

Gourmet 21

Chapter 21: Someone Better than You

The penalty was similar when players experienced death. They would not be allowed to enter the game for twelve hours nor would they be allowed to partake in the random item drop. Their stats would also drop randomly by 1~10 points. This system was set to prevent players from quitting halfway in the middle of a dungeon hunt.

Minhyuk naturally drifted to the back of the group.

Since they told him to just stay behind, then it would be blasphemy if he did not cherish this time to eat his delicious castella cake. He would also occasionally pull out one of Allon's chestnut sweet red bean jelly to chew on.

"Well then, let's go." The spearman, Roy said as he took the lead.

Ver walked beside Roy, while Minhyuk and Rakku stood behind them. They walked and maintained the most basic party formation as they moved forward.

Just then, a monster appeared in front of them.

"It's a?Mini Ant.?Mini ants?usually use their long arms to pull people in and squeeze them to death. Their grip is much stronger than what you think. Be careful."

A mini ant?was the size of a small tree, standing at around 140cm in height. Minhyuk had already searched for information on Twilight Graveyard before. He knew that the first monster to come out was the mini ant, which would then be followed by...

'Fufufu, something delicious will come out next.'

Allon had told him that the pig would come out once he reached the end of the dungeon. Just the thought alone was enough to make Minhyuk drool. He quickly wiped the drool dripping down his chin as he watched the battle in front of him.

Only one mini ant had come out to welcome them.

Creak—

The mini ant's branch-like arms stretched towards them. Roy immediately stepped forward to counter the attack.

Strike!

Roy slapped down the arms that were extending towards them in one strike. Minhyuk could tell that the spear in Roy's hand was quite expensive. Then, Roy dashed forward and quickly narrowed the distance between him and the monster.

Thrust!

"Kiiikiiiiikiii!"

The mini ant shrieked loudly as the spear in Roy's hand hit its body, causing it to fly a distance back. Ver immediately dashed forward and struck it down with his ax.

Thud!

The mini ant collapsed, dropping 104 gold as well as branch-like arms in front of its corpse.

[Party: You have acquired 26 gold.]

[Party: Roy has acquired Mini Ant's Tree Limb(1).]

The gold was distributed among the party members equally, while the miscellaneous item went to Roy.

"That's how you do it. This will be my last Twilight hunt, so I won't be able to take you on a?bus?again. Next time you go out hunting, you can tell other parties?'I have seen a lot of attack patterns.'?If you say that, they will accept you in their party, Minhyuk," Roy spoke to Minhyuk with a kind smile on his face.

"That's great," Minhyuk answered while chewing loudly.

Chew, chew.~

Roy smiled widely after hearing Minhyuk's words.

"Ugh...?You hunted it so fast that I wasn't even able to use my magic."

"The best time to use magic is when we are driven into a corner. After all, it uses a lot of MP," ?Roy said, trying to comfort Rakku.

"I saw it earlier. But your spear is really nice, Roy."

"Hahaha. Well, this is a rare item for beginners. I paid a lot of money for it. Minhyuk's items look nice too, right?"

"I don't know..." Minhyuk answered vaguely.

Everyone in the party thought that Minhyuk had also just paid for his items with money, so they left the topic at that.

'That spear...'

Minhyuk looked at Roy's spear. His eyes had been attracted to the weapon ever since he joined the party. He could not explain it, but he had a weird feeling at the sight of the spear, as if he had seen it somewhere before.

"Well then, shall we start hunting in earnest?"

"Yes!"

"Yeah!"

Chomp~

"Yep!"

The hunt was going smoothly. Roy was a lot stronger compared to others at his level and Ver was fighting well too. Rakku also timed her Magic Missiles perfectly, often disrupting the enemies' attacks.

They were currently hunting three mini ants. Roy suddenly turned to Minhyuk as he watched the mini ant's limbs stretch forward, and said, "Minhyuk, why don't you try and kill that one?"

It looked like Roy was giving Minhyuk the opportunity to experience hunting a mini ant. This was very common in most power leveling tactics. However, there were a lot of players that got scared with the realistic nature of the game and often failed to hunt any monsters.

Ver laughed mockingly as he said, "What can someone like him do?! He only knows how to eat!"

Jab—

"Keep that mouth shut," Rakku said angrily, jabbing Ver at the side.

"No, did I say something wrong? He's being carried by us and all he ever does is eat. This guy..."

However, before Ver could even finish his words...

Bang!

Minhyuk had kicked off the ground and dashed forward.

'He's fast.'

Roy's eyes narrowed as he watched Minhyuk move. Meanwhile, Minhyuk hurriedly gulped down the castella as he narrowed the distance between him and the mini ant.

Slash!

Minhyuk slashed the mini ant, tearing through its body. It fell down with a loud thud. In just a single strike, the mini ant had turned into a cold, dead body.

"Oh, that's quite neat."

"He's that fast?"

Clap, clap.

"We have already whittled down its strength, that's why he was able to one-shot it. Tch."

Minhyuk was fast. However, everyone thought that he was just a bit faster compared to others at his level. However, one thing that they were not aware of was the fact that Minhyuk had not even made an effort.

After all, was there any need to? The monster in front of them would die with just one hit anyway. Besides, there was something that he wanted to check too.

"Do you do kendo in real life?"

"Yes, I've been doing it for quite some time."

"Ah, so that's why your movements were so neat. That's good."

Just like that, they continued to move forward.

Changwook logged out of Athenae and headed towards the room where Minhyuk's capsule was. There, he saw Jinhwan, the doctor in charge of Minhyuk, as well as several other medical staff and personnel. It seemed like they were having an interesting conversation.

"It's time for my shift! What are you guys talking about?"

"Ah. General, you're here?"

"Doc, please."

"Haha. Sorry, sorry. We were just talking about Minhyuk."

"Minhyuk? Why? What's the matter with him?"

Minhyuk's dietitian, Im Hyejin, said, "We've already known Minhyuk for five years, and we have never seen him become angry before. However, I believe that Minhyuk is a person that definitely gets angry."

"Ah. So no one here has ever seen Minhyuk angry?"

All of the people present nodded.

"It's because I always see Minhyuk smile everyday~"

"Yeah. I have only seen Minhyuk smile."

Changwook grinned and said, "I've seen it before."

"Huh? Really?"

"For real? Minhyuk got angry?"

"I made a blunder in the past," Changwook said, sitting down with an awkward expression on his face.

"At first, I also thought that Minhyuk was the type of person that does not get angry at all. He's a very funny and lively guy, you know? But, don't you think that Minhyuk has every right to complain? After all, he doesn't know why he got this disease and he's been suffering."

"That's right, do you remember Director Park Taeil? That guy's son always called Minhyuk a 'pig' behind his back. However, Minhyuk only said, 'Oh, how did you know that I was a pig? You're really great! Hwiiiik!' before laughing. I can't tell you how angry I was at that punk back then."

"Do you know what I thought when I saw that happen?"

Everyone turned to look at Changwook, waiting for his next words. To which, he said, "Wow, this person is really living well."

"Huh?"

"Look at Minhyuk. His father is a CEO, he has a good personality, he's good at studying, and if you discount the fact that his body is overweight, then he would be a great athlete. Whenever he sets his mind on something, you know that he will always come out on top."

"That's right. Minhyuk has always been exceptional in everything."

"He's someone who has practically everything. How do you think he, when placed first in school, felt when the last in class asked him? 'Will you be happy if you continue studying like that? Why don't you enjoy life to the fullest~?'"

"...You must be thinking that he would feel happy, right? Why? Because he would feel superior when people say that. However, it's not the same for Minhyuk."

"You're right. Minhyuk has everything so he doesn't care if anyone gossips or says anything bad about him, he will just smile. He's already been through so much in life. Still, he is a very gentle person, and he is a gentleman through and through."

"Except...when it comes to eating."

"Yeah, he's gentle. Except when it's about eating."

Everyone nodded in agreement.

Then Im Hyejin said, "Ah, wait. This isn't what we were talking about. Changwook, you mentioned that you saw Minhyuk angry. How was he then?"

Changwook looked bitter when he recalled the memory. Then he said, "...It was very scary."

Everyone's eyes widened at the shocking remarks that came out of Changwook's mouth.

"Really?"

"Yeah, I only saw his angry face for a fleeting moment. Back then, I think it was... when Minhyuk was still allowed to eat crackers, what...once every two weeks? That day he did not listen to any word that I said and only had his eyes on the crackers. So, I took it away."

"But right when I did that, the look on Minhyuk's face..."

"What? What did he look like?"

"He looked like a completely different person. He quickly apologized when he realized what happened. And I know that Minhyuk became like that because of his illness, and what I did was wrong as well, so I apologized too. Thankfully, we resolved the situation."

Everyone nodded as if it was a relief to hear those words.

"After that incident, I also heard that Minhyuk got angry at Secretary Park Munsoo, you know? So, I went to Secretary Park and asked him about it, just so I can be careful about my actions next time."

"So? What happened?"

"Secretary Park told me a lot. Basically, Minhyuk has a bottom line. Once you cross that line, you're done for. And he really gets very scary when he's angry. He will spit out facts to the point that you would feel that it's savage and be speechless. I definitely don't want to cross that line."

"You see, it's completely impossible to attack someone in reality, right? He will just come at you with logic. Even that was scary enough. But, what do you think will happen inside the game?"

Everyone gulped in fright.

"I'm sure we'll see a very angry Minhyuk there. What's more, there is a PK system inside the game."

Roy and Ver were dealing with six mini ants. However, they started to get overwhelmed as the number of their enemies grew.

"T...the aggro got deflected!" Rakku shouted in a fluster as she launched her Magic Missile, trying to stop the dying mini ant from approaching her.

Then, Minhyuk suddenly appeared. He quickly stood in front of the mini ant.

Slash!

A single slash of Minhyuk's sword was able to kill the mini ant easily.

"Are you alright?"

"Ah, yes...!"

However, Roy and Ver were losing aggro. The ones that were coming at Rakku and Minhyuk seemed to have more stamina compared to the ones before.

"Shit, why is the aggro deflecting!" Ver shouted loudly, his temper flaring as he hurriedly chased after the monster that got pulled away.

He knew that he would lose even more points with Rakku if he let her get attacked. However, Ver could not stop a mini ant from stretching its limbs towards himself. Thankfully, Minhyuk had stepped up in time to protect Rakku.

[Dauntless Strike]

[Additional 20% damage to your strikes.]

Slash!

Minhyuk took out another mini ant before narrowing the distance between the branch-like arm that was reaching towards Ver.

Bang!

"Nice!" Roy shouted, stabbing the back of the mini ant as if he was waiting for it to come his way.

Stab!

"This little shit!"

Ver grimaced when he realized that Minhyuk had just helped him. However, Minhyuk did not care about him. He just returned to his position, watching them carefully.

"I'm hungry," Minhyuk said as he opened a sweet red bean jelly and ate it.

After they finished the hunt, Roy remarked, "Ver, weren't you too distracted? It would have been a big disaster if you had let that mini ant get through our rear."

"Shit, that first-timer keeps on getting on my nerves."

"Minhyuk has been doing a very good job. This is already a great achievement for someone doing his first party quest."

"Ah, no, he's not? That guy just stepped out in front of me and deflected more aggro."

Roy swept his hair back with an awkward expression on his face while Ver bit his lips tightly.

'FXcker, I got embarrassed in front of Rakku.'

It seemed like Ver was under a strong delusion that he had a chance with Rakku. Angry at being embarrassed in front of his "girl", Ver stomped towards Minhyuk.

Aaah~

Minhyuk opened his mouth wide and was just about to put a castella cake in his mouth to satisfy his hunger after the battle when...

"Argh! You're just pigging out as always! You! I have to say something to you. The aggro got deflected because of you," Ver said, snatching the castella cake away from Minhyuk's hand.

Chapter 22: Someone Better than You

[An act of poor etiquette has been committed.]

[Player Ver is in a temporary chaotic state.]

[If the other party initiates an attack, they will not receive any penalty.]

[The item can be collected by the owner after 3 seconds.]

[Item is not available for use.]

Chaotic State. It was a state of penalty that a player would fall into once they had committed an act of poor etiquette. This state would allow the other party to take action against the aggressor, without being penalized. If the aggressor did not escalate their aggression or kill their opponent, they would just be placed under a half-chaotic state.

This would still give the opponents a few minutes to attack the aggressor before their half-chaotic state was released. However, if the aggressor had already killed another player, then the player-killer would be placed under a temporary complete chaotic state. There would be no penalty incurred on other players attacking the player-killer until they have returned to a normal state.

"What's with this cake that makes you keep on eating it..." Ver said, raising his hand to throw the cake away. However, before he could do so, Minhyuk had stood up and punched him square in the face. It all happened so fast that no one was able to react.

Punch!

The punch blew Ver away and made him so dizzy that he was not able to come back to his senses quickly. Ver was very surprised at this.

'W...why did my HP drop this much... It was just one punch!'

Ver gaped at Minhyuk as he heard him say, "I'm an X? Me?"

'W...what's with that look...'

Ver was flustered at Minhyuk's sudden actions. The same was true for Roy and Rakku, who were shocked. Everything had happened in just an instant. The happy-go-lucky Minhyuk was now emitting a scary aura while wearing an angry expression.

"W...what are you doing?! Did you just hit me?!"

Minhyuk just took a single leap and he was already in front of Ver. Ver flinched in fear, unable to reconcile the seemingly harmless Minhyuk from earlier, and the ferocious expression that Minhyuk was showing right now.

Even if he did not know how his HP dropped this much, he knew that he would be forced to log out if he received another blow. The revelation made Ver extremely flustered and frightened that he was left stuttering.

In fact, the situation would be solved if he logged out of the game willingly. However, Minhyuk's fierce expression and aura overwhelmed him to the point that he could not think straight.

