released the Battle God's advertisement video, the rate at which the foreigners would migrate to them would increase exponentially.

"So, that's why it's unfortunate." Locke, who finally understood what Haze meant, nodded.

However, no matter how hard they brainstormed, they could not come up with a single suitable solution.

While they continued to discuss, Ares said, "Even so, it's still amazing, no? I read from one of the articles that the Battle God's religion already has around twenty times more members than other religions made by the other gods."

And everything happened in just two days.

When Haze heard that, she confidently declared, "It would be difficult for any god to obtain members that would go beyond the members of the Battle God's religion."

Haze said those words with great confidence. However, she did not know she would have to correct that statement later.

Athenae had the power to appoint someone as a new god. Of course, the conditions to become one of the appointed gods were extremely difficult to achieve. However, whenever Athenae looked at *him*, she thought, '*He's a great man. A man worthy of respect.*'

He was someone who had always healed those who had suffered greatly. With just a single touch from him, a smile filled with happiness would appear on the faces of people who had suffered from immense psychological pain for decades. All of the people who he freed from the pain that had shackled them for years had now forgotten their sufferings and taken a leap further in growth.

Truthfully, Athenae had never seen anyone with such remarkable and shocking healing power in her entire life.

Athenae summoned the Absolute Gods and convened a meeting.

[I... have never encountered anyone who can bring and let the smile and laughter remain in the faces of everyone they touched.]

No one said anything against her when she said those words. Because what she said was the truth.

[They shed tears of joy and rejoiced at his touch. Not even I, their mother, nor the Battle God who rules and leads all armies and the God of Death who governs their death, could accomplish this.]

Although this comment bruised their egos, every single one of them acknowledged this feat. The same was true for Guardian God Obren.

'A god who can make someone feel joy and happiness like this will never appear again in this world.'

[I will give him a position and name him a new god. The name of the new god is...]

Everyone perked their ears up and listened to Athenae's divine and holy voice.

[God of Hair Growth.]

He was overcome with emotion.

He had already freed them from their sufferings, but they would still come and visit him to express their gratitude. He grew greedy, wanting to save more people. But his powers were limited. At most, he could only free ten people from their sufferings within a day.

But the great and holy God Athenae listened to his earnest hopes and prayers so that he could free more people from their sufferings. He was very thrilled. He knew that he could now save more people. Not only that, but his new followers would come.

His tremendous and divine self walked forward and headed toward the walls of the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

At the same time.

Millions of people were camping out with their tents and mats, waiting for the Beyond the Heavens Empire to accept them and move in. As these people stayed, they received shocking notifications.

[A new god has been born to the world.]

[His name is God of Hair Growth, Corr.]

“...God of Growing? What’s that?”

“What’s with the name?”

The players were not that impressed by this new god. After all, Athenae allowed them to set their hair to whatever style or color they liked. Even if they were bald, they could make it so they could have a head full of hair inside the game.

However, they were soon left dumbfounded. The number of people who came in in an hour could rival the Battle God’s Religion members.

“Uwooooooooooh!”

“This is a historic moment...!”

“Finally... finally...!”

“Lord Talmor!!!”

“...”

“...”

Those who wished to join the Battle God’s religion all saw the people kneel in front of the walls and scream. As they watched them, warmth started to flood their chests.

“...They must have had a tough time.”

“They must have suffered for a very long time.”

“That’s right. I would react like that, too, if I were bald. *Sob...!*”

Many people started to tear up when they heard the people’s cries. Then, at that moment, *he* finally appeared atop the walls.

He looked at the people sadly, with a holier light than anybody else’s. This was God looking at them with pity and sadness. There was also a kindness and warmth in that gaze as if he had acknowledged all of the sufferings and hardships they had endured.

The new god, Corr, tried to console the wailing people. Using God’s Voice, he let his divine and holy voice resonate all over the place.

[They weren’t guilty of any crimes.]

That was right. They did not do anything wrong!

[They were just born with it. They were lacking in this department compared to others.]

[Their sad and mournful cries echoed.]

[They screamed and wailed, knowing that whatever they were lacking could not be compensated by something else.]

Yes. This could not be cured or filled with something else.

[But...]

[We will help the pitiful and the suffering.]

[I will fight together with you.]

[We will ensure that no one in this department is left lacking.]

They were unnecessary yet kind words.

Corr raised one of his hands as high as he could. And just like a signal, everyone shouted in unison.

“Grow hair! Grow! Grow!”

Their loud and passionate roars almost shook the entire Beyond the Heavens Empire.

[We shall make those lacking take one step forward and grow again.]

Corr raised his other hand.

“Grow hair! Grow! Grow!”

“Uwooooooooooh!”

“Ugh! It’s so bright!”

“*Sob!*”

The sun's bright rays touched their shining heads and intensified the light. But then, a miracle happened. With one wave of their god's hand, *their deficiencies* were slowly being filled. Hair began to grow in the vast desert, which was called their heads.

"Heuk, heuk, heuk!"

"L— Lord Talmor!!!"

[You are no longer lacking.]

[You are no longer carrying this sin.]

[And...]

[Now, you are filled with richness and abundance.]

[So, let's shout together.]

[Grow hair!]

"Grow! Grow!"

[Grow hair!]

"GROW! GROW!!!"

Black hair started to grow and fill their clear heads.

Those waiting to join the Battle God's religion nodded kindly when they saw this scene.

'You're no longer bald.'

'That's cool... They're also growing thick and soft hair!'

Meanwhile, an old man appeared standing on the wall. This old man was once at risk of going bald but had long been saved by Corr. His name? Spear God Ben.

"Hoho. I have never seen such a touching sight in my entire life," Ben said as a tear slowly fell down his cheek.

Chapter 1007

Surprising notifications rang in Minhyuk's ears when he came back after exercising.

[Your vassal, Corr, has risen to the position of a god and has become the God of Hair Growth.]

[He will be the light who will save those suffering from baldness.]

"Eh...?"

For a moment, Minhyuk wondered if there really could be a god like this. But then, he remembered something that made him choke up and cover his mouth.

'Uncle Munsoo...'

His father's secretary was slowly turning bald. This was a fact. And he could no longer hide it no matter how much hair fiber spray he used. His Uncle Munsoo even told him that he was so sad one windy day because his wig was blown away. Since a person was balding close to him, Minhyuk could understand the pain these people were suffering from.

Then, something more shocking happened.

[12,313,000 people are applying to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

"...?!"

Minhyuk was left dumbfounded.