Rakku stared at Ver with pity as she watched Minhyuk approach him. But Minhyuk knew that it was not worth it for him to deal with Ver. Then, he raised his hand.

"Hiiiiiiiiik!" Ver shrieked, cowering in preparation for another attack. However, all that Minhyuk did was take the cake back from his hands and put it in his mouth.

Ver was left speechless. His ugly face was wearing an even uglier expression after being embarrassed.

"Come on, both of you, calm down. Ver, come here," Roy said, stepping up to mediate between them while Rakku secretly pulled at Minhyuk's clothes to separate them.

In fact, it was not that difficult for Minhyuk to PK Ver and force the latter to log-out. However, there was a reason why he did not kill Ver.

'If my guess is right, then Roy will definitely separate us from Ver.'

Ver scowled at Minhyuk, still raring for a fight to try and protect his remaining self-esteem, as Roy tried to mediate between them.

"Let go! Let go of me! That bastard..."

Minhyuk folded his arms and stared at Ver expressionlessly, who shut his mouth the moment their gazes met.

Then, Rakku whispered in Minhyuk's ears, "Minhyuk, good job. Wow, that was so refreshing. I was so upset because that person kept on flirting with me and separating us."

Minhyuk pulled out another castella cake slice from his inventory as he replied, "Rakku."

"Yes?"

"That person tried to do something that he shouldn't have done."

"W...what is it?" Rakku asked shyly, perking her ears up to listen carefully.

"He tried to throw away food."

"...?"

Minhyuk ate his castella cake with a very solemn expression. This was a man whose unawareness was a whole other level.

Roy smiled awkwardly after pulling Ver away from Minhyuk.

"Oh... Wait. The party's mood is not that good. Haha. Well, I'm not blaming Minhyuk for it."

Roy saw it happen but before he could react, Minhyuk had already taken the necessary actions. Even so, if it had happened to him, he would have also done the same.

"Another mob, the sweet python, will appear soon. It's much stronger than the mini ant, so we're going to have to pull them over one by one before we can strike them down. Ver and I are the perfect fit for the job."

What Minhyuk had guessed was really unfolding the way he thought. He knew that Roy was not doing this in order for Minhyuk and Ver to reconcile, but it was because he wanted to leave them behind. Of course, it was still just a possibility.

However, the fact that Roy only interfered in their fight after it happened, as if he was waiting for this fight to break out, was enough to convince Minhyuk to be on guard against him.

"The atmosphere between you two is too hostile; it's better for the two of you to stay behind," Roy said quietly.

Minhyuk and Rakku nodded their heads in agreement as they watched Roy and Ver walk further into the dungeon until they disappeared from their sights. Even after they had left, Minhyuk still continued to eat. Rakku felt that the air was awkward.

"You really won't give me anything? Just a bit?"

"Yes, I won't even give you a tiny morsel!!"

"Even a tiny morsel..."

Minhyuk was the type of person who did not share food with just anyone!

After another bout of silence, Minhyuk asked, "How much of your MP is left right now?"

‘Why did he ask this all of a sudden?’

Rakku was confused by Minhyuk's sudden question. However, she still said, "My MP is half-filled right now."

"Is that so? I hope it will be filled up quickly then," Minhyuk replied while nodding his head.

"Why?"

"Just in case."

‘Just in case?’

She looked at him curiously but Minhyuk did not explain further.

Twenty minutes later...

"Why, why aren't they coming back?" Rakku asked in a fluster. She knew that twenty minutes was more than enough time for the two to lure a single monster.

[Party Chat | Rakku: Roy? Ver? Where are you?]

[Party Chat | Rakku: Guys? Can you please answer me?]

[Party Chat | Rakku: Guys...?]

However, the party chat window remained silent. Minhyuk continued to eat his castella cake in silence. Just then...

Thud, thud, thud, thud—

The sound of urgent footsteps rang loudly from deep within the darkness of the dungeon. Rakku held her breath while Minhyuk just chewed on his bread.

Gasp, gasp, gasp—

"Damn it! A Great Sweet Python came out!"

"G...Great Sweet Python...?!"

The one running over was none other than their party leader, Roy.

The Great Sweet Python was a monster that was considered to be a quasi-boss spawn on the Twilight Dungeon and was the next most powerful mob after the boss monster. It was very rare, but there were times when the quasi-boss had proven to be more challenging and difficult to fight, compared to the boss mob. The Great Sweet Python was exactly in that category. Whenever this guy showed up, a dozen or more sweet pythons would accompany it as well.

"What about Ver?!"

"He was forced to log out! Damn it!!" Roy swore as he tried to calm his ragged breaths.

"Hmmm." Minhyuk hummed and nodded, still eating his bread

"Huff...Huff...Huff...?We tried to shake those guys off...?Huff...?I just kept on running..." Roy was still breathing heavily as he spoke.

"T...then are the three of us going to take it on?"

"Yes, we have to be as careful as possible and start off with the mob surrounding the Great Sweet Python..."

Right then, Roy suddenly stabbed his spear out towards Minhyuk.

"Kyaaaaack?!" Rakku let out a little scream of alarm. However...

Clang!

Minhyuk calmly parried the attack with his sword in one hand, still holding his cake in the other.

[Chaotic player.]

[No penalty will be incurred if PK is successful.]

[There is a high probability of an item dropping.]

Minhyuk calmly finished the cake in his hand while Roy jumped back to widen the distance between them. He was completely shocked at Minhyuk's reaction. Minhyuk stepped forward while pushing Rakku behind him.

"What the hell, you knew?" Roy asked, the kind smile on his face slowly fading away.

"W...what's happening?! Why did you suddenly attack Minhyuk...!"

"He's a PK guy," Minhyuk spoke calmly.

"Oh my, so you really knew? I never thought that you could parry my spear."

Minhyuk stared at Roy as he mumbled something under his breath. The words that he muttered were a chapter of the Bardy Swordsmanship.

"When did you realize it?"

"Who knows..."

Two hours ago, while Minhyuk was on his way to meet Charlie, the hunting NPC.

"Ah, damn, I dropped the spear I got last time!"

"What?! How did you drop it!"

Minhyuk saw two very familiar faces. They were the people that he saw on the day that he first arrived at the central plaza and met with General. It was the player who had bragged about getting a great item and his friend that complained about his stomachache.

"I went to a dungeon on a party hunting quest and got PKed... That guy is a huge bastard...! Argh, that spear is a unique item!! I'm so pissed off!"

"PK?! Wow, there are still bastards like that even in a beginner's village?"

"Why are you laughing? Are you gloating over my misfortune?"

"Calm down, my friend. When a friend is in trouble, shouldn't a true friend laugh at him so he will learn his lessons?"

"Hey, XX bastard!"

Minhyuk, who listened to their conversation, thought that it was truly possible. After all, that player was jumping in joy when he got that spear. He was so happy that Minhyuk wondered if the player was feeling the same way as him, when he received something that he could eat.

After listening to their conversation, he continued to walk towards the central plaza to find a Twilight party.

In all honesty, Minhyuk was not that confident that it was Roy. There was a chance that the spear just looked similar. However, from what he heard, the spear was a unique item.

In other words, it was truly the spear that he saw the other day. Artifacts above the rare grade were uncommon. Those artifacts starting from unique would definitely only have one in existence.

However, even though he had found it strange, he chose to maintain his vigilance and observe the situation.

Then, he was accepted as a member of their party. If one were to ask Minhyuk when he realized that Roy was the PK guy, his reply would be that it was when Roy offered to bring him along. There was no other reason aside from him having an ulterior motive.

'He's aiming for my items.'

PK would result in random item drops, and Minhyuk's items looked quite expensive. Plus, Roy had acted according to Minhyuk's expectations. Minhyuk had pondered about how Roy would act.

'Will he make a move when the three of us are together? No, I don't know about his level, but it will definitely be hard on him to take on all three of us. So, he will definitely separate one person away from the other two first.'

True enough, Roy found a chance when Minhyuk and Ver had a dispute. He waited for the perfect timing to separate them by saying that he and Ver would chase and kite the mob.

When this happened, Minhyuk finally confirmed that Roy was really the PK guy. He was prepared to PK Ver earlier, but he hung back first. Ver was going to die anyway if Minhyuk's assumptions turned out to be correct. Hence, he thought that it would be better to make use of him to confirm things than to kill Ver himself.

"Well, it doesn't matter. All we have left is a time-consuming mage and a Level 10 classless novice."

"H... how can such a kind looking person do this...!" Rakku shouted.

Even if they were low leveled, no one would feel good about getting PKed. Then, Rakku noticed Minhyuk, who was very calm.

'Just like what he said, I'm a mage and Minhyuk is only at Level 10...'

It seemed like their 2:1 odds would only lead to a complete defeat after all. Rakku had clearly seen that Roy was good at fighting. Roy quickly narrowed their distance.

[Power Strike]

[Additional 10% attack power on a single blow.]

Roy used the special skill attached to the spear, lunging at Minhyuk with all his strength. He believed that Minhyuk would need to throw his sword away in order to stop this strike, which would allow him to stab Minhyuk in the neck.

[Dauntless Strike]

[Each attack inflicts additional 20% damage.]

But then, Minhyuk's sword flashed with a red light.

Clang!

The sound of weapons colliding rang out loudly as Minhyuk parried his strike.

"Shall I show you everything I got?"

Minhyuk had purposely hidden his stats and power due to his suspicions of Roy. Even with the deflected aggro, he had only chosen to finish off the ones which had blood all over, or were on the brink of death.

Tremble—

Roy's face grew solemn at the trembling sensation that passed through his arms from the force of the collision. However, before he could collect himself, Minhyuk had already quickly narrowed their distance.

"Ha!"

"Huh?!"

Both Rakku and Roy exclaimed in shock. They finally realized that Minhyuk had fooled them completely. Minhyuk's speed was much higher compared to when they were hunting mini ants.

Clang!

Clang!

Minhyuk swiftly pressured Roy with his attacks.

'What the fxck! What kind of stats does this Level 10 have...!'

Roy was shocked at the tremendous amount of strength he felt with each strike that he blocked desperately.

[Two Consecutive Quick Assault]

[Each sword swing will deal damage twice.]

Clang!

Minhyuk's sword collided against Roy's spear, when suddenly, another sword swing appeared out of the afterimage.

Clang!

Clang!

In the end, Roy could not withstand Minhyuk's overwhelming power. His grip on his spear loosened which allowed Minhyuk to stab him in the neck.

Stab!

"Ugh!"

Roy trembled as Minhyuk's sword slit through his throat.

Splatter!

Then, Minhyuk pulled his sword out without any hesitation. When Roy's body collapsed to the ground, plenty of glittering artifacts fell and dropped in front of his corpse.

'A ring?'

Chapter 23: It's Zero Calories if It's Delicious

The ring that dropped had a small pair of white wings attached to it.

[You have acquired Hermes' Ring.]

Minhyuk immediately checked the item's information.

[Hermes' Ring]

Class: Unique

Requirement: Level 10

Durability: 782/1,000

Defensive Power: 52

Special Abilities:

?AGI +15

?Skill: Haste

Description: A ring that Hermes accidentally dropped. It has the Haste spell attached to it. It seems to be useful for Warrior-class players.

'Ho.'

Minhyuk then went on to check the information on the skill?Haste.

(Haste)

Artifact Skill

Level: None

Mana Required: 50

Cooldown: 2 hours

Effects: 1.3x attack speed and movement speed for 10 seconds.

The skill was worthy for the item to be classified as unique. It could increase the player's attack speed by 1.3 times for 10 seconds. From what he gathered, the higher the level of Haste, the greater the increase in attack speed and skill duration. The problem was the skill was an artifact skill.

Unfortunately, this meant that the skill level would not increase.

At that moment...

"Minhyuk, what do we do now..." Rakku asked, her voice tinted with anxiety.

"Let's go."

"What, where...?"

"To kill a pig!"

"With just the two of us?!"

"Yes, don't worry. I already tested it earlier. Those mini ants? They're easy to deal with. Besides, since Roy could get out of that place safely by himself, it means that the sweet python is easy to deal with too."

"Uhhh..."

"Let's go!" Minhyuk said, but, he suddenly stopped in his tracks.

"Why didn't he disappear yet?"

"Maybe he hasn't logged out yet? He's probably swearing at us like crazy right now."

"Is that so?" Minhyuk said, nodding his head in understanding. Then...

"Eyy!"

Minhyuk pushed Roy's body away with the tip of his big toe before skipping off happily.

Team Leader Park was very shocked as he said, "Wow! Isn't this player perfect? Well, except for his food consumption."

He shook his head as he continued to watch Minhyuk on the monitor. Team Leader Park could see that Minhyuk had the ability to read the atmosphere and flow of the situation, while calmly making his decisions. He also had precise control over his movements and attacks.

"Puppeteer? Roy's strength is around Level 20, but..." Lee Minhwa mumbled.

Then, Team Leader Park ordered, "Show me Player Minhyuk's stats window."

"Yes!"

(Minhyuk)

Level: 10

Class: None

HP: 431?MP: 280

STR: 47+14??AGI: 37+32 ?STM: 25+12

WIS: 20+8 ?INT: 20+8 ?Rep: 16

Fullness: 100%/10

Bonus Point: 0

"..."

"..."

The two of them remained silent for a while. Team Leader Park scratched his head in confusion as he said, "...Just what did he do to achieve stats like that while being a classless Level 10?!"

"He ate well and exercised diligently."

"..."

"It?was?what he said the last time."

"I can't even refute it because I know that it's 100% true..."

Team Leader Park wanted to analyze this rationally, but he had no words to describe the situation. Then he said, "However, it's still too early for Player Minhyuk to relax."

"That's right." Lee Minhwa answered while nodding.