The Battle God's religion was currently only accepting members on a first-come, first-serve basis. Although it was only temporary, the migration applications for the people who wanted to join the Battle God's religion were limited. In other words, that and this application to relocate were utterly different matters.

Then, he saw Haze running to him. She said, "Your Majesty, the baldi... no, the ones with rich silky hair want to serve the Talmor Religion. They are all lined up in front of the empire's walls!"

At this moment, Minhyuk realized how many bald people were there worldwide.

Haze said, "Around 80% of them are guardians living in Athenae."

Guardians was the term for NPCs.

Of course, Haze was not yet done. She said, "They have already paid two million platinum as a donation to support the construction of the Talmor Religion's temple."

The more Haze spoke, the bigger Minhyuk's eyes grew.

"If the baldies, no... the ones with rich, silky hair, continue to come to our empire, then we will probably be able to secure ten million platinum in funds."

Minhyuk was deeply moved. He was very grateful to them for giving funds to the empire even though they were only given a head full of hair. But even more surprising was the number of migrants applying to move to the empire constantly increased.

Minhyuk, who just started Athenae, was in an excellent mood. He was in this very same mood when he met his father. But when he told him the story, Chairman Kang Minhoo chuckled dryly.

"The truth is... this father of yours is also worried. What if I get bald, too? That's why I understand why they feel that way."

"Eh...?" Minhyuk looked at his father in confusion.

“Your great-grandfather was bald.”

“...”

In other words, the curse of baldness skipped two generations. The thought that there was a chance that he would suffer the same fate brought a chill down Minhyuk's spine.

Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado died comfortably in Herakel's arms.

When Minhyuk returned to the Beyond the Heavens Empire, he relocated Eirin's grave. This, along with the fact that the God of Death had given him and Eirin permission to stay together in hell, brought a slight smile on Rocado's lips. And this smile remained until he laid in his eternal rest.

Minhyuk ordered a solemn and sincere funeral service for Rocado. Rocado was buried in a grave beside Eirin's own at the end of the service.

However, there was something on Minhyuk's mind. He was apprehensive about Herakel.

‘I wonder if Herakel will be able to adapt in the Beyond the Heavens Empire?’

Rocado had asked Minhyuk to look after Herakel. That was why he was apprehensive about the man. During the funeral, Herakel seemed very sad. However, no tears dripped down his face. Seeing this, Minhyuk told him, “Herakel. If you go to the central plaza, you can find a ramyeon stall. The ramyeon there is fantastic. You should try it.”

“Herakel! Herakel likes new food!”

The bored Herakel immediately headed straight to the central plaza. Standing in front of the ramyeon stall, he saw a small boy.

“I am Conir!”

A sudden self-introduction? Herakel received a very fresh, novel, yet shocking experience.

“Herakel came to eat ramyeon!” Herakel, with his vast build, sat down in front of the stall.

The moment he sat down, the boy making ramyeon asked him, “When making ramyeon, what do you put first? Noodles or soup?”

The boy has never met anyone who could give the best answer to this question in his entire life.

But then, Herakel said, “Anyway, Conir will cook for Herakel!”

“...?”

The eyes of the boy, Conir, grew the size of saucers. He could not help but be shocked by this new experience.

‘Ramyeon... tastes better when someone else cooks it for Conir! Just like how Minhyuk hyung likes eating Conir’s ramyeon!’

That was right. As someone who had reached the level of god when it came to cooking ramyeon, he realized that it would be better to eat the ramyeon made by other people than eat the one he made on his own.

“A– Amazing!”

Seeing how Conir was in awe of him, Herakel began to brag. He said, “Herakel is a true man! Herakel is good at addition and subtraction!”

Conir’s eyes grew even wider when he heard that. He said, “S– So cool! Herakel is good at addition and subtraction. Wow...”

“Fu– Fufufufufu!”

This was the first time that someone looked at Herakel with sparkling eyes after he bragged. So, this was a very fresh experience. When the two made eye contact, they saw the slight smile on each of their faces.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk hurriedly walked to the central plaza. He was distraught when he heard that Herakel immediately went to the ramyeon stall.

‘Because they both have similar personalities and way of thinking, there’s a chance that they might not get along well.’ This thought ran through Minhyuk’s head as he headed straight for the ramyeon stall.

“Irasshaimase!”

“Irasshaimase!”

“...?”

Herakel, who had “Deputy Kaptain, Kitchen Helf” written on his forehead, stood with Conir and welcomed Minhyuk.

Goosebumps rose all over Minhyuk’s skin when he saw the two standing together.

‘This is nuts...!’

On the surface, it might look like Conir and Herakel were two simple and naive men running a ramyeon stall to get by in this cold and harsh world(?). If the two ventured out into the world, there would be countless people ignoring the two. Perhaps they might even take advantage of Conir and Herakel’s things.

‘The Sword God and the God of Strength.’

The mere sight of the two standing together was enough to frighten Minhyuk. What would happen if Herakel learned how to wield a sword from Conir and how to swing his sword more systematically? Unbeknownst to Minhyuk, what he was imagining would soon become a reality.

The story of the Supreme Ramyeon Brothers, which would later become a legend, was about to begin.

Minhyuk sat inside the conference hall along with his executives.

“How’s the advertisement video?” Locke asked.

However, Minhyuk just shook his head. “Carron is keeping his mouth shut, especially with the people involved. We will only know once it’s released.”

Everyone nodded in understanding. Carron’s penchant for being strict in keeping secrets was not necessarily bad.

“However, he told me, ‘*I’m very proud and confident about it.*’ I think?”

“Oh.”

The executives nodded as if these words were more than enough. Not long after, a notification window popped out in front of everyone present and waiting inside the room.

[You can now view the Battle God’s advertisement video.]

[Would you like to view it?]

Of course, the same notification rang for all the players worldwide. And Minhyuk? He agreed without any hesitation.

[Year 719. Asgan Continent. The entire world was at peace.]

[Somewhere in this peaceful continent. Countless children gathered around a single man.]

“Uncle Tsun-tsun! Please tell us about the past!”

“These idiots. *Tsk*. You want me to talk about the past again, huh? *Hmph*.”

“Uncle Tsun-tsun, you say that, but you’re still going to tell us,” one of the naughty children said to the man called Uncle Tsun-tsun.

“A hundred years ago...”

[There were beings hailed as the Eight Pillars.]

[As their name suggested, there were eight of such beings.]

[The first of them was...]

As Uncle Tsun-tsun began to tell his story, the scene in front of all of the children changed. At the same time, the scene that the viewers were watching also changed.

With her face covered by a bright light, a woman appeared in a world filled with clouds.

[The mother of all creations and the God of Origin who rules and maintains the balance of the world, Athenae.]

Uncle Tsun-tsun continued to talk and describe them, the scene in front of the children changing with every word he spoke.

[The father of all the world popes, Kronad.]

A shudder ran down the children's spines when they saw Kronad, with his stunning appearance, appear in front of hundreds of thousands of popes.

[The King Above Gods, who reigns over the Tomb of all Kings and Emperors, Aegaeon.]

On top of a huge tomb, the figure of the one who ruled over tens of thousands of dead kings and emperors appeared.

[The Weapon Master, who reigns and controls all of the weapons in the world, Fabro.]

Tens of thousands of weapons with a sharp glint in their blades floated around Fabro, who stood alone.

"Wow!"

"Woah!"

The children shouted in admiration.

[There's also the Father of Dexterity, Jack-of-all-Trades Rocado.]

The image of a man surrounded by hundreds of hands and creating several artifacts all at once appeared in front of everyone.

[And among the Eight Pillars, two beings were hailed as the cruelest and most vicious beings in the history of the Asgan Continent.]

Some of the children could not help but gulp dryly.

[Immortal Sorceress Helenia.]

The scene changed. It showed a woman with flaming red hair walking among hundreds of thousands of corpses. Annoyed, she waved her hand and burned all of the corpses around her until there were no traces of them left. A flash of a smile appeared as if she had finally found her surroundings clean. It was a very grotesque and shocking scene.

[And...]

Although they had heard this story countless times before, the children still listened with rapt attention.

[The devil who killed millions of humans without mercy and hesitation...]

[...and the most outstanding out of all the Eight Pillars...]

The scene changed once again. This time, the scene showed Uncle Tsun-tsun and the children.

[His name is none other than Obren. It's me.]

“Boo!”

“Uncle Tsun-tsun, you always say you’re the devil just because you have the same name.”

“If uncle is the devil, then I’m Athenae!”

“Idiots!”

“Uncle, you’re the Guardian Deity of the Beyond the Heavens Empire!”

Uncle Tsun-tsun, or Obren, knocked the kids' heads. However, the children looked at him indifferently, as if they were used to his antics. One of the children, a five-year-old girl, sat naturally on Obren’s lap to listen to his story.

“Are you going to listen or not?!”

“Pff... you always lie, though.”

“But I still want to listen to the story.”

“Anyway, let’s continue.”

[The most cruel, brutal, and cool devil, Obren.]

[However, even the Eight Pillars could not live for eternity.]

[Pope Kronad went to hell himself to pay for the sins that he had committed.]

[And Rocado, who was an ordinary human, found himself at the end of his life and succumbed to his death.]

[As for Obren, he found salvation through him and could live a new life.]

[Obren became the lovely, kind, upright Guardian God.]

Glance—

Obren sneaked a peak at the children. Then, he continued to tell the story with a hum and a cough.

[Then, one day...]

[The Immortal Sorceress Helenia, who failed to complete a descent, awakened to the world.]

[The awakened Helenia realized that she could not do anything on her own. So, she went out to find and awaken someone else.]

[And the one she found was none other than the King Above Gods Aegaeon.]

The scene changed once again. It showed Helenia talking to the awakened Aegaeon.

“Come with me and help me kill Athenae.”

Then, Aegaeon chose to side with Helenia.

[Tens of millions of Aegaeon's troops, who could rival the Heavenly Army, charged into the Land of the Gods. It was hell on earth. Countless people died.]

Stab—

The scene showed someone's splendid temple littered with the corpses of thousands of gods. In the end, the last man standing was also stabbed straight through the heart.

[And...]

Thud, thud, thud—

The man slowly crumbled and turned to dust when Aegaeon pulled his sword out.

[...the Battle God died.]

Chapter 1008

The Battle God was not only the source of envy of all of the NPCs but also of the players of Athenae. But this very same Battle God had collapsed after his heart got stabbed.

Clang—

The Battle God, who lost grip of his sword, twitched. However, Helenia and Aegaeon just walked past him with mirth on their faces.

[The Battle God died.]

[With the death of the Battle God, the Land of the Gods slowly fell into chaos.]

[The Heavenly Army and the surviving gods scattered and crawled elsewhere.]

[Finally, after wreaking havoc for a month, they reached where God of Origin Athenae was.]

[However, Athenae was not alone. Another excellent and handsome member of the Eight Pillars was also there.]

[It's none other than the devil who became the Guardian God, me.]

The handsome man looked coldly in front of him as he stood among hundreds of gods and tens of thousands of Heavenly Army troops. Athenae, whose face was covered and hidden by a shroud of light, stood with them in her white papal robe. She could hear the screams getting closer and closer to where they were.

[At that time, Obren did not harbor any love or respect for Athenae. But he still stood by her side.]

[As the God of Origin, Athenae knew fully what her death would signify.]

[If she died here, then the entire world would collapse.]

“...That is our final hope. It’s the final and only way for us.”

“...”

[Athenae was also preparing for something. However, Obren just shook his head when he heard those words.]

“He only has a 0.001% chance of succeeding.”

“Stop with the bullshit, Athenae. Do not try to evaluate him and limit him with your probabilities,” Obren growled.

Athenae just looked at his eyes silently in response.

BANG—!

Then, Aegaeon and Helenia appeared as the enormous doors were blasted apart. Helenia’s powerful magic swept and devoured the surviving troops of the Heavenly Army. And Guardian God Obren? He immediately charged forward to fight against them.

[I was strong. I could overwhelm Helenia, who did not have her complete powers.]

[However, the problem was the King Above Gods Aegaeon.]

[Aegaeon, the ruler of all kings, had the power to rule the army led by the kings.]

[A powerful army with nearly a hundred million troops. I still cannot forget the overwhelming momentum and majesty the army showed back then.]

The shocking sight of more than a hundred million troops charging toward Athenae’s Temple and filling it was like a sea of black. Seeing Obren fighting alone was both strange and shocking.

[How long had they been fighting?]

[In the end, one of Helenia’s magic pierced through my chest.]

“Urk...!” Obren collapsed and vomited a mouthful of blood.

[It was already a hopeless situation.]

[I stood at the forefront facing Helenia, Aegaeon, and his millions of troops.]

[At that moment, I... I remembered an old man that I liked.]