"From here on out, we will see the full power of the Puppeteer. Before, he had no choice but to move like a spearman, but now..."

The Puppeteer was a special case among the classes currently acquired by players, considered to be one of the strongest classes among the secret classes. In fact, while there were players who had noticed the Puppeteer committing PK, the Puppeteer had always been successful. And the reason was...

"He can immediately trigger Ghost Puppetry?the moment he dies."

"Yeah. It truly is a horrifying skill." Lee Minhwa nodded as she continued.

"He will go into a transparent viewing mode and stick to a player. After triggering Ghost Puppetry and clinging to another player, the Puppeteer will be able to come back to life once the player hunts mobs. The more monsters the player hunts, the more the Puppeteer will be able to fill the progress bar, the greater the chances of him coming back to life. What's worse is the fact that he can turn the corpses in the area into his puppets."

"That's right. You're quite good at memorizing, huh?"

Team Leader Park could see that the new recruit, Lee Minhwa, was doing a superb job in memorizing the characteristics of the special players.

Hearing the praise, Lee Minhwa beamed with delight.

"Here's a question then. What are the risks that Player Roy faces when using the Ghost Puppetry skill while still at a low level?"

"The strength of the revived mob will only be at 60% of its original strength. Also, the mob can only be counted if its body is intact."

"That's right. You're really smart.."

"...Hmm?" Lee Minhwa hummed as she turned her head to look at Team Leader Park.

"What's the matter?"

"Team Leader, the mob's body has to be intact, right?"

"That's right. With his current level, a damaged monster will not increase his progress bar.

"...There is an apple on top of the head of the sweet python."

"What's wrong with that?"

"Team Leader. It's an apple, you know?" Lee Minhwa said in frustration.

"That's why I'm asking, what's wrong... oh?!" Team Leader Park said, looking at Lee Minhwa in shock, realization dawning upon him.

"A...apples are meant to be eaten."

"Hey. That's not true. The apple on top of the head of the sweet python has poison. If he eats that, his experience will drop."

"Yes. That's true, his experience will really drop. But..."

Lee Minhwa looked at the monitor and said, "The apples on top of the sweet python's head are known to be more delicious compared to regular apples."

'Ptui, ptui, ptui, ptui!?' Roy spat as he glued himself to Minhyuk's shoulder in transparent mode.

Anyone who saw the state that he was in right now would be terrified to see that he only had a head. He kept on trying to spit on Minhyuk's head, but since he was in transparent mode, his spit could not reach Minhyuk at all.

Then, a sweet python appeared.

'This damned bastard. The moment I get resurrected, I will slit your throat!'

Hermes' Ring was a pretty expensive ring that Roy had wanted to trade and sell for cash. However, Minhyuk had taken it after it dropped from his body.

'Fufufufu, I can't wait to see his expression once he sees me revive.'

This revival had allowed him to kill plenty of people so far. But in order for Roy to reverse his death, he had to cling on the player's shoulders and wait for them to kill monsters and fill the progress bar to 100%. Only then, could he revive and stab them to death. This time would not be any different.

"Oh, that's the sweet python?" Minhyuk remarked as he licked his lips.

'???' Roy looked at Minhyuk strangely as he watched the latter rush towards the sweet python.

The sweet python was at least two meters long. It also had a bright, shiny red apple the size of a fist, attached atop its head.

'This rascal is really strong. What did he do to get this strong?'

Not long after, the sweet python died. Seeing it collapse, Roy felt like no one would be able to stop him from coming back to life and giving the two bastards a surprise.

'Well then, one mob's down.'

Generally, a single sweet python would fill Roy's progress bar by 10%. This meant that his revival would be coming very 'soon'. However, before he could even rejoice, Minhyuk suddenly reached his hand out towards the sweet python.

"It's an apple, an apple!"

"Minhyuk, that's a poisonous apple!" Rakku said, trying to stop him.

For things attached to a monster's body, like the poisonous apple, it would not be dropped upon death. However, the player could decide to take it away or not. Generally, players would not care too much about the poisonous apples. However, Minhyuk snatched it away from the sweet python's body and checked its information.

(Sweet Python's Poisonous Apple)

Material Grade: E

Special Abilities:

?Experience will drop by 5%

?Much more delicious than any regular apple.

"Did you check it?"

"Yes..." Minhyuk answered as his body trembled.

In fact, Minhyuk already knew that the apple on the sweet python's head was poisonous. After all, he had already checked online for its information in advance.

Rakku laughed when she saw him trembling. She said, "Did you hope that it was a good item? No way, it's really just a miscellaneous item. The store wouldn't even buy it. Quickly throw it away and let's move forward."

Perched on Minhyuk's shoulder, Roy nodded quietly. He agreed with Rakku's words completely.

"That's right, you shit. Fufu. You should understand that it's a miscellaneous item, okay? Now, throw it away! Move forward and don't ever touch it again!"

However, Minhyuk spoke quietly, "Rakku, do you like Blue Velvet?"

"What?" Rakku asked in confusion.

Blue Velvet was one of the most popular girl groups in the country.

Minhyuk was so excited to be eating an apple that was much more delicious than a regular apple, that he burst out into a song .

“R, red flavor~!”

"..."

"I'm curious, honey~!"

"...?"

“It tastes like a slowly melting poisonous apple when I bite into it~!”

Minhyuk was looking at the apple in his hand lovingly. It had a smooth and shocking red color, with not a single bruise in sight. Then, he opened his mouth and took a big bite.

Crunch!

The light and crisp sound of someone biting into a juicy apple rang out loudly in the area. Minhyuk felt the sweet apple juice fill every corner of his mouth with every crispy and juicy bite that he took.

Crunch, crunch, crunch.

Minhyuk's mouth was filled with mouth-watering and refreshing sweetness.

[You have eaten a poisonous apple.]

[Your experience will drop by 5%.]

"That's right! This is it! It's zero calories if it's delicious~"

"..." Rakku was left completely and utterly speechless at the sight.

There were a lot of dishes that could be made using apples. One could make jam and use it as a spread for bread. Or, they could just blend it and make it into a drink. It was also considered to be a very delicious and extremely healthy fruit.

Apples are also known to help maintain healthy and strong teeth, while preventing illnesses like constipation and diabetes. Minhyuk smiled happily as he gnawed on the apple until only its pit was left.

"Kyaa~ This refreshing taste is the reason why I eat apples."

Minhyuk looked at Rakku and asked, "Would you like to try one too? After all, we're hunting together, so this is fine!"

"...No, thank you," Rakku answered. She looked at him, wondering who the hell Minhyuk was.

Meanwhile, Roy was looking at Minhyuk incredulously.

"T, this guy is crazy!"

However, he was able to calm down shortly after.

'Phew, phew... No. It was probably because he was just curious. Which crazy bastard will sacrifice 5% of their experience continuously just to eat apples?'

Roy could not guarantee that Minhyuk would continue picking the apples off of the sweet python's head. As long as he did not touch them, then he would be able to fill his progress bar.

"Woohoo! It's an apple, an apple!"

Roy's wishful thinking was completely shattered. Minhyuk easily dealt with all of the sweet pythons that appeared, and as they continued to hunt the sweet pythons, he picked the apples on their heads without fail.

"Wow. I'm so happy..." Minhyuk said with a bright smile on his face as he bit into another apple.

Roy shouted at him, "Shit, this apple-crazy bastard! What a crazy rascal, you're the only one who would eat this experience-draining apple just because it's delicious. Wow. I have never seen a guy like you in my life before!"

However, Minhyuk only felt a tickle in his ears.

'Is someone insulting me?'

Rakku couldn't help but open her mouth to say, "W...what in the world is wrong with you... Those are your hard-earned EXP points..."

"Miss," Minhyuk replied seriously.

"Yes?"

"Have you ever tried eating only 5,000 cherry tomatoes every day?"

"Are you talking about elephants?"

"..."

"???"

"Don't tell me to stop if you haven't tried it yet. If you eat 5,000 of those every day, then you will also be like me," Minhyuk said indignantly, feeling a strange tingling at the tip of his nose.

Fifteen minutes later.

'Ugh!!! This is impossible!?' Roy screamed once again.

The Ghost Puppetry's progress bar should have been filled within thirty minutes. If he failed to do so, he would die and receive twice the penalty. This was the Ghost Puppetry's side effect. At that moment...

Fwoosh—

Roy's transparent figure disappeared slowly. However, Minhyuk was completely oblivious to it. He just kept on picking his apples happily as he advanced further into the dungeon with Rakku. After walking for a while, they finally arrived in front of the boss room.

'Porky, just wait a bit more. Hyung is coming.'

Minhyuk's expression grew solemn as he pushed the thick, iron door in front of him. He knew that he would finally be able to meet his long-awaited pork the moment he opened this door.

Creak—

The iron door creaked loudly as Minhyuk opened it.

Bang!

Once the door was completely opened, Minhyuk tightened his grip on the Sword of Rebellion.

Chapter 24: The Food God Knows How to Eat Grilled Pork Belly

"Kwiiiiik!"

A pig was truly behind the huge door. However, it was a bit different from ordinary pigs. The pig was twice the size of the ordinary pigs, and had shiny, golden fur covering its entire body. It also had two curled tails hanging on its forehead, instead of its butt.

[You have entered the boss room.]

[Once you finish hunting the boss monster, a warp gate will appear that will lead you outside of the dungeon.]

"I...it's the Golden Pig! It's a special boss mob that rarely appears in Twilight Graveyard!"

"Is it a special boss?"

"Yes. As far as I know, you can get double the item drops and experience points compared to ordinary pig monsters. But it's definitely stronger...!"

Minhyuk nodded, grasping his sword tightly.

'Grilled pork belly... Pork neck... Pork loin...!'

Those were the food that he was really craving. Grilled pork belly was something that colleagues ate together while drinking soju after a hard day's work. It was also a stir-fried dish that most mothers would prepare for their children every day, with their sleeves rolled up in determination.

However, it was not the case for Minhyuk. If he could eat everything that he wanted in reality, then he would not be here right now. With those complicated feelings, he ran towards it.

Clench!

[Bardy Swordsmanship]

[+9 to all 5 basic stats for 5 minutes.]

Power surged through Minhyuk's entire body as he rushed towards the Golden Pig. Seeing the incoming Minhyuk, the Golden Pig also let out a loud cry as it ran fiercely to meet Minhyuk.

However, just before the two of them collided...

Slash!

Minhyuk easily twisted his body away as he slashed the sides of the Golden Pig's body with his sword.

"Kwiiiiiiik!" The Golden Pig squealed loudly in pain, before quickly turning around and glaring at Minhyuk with its beady eyes. As for Minhyuk, he let out a calm and even breath.

Dash!

He knew that if he let the Golden Pig ram into him, he would take huge damage. However, the Golden Pig was already rushing fiercely towards him. This time though, Minhyuk did not think of evading. He stared at the Golden Pig as he gripped his sword tightly.

[Vital Strike]

[Additional 17% attack power for each successful strike.]

Through Minhyuk's vision, five vital points were suddenly marked out with a red light on the Golden Pig's body. He needed to stab any of these points accurately. He then took another deep breath to steady himself with his sword held tightly in his hands.

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud!

The Golden Pig's steps were so heavy that the ground shook violently.

"Kwiiiiiiik!"

Cold sweat dripped from Minhyuk's hands. Then...

"Ha!"

Minhyuk calculated the timing, speed and distance with care, before stabbing out his sword with all his might. With that strike, he was able to accurately stab the Golden Pig's neck.

Stab!

"Kuuwiiiiiiik, kuuwiiiiiiik!"

However, the Golden Pig was not going down without a fight, and it struggled fiercely. It was thrashing so violently that Minhyuk's body swayed and bounced from side to side as the Golden Pig tried to throw him off.

'Ah wait, I can just let go of my sword.'

Just when the pig was about to attack Minhyuk...

[Magic Missile.]

Bang!

Rakku released a magic missile, causing a white fist to strike the pig on its face. Her timing was perfect.

"Good job!"

Minhyuk rolled away from the Golden Pig, and then proceeded to dash forward quickly, grabbing onto his sword again.

Stab!

"Kuuwiiiiiiik...!" The pig cried loudly. Minhyuk gritted his teeth as he tried to pull his sword out of the Golden Pig's body.

"Kuuwiiiiiiiiiik!"

The Golden Pig bounced around, trying to shake Minhyuk off.

Swish!

Fwooooosh!

Minhyuk was finally thrown off together with his sword that had been lodged deeply in the Golden Pig's neck. That was when bright red blood gushed out of the Golden Pig's neck.

"Ugh."

Minhyuk stood up. He realized that the battle was finally almost over.

Thud, thud, thud!

The Golden Pig caused a huge commotion, struggling to remain standing.

"Kuuwiiiiiiik!" It squealed loudly, staggering around. Then, Minhyuk's sword shone brightly.

[Dauntless Strike]

[Each attack inflicts additional 20% damage.]

Slash!

Minhyuk slashed once more at the bleeding wound on the Golden Pig's neck. With that slash, the Golden Pig stumbled and finally collapsed.

Thud!

The Golden Pig trembled violently. The scene looked very realistic. Minhyuk could tell that while it had not died yet it was definitely let out its final breath soon.

'If that's the case, then...'

Although Minhyuk was distracted at the thought of finally eating pork, he still recalled the quest that he received from Roina that was related to the Twilight Graveyard. Just as he was thinking about it, a series of notifications rang in his ears.

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[...]

[You have completed the?Quest: First Party Hunt.]

[You have acquired 10,000 gold.]

[You have gained 5 bonus points.]

However, the notifications did not end there.

[You have completed the?Quest: Attack Twilight Graveyard.]

[You have obtained?God Class: Food God.]

[You will now need three times the experience before you can level up.]

[The Food God's skills have been unlocked.]