“The Evil One, Obren.”

“Why don’t you come to our side?”

[My body was already suffering from severe injuries. I no longer have any mana left. My body was already one foot in the grave.]

[Even so, I told them...]

“I have never learned how to back down.”

“Unbelievable.”

“Why are you doing this?”

“It’s not your duty to protect the Land of the Gods, no?”

[I was once the devil. But I learned...]

“I realized how much the children’s laughter tickled my ears as I listened to their calls of ‘Uncle Guardian God’ while gathering around me.

“...how pretty the young girl looked as she looked up at me and held my hand tightly.

“...how precious the soldiers were, who waved at me despite knowing I was once the devil.

“...how sweet the apple given to me by an old wife was when I walked in the market.

“And Athenae’s collapse means that all of that will disappear. I can’t have that. So, I... will not back down.”

[My shoulders felt very heavy. However, I have already made up my mind. I will fight until the end of my life.]

[Actually, I was terrified.]

[I was already at the point where I was in so much pain that I wanted to die already. I was already questioning the meaning of life. But...]

[Someone made me wish that I could live more.]

[He brought the laughter back to my face.]

[He made me realize what it’s like to love.]

[That’s why I chose to run forward.]

[I squeezed the last of my strength and fought against them.]

Everyone saw Obren charging toward the enemy alone. But in the end, he lost his right arm. Even his left leg was broken. He had already collapsed on the ground, his body bent in strange places, and Helenia was about to make his heart explode.

“Enough...!”

[I... have never seen Athenae look so weak before.]

[Athenae looked like she had lost all hope.]

[Seeing her like that, Helenia and Aegaeon laughed. They knew that victory was now at hand.]

But then, at that moment, Obren raised his arm to the sky and spoke.

[This hand of mine has one meaning.]

[Trust.]

[It was his firm belief and trust in him.]

Then, the background music began to play. It sounded so lively that hope spread to the chaotic and ruined Land of the Gods.

[Then, a shocking scene appeared.]

In the world in the skies, the Land of the Gods, A stair made of tens of thousands of steps made with light slowly began to appear and break through the clouds.

Then, a vast tremor shook these tens of thousands of steps of light.

Thud– Thud– Thud–

[They were a race that could only live up to a hundred years.]

[A race that is far weaker than any other race. A race that survives and lives by leaning on God.]

[This race gathered together under his banner.]

A trembling breath escaped Athenae's lips. And Obren? He smiled brightly, his arm still raised high up in the sky.

[His army began to advance.]

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

The humans began to climb and run to the stairs leading to the Land of the Gods.

[They were the guardians of Athenae.]

[Some foreigners visited the land of Athenae.]

The humans, who were wearing armor made of light, began to cover every inch of the steps of light.

“Kill them all!!!”

[Aegaeon's army, donning black, began to descend the stairs.]

[It looked like a battle between the good and the evil.]

But as the black army stepped down the stairs, the human military, engulfed in light, began sweeping them away.

“For victory!!!”

“For victory!”

Among them stood Alexander, a player everyone was very familiar with, and countless other famous high rankers. Their presence created a deeper sense of immersion for all who viewed the video.

The black army constantly fell from the tens of thousands of steps of light. Seeing this, Helenia started to cast thousands of her magic spells to break down the stairs connecting the Land of the Gods to the world of humans.

[However, there was no trace of fear on their faces.]

Helenia summoned dozens of Meteors. These meteors fell non-stop and killed the humans as they tried to destroy the stairs.

[Just like me, they all had faith.]

Flash—!

Then, a bright light flashed and lit up the entire world at that moment. Along with that light, a grand and majestic temple began to descend upon the Land of the Gods.

[I knew that he was coming.]

A bright and colorful light shot out from the temple and gave strength to the people covered in light walking up the stairs. This was the divine and holy temple, Evangel.

Crackle—!

Then, at that moment, a bloody tentacle shot out from somewhere. The tentacle grew larger and larger while taking on a shape before slowly turning into stone. The shape that it ended up becoming was none other than the shape of a bridge. The bridge, more than five kilometers long, was connected to another world completely separate from the Land of the Gods.

[A bridge connecting the Land of the Gods and Hell was created.]

At the end of the bridge, one could see the God of Death standing atop a flying bone dragon.

[Hundreds of millions of people climbed up the bridge.]

[Even after their death, some still wanted to protect the land they were born on. They all marched straight toward the Land of the Gods.]

Standing beside the God of Death was the Slaughterer, Asura Ascar. She also joined the dead and charged toward the Land of the Gods. Those who wanted to protect the world charged from all directions.

*[Everyone began to gather around **him**.]*

Flash—!

Another flash of bright light appeared. Along with that, hundreds of steps made of light slowly fell from the sky above the Land of the Gods. Athenae had prepared these stairs made of light. However, even though she had prepared this, Athenae knew that there was only a 0.001% chance of getting triggered. In these stairs, the Heavenly Army troops and the gods that had scattered after the death of the Battle God began to descend.

Helenia and Aegaeon were left flustered when the gods suddenly appeared behind them.

Flash—!

Above their heads, a man shot down with his sword in hand, accompanied by a bright flash of light.

[It was an era of chaos and confusion.]

[However, in this chaotic era, one person gathered Hell, the Human World, and even the Land of the Gods together.]

[He was the only one who could do that.]

“Uwooooooooooh!”

When his sword stabbed the ground, a terrifying earthquake swept the millions of troops of Aegaeon’s army. With every swing of his sword, lightning would fall from the sky and kill hundreds of enemies.

The beat of the music grew faster and more cheerful, and the rhythm made all of the viewers shudder.

He stood there after slaughtering a considerable portion of Aegaeon’s army.

In a blink, all the humans have climbed up the stairs connecting their world to the Land of the Gods and stood behind him.

The God of Death had also crossed the bridge connected to Hell and joined his side.

Even the gods stepped down the stairs that connected them to the sky and stood by his side.

“Uwooooooooooh!”

He ran toward Helenia and Aegaeon, his sword colliding with Aegaeon’s own.

Baaaaaaang—!

A huge spark exploded from the collision, and the scene changed. It returned to Uncle Tsun-tsun Obren's sitting with the children, and the children cheered loudly.

“So cool!”

“Hehe!”

“So, what’s his name?! Who is he?!”

The children had heard this story countless times, and the ending would always be the same.

Uncle Tsun-tsun Obren looked at the sky with a faint smile and said, “He is the Battle God.”

Joy Co. Ltd.’s conference hall.