"...Food God?" Minhyuk asked himself in confusion.

Minhyuk was quite familiar with the words 'God Class'. It was a very special class in a way that a player would need to undergo several rounds of trials before being able to obtain such a class. There were only a few rare cases where the players had received easier trials and completed them.

Regardless, he was sure of one thing. It was a class that was much rarer compared to the hidden, secret and legendary classes.

Minhyuk checked his stats window first.

(Minhyuk)

Level: 13

Class: Food God 0%

HP: 431?MP: 280

STR: 47+14??AGI: 37+32 ?STM: 25+12

WIS: 20+8 ?INT: 20+8 ?Rep: 16

Fullness: 50%

Bonus Point: 15

Minhyuk could see that his class had already changed to Food God. However, he was still doubtful about a few things.

'What does the 0% after the Food God mean?'

He also wondered why the / after the fullness stat had disappeared.

'Hmm...'

Minhyuk pondered deeply before closing the stats window, then checking the skills window. He quickly skipped over his old skills and went directly to his newly acquired skills.

(Charm of Freshness)

Passive Skill

Level: Master

Mana Required: 0

Cooldown: 0

?If you cook any ingredients you had gathered or hunted within an hour of procuring them, the food will taste infinitely better. Your stats will also increase.

"An increase in stats?" Minhyuk asked in confusion.

Minhyuk could understand the first point of this skill. It goes without saying that freshly caught fish tasted delicious whether eaten raw or cooked. For this skill, ?freshness? was very important.

However, Minhyuk found the 'stats increase' part in the skill description to be very odd.

'Does it mean that my stats will increase whenever I eat?'

Minhyuk continued to check his other skills while thinking about the increase in stats.

(Food God's True Worth)

Passive Skill

Level: ?Master

Effects:

?Whenever you eat a new food, your stats will increase depending on various factors and elements.

????

????

'Question marks?'

Minhyuk felt his confusion grow. He wondered how every new meal would give him an increase in stats.

'How could that be? It's too...Fraudulent?'

This thought flashed in Minhyuk's mind. However, he still had yet to finish checking out all of his new skills.

(Ingredient Acquisition)

Active Skill

Level: Master

Mana Required: 100

Cooldown: 0

Effects:

?You will be able to get cut meat, fresh vegetables and other food materials all at once.

(Food God's Greatness)

Passive Skill

Level: ?

Effects:

????

????

'Woah...!'

For obvious reasons, Minhyuk liked the Ingredient Acquisition skill more than Food God's True Worth.

In fact, Minhyuk had found it hard to deal with the chicken in the novice zone before. When someone who knew how to process meat already had a difficult time trying to do it inside the game, what more for someone who did not know how?

Furthermore, that had been just chicken, what would happen if it was a pig or a cow? It would be completely impossible for Minhyuk. That was why Minhyuk had stopped by a butcher shop before coming to Twilight Graveyard. He had asked them if they could butcher a pig for him.

The butcher shop owner told Minhyuk that he would do anything as long as he was paid 100,000 gold. With this, a huge weight had been lifted off of Minhyuk's back.

'That's right, this is a game after all!.'

Minhyuk was extremely satisfied. He closed the skills window after checking out all of his new skills.

"Minhyuk, look at all the items that dropped!" Rakku exclaimed. She had been keeping quiet for a while when she saw Minhyuk stand silently in front of the Golden Pig. She thought that Minhyuk was dealing with something and only called out for him after he moved.

There were plenty of items that dropped from the Golden Pig.

"Wow, the staff has been dropped too!"

The items that dropped were completely different from the expected drop from an ordinary pig boss. Perhaps it was because the one that had appeared was the Golden Pig.

Rakku quickly collected the items. Since the auto-distribution system was still on, the items were distributed evenly to the party, with the exception of the two people who had been forced to log out.

[Party: You have acquired 67,354 gold.]

[Party: Minhyuk has acquired Golden Pig's Leather (1).]

[Party: Rakku has acquired Golden Pig's Bone Staff.]

[Party: Minhyuk has acquired Twilight Beads.]

[Party: Minhyuk has acquired Golden Pig's Tusks.]

"Minhyuk, please hold out your hand."

"Why?"

"It's for a trade. I have to give you 40,000 gold and the Golden Pig's Bone Staff. It's a rare item, you know!"

Grin—

Minhyuk smiled. He thought that Rakku was doing this because she felt sorry that he was the one who did most of the hunting. However, the truth was Minhyuk was not even interested in the items at all. Right now, his attention was solely focused on one thing... Pork.

"You should use the staff, and the money was split evenly between us, so it's fine. I'm not a mage so I have no use for the staff."

"Ah, then I'm sorry..."

"If you feel sorry, then you should exit the dungeon first."

"What?" Rakku asked in confusion.

"There's still something that I have to do."

"...?"

Rakku looked at Minhyuk strangely. However, all she could do was nod in agreement after seeing Minhyuk's expression. Minhyuk looked like he was ready to commit PK if she did not leave right away.

"Okay, I got it, I got it. Stop making that scary expression already."

The warp gate was already opened since the hunt was over. Rakku was walking towards the gate when Minhyuk called out after her.

"Ah, right. Do you happen to know about the 0% right beside the class? Do you know what it means?"

"Ah, yes, I know. Usually, if you fill it to 100%, then you can upgrade the class to a second stage."

"Oh, I see," Minhyuk said as he nodded in understanding.

‘Food God. Hmm. It doesn't seem like it would just end with Food God.’

"Then, have fun!"

"Yes, you too!"

The moment Rakku disappeared, Minhyuk stretched his hand out towards the golden pig.

"Ingredient Acquisition."

[Tenderloin, sirloin, rib eye roll, pork shoulder, pork neck, front leg, pork picnic, pork jowl, cheek, ham leg... pork belly... belly bacon... ribs... boston shoulder... omitted]

A hologram popped out in front of Minhyuk, showing the figures corresponding to each part of the pig. Even the other parts like the bones, guts, and blood were shown.

[Please choose the ingredients you wish to acquire.]

Minhyuk extended his finger towards the hologram, and began to click on the parts that he wanted, one by one.

[You have acquired Pork Belly.]

[You have acquired Bacon Flank.]

[You have acquired Tenderloin.]

There were plenty of ingredients that could be acquired from a pig. It could generally be split into seven larger parts and twenty-two smaller parts. No part of a pig would be wasted since each part of the pig could be cooked and eaten. Minhyuk grinned after acquiring everything, including the fur and the skin, into his inventory.

'It was nice meeting you, Porky.'

Minhyuk gulped in anticipation.

Minhyuk's father, Kang Minhoo, had named himself Black Dragon inside the game. He was now on his way back from his most recent party hunt. He wanted to increase his level high enough before going to see Minhyuk. However, during the gaming process, he found that Athena was really fun. He enjoyed the game so much that he had willingly spent a lot of money to buy expensive set items.

'Fufu, everyone must have been surprised.'

Black Dragon was currently at Level 30. However, the low-leveled players that met up with him during the party hunt had all looked at him in surprise. All of them were shocked at his good items. But no matter what they said, Black Dragon just smiled without saying anything. Even if he did not say anything about his items, everyone still laughed.

'It's definitely because of my good sense of humor.'

Black Dragon had a strong belief: that everyone should have fun whether they were playing or working. That was why he would usually throw out jokes ever so often.

Jokes like this...

'Everyone, do you know why you should never argue with my spear?'

'W...why, Black Dragon!'

They had all been trembling, trying to stifle their laughter, before he could even complete his joke.

'Because it always has a point!'

'Eh?'

A spear was sharp and had a point so it would always be right in an argument.

Chapter 25: The Food God Knows How to Eat Grilled Pork Belly

‘Bwahahahaha! My goodness! A spear really has a point! Black Dragon!’

Then, everyone looked at each other and nodded in agreement. They told him, “Wow. Black Dragon, we think this cool phrase will definitely suit you. You can use it whenever you’re angry.”

‘What phrase?’

‘The being in my right arm is going to go berserk...!’

‘Wow. So awesome...!’

‘So freaking cool...’

‘Oho, I see.’

Black Dragon naively fell into the hands of the united party members! After finishing the party hunt, he went to Isbin Village.

‘Hmm. Where’s Minhyuk?’

He learned his son’s rough location from General so he wanted to look for Minhyuk. But while he was looking for his son...

"Ah. That f*cker! You son of a b*tch! I'm going to kill you! Minhyuk!! You motherf*cker!!"

‘Hmm?’

Black Dragon frowned. That was his son’s name, right? His expression suddenly turned cold upon hearing someone cursing his son out. He might not know what was going on but he believed in his son. Whoever was speaking must have done something bad first which resulted in some friction between them. So, he decided to follow the unknown player to confirm his suspicions.

‘This punk is going out of the village.’

Black Dragon continued to follow the player quietly. After walking quite a distance away from the village entrance, the man spoke again.

“Wow. This is a complete black mark in my PK life. I have never seen a bastard like that ever in my life. Why did he keep on eating the poisonous apples? Argh!!! I’ll make sure to show that bastard what infinite PK is. B*stard.”

‘Just like I expected... he’s the one who did something first...’

Black Dragon was fully convinced that the unknown player was talking about his son, Minhyuk, when he heard him talk about apples. So, he stopped the man.

"What the hell? What's your problem?"

"...Black Dragon."

"Yes? What?! Your nickname is...?Pfft!?Your nickname is Black Dragon?!" Roy said, laughing without any restraint.

Roy wondered why a crazy player was blocking his path while calling himself?Black Dragon. However, Black Dragon nodded his head silently, confirming his words as he pulled his sword out of its sheath.

“The being in my right arm is going to go berserk.”

"...Pffft!" Roy laughed. But before he could even laugh even more, the overgeared Black Dragon had already attacked and killed him in his chaotic state.

"I'll show you what an infinite PK is," Black Dragon remarked coldly.

He wanted to show his beloved son's enemies what he would do to them, so he made an example out of Roy. From that day forward, Black Dragon used all means necessary to chase Roy down. In the end, Roy was forced to delete his character and register a new ID.

Chop, chop, chop, chop!

The sound of the knife hitting the chopping board was a bit unsophisticated and muffled as it rang loudly inside the Twilight Graveyard's boss room.

Minhyuk sat in this very room as he started cooking. The first dish that he made was soybean stew, which was usually served in barbeque restaurants. It was the perfect combination for the greasy, grilled pork belly. There were even some people who would go to these restaurants just so they could have a taste of this stew.

Minhyuk finished chopping the zucchini and the onions. Then, he looked over his pot to see if the water was boiling. It was the water that he washed his rice with earlier. Seeing that the water was now boiling, he took out the kelp for the broth, before adding some soybean paste and spicy dip paste, as well as a bit of chili powder into the broth.

He then mixed the broth thoroughly before letting it simmer on low heat. The seasonings used in restaurants were usually much stronger compared to the seasonings that were used at home. However, this difference was what gave this dish its natural charm.

Since Minhyuk had always wanted that mildly spicy flavor to the dish, he added some Cheongyang chili peppers. Then, he skimmed the foam off the soup, before adding the square pieces of thinly sliced tofu inside. After that, he covered the lid of the earthen pot again to let it simmer further until it was fully cooked.

After finishing preparing the soybean stew, Minhyuk turned his attention to the pork belly. He added a few pieces on top of the well-heated grilling pan.

Sizzle!

"Kgghk! This is amazing, so wonderful!"

Right now, the spread in front of Minhyuk included bowls of hot rice, pickled garlic stems, scallions in sesame oil and chili powder, sliced garlic, spicy dipping sauce, lettuce, perilla leaves and cucumber chilies.

Minhyuk watched the meat carefully until it was half cooked, before skillfully turning it over.

Sizzle!

Minhyuk smiled brightly at the oil that trickled out of the grilling pork belly. Then, he placed some kimchi as well as some mushrooms on one side of the grilling pan. Once the meat was almost cooked, Minhyuk quickly cut it up into smaller pieces.

Then, he slowly removed the lid off the simmering soybean stew.

Shwaaa!

Steam slowly rose from the pot.

"Hehe..." Minhyuk chuckled in satisfaction.

‘What should I eat first? Hmm, let's get this guy first.’

Minhyuk stretched his chopsticks to clamp on a juicy-looking mushroom that was grilled perfectly.

‘This is the best to eat when you're trying to get your energy and stamina back!’

Then, Minhyuk gently lowered the mushroom into the stew. This was the main point of this dish. He then picked up his spoon, scooped up a mouthful of soup along with the mushroom. Without wasting a single drop, he slowly brought it to his mouth for a sip.

"Wow!" Minhyuk let out a gasp of satisfaction as the taste of the warm mushroom and the savory soup whetted his appetite even more.

He quickly gulped down the mushroom and the soup of the stew before clamping a piece of grilled pork belly with his chopsticks. Swiftly, he dipped it in his pre-mixed sauce made with sesame oil and salt before putting it in his mouth.

Chew, chew, chew.

"S...so happy..." Minhyuk said, his eyes glistening as he grinned.

The grilled pork belly was thoroughly cooked. The savory and salty taste of the sauce brought out the meaty flavor of the grilled pork belly as its juiciness spread out in his mouth. The meat was very tender since Minhyuk boiled it for a long time.

Next, Minhyuk prepared a wrap by placing a piece of the meat, some dipping sauce, garlic, scallions, and kimchi on top of a lettuce leaf. Then, he opened his mouth widely and quickly gobbled up his freshly made wrap.

"Hahaha!" He laughed out in delight as he gulped down the food.

Then, he quickly scooped up a mouthful of rice and delivered it straight to his mouth.

Chew, chew, chew—

Without stopping, Minhyuk immediately grabbed a spoonful of the stew.

"Hoo, hoo," He blew some air to let the spoonful of stew cool slightly before sipping it.