The executives, who were only watching the completed advertisement for the first time, were all left in awe as they stared at the screen showing the video about to end.

Then, the final words appeared on the screen, accompanied by majestic and awe-inspiring music.

[Stand alongside the Greatest Monarch, the Battle God.]

Even the final line was elegant. This was a great advertisement video. However, among the applauding executives, only President Kang Taehoon was rubbing his chin.

He said, “As expected, the last line is disappointing.”

The Line Killer President Kang Taehoon had been criticized for his ridiculous lines in the past. However, at this moment, Kang Taehoon was confident that the line he had thought of would be much better.

“It doesn’t have much of an impact. Will you listen to the line that I thought of?”

Everyone pretended that they were interested in the lines that Taehoon thought of. But in reality, they felt like it would be something that would make them curl their toes with how cringe-y it was. But there was nothing that they could do. He was the president of Joy Co. Ltd, you know?!

“There’s nothing to be afraid of with the Battle God. Let’s go together, friends!”

“...”

“...”

Silence enveloped the room for a moment.

“Ha– Hahaha. That’s great.”

“It’s a *reaaaaally* great line.”

“Ha– Hahahaha! My– My heart feels like it’s shrink– no, it’s swelling with pride!”

“See? Hahaha. If we used that line, we would have secured more new players. Hahahaha!”

Team Leader Park Minggyu, smiling faintly, thought, ‘*Socializing... is very difficult.*

Chapter 1009

After the Battle God’s advertisement video was released, the number of migrant applications for the Beyond the Heavens Empire, which was already flooding in, soared through the roofs.

[35,305,000 people are applying to the Beyond the Heavens Empire!]

Unlike the Luvien Empire, which was still in the middle of a chaotic time and was still trying to regain its stability, Minhyuk had now become the true Battle God. With the release of the advertisement video, the number of migrants applying to join their empire was increasing.

However, this number of migrants was still far too large for the Beyond the Heavens Empire to handle. So, just like before, they planned to take it step by step and approve the applications using a first-come, first-served system.

In front of the Battle God’s Temple.

A man looked at Minhyuk’s figure as he stood before his countless followers, looking at him with shining eyes and listening to every word he said with a small smile. This man was none other than Black Dragon.

Black Dragon looked at his excellent and outstanding son with a small smile before logging out. Although there was a smile on Chairman Kang Minhoo’s face, there was still something that he was very conflicted about. Then, he hurriedly pulled out his handkerchief to cover his mouth.

“*Cough! Cough!*”

Chairman Kang Minhoo, who had been coughing recently, was feeling unwell. Wasn’t there a saying about how one knew their body best?

“How much time do I have left?”

He did not know the answer to that. Not long after, Kang Minhoo collapsed.

Knock, knock—

“Chairman, I’m coming in... President?!” Lee Jinhwan shouted.

The doctor arrived right on time. Jinhwan hurriedly approached Minhoo, only to find him gasping for breath.

Perhaps Kang Minhoo was very relieved to see the doctor. He looked at him and mumbled, “Don’t... let... Minhyuk... know...” before promptly passing out.

Ilhwa Group was a business legend. In its early days, it was nothing but a mom-and-pop store. However, it rose to the top of the Korean business community. People often say, *"There's no company that is clean,"* but Ilhwa Group proved them wrong. They were a very clean and good company.

Chairman Kang Minhoo, the chairman of such a group, was someone that every young person in South Korea dreamed of and aspired to become. However, the object of the masses' admiration was now looking quite shabby as he sat inside a hospital room and looked out the window.

"Cough! Cough!" Minhoo began to cough again. However, he just covered his mouth with a handkerchief and continued to look out the window.

There was a bitter smile on Minhoo's face. The moment he woke up from fainting, he immediately underwent all the tests that he could take. However, he knew full well about his physical condition. That was why he could see it coming.

'Minhyuk should be the last person to know.'

His child has just gotten over his illness. When he thought about that, he suddenly recalled something. They were none other than the dragons that he owned in Athenae. There was an Athenae capsule connected in this VVIP room.

–You absolutely have to rest.

Although Lee Jinhwan told him to rest, Kang Minhoo still went ahead and connected to Athenae. Then, he summoned his dragons.

"Kihyeeeeeee!"

"Kihyeeeeeeeeck!"

"Kihyee?"

The four dragons always liked it when Black Dragon summoned them. They would all make eye contact with him, act cute, and rub their faces all over his body.

Black Dragon stroked their heads gently and said, "I wanted to become the real Black Dragon, the Black Dragon written in the myths and legends, and stay with you guys, but..."

Kang Minhoo had once mentioned this to Minhyuk. His goal was to become a real dragon in the game. A complete and genuine black dragon. And he finally found a clue that could help him achieve this dream.

"It seems like I don't have much time left."

Kang Minhoo patted the dragons sadly. After saying his final greetings to his dragons, he logged out and met with Lee Jinhwan, who came just in time as he got out.

“*Cough! Cough!*” Kang Minhoo coughed. He covered his mouth with his handkerchief and sat on his bed again before looking out the window.

“Chairman, didn’t I tell you you must rest?”

Kang Minhoo just smiled bitterly at Lee Jinhwan’s concern.

Lee Jinhwan sighed and said, “Chairman, the results are out.”

‘I know my body best.’

“Do I have to know?” Kang Minhoo said. Sometimes, it was better for the person involved not to know. Then he continued, “I saw Minhyuk standing in front of so many people today. As his father, I feel very proud and happy. I was overwhelmed with emotions.”

“...”

Lee Jinhwan just silently listened to Kang Minhoo.

“Now, that child can probably lead the Ilhwa Group. However, there’s one thing that I always ask myself.” Kang Minhoo laughed bitterly. “Will that life give my son happiness?”

Did he have to do that? Did he have to push his young child, who had barely gotten over his illness, to carry the enormous burden and be the group chairman just because of his greed?

“I still believe that it’s too much of a burden. That’s why I have been thinking a lot these days. What should I do in the future?”

Kang Minhoo looked up at the sky outside. The blue sky looked gorgeous today.

Then, Lee Jinhwan said, “The results of the tests are...”

Chairman Kang Minhoo’s eyes grew sadder as he looked at the world outside.

“Alright. How many days do I have left? A month? A year?”

“Your body age is 35 years old. The fact that your body age is that young despite being 58 years old this year is very surprising. This is the first time we have seen such a young body age for someone your age.”

“...?”

“The results of your liver function tests, lung function tests, and cancer screening tests all returned normal. Even your muscle mass and bone health are better than people in their twenties.”

But Kang Minhoo's smile remained bitter. "I know my body well. I have been coughing and running a fever and dizzy for a few days now."

"You have a cold caused by exhaustion."

"..."

Kang Minhoo looked at the sky again. This time, his bitter expression morphed into sadness.

'I'm happy about the results, but for some reason, I feel uncomfortable.'

Anyway, what happened had happened.

Minhyuk has been as busy as a bee. The number of people who wanted to relocate to the Beyond the Heavens Empire was much higher than he had expected. Because of that, not only did he have to consider expanding his territories, but he also had to consider the homes that these people would live in.

Considering that most of these people migrated to the empire to join the Battle God's religion, he also had to prepare quests related to the Battle God. He was living a busy life.

"Haze, how long are we going to be this busy?"

Haze smiled awkwardly when she heard Minhyuk's question. "Normally, I would have already told you, Your Majesty, that leaving this to us is okay. But even though it's hard for you, I hope you can help us for just a week."

A week. In a way, working full time as an emperor for just a week could be considered a very small amount of time for an emperor like Min Hyuk. This was proof that the people of the Beyond the Heavens Empire had always worked hard for the empire and for his sake.

'There's so much to do.'

Minhyuk had to eat delicious food, revitalize the empire, and defeat the Luvien Empire. All he could do was sigh and focus on his work once again.

After a good night's sleep, the now well-rested and perfectly healed Black Dragon logged back inside Athenae. The dragons looked at him with shining eyes and asked, *'Are you alright now?'*

Black Dragon smiled brightly at them. He said, "Fufu. I won't die so easily. After all, dragon blood is flowing in my veins. Besides, the sky is too blue for me to die, right? Fufufufu."

It was a cringeworthy chuuni line! But the dragons rejoiced at the return of the healthy and lively Black Dragon. They twisted their bodies while acting cute and asked for hugs from Black Dragon, who found out he was fine.

“It’s time to become a real dragon.”

Black Dragon dreamt of that beautiful dragon body covered in black scales and glittering under the sunlight.

“So, when I become a dragon, I can say this...”

All of the dragons focused on him.

“Fufu. You dare to touch me? My real power, the power of a dragon, is going berserk!”

“Ki– Kihyeeeeee!”

“Kihyeeeck!”

“Kihyaaa?”

The dragons’ eyes shone brighter as they looked at the cool, dashing Black Dragon with awe and admiration.

“And you, my four dragons, will fly together with me. Fufu.”

“Kekekekekeke!”

“Keekeeekeeekeek!”

“Ahihihihihihihi!”

The four dragons followed Black Dragon, and all laughed dreadily.

Black Dragon had already figured out how to become an actual dragon. From what he had heard, there were, at most, only two ways to do that.

Black Dragon rarely asked for information from Informant Abel. This was because he knew that far too many people needed Abel’s aid. However, the world-renowned Black Dragon had a far more extensive intelligence network than Abel’s own.

“The place where the dragons slumber.”

The Dragons’ Grave. According to the intel that Black Dragon had received, there was a way in that place that would allow him to become a true dragon, not a half-dragon.

Black Dragon did not delay further and left for the Dragons’ Grave.

Dragons' Grave.

Black Dragon and his four dragons fought desperately against the already dead dragons.

When he was young, Black Dragon dreamt about dragons. As they ascended to the heavens, their figures were literally a thing of legend. Even the *breaths*

that they spewed out of their mouths were breathtaking. Now that he was an adult, this dream became his goal.

Black Dragon already had everything. He was left with nothing more to enjoy and be excited about. But when he obtained Britney in Athenae, he took one step closer to becoming the true Black Dragon and again awakened his dreams of becoming an actual dragon. This was his final dream, the last goal he wished to achieve.

"Don't back down! I'll protect your backs!" Black Dragon shouted.

He gritted his teeth as he continued to fight with the dead dragons, who were charging at them fiercely. Whenever the four dragons were in danger, Black Dragon would jump up and protect them. He would even go so far as to use his body to receive the attack on their behalf. Then, he would take potions and continue to cut down the dead dragons in front of him.

This was already the third day. Although he and his dragons were exhausted, they continued to move forward.

"Fufufu. Just think about it. Thousands of dragons, ascending to the heavens and flying with me, who has become a true dragon!"

"Keeeeekeeee!"

"Kihyeeeeeee!"

"Kiheeeeeeee!"

Black Dragon looked like he had returned to his childhood, as if he had imagined a pleasant thought. After walking for quite a while, they finally reached the end of the Dragons' Grave.

[Brainwashed Dragon King has appeared!]

The Dragon King was twice as massive as an ordinary dragon. The problem was that hundreds of dead dragons appeared around him.

With his dragon armor, Black Dragon flew to the skies with his own dragons. This final stop held the path that would lead him to his dreams of becoming a dragon.

Slash, slash, slash—!

Another fierce battle ensued. Black Dragon fought for his dreams while the four legendary dragons fought to protect him and his dreams. The four dragons loved Black Dragon more than anybody else in the world. That was why they were willing to do anything and everything for him.

“Keuhaaaaaaack!”

“Kihyeeeeeeck!”

“Kiheeeeeeeek!”

When they saw Black Dragon fall after receiving the brunt of the dragons’ breath, the four dragons flew toward him to protect him.

“I’m fine. Let’s go again!”

“Kihyeee!”

“Kihyeeeeeeck!”

The fierce battle only ended after a dark sea of dead dragons had been created. And the soul of the brainwashed Dragon King was finally set free. He said, “You have all the qualifications to become the ruler of the Dragons’ Grave. But to become one, a human like you has to become a dragon. This path would not be easy.”

That was right. Most humans would immediately reject this when they heard they had to become a dragon. But compared to others, there was a slight smile on Black Dragon’s face.

“This is why I will offer you two things.”

Ring!

[The Dragon King offers you two rewards.]

[The first reward is a cintamani stone that can turn you into a dragon.]

[The second reward is a chicken carrying a dragon’s vitality.]

“...”

Black Dragon felt extremely happy that he would finally become an actual dragon. But the other reward was a chicken carrying a dragon’s vitality. When he checked its details, he discovered that it was a God-grade ingredient far superior to any other ordinary God-grade ingredient. On top of that, it looked very delicious.

But Black Dragon had dreamt of becoming a dragon for a long time. He realized he could not make this dream come true so early. A bitter smile flashed on Black Dragon’s face.