"Slurp!"

Minhyuk's eyes widened in happiness at the mildly spicy flavor of the soybean stew that met with the plain rice. The taste was completely heavenly.

He then made another wrap. The combination of the savory, meaty juices of the grilled pork belly and the sour yet spicy flavor of the well-ripened kimchi was simply divine; the wrap immediately

vanished. Very quickly, another wrap was prepared, but this time, it was filled with grilled pork belly topped with garlic stems and dipping sauce.

"Isn't this too delicious?! Hey, Porky! Isn't your taste too much for a human?!" Minhyuk asked, speaking into the empty air. However, his hands did not stop. He continued to eat wraps in one bite before making another one, eating as much as he wanted.

To be honest, the amount that Minhyuk's earthen pot could hold was enough to feed fifty people. Even his grill was as big as four grills combined together. He had more than enough to fill his stomach. And just like that, Minhyuk continued to indulge in his delightful meal, courtesy of Porky.

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

There were more than five people staring at the monitor in awe inside the office of the Special Players Management Team. Whenever Minhyuk placed a piece of meat in his mouth, Lee Minhwa would unconsciously open her mouth too.

'Come on, give me a piece. Put it in my mouth!'

Lee Minhwa wanted to eat a piece of meat so bad. Unfortunately, no food came her way. She unknowingly chewed, as if there was a piece of meat in her mouth. But then, she suddenly woke up from her daydream and turned her head around.

"Gasp?!?What the hell?! Why is the Development Team here? Huh? Someone from the Customer Center came too?"

"Ah, we have some business to do here. But we ended up stopping here without realizing it... Shit, why can't I stop watching this? Wow, I've always been a big fan of BJ Binz's mukbang, but I think I have to switch lanes starting today."

The people from the Development Team cried out in surprise. Everyone else only came to their senses after hearing the commotion.

"Cough, cough! Who wants to eat grilled pork belly today?"

"Me! Me!"

"Me too!"

Everyone raised their hands as Team Leader Park wiped the drool off of his face.

"Player Minhyuk received the Food God class, after all. The Management Team will have a hard time in the future." Lee Seokhoon, the Development Team's Team Leader, said.

Team Leader Park could only smile bitterly in agreement as he said, "We have no choice but to admit this. After all, I haven't seen anyone who can eat as much as him."

"Really?" Team Leader Lee Seokhoon asked in confusion.

Then, at that moment, an employee from the Customer Center remarked, "Aren't the skills for the god class, Food God, a bit too ordinary? Other than the one where he gets an increase in stats whenever he eats, everything else sounds ordinary."

Lee Seokhoon smiled and said, "Really?"

"I don't think it's ordinary."

"...Is there something else to it?"

"Do you know what the '???' in the 'Food God's True Worth' skill, refers to? Well, Seonwook doesn't know since he's from the Customer Center."

Seonwook might not know but the employees of the Development Team and the Special Players Management Team knew.

"Those question marks are the real charm of Food God's True Worth. Perhaps you'll find out about it soon?"

Thirty minutes later.

"You said that I will find out about it soon. But...he's still eating?"

The employees working under the Development Team had all gone back to their work, and the only one left was Seonwook from the Customer Center.

"Cough... No. You'll find out soon enough."

After two hours.

"...He's still eating?"

"Seonwook, are you not going to leave?"

"It's my day off today, I just came here to get something. Ah... I'm just hanging around because I'm very curious..."

"Hmm..."

After another two hours.

"Oh, he's done eating. I'll finally know... Wait! What?! Is he going to eat pork neck now?"

"...Shit, I'll definitely learn about it today!"

After another hour.

"H...he's really done eating, right?"

"I thought I was watching? Animal Kingdom's? The Elephant's Way of Eating? or something..."

"Well, now you'll see something interesting," said Team Leader Park, eyes shining brightly.

"However, it is just a small part of it."

"Burp!"

Minhyuk, who scared almost all of the monsters in the dungeon with his loud burp, patted his stomach in satisfaction.

"Well, I'm not even full, but I'm going to take a break for now," Minhyuk said, grinning widely after finishing his meal.

The meal was so delicious that he could barely contain his happiness. He drank his water as he thought with excitement about the other dishes that he could cook using pork. Just then...

[Food God's True Worth has been triggered.]

[You have gained +1 STR and +1 STM.]

"Oh? My stats really did increase. Oh my god!" Minhyuk exclaimed in surprise.

'So, it really was a special ability?'

The skill was really the perfect fit for someone like Minhyuk. However, the notifications were still ongoing.

[Perfect Combination]

[There is harmony between the soybean stew and the grilled pork belly.]

[You have been granted additional stat points.]

[You have gained an additional +2 STR.]

"...Huh?"

'Perfect Combination? This is a little... unexpected.'

The notification was unexpected. However, as a foodie, Minhyuk knew that the combination of food was truly important.

Would anyone be able to imagine eating chicken and powerade together? Would something like that be delicious? How about ramen and chocolate? That combination was completely terrible too. That was why the combination of food was important.

Sweet chocolate cake with Americano. Hamburger, french fries, and iced cola. Minhyuk had also heard General?sing about the ultimate experience in the army. It was none other than the combination of beef seaweed soup, vienna sausage and dried laver.

'The first notification rang after I finished eating...'

Minhyuk thought about it carefully. He thought about when he received the second notification...

'Hmm, this may be one of the question marks in Food God's True Worth. So one of the question marks shows the harmony when the elements and ingredients in the food are combined?'

Minhyuk realized that Food God's True Worth still had a lot of hidden secrets that were yet to be discovered. However, he believed that exploring the different combinations of food and flavor was something fun anyway.

Minhyuk also had another realization.

'Eating a lot doesn't mean that I will have a tremendous increase in my stats.'

If that was the case, then, Minhyuk would already have an increase of 100 in his stats in just a single day.

'Don't tell me that if the combination of the flavors and the taste falls then my stats will also fall?'

That grim possibility suddenly occurred to him, but after a ten-minute break, the thought flew out of his mind.

"Well, shall we eat grilled pork belly again?"

It seemed like Minhyuk was not ready to quit his eating spree yet.

Minhyuk was smiling brightly when he came out of the capsule after disconnecting from the game.

"Everyone, I ate grilled pork belly today!"

"Wooooooooo!"

"Congrats~!"

"Congratulations, Minhyuk."

Everyone surrounding Minhyuk was congratulating him. Even his father, who was standing by the doorway, clapped happily with them.

"Dad! Huh? Why do you look so tired?"

"Ah, no. It's because I had a bit of work to do."

"Please, take it easy. It pains my heart to see you so exhausted like this."

"Okay," Minhoo answered with a smile.

He was exhausted because he kept on hunting Roy. However, even if he wanted to continue doing that, he had to log out of the game with Minhyuk and Changwook. That was because today was an important day.

Everyone present gathered in front of the weighing scale. Today was the day that they had decided to check the results of the treatment. In other words, Minhyuk had to measure his weight. It was a very important day. In a sense, today was the day that they would have to make a big decision regarding his health and treatment plans, moving forward.

Minhyuk stood in front of the huge scale with nothing but his boxers on. He exhaled nervously, as he closed his eyes and stepped on the weighing scale.

Thud—

Minhyuk was so heavy that the weighing scale groaned when he stepped on it. Then, the numbers on the scales quickly increased. Lee Jinhwan and Minhoo looked at the numbers on the weighing scales with trepidation. Then...

"Can I open my eyes now?"

"Yeah."

"Yes you can, Minhyuk."

Minhyuk slowly opened his eyes. He looked at the numbers flashing on the weighing scale.
173.2kg.

"...It didn't decrease," Minhyuk said sadly. His whole figure slumped dispiritedly.

"Minhyuk, don't be too disappointed," Jinhwan said while patting his shoulders gently.

"If your weight did not change at all, then, that means that you are not experiencing any yoyo effect."

"Ah..."

"Aren't you eating as much delicious food as you want right now? If we continue, I believe we will get good results."

"Really?"

"Yes, Minhyuk is a very healthy piggy."

"Ah. Doc, you're too much!"

Both of them laughed happily. Minhyuk then turned around and walked away with Changwook to exercise and complain. Jinhwan and Minhoo looked at each other.

"Is it real? He's showing signs of improvement?"

"Yes, you're right," Jinhwan answered as he solemnly nodded.

Both of them walked away to discuss Minhyuk's condition further. The moment they arrived in Lee Jinhwan's private clinic, Minhoo was shown a diagram, which showed how much Minhyuk had eaten inside the game.

"Our medical team monitors Minhyuk 24/7. We monitor the amount of food and the calories Minhyuk consumed. We are very thorough."

"I see."

"Please look at this diagram. If you look at it, you can see that he has eaten 5,122 cherry tomatoes, vitamins, and nutritional supplements."

Jinhwan pulled out another diagram and showed it to him, before continuing, "This is the diagram before we started the Athenae therapy."

Jinhwan placed the two diagrams side by side. Kang Minhoo's eyes widened when he compared the contents of the diagrams.

"...It, it's decreasing?!"

"Yes. As you can see, it's decreasing."

Jinhwan smiled lightly as he said, "Before we started the treatment, Minhyuk's intake of cherry tomatoes was increasing by 10~30 pieces every day. For someone who eats 5,000 pieces a day, that's not much of an increase, but if it continued on until the 10th, or even the 100th day, then it would be too much to handle."

"Yeah."

"In fact, no treatment has ever stopped the increase in the amount of food intake. Now let's look at the diagram after the start of the Athenae therapy," Jinhwan said, eyes shining brightly.

"We're decreasing the amount by 2~4 pieces each day."

"Is that so?! Then, it's definitely decreasing!"

"It's decreasing little by little. In any case, Chairman Kang..."

Lee Jinhwan patted Kang Minhoo's hands. He was only able to do this because the both of them were friends and colleagues for a very long time.

"...This is the first time that he's showing signs of improvement ever since he started having the eating addiction. Chairman, Minhyuk has given me hope once more."

Chapter 26: Food God VS Mukbang Emperor

"..."

Minhoo was speechless. Minhyuk's daily consumption might only be decreasing by two to four pieces every day, but, it had never happened before.

"We can't be sure yet if this will prove to be significant, but this small change clearly shows that there's an improvement. In fact, it's giving me the confidence that he will certainly lose weight in the future."

"Yes, you're right. I can't believe that my son's showing improvements with this treatment while being able to eat happily..." Kang Minhoo said. He was so moved that his eyes reddened.

However, he became curious, turning to Jinhwan and asked, "Why didn't you say anything to Minhyuk earlier?"

"...Who knows... But, did you know?" Jinhwan asked as he continued to speak with a bitter smile on his face, "If you look through SNS, you will be able to see comments like this: Ah, I exercised hard to lose weight today, so I'm going to order chicken because I'm very proud of myself."

"...Ah?"

"In fact, a lot of people on a diet can't stop themselves from ordering food after an extreme workout. What do you think Minhyuk would do if he knew that he was showing signs of improvement? Relief can also be equally poisonous."

Minhoo recalled how disappointed his son looked earlier. Seeing Minhoo's pained expression, Jinhwan had no other choice but to say, "Minhyuk will know it even if we did not say anything. That is, as long as Minhyuk's food consumption continues to decrease. After all, the scales will definitely reflect the numbers correctly."

Jinhwan smiled lightly.

Minhyuk woke up early in the morning to access?Athenae. He had been raiding Twilight Graveyard alone these days to hunt pigs. Of course, he had kept the Golden Pig inside his Food Storage Inventory. However, he still needed to hunt a large number of pigs so he would have more pork to eat later. After all, Twilight Graveyard was a place that could only be accessed by players below Level 15.

Thankfully, the poisonous apples, coupled with the increased difficulty in leveling for god classes, worked to his advantage. He needed thrice the normal amount of EXP to level up. These were the main reasons why he did not gain much experience despite raiding and clearing Twilight Graveyard all by himself. If he was a normal player, Minhyuk would have probably reached Level 15 a long time ago.

"La, la, la~" Minhyuk sang happily as he sat inside the boss room, in front of a well-greased frying pan. He grabbed an egg in excitement and cracked it on top of the pan.

Shwaaaa—

The egg sizzled and jumped slightly in the oil. Then, Minhyuk sprinkled half a pinch of salt on top of it and waited for it to cook. After frying the egg, he pulled out a plate and placed the egg on it.

The next thing that Minhyuk did was pull a pot out of his inventory, place it on top of the fire and pour some sesame oil inside. When the oil was slightly hot, he started to stir-fry some pork.

Sizzle, sizzle—

"Kimchi stew and fried eggs are best for breakfast!" Minhyuk shouted out. He recalled the time when he was still not yet afflicted with the eating?addiction problem. Back then, the aunty, who worked as their housekeeper, would always prepare kimchi stew with pork and fried eggs for him before he went to school. The memory and the flavor back then was something that he could not forget. They were so delicious that he always had a few more bowls of rice despite it being early in the morning.

Minhyuk poured water in the pot once the pork was almost cooked.

Shwaaa—

Then, he added some chopped kimchi, a spoonful of red chili paste, and a spoonful of chili powder. He also added some?Cheongyang?chili pepper for that spicy flavor. After letting the pot boil and simmer for quite some time, he added some chopped scallions before taking it off the fire.

Just like he expected, a notification rang.

[Please select the main ingredients for this meal.]

"Of course it's pork!"

[The pork's front leg meat was selected as the main ingredient.]

"Thank you for the food!"

Minhyuk placed the fried egg on top of his rice. The ends of the egg were finely scorched, and the yolk slowly flowed down the rice the moment Minhyuk poked it with his chopstick. Then, he mixed the egg and rice thoroughly.

Chew, chew—

"Hmmm, this is delicious."