“Children, I’m sorry.”

“Kiiii– Kiiiiii!”

“Kihyeeeeee!”

The kind-hearted dragons, who struggled and fought fiercely for his sake, respected Black Dragon's choice. All of them nodded their heads and told him that it was fine.

This was a very ridiculous situation. However, ridiculous situations often happen between a father and his child. Black Dragon had frequently heard the other fathers' stories. One of them saved enough money to buy a new padded coat but ended up using his old padded coat because he used it to buy a game console for his son. There was another one of them who chose to quit smoking and had been doing it for decades. Instead, he saved the money that was supposed to be for his cigarettes and used it for his daughter’s wedding.

Although Kang Minhoo has almost everything in the world, in this case, he was still no different from them. He was just an ordinary father. He knew that one father would still laugh happily while wearing his old padded jacket after seeing his child smile and be happy with his new game console. Even the father who used his cigarette money to save and contribute to his daughter’s wedding would send her off without any regrets.

And Black Dragon was just like them. He would willingly choose the food that his child would like so that he could see the smile on his son Minhyuk’s face.

“I’ll choose the second reward.”

That was right. Kang Minhoo was just an ordinary father.

At the same time.

Minhyuk, busy dealing with his emperor work, received a whisper from Abel.

[Abel: Minhyuk, regarding what you asked me about the other day? I found a way to become a dragon. I heard that there are two methods, but I only learned about one.]

Just like his father, Minhyuk was an ordinary son, too.

Chapter 1010

Minhyuk once heard his father talk about his dreams.

–Son, this father of yours will become a dragon one day.

When his father talked about his dreams back then, he looked just as excited as a child. He could not help but smile when he saw his father gush about his dreams like that.

'I have received a lot from him.'

Minhyuk's father was his sole driving force. He was the only reason why Minhyuk did not collapse and continue to struggle and fight against his eating addiction. Because of that, Minhyuk had always wanted to do something for his father.

And just like always, he asked Abel about it. But after sending a reply to the whisper, Abel did not answer.

[Minhyuk: Abel?]

[Abel: Minhyuk, I am very serious about this. You have to listen carefully to me.]

Abel suddenly sent a very solemn whisper. Sensing the tone of the whisper, Minhyuk also turned serious.

[Abel: Please, I beg you. Do not buy me food. Just pay me with money...]

[Minhyuk: Why? Koreans like rice the best. When someone has not contacted you for a long time, you say, 'Let's have a meal later!' When you meet someone on the street, you say, 'Let's have a meal later!' When someone does something you're grateful for, you say, 'Let's have a meal later!' But you're refusing that meal? OMG...]

[Abel: No. It's because you say you will always buy me a meal, but you also eat my share!]

'Uhm. I can't deny that.'

For some reason, Minhyuk felt very sad.

'I felt like it was more delicious whenever I stole from Abel's plate...'

[Minhyuk: Okay, I understand...?]

[Abel: Alright. Thank you. Anyway, there are two methods to become a real dragon. Let's set things straight first. I only found one of the methods.]

Minhyuk quietly listened to Abel's story.

[Abel: There is a place called Dragon Land. It's a place where only dragons live. I have gathered that it's an entirely different place from the World of Hybrids where your father is currently.]

As far as Minhyuk knew, his father, Black Dragon, was acting as the Dragon Monarch and was working actively in the World of Hybrids. Then, suddenly...

'If my dad becomes a real dragon, would he become the owner of Dragon Land?'

If that truly happened, Black Dragon would be able to lead the half-dragons and the dragon army. At that moment, Minhyuk could already imagine the sight of his father smiling grimly as he swept his hair up!

‘Fufufu! A real dragon is going berserk in my body!’

But that was not the end.

‘The blood in my body is boiling. It’s calling for my brethren!’

Then, tens of thousands of dragons and half-dragons would charge forward and fight by his side!

‘Wow...’

It would be a sight to see. Of course, Minhyuk was still listening to Abel as he imagined his father.

[Abel: According to the information I have gathered, the necklace possessed by the old Dragon Emperor can turn someone into a real dragon.]

Minhyuk also confirmed with Abel how to get to Dragon Land and meet the Dragon Emperor. However, he was not in a rush.

‘I’ll take care of these boring tasks first and then go there immediately.’

Minhyuk felt extremely happy at the thought of his father’s smile.

Black Dragon chose food as the final reward in the Dragons’ Grave for his son, Minhyuk. He did not have any regrets at all. It was fine. After all, there were two methods.

Since he knew there was another way, Black Dragon could unlock more information about the other method without much difficulty.

“Children, this time it’s for real.”

“Kekekekekek!”

“Kikikikikiki!”

“Ahihihihihi!”

Black Dragon and the four legendary dragons all laughed grimly. Perhaps it was because they were given a short preview of what would come; they felt even more motivated to reach their goals.

After following the information he obtained, Black Dragon and his four dragons finally reached Dragon Land.

The Qingdao Kingdom was a nation built by one of the Chinese high-rankers, Xu Jiaqi. Its main pillars were the Black Dragon Order, a group that dominated the Chinese Server in the past.

Back then, the Black Dragon Order's members all had the *pinnacle* skill that no other player had. However, the pinnacle skill they once monopolized had now become a thing of the past.

The Qingdao Kingdom was located in the Chinese Server. This meant that its population and territory were much larger than those of the Beyond the Heavens Empire, a nation that was hailed as an empire. But even if that was the case, they still lagged completely behind the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Why? It was because of their *level*.

Even so, the Qingdao Kingdom was still quite a mighty nation. It aimed to become the second empire established by a player.

“This is quite reassuring.”

Lamber chuckled when he heard Xu Jiaqi's words. Lamber was one of the members of the newly reconstructed God's Children.

The Gods' Children seemed to have completely disappeared when Rex, one of them, failed to complete the God of Death's story. However, new Gods' Children were born to the world to carry their pride. They also have the same high reputation that they had in the past.

Lamber, in particular, possessed a very unique ability.

‘Ruler of Range.’

The Ruler of Range was one of the Absolute Demigod Classes. Although its attack skills were excellent, the class' other skills were far more outstanding. The class possessed a very absurd skill called *Absolute Range*. The skill user could set up a range that could reach up to 1.5 kilometers and reduce the skills, artifacts, and abilities of the people caught within the range by 30%.

‘In other words, everything they have will drop by 30%.’