This time, Minhyuk stretched his spoon towards the piping hot and spicy kimchi stew.

"Phew, spicy is the best!"

He blew on the spoon a couple of times before stuffing its contents into his mouth.

Chew, chew—

The pig's front leg was low in fat so its texture was a bit dry, but it was chewy. In addition, the stew's spicy soup could make the meat feel softer and more tender. Whenever Minhyuk felt the spiciness becoming a little overbearing, he would munch on the rice and the fried egg. He would also occasionally chew on the crisp kimchi that came with the spoonful of spicy kimchi stew that he poured on his rice.

Minhyuk quickly finished eating his food. Then, at that moment, the usual notifications rang in his ears.

[Food God's True Worth.]

[You have acquired STR.]

And then...

[Perfect Combination.]

[There is harmony between the kimchi stew and the fried egg.]

[You have been granted additional stat points.]

[You have acquired +1 STR, +1 STM.]

"Oho!"

He found that the Perfect Combination placed strong emphasis and recognition on the compatibility of the flavors of the dishes. Although Minhyuk had made it more delicious so he could eat well and satisfy his palate, it surprisingly resulted in an increase in his stats. After eating for quite a while, Minhyuk also discovered that each ingredient would shine a different color, seemingly representing something.

'Perhaps it represents the stats that I can gain?'

In other words, the red light would give an increase in STR and STM. Minhyuk also saw a faint blue glow on the vegetables. Eating the vegetables gave him an increase in his AGI. So far, the only colors that he had seen were red and blue. Therefore, he was still not entirely sure.

There was also the possibility that the stat increase and the light had something to do with the main ingredients. In other words, the notification that asked him to choose the main ingredient was also allowing him to choose which stats he wanted to increase. From what Minhyuk had gathered, the stats were all based on what kind of food he would eat. Because of that, Minhyuk's STR and STM had increased significantly.

'Porky is love~'

Since Minhyuk had been so focused on eating the Golden Pig and the rest of the pork, he did not have many chances to eat dishes with vegetables as the main ingredient. Hence, the significant increase in STR and STM.

Minhyuk also discovered another rule.

'There's no increase in stats if I ate the same kind of dish more than three times each day. There's also no increase if I make a dish that I have already made.'

There seemed to be no stat increase if he ate a dish that he had already tried. However, despite this setback, this skill remained to be very overpowered. During the course of his stay in the Twilight Graveyard, his STR stat had already reached 80, a number that could only be reached by someone at Level 16. Even his AGI had reached 45. If Minhyuk added the effects of his title and items, these numbers would definitely be higher.

At this point, Minhyuk was already different from other players. It was not simply because he had high stats. Whenever a player killed a monster below their level in Athenae, the EXP that they would gain would be significantly lower than normal. It was only when a player hunted a monster that was within a 1~5 level gap of their own levels, would they be able to receive the normal amount of EXP. If the player chose to hunt a monster that was way stronger than their level, they would receive a significantly higher amount of EXP.

In other words, Minhyuk was currently an overpowered character, ready to bomb his way through his levels. As long as he continuously leveled up and received bonus points, he would always be way stronger than other players in the same level. No, more than that, it was safe to say that the gap between Minhyuk and the other players would continue to widen as long as he continued to eat.

Minhyuk stood up after finishing his meal.

'Phew, I'm afraid I have to leave Twilight Graveyard soon.'

Even if he continuously ate poisonous apples, his EXP would still continue to increase, albeit little by little. It was almost time for him to leave the dungeon.

So, to fully take advantage of his remaining time inside the dungeon, Minhyuk went out to buy ingredients for the other dishes that he wanted to try.

A crowd had started to gather in Isbin Village.

"Hey, hey, hey, Binz! Binz! Hey, you look so awesome in person!"

"Omg, omg. Binz smiled. So pretty, he's really amazing."

Binz was the number one mukbang BJ. He was also ranked 19th in Athenae's online Local Rankings. Right now, he had just arrived in Isbin Village.

"Hello, hello," Binz greeted the crowd.

Binz was a very tall, and well-built man. His warm personality had helped him amass a very large fan base. He was hailed as the Crown Prince of the mukbang world, with his low baritone voice that made viewers feel comfortable, often setting them in a daze. He was also considered to be a Ranker among Rankers after standing tall at 19th place in the Local Rankings.

'There's a lot of people.'

Binz smiled and looked at the crowd.

White mist always came out of the players' mouths whenever they spoke since it was early winter inside the game. The seasons in Athenae were prone to rapid changes. Winter had already arrived even though the players only felt that it was a bit chilly a few days ago.

"I came here in Isbin Village today to eat the food that everyone thinks about most during winter," Binz said politely, standing in the center of the crowd.

"Food that everyone thinks of during winter?"

"Is it taiyaki?"

"What? Are you going to eat tangerines while sitting on top of an electric mattress?"

"Hahahaha, ah, that's really a delicacy. Ha... I'm already drooling," Binz said, laughing loudly at one of the players, "But, if I really laid down an electric mattress and ate tangerines, you will post it on the player homepage saying?'Beggar Binz, Eating Tangerine that he got from Begging.'?or something like that."

"Hahahaha."

"Hohohoho."

Everyone laughed at his words.

"The food that I'll eat this time should be something that a player can personally make and sell. Do you have any idea what it is?"

"Ah, could it be..."

Binz saw a woman step out of the crowd.

"...Street snacks?"

"Correct!"

"Wow...!"

"During winter, whenever we're on our way home from school, or from work, and we feel cold and hungry, this is something that will always whet our appetites. That's what I came here for."

Click, click, click, click!

Camera flashes started to go off. Of course, there were plenty of players that worked as reporters in real life. Because of Athenae's massive online popularity, a lot of the reporters flocked to gain access to the game to pick up and write articles.

"Let's go now."

The players all followed Binz as he started to make his way towards his destination. Not long after, they saw a small cart coming out. Most of the players who ran these cart bars had long changed their classes to 'Chef'.

The cart owner faced them and bowed.

'I can't believe Binz came to our store...'

The cart owner was a player that gained a hidden chef class. The class that he received was called Chef of Happiness. This class only allowed him to have an increase in EXP if someone happily enjoyed his food like a delicacy.

Binz had gathered and read through the owner's information even before he came here. He said, "I will introduce you guys to our chef today. He is a player with the hidden class, Chef of Happiness. In his case, the system will calculate the level of happiness of the players who eat his food, if they felt happy, then he would gain EXP."

"That's right. But to be honest, the description is a bit vague."

"Vague?"

Before eating, Binz would always start with an interview. It was a type of noise marketing. In fact, Binz was a BJ that loved eating.

The chef replied, "It doesn't matter if the players think my food is delicious, or until they were full, my experience still wouldn't go up."

"Aha, is that so? Are you saying that the player should really be happy with your food before your experience will increase?"

"That's right."

"Oho, that's quite a unique job. Haha," Binz said with a grin.

Since Binz was someone who loved and cared about food, this was the perfect opportunity for him to show the other players that he was very sincere in what he was doing. Some would say that Binz ate for the money but that was not the case at all. He had turned this into his work because he really loved to eat. However, he definitely had changed from before, even if it was a little.

'It's because the company wants me to do this.'

His mindset was bound to change. It was inevitable. After all, this was his work.

"Then, is there any player who wants to try it first?"

"Me!" A man shouted loudly as he raised his hand.

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"Me too!" Some of the female players shouted, quickly moving forward towards the handcart.

"Wow! It's delicious!"

"It's delicious...!"

However, despite the clamoring, the owner's expression remained rigid, his brows furrowed.

'Two people had already eaten, but there's only a 1% increase in my EXP... Sigh...'

The owner was dismayed. This was because the players that tried his food were not really hungry. In fact, they did not even feel that the food was delicious. The owner knew that they were only doing this just so they could catch Binz's attention.

'How much will it increase when Binz tries my food?'"The shopkeeper wondered.

"I'll try some now," Binz said while picking up a stick of fishcake and biting into it. He ate really well. The people around him looked at him in awe, mesmerized by how well he ate. Just then, they saw the owner's eyes widen in shock.

[You have leveled up.]

"Gasp...!"

"...What's wrong?"

"M...my level increased. It increased by one just now. When the others ate, my experience only rose by 1%... I have 66% in my experience bar but..."

"Eh?" Binz looked at the owner in confusion. He was shocked that the owner had leveled up already. Binz did feel that the fishcake was delicious, but he still wondered how the experience could have increased that fast.

"Wow... His experience increased a few dozen times higher compared to other players... So this guy is a naturally born mukbang BJ, huh?" This was the thought that flashed in everyone's minds.

"Wow..."

"Binz, it seems like you are really eating happily..."

"You're not just putting on an act, right?"

"Ah, no. I took a screenshot before Binz ate and another one when I leveled up. I'll post it on the player's bulletin board later."

"T...then it's real?"

"Did you really level up because he felt that your food was delicious?"

Binz smiled happily at the other player's surprised expression. In fact, the street food that the owner was selling was truly delicious. It could make anyone's lips curl up in a smile. Just when he was about to eat another fishcake, he saw a player making his way through the crowd. The player was wearing a white mask that covered the lower half of his face before standing next to Binz and saying, "Wow! Wow! It's rice cake, fritters, blood sausage set. Wow! Wow!"

"...?"

"W...what's wrong with that guy?"

"Shit, Binz was just about to eat, but now he has lost his flow..."

However, the player did not pay the crowd any heed. He just continued shouting happily as he turned towards the owner and said, "Uncle, do I pay after I eat the fishcake?"

The player stood around five centimeters higher than Binz, probably around 185 centimeters tall.

"Ah..." The owner said, looking at Binz in embarrassment.

The owner had prepared a lot of food today. One of the reasons was because he knew that Binz was going to eat in his shop. The other reason was because he wanted to prepare in advance for when the other players decided to buy from him later. However, even if he was prepared for the situation he was still doing the mukbang with Binz right now. But Binz just smiled and nodded. Why would he even want to stop a person who wanted to eat?

"Yes, you may pay later."

"Then, I'll eat first! Uncle, first, give me ten servings of rice cakes, ten servings of fritters and ten servings of blood sausage. Ah, right. Please add the guts and the liver too!"

"...?"

Binz turned to stare at the masked man after he heard him order quite a ridiculous amount. However, what Binz saw was a man trying hard to contain his joy at the food in front of him.

'That smile...'

It was a smile of genuine happiness.

"Ugh... So cold..."

Minhyuk felt that the wind was freezing cold. It had turned a lot colder compared to a few days before. After all, the weather in Athenae could change very quickly. However, there was nothing that he could do about it. Time flowed faster inside the game than in reality. When he logged in for the first time, it was still just the cool and refreshing autumn, but after a few days of playing, the season had already changed and became much colder.

Minhyuk was munching on a sweet red bean jelly while walking towards Isbin Village.

'There's only a few of this sweet red bean jelly that's left.'

This thought made Minhyuk feel sad, at the same time, it also made him hungrier. The cold made him feel hungry. At this time of the year, there was only one food that came to his mind. It was none other than street snacks.

'Heh... Just thinking about it...'

Gulp—

Just the thought of eating those delectable street food made Minhyuk swallow his saliva. That was when Minhyuk saw a huge crowd of people.

"What, what? Are they giving free delicious food over there?!" Minhyuk asked aloud. He only had food in his head. As he approached the crowd, he saw a familiar sign in the center.

'Happy Snacks.'

"...!"

The sign caused Minhyuk to tremble in excitement. In fact, he was so excited so hard that anyone could see him shaking. His expression of thrill was as though he had won the first prize in the lotto. However, he noticed something strange as he got closer. The crowd was a bit too much for free food. That was when Minhyuk saw the BJ named Binz. Of course, Minhyuk knew his face, but his interest in BJ Binz was solely on the food that he ate.

'Ah... I will definitely draw attention,' Minhyuk thought. He did not like that idea very much. He hated being bothered. Minhyuk played games because he wanted to eat, not because he wanted to gain fame and attention.

That was when Minhyuk saw a shop selling masks, not far from the crowd. Sometimes, players loved to wear masks to add an air of mystery to themselves.

‘That’s right. If I wear a mask, then...’

Minhyuk was certain that he would gain a lot of attention if he walked out of the crowd and stood next to Binz. But, if he wore a mask, he would be able to avoid a lot of trouble. So, he hurriedly bought a mask. The mask was quite cheap, selling for just 20,000 gold. Then, after wearing the mask, he pushed through the crowd and stood next to Binz.

The harmony of the colors of the food in front of him was very good! The well-cooked rice cakes and fishcakes were swimming in the bright red sauce. There were even a few white well-boiled eggs peeking through the broth. However, it was not just that.

There were shining, golden fried snacks sitting on one side: fried seaweed roll, deep-fried veggies, fried sweet potatoes, tempura, fried squid. The sumptuous spread brought a smile to Minhyuk’s face. But was that really all? Of course not! There was also the chewy and bouncy blood sausage on the steamer, along with the other parts like ears, livers and a lot more. The food seemed like they were shouting at him in welcome, to hurry and eat them.

Minhyuk shouted in excitement, "Wow! Wow! It's rice cake, fritters, blood sausage set. Wow! Wow!"

"...?"

"W...what's wrong with that guy?"

"Shit, Binz was going to eat, but because of that man, he lost his jive..."

However, Minhyuk did not hear them at all. His eyes were fixated on the steaming seaweed soup, as well as the beautifully cut fishcake swimming inside of it.

"Uncle, do I pay after I eat the fishcake?"

"Ah, aaah..." The owner opened his mouth in hesitation. Minhyuk looked at the owner in confusion after hearing his hesitation. Then, the owner smiled awkwardly before saying, "Yes, you may pay later."

"Then, I'll eat first! Uncle, first, give me ten servings of rice cakes, ten servings of fritters and ten servings of blood sausage. Ah, right. Please add the guts and the liver too!"