It was a ridiculously phenomenal skill. Of course, Lamber's ability came with a massive penalty. His level would drop by one every time he used the skill. Not only that, he also had to pay around 1,000 platinum to trigger the skill. It was quite a massive penalty for just one skill.

However, skills with such huge penalties could be considered a player's one-shot kill skill. It was purely up to the player's discretion whether they would benefit or lose from using this skill.

And the Qingdao Kingdom had been benefiting greatly from Lamber's unusual ability. Even if dozens of Qingdao Kingdom's top rankers had gathered together, it was difficult for them to raid a boss mob. However, with the addition of Lamber, they could raid such monsters easily.

Xu Jiaqi, who walked with Lamber, looked around her. Thirty Level 600 players and countless of the Qingdao Kingdom's elite troops marched in front of them. Seeing this, Xu Jiaqi felt very reassured.

'Many players have achieved Level 600 popping all over the world.'

The number of players at Level 600 has increased rapidly since Alexander achieved Level 600. The current estimate of the total number of Level 600 players is around 1,000.

As far as Xu Jiaqi knew, the Qingdao Kingdom had the highest number of Level 600 players compared to other nations. Simply put, it would be difficult for other empires and kingdoms to keep up with them. This was mainly because of their large population.

Meanwhile, she looked at the end of their marching path. In this place lived another race. And this race was none other than the dragon race. A place that was teeming with true dragons.

"When it comes to true dragons, there's nothing that we can throw away. From their spines to their cintamani stones, to their toes, and even their skin. Everything has value. One dragon is worth 10,000 platinum. And if we capture those dragons and torture them, we can get Dragon Tears from them. Each drop of such tear is worth 5,000 platinum."

This was information that they had learned from Sima Qian, the aide and tactician of the Qingdao Kingdom.

"It wouldn't benefit us to hunt the dragons right away. We have to capture the Dragon Emperor first. The tears of a Dragon Emperor are far more valuable than any other Dragon Tears. We'll have them remain in our captivity and obtain those tears forever."

"Amazing," Xu Jiaqi said, a vicious and disgusting smile on her face as she slowly walked toward their destination.

Black Dragon was extremely nervous when he finally reached Dragon Land. In the first place, dragons were legendary spiritual beasts, even in Athenae. Of course, the four dragons by his side were a bit special.

As for the dragons he would meet in this place, they were not like the dragons he had encountered in the Dragons' Grave. Since they weren't dead, he did not know whether they would be hostile or friendly to him.

Black Dragon, who grew closer to Dragon Land, saw the dragons guarding the entrance to what seemed like an ordinary empire. He slowly and carefully walked toward the entrance.

The two dragons stationed at the gates looked at Black Dragon warily. Dragons had eyes similar to that of a snake. So, when they narrowed their eyes at him, it looked even more intimidating.

"Do you have human or dragon blood flowing in your veins?" One of the dragons snorted, flame shooting out from his nostrils.

Then, Black Dragon saw...

[Dragon Guard Gian. Level 598.]

[Dragon Guard Conon. Level 601.]

And just as he expected, the dragons were at a much higher level than ordinary mobs. Black Dragon had done extensive research and studies about dragons. From what he had gathered, these dragons possessed a unique power that was different from the power that the four legendary dragons possessed. He also knew that there were many kinds of dragons.

"Who are you?" The dragon asked, a cold and vigilant glare aimed at him.

Who am I?

Without any hesitation, Black Dragon said, "Fufufufu. Did you just ask who I am?"

Black Dragon laughed majestically, his chuunibyou coming through. Then, he breathed the sweet air around him and said, "*Ahem*. My blood is boiling. I am a human who wants to become a dragon. Seeing my brethren personally makes the blood in this body of mine boil. Ooooh! I want to share the same hot blood flowing through your veins. Fufufu. Kghhk...!"

Black Dragon trembled as he held his right hand. Then, he said, "The being in my right arm is about to go berserk...!"

"..."

"..."

The two dragons looked at each other. At this moment, Black Dragon thought that a fierce battle was inevitable. If a fight truly broke out, the path leading him to become a dragon would be stained with blood.

“Let me guide you to the Dragon Emperor.”

The dragons led Black Dragon inside. When he stepped inside, he saw a peaceful and quiet land. Although what they seemed to eat was different from what humans ate, they also practiced the same practices and bought and sold wares and food to each other. They also stopped on the streets to talk and laugh with each other.

‘Living is the same for everyone,’ Black Dragon thought as he followed the Dragon Guards.

Finally, he reached the castle where the Dragon Emperor lived. A shudder suddenly ran down Black Dragon’s spine when he caught sight of the black energy surrounding the black-and-white castle. That was not all; blood dripped all over the castle. This scene made Black Dragon excited.

‘My goodness! There’s blood dripping down the castle!’

Not long after, Black Dragon entered the castle and met face-to-face with the Dragon Emperor. The Dragon Emperor was around 1.5x bigger than ordinary dragons, and his eyes? It was entirely black, with no distinction between the pupils and the whites of the eye. He was also donning a torn and ragged red cape that heightened his impressiveness in the eyes of Black Dragon.

“Fufu. You have brought me an insignificant human being? Shall I take your heart and dye my hands a beautiful color with it? If not that, then shall I hang your heart on the castle and let your blood drip down and soak the world until the land begins to wail?”

“Fufufufufu. It would be his greatest honor and pleasure if you allow his heart’s blood to soak the land, Your Majesty.”

“Today’s sun is quite intense. It is just like you, Your Majesty. However, this connection is just like a spring breeze. Keuhahahahahaha!”

At this moment, Black Dragon felt his heart thump wildly. He finally understood why the Dragon Guards said nothing else and guided him here. The way they spoke was just way too excellent. They were just like him!

Black Dragon took a step forward and said, “Fufufufu. Can you see it, Your Majesty the Dragon Emperor? Can you see this being on my right hand, twitching like crazy and hoping to rush out just because we have seen you?”

“Is that so? This is also the first time that I have met a human like you who carries the same air as us. My heart is growing as intense as the sun. Ahhh. The four dragons under your command shine as brightly as the stars. They are so bright that they blind my eyes. Kghhk!”

The Dragon Emperor and Black Dragon looked at each other's eyes.

“Fu– Fufufufufufufu– Fufufufufufufu!”

“Keuhahahahaha– Keuhahahahahahahaha!”

At this moment, Black Dragon, who cackled heartily, felt like he had met a true friend. He raised his hand elegantly and said, “For your eyes carrying blazing flames, cheers!”

Black Dragon was indeed pleased.