"..."

"???"

"Do you want me to wrap it for takeaway?"

"No. I'm going to eat them here!"

The food might still be delicious if he wrapped it and took it away, but Minhyuk found it more pleasing to eat street food in front of the food stall where he bought them. Then, the owner began to prepare his order.

"Ah, who's that person?!"

"Hey, hey. His proportions are amazing, right...?"

"Ah... What proportions... Huh? Look at that jawline..."

"T...that person... I'm going to get my hands on that 'super handsome' man."

The crowd was buzzing with excitement as they talked about Minhyuk, but he completely ignored them. He was rubbing his hands in anticipation wondering what to eat first.

[Please select the main ingredients for this meal.]

'Of course it's fishcake!'

[Fishcake has been selected as the main ingredient.]

Minhyuk truly believed that the best delicacy in a snack bar was fishcake. There was only one reason for it, and that was, 'Because you don't have to wait for it!'

He quickly grabbed a paper cup before scooping plenty of fish cake soup inside. The warmth of the fishcake soup gently passed through the paper cup and thawed the coldness in his frozen hands.

"Hoo, hoo," Minhyuk blew gently on the fishcake soup inside his paper cup, before carefully taking a sip of the soup.

"Ah... it's so great to be alive," Minhyuk said, feeling the warmth spread throughout his chilled body. Then, he grabbed a fishcake, dipped it in the soy sauce bowl, and chomped down on it.

Chew, chew—

"De, delicious...!" Minhyuk exclaimed softly, smiling happily. Then, he ate one, then two, then three... in a flash, he had wolfed down ten fishcakes.

"..."

"..."

"Wow..."

All of a sudden, the owner shouted in surprise, "...My, my level increased by four!"

"...!"

"...!"

"Gasp?!"

The crowd was astonished. However, Minhyuk did not hear them at all. The owner quickly laid down the full, heavy plates in front of Minhyuk. Looking at his haste, it was as though the owner was worried that he would be the one skewered with the stick in Minhyuk's hands if he did not place the plates as quickly as he could. That was because Minhyuk was emitting a cold and intense look as he glared at his empty plate.

Minhyuk looked at the bright, glistening red rice cakes, before grabbing a toothpick and stabbed a piece to taste. The sweet and spicy flavor that spread in his mouth made him shiver in delight as he said, "Oh! This is?sooo?delicious!"

Then, Minhyuk turned to try the fritters and in a single bite, he consumed a fried seaweed roll.

Crunch, crunch!

The harmonious combination of glass noodles, seaweed, and vegetables burst out in Minhyuk's mouth the moment he bit on the crispy fried seaweed roll. Then, Minhyuk grabbed another fried seaweed roll. This time, he dipped it in the rice cakes' sauce before taking a bite. The spicy flavor of the sauce paired with the crispy texture of the fried seaweed roll was impressive.

The fried sweet potatoes were a perfect combination with rice cakes, while the fried squid and tempura were perfect with fish cake soup. This was one of the truths of life.

Then, Minhyuk turned his attention to the chewy blood sausage. Grabbing a piece of the blood sausage, he dipped it in salt and ate it in one bite. Then, he grabbed another piece, dipped it in rice cake sauce and ate it in one bite. Lastly, he grabbed another piece, dipped it in fish cake soup and ate it again in one bite. The exquisite combination of flavors exploded in his mouth. The sizzling pork liver paired with the rice cake sauce was simply divine.

"Holy..."

"My goodness... this guy's crazy."

"It...it looks delicious..."

The crowd was murmuring in surprise, but Minhyuk's attention remained undivided.

"M...my level has increased by fifteen!" The owner shouted loudly, although his voice was soon drowned out amidst the rising commotion from all around.

At that moment, Minhyuk was splitting a boiled egg on top of the rice cakes. He used a spoon to crush the egg white, before mixing it with the yolk and the rice cakes sauce.

"Uncle! I'd like to have another 10 more servings of rice cake, fritters and?blood?sausage set!"

"...Wow, crazy!"

"My god... I just realized that I'm watching that player instead of Binz..."

"I...Is he for real...?"

Binz was about to bring a rice cake into his mouth earlier, and unknowingly stopped at the sight of an unknown player wearing a white mask eating happily beside him. The player even ordered another ten servings of each of the food in front of them.

Then, Binz heard the owner say, "Gasp! My level has increased by twenty!"

Binz could see that the owner was no longer paying any attention to him.

'This person's EXP will only increase if someone enjoyed his food... but from what I heard, it will only increase if the reaction was genuine.'

That was when Binz realized that the player standing next to him was eating with even more gusto compared to him.

'H...he really looks happy...'

At some point in his career, the food that Binz used to enjoy had become tiresome work under the glaring expectations of his viewers. Of course, he was still very happy that he could eat as much as he wanted to. However, before he realized it, the feeling was slowly starting to fade away.

And now, Binz could see that the person standing next to him was truly smiling genuinely.

Growl...!

‘For some strange reason, my appetite is growing the more I watch him. Why?!’

This was a completely absurd notion. He was Binz, the crown prince of the mukbang world! Strangely enough, the longer he watched the man beside him eat, the more he felt like gobbling up the food in front of him.

Chapter 28: Food God vs. Mukbang Emperor

‘Is this how others feel when they watch me?’

Binz was uncertain, but in truth, he was mistaken. The crowd was already thinking about buying food from the snack bar the moment Minhyuk left.

Most people that watch mukbang are usually people on a diet. They try to live vicariously through the mukbang BJs.

However, Minhyuk’s live mukbang had the power to destroy a person’s diet, without any mercy!

Chew, chew—

A strong desire to win against Minhyuk began to blaze in Binz’s heart as he started to eat again. He would feel a strong surge of hunger whenever he looked at Minhyuk. That was when Minhyuk suddenly shouted, "Uncle! Another ten servings of rice cakes, fritters, blood sausage set!"

"H, here...! I want ten servings too!" Binz shouted, eager to compete. Just like that, the eating battle between the two of them began. This time, Binz ate with abandon.

Crunch, crunch!

He ate fritters, blood sausages, and rice cakes, stuffing himself! However, before he could even finish everything on his plate...

"Uncle, please give me ten more servings. Ah, no. Please add another five more to that~!"

"C...customer... are you alright?"

"...I haven't eaten half my fill yet though? Uncle, your fish cake is almost gone over here."

"Ah... Yes..." The owner answered, before hurriedly adding more fish cake to his stall.

Binz, on the other hand, felt like he had already eaten a lot. He was starting to feel bloated and even if he wanted to, it seemed like he could not eat anymore.

'W, what the hell...?! Just who in the world is this man?!'

Binz felt annoyed as he looked at the man suspiciously. However, in the end, he still placed his skewer down and gave up eating.

Clack!

"Phew..." Binz sighed, patting his full and bulging stomach. Then, he saw Minhyuk still eating right beside him.

‘...I’m so curious.’

Binz wondered what this man's identity was. Then, he said, "Excuse me."

He called out to the man beside him, putting on a smile. However, Minhyuk did not even turn to look at him. He just continued eating.

"Hey!" Binz called out a little louder. But, just like before, Minhyuk still continued to eat. There was no indication that he heard Binz calling out to him.

'What incredible concentration! And,?and it's?solely devoted to the food in front of him...!'

Binz realized that nothing could distract the man from eating. There was only food on his mind! However, he was dying with curiosity. So, he raised his hand and tapped the man on the shoulder as he said, "Can you please tell me your nickname..."

Slap!

Minhyuk slapped Binz's hand away from his shoulder before looking at him fiercely and saying, "Hey. Why did you touch me while I was eating? What if I stabbed you to death with my skewer?"

Binz trembled in fright, as a thought flashed in his mind,?'I, I would have really died! No one will be able to live if they touch this man w, while he's eating...!'

It was the truth. The fierce and murderous aura that Minhyuk was emitting right now, was basically telling everyone around him that they would die if they touched or disturbed him.

'I'm still... A bit famous you know...'

However, despite his fame, Minhyuk did not even give him 1% of his attention. Ah, no, that was not right. Minhyuk would not give Binz even 0.00001% of his attention at the moment. Binz nursed his bulging stomach as he continued to watch Minhyuk eat well.

"M...my level has increased by 31!"

"This uncle. He's been talking since earlier. It's noisy,?'Minhyuk thought. He was still eating diligently without any shred of interest towards what the owner was trying to say.

"Uncle. Please give me ten more servings of this! Ten more!" Minhyuk ordered, the thought of eating another set of servings of the street snacks bringing him bliss. However, something unexpected happened.

"Es...esteemed customer... I'm sorry... but we are out of ingredients."

"Eh?! What did you say?! I'm only halfway done!!!!" Minhyuk shouted desperately. He still wanted to eat more of those crispy fritters, those chewy blood sausage, and those hot fish cakes!!!

"Customer, you have already eaten 70 servings of rice cakes, 250 pieces of fish cakes, 70 servings of blood sausages, and 80 servings of fritters..."

"Ha... I could eat 100 more servings."

"..."

Both the owner and Binz were left speechless by Minhyuk's words. Even the players standing behind them had their mouths wide open in shock.

"That's too bad. How much do I have to pay?"

"Please wait a moment," The owner said as he tapped on his calculator. Then, he continued to say, "One serving of rice cake is worth 2,500 gold, 70 servings is worth 175,000 gold. One serving of blood sausage is worth 3,000 gold, you ate 210,000 gold worth of servings. Fritters, 240,000 gold... The total comes up to 750,000 gold."

"It's less than what I thought," Minhyuk said, shaking his head.

"H...he said it was less than what he thought?"

"I can't even eat that much even when I'm attending our company dinner..."

Just when Minhyuk was about to hand over 750,000 gold...

"Customer, please, you can just give me 650,000 gold."

"650,000 gold?"

"Yes, I'm giving you a discount."

"Oh! Uncle, you're a really good man!"

The owner smiled lightly at Minhyuk's words. He was also running a small snack bar in reality so he knew how to do business. Besides, he knew all too well the factors needed for his class, Chef of Happiness, to level up. Minhyuk alone had given him a boost of 31 levels in one single sitting. That was a massive boost to his power.

Furthermore, this customer had eaten so well, that there was a satisfied smile at the corners of the owner's lips. He could not help it.

Minhyuk passed the owner 650,000 gold. After all, he had accumulated a lot of miscellaneous items after his continuous solo raids inside Twilight Graveyard. When he sold those items, he gained 3.2 million gold.

[Food God's True Worth.]

[You have gained +2 STM.]

[Perfect Combination.]

[Life Combination.]

[Your score will be doubled.]

[You have gained +6 STR and +3 STM.]

"...Huh?" Minhyuk muttered dumbly at the sudden notifications.

Life Combination?

He knew what the Perfect Combination was since he had already experienced it before. He also knew that there was no other combination that could compare to the combination of rice cakes, fritters, blood sausage, and fish cake soup.

So, what was Life Combination? Why was it able to double his score in conjunction with Perfect Combination? Generally, the increase in stats would be around three or four with Perfect Combination alone. However, his stats had just increased by nine. This meant that the stats that he gained would increase if his score doubled.

Minhyuk thought, 'Life Combination... Hmm... Could it be... It's a combination that we usually think about in our daily lives?'

He assumed that Perfect Combination reflected the combination of flavors in a meal, while Life Combination was the combination of food that one wanted to eat at a specific moment in one's daily life. During winter, when people were cold and hungry, the food that came to mind the most was the snacks in a snackbar.

It could also be the case when someone felt hungry at one in the morning, wanting to eat ramen or chicken by the Han River. From that, he could conclude that Life Combination was the combination of food and the atmosphere, not just the taste.

'There's a lot of interesting systems, huh?' Minhyuk thought, chuckling lightly. He was only focused on eating well, but his stats continued to increase. After settling his bills, he turned around to leave.

However...

"C...can you please tell me the name of your broadcasting site?!"

"Please tell me your nickname!"

Minhyuk was shocked by the sudden and overwhelming reaction of the crowd. It seemed like some people in the crowd had broadcasted in Paprika, a broadcasting network working with Athenae. The comments of the netizens watching were...

[gdgfl4: Real, is that really a person? He ate food that's worth 750,000 gold alone. Hehehehe]

[BinzKissKiss: Omg... Omg... watching that person eat makes me feel so happy and excited, today's a snackbar?!]

[TwistedGrill has gifted you 100 stars.]

All of these were happening while the reporters from different broadcasting stations were beside themselves with excitement and thrill.

"Hello. I'm Han Inhwa, a reporter from TVM station! We want to cover your story!"

"Excuse me. I'm Lee Sungmin, KBC's reporter. Please let us interview you!"

"Please give me your nickname!"

This situation proved that Minhyuk's decision to wear a mask earlier was a great idea. Right then...

[Binz has gifted you 10 reputation points.]

"...?" Minhyuk tilted his head in confusion before turning around to look at BJ Binz. There, he saw Binz smiling at him.

Rankers who placed in the top 100 of the Local Rankings received special benefits. One of these benefits allowed them to give reputation points. The ranker could give reputation points to others if

they have touched or knew the nickname of the other player that they wanted to send it to. Furthermore, the limit was they were only allowed to give ten reputation points every year. Binz had actually maxed out his quota in a year for Minhyuk.

'If I was allowed to, I would have given him 100 reputation points,' Binz thought, smiling bitterly. The events that transpired today made him realize that he was still lacking. After all, there was someone like this who could enjoy eating with this much happiness, and not think of it as tiresome work.

'Perhaps, this kind of guy was actually the one most suited to be a mukbang BJ?'

"Ah. Well. Thank you," Minhyuk said. He looked at Binz curiously after expressing his gratitude. However, that was all. He did not show an ounce of interest beyond thanking him.

"Can I talk to you?" Binz asked, as the corner of his lips turned upwards slyly. Minhyuk looked at him suspiciously, as Binz continued to say, "I have something that we can eat secretly."

"...!"

Minhyuk's eyes widened in surprise at those words.

"Let's get out of here first, what if someone else took it?"

However, Minhyuk was not a naive, young boy that would immediately follow a stranger at the mere mention of food! So, he thought about things rationally.

From what he could see, Binz did not look like he was a bad person. Besides, he did not have any reason to hurt Minhyuk, and he also did not look like he was lying. In the end, Minhyuk nodded his head, saying, "That's right. We should eat it before someone else sees it...!"

Whisper, whisper—

Minhyuk talked to Binz in a small voice so that no one would be able to listen to them. Binz grinned. To him, Minhyuk looked like a child that had stolen some delicious food from his mom to eat it secretly with his friend.

"Grab my hand."

Minhyuk and Binz grabbed each other's hands.

"Huh...? Huh...!"

"I...Impossible!"

Then, the two of them disappeared in a flash of light.

The next time Minhyuk opened his eyes, he was standing inside a room that looked to be in an inn. The inn was usually used as a place where players logged out of the game. If they designated their room as their return point, they would be able to return to their rooms once they tore their return scrolls.

"...What do you want with me?" Minhyuk said, covering his body with both of his arms while looking at Binz warily.

"Ah, no... I have this place designated as my return point so it will be easy for me to log-out!"

"Fufufu, alright. Since it's just the two of us here, I believe we'll be able to eat in peace. Ah. My name is Minhyuk."

"That's true. I'm Binz."

Minhyuk laughed and took his mask off, before turning to look at Binz in anticipation and excitement.

Grin.

Binz's lips curled up in a smile as he thought, 'This person... is really interesting.' Then, he pulled something out of his inventory. The item was none other than... Pizza bread.

"I made this. Please help yourself."

"A...are you an angel?!"

"An angel?"

Minhyuk looked at the bread in excitement.

Pizza bread was an imitation of pizza, however, it was also something completely different from pizza. There were even times when people craved pizza bread more than pizza. Pizza bread was a food that everyone had in their childhood. It was something that could invoke those memories back when they were still attending elementary or high school.

After all, their parents would usually bring pizza bread and give it to the class if their child became the class president. This was also the food that parents commonly prepared for picnics and outings. Pizza bread was the best food to relieve hunger, the go-to food after PE classes.

Minhyuk smiled happily as he received the pizza bread. However, his expression quickly turned strange.

"...Huh?" Minhyuk asked as he looked more closely at the pizza bread. There was a reason why he was looking at it strangely.

"The color is different...?"

The color was completely different from the pizza bread that he knew. The crust around the pizza bread was white. Minhyuk squinted his eyes to inspect the bread further. He could smell the scent of ketchup, mayonnaise, and bread. However, he could also smell something different, thick and soft in the bread.

"This..."

"Fufu, did you realize it?" Binz asked with a grin. Then, he continued, "This bread is made out of the Sun's Wheat. It's a specialty here in Isbin Village."

"Sun's Wheat?"

"Yes. Just like in reality, Athenae also implemented specialties. There's at least one specialty in every area here inside the game. And, Isbin Village's specialty is none other than Sun's Wheat."

"Ho."

'That is some quite interesting information.'

"Plus, bread made out of the Sun's Wheat is much more delicious," Binz whispered, his smile turning more mischievous by the second.

'Much more delicious... I can't wait...!'

The notifications rang out the moment Minhyuk took a bite of the pizza bread.

[Please select the main ingredients for this meal.]

[Sun's Wheat, ham, onion, parsley powder... redacted.]

'Sun's Wheat.'

Crunch—

Chapter 29: Food God Becomes a Chef

The hint of sweetness in the pizza bread spread evenly in Minhyuk's mouth. Even the flavor of the crispy onion complemented and gave balance to the greasy taste of the mayonnaise in every bite. The combination of the sweetness and sourness of the ketchup, as well as the savory sausage, completed the entire cacophony of flavor in the bread. It was enough to give Minhyuk a shock. The pizza bread in his hand was truly much more delicious than any other ordinary pizza bread.

'I...I want to grab it from him...?' Binz thought as he wiped the drool off of his mouth. It was as if his drool would always flow whenever he watched Minhyuk eating deliciously.

After Minhyuk finished the entire pizza bread...

[Food God's True Worth.]

[You have gained WIS+1 and INT+1.]

By this point in time, Minhyuk had already determined that the white light corresponded to WIS and INT. But, the most crucial information that he learned today was...

'The?Sun's Wheat...'

Flour was deeply ingrained in everyone's daily lives, to the point that it could rival rice as a staple. There were even ramen shops, pizzerias, bakeries and other shops that dealt with flour, lining the streets everywhere. Right now, someone had just told him that these commonplace foods could become even more delicious.

It was truly groundbreaking.

"I knew you'd like it. Was it delicious?"

"Yes!" Minhyuk answered, his back straight and head nodding like a baby chick pecking on rice. Then, he asked, "Where can I get Sun's Wheat? Since it's a specialty, does that mean that I can buy it?"

However, Binz smiled bitterly as he answered, "I'm sorry. I know it's disappointing to hear this now, but the Sun's Wheat is no longer available."

"EH?!"

Binz's words were completely out of the blue. Minhyuk could not believe that he would not be able to buy it anymore! This meant that he would not be able to taste such delicious wheat ever again! At this point, Minhyuk looked like he had lost everything in the world.

"I bought the Sun's Wheat that I used to make this bread from an NPC. From what he said, the reason why Sun's Wheat is no longer available is because the goblins had taken over the Bordy Plains. And, the Bordy Plains is the only place where Sun's Wheat grows."

"Are you saying that some?damn?goblins?are blocking me from getting more delicious Sun's Wheat? How dare they...!" Minhyuk furiously roared out.

.

Hearing his furious words, Binz chuckled awkwardly and tried to soothe Minhyuk, "I did not expect that you would be this mad and upset... Anyway, that's the main reason why Isbin Village is starting to form subjugation troops. They already have around seventy soldiers and are accepting thirty volunteer players. They will give you Sun's Wheat as a reward."

"Oh, so that's the case. But, why didn't you volunteer, Binz?"

Minhyuk believed that Binz also liked food very much. That was why he was wondering why he did not volunteer himself.

"It's because of my level..."

"Ah..."

The reason was completely understandable. Since they were in a beginner's village, the subjugation troops that would be sent to hunt for low-leveled goblins had to be low-leveled as well. It was natural that the game would impose a level limit. If that was the case, then Binz could not participate at all.

"They will only accept players between Lv15~20. This is what I heard from the front desk administrator at the subjugation troops' training center."

'As I thought!'

However, Minhyuk believed that this situation was the Sun's Wheat trying to tell him,?'Come, hurry and eat me, darling!'

"Thank you for this information!"

"Wait. Can we add each other as friends?"

"Of course!"

Binz was like a benefactor to Minhyuk since he had given him food, so Minhyuk willingly accepted his request!

[Binz is asking to add you as a friend.]

[Yes / No]

"Yes."

[Binz / Berserker / Lv397]

After accepting his friend request, Minhyuk bowed politely. Then, he turned around to leave. Binz was left behind, watching Minhyuk's back until he disappeared into the distance.

Today was the day when the subjugation troops were set to depart. Minhyuk had directly gone to the training center and applied to volunteer the very same day Binz told him about the subjugation troops.

Currently, Minhyuk was still inside the pool and exercising, something that he had to do before accessing the game.

"I heard that volunteering with the Bordy Plains subjugation troops is not that good."

"Really?" Minhyuk tilted his head curiously at Changwook's words. Then, he asked, "Why?"

"It's because they only give you 10,000 gold and five kilograms of Sun's Wheat as rewards. Who in their right mind would accept such meager items?"

"But... Isn't receiving five kilograms of Sun's Wheat a great deal?"

Changwook's mouth turned shut at Minhyuk's words. If he based it on Minhyuk's standards, this reward was definitely a good deal. However, even if it was just a low-leveled subjugation operation, the usual rewards handed out should be at least 80,000 gold. The subjugation troops would also provide the novice players with the proper gear and equipment needed for the subjugation quest.

However, the Bordy Plains' subjugation troops did not do so.

"So, did you just eat meat inside Twilight Graveyard during this whole time?"

"Yes."

"How're your stats right now? Did they increase?"

Changwook asked Minhyuk about his stats. However, Minhyuk had already started swimming again, so the answer took a while. Minhyuk swam a lap before stopping in front of Changwook to take a breather. Then, he said, "Puhaaa! I don't remember. I'll check it later once I'm done with my exercise and let you know."

Once he finished his exercise, Minhyuk tried to bring himself up towards Changwook. Seeing his wobbling figure, the people around hurriedly reached out to help him climb.

Swoosh!

Changwook immediately brought a towel and helped Minhyuk dry his huge body the moment he sat down on a chair. The chair that Minhyuk sat on was a very large chair. It was placed near the pool, something the caring staff did for Minhyuk. After catching his breath, Minhyuk grabbed his mobile phone and accessed his Athenae account and information, information that could also be accessed through the phone. Then, he clicked on his stats window before handing his phone over to Changwook.

(Minhyuk)

Level: 15

Class: Food God 17%

HP: 806?MP: 240

STR: 112+14??AGI: 78+32 ?STM: 56+12

WIS: 16+8 ?INT: 16+8 ?Rep: 26

Fullness: 100% 126

Bonus Point: 0

“...Are you sure that these are the stats of someone at Level 15? Why does it look like it's almost the same as a Level 50 player's stats?”

“If this piggy punches you, you'll die.”

“But, you won't kill me, right?”

“Argh! If only you weren't my hyung...!” Minhyuk said, shaking his fists at Changwook.

Changwook smiled awkwardly as he said, “Sorry.”

Then, a thought suddenly flashed in Changwook's mind, ‘If he continues to level up at this pace, then...’

It would be too broken, right? Minhyuk was practically an overpowered character among overpowered characters! However, even if he was a overpowered character, there was still one drawback.

'He doesn't seem to have any other special ability except eating?'

Changwook did not bother to raise the topic with Minhyuk. However, even if he did not do so, it would not change the fact that skills were very important in?Athenae.?Right now, most of the mages at the same level as Minhyuk had learned some first-tier magic, at the very least. Even the?knights?would have already learned skills related to their class.

'Well, it doesn't matter. Minhyuk went there to eat,?’Changwook thought, watching Minhyuk stand up.

"I'll access the game again~" Minhyuk sang happily, a spring in his steps.

Belo was a Level 40 warrior player. However, he was still able to arrive in front of Isbin Village to join the subjugation troops with the guild members of Connection Guild. The reason why he and his guild members were?here?despite being fairly high-leveled players was because...

'We will be able to get the key to a hidden dungeon if one of us gets the highest contribution during this subjugation operation.'

Belo was able to complete a quest just recently. The reward that he received from the quest was a hint that pointed to the hidden dungeon. It clearly told him that they would be able to receive the

key only if they achieved the highest place in terms of contributions as part of the subjugation operation in Bordy Plains.

In other words, the quest that he received was a link quest that revealed its rewards with each quest cleared. Hidden dungeons were extremely special existences. They were places where even low-leveled players could enter and challenge. The rewards were usually unknown but they were definitely good. That was the reason why Belo asked his real friends and guild members to come and join him in the Bordy Plains' subjugation operation.

'I even ate the wings of a black pixie just so I can enter this hidden dungeon.'

The black pixie's wings were categorized under cursed items. Once consumed, it would immediately bring a player's level back to around Level 20~25. The player would remain in this state for two weeks straight. These items were usually only used and consumed by users out of necessity and convenience.

However, using cursed items would also result in other penalties. Since their levels would drop to Level 20, it meant that their stats would also fall to match the level. However, this much penalty was still manageable. After all, at Level 15~20, these experienced players were still much better than the complete novices who were unaware of anything. Right now, there were a total of five people, including Belo, who came to the subjugation troops.

"Foreigners, come this way! I'll determine which units you will be assigned to."

The players that volunteered for the subjugation started to line up in front of the soldier who had just called out. There were twenty volunteers participating in the subjugation operation this time. The volunteers might be a bit shabby and their numbers were small, but it was understandable. After all, it was a subjugation quest that closed in just an hour.

'Fufu, this must be why the hidden dungeon is here: to compensate for the meagre subjugation rewards.'

The players slowly formed a line in front of the soldier.

"Wow, isn't this the smell of novices?"

"Uwooooh, the smell of novices!"

Belo and his party laughed as if they were not currently low-leveled players too. Meanwhile, the NPC soldier standing in front of the line began to ask for the volunteers' special skills and abilities.

"Boy, what's your special skill?"

"I can shoot with the bow well."

"You?"

"I can use a spear!"

"You?"

"I eat well."

"I see, very good... huh?"

Belo turned to look curiously in front when he heard those words. The person that spoke was a tall man.

"You're good at eating?"

"Yes. I am not picky and I can eat a lot of things!"

That man was none other than Minhyuk. His eyes were already twinkling as he answered the soldier.

"Pfft, alright! You're a foreigner who eats well!"

"Hehe, that's right!" Minhyuk said, smiling brightly. Minhyuk had already noticed this fact after meeting NPCs like Valen, Roina, and Allon. And it was none other than special benefits. As long as he got close to them, he was sure that they would give him good benefits. Of course, the NPCs would definitely think that Minhyuk's sudden approach was strange and inappropriate.

However, Minhyuk's wish was not that grand. All he wanted was food, food, and food!

"To be honest, I only spoke in jest because you, my handsome soldier friend, look tired!"

Just like what Minhyuk said, the soldier looked extremely exhausted. The soldier had no other choice. His direct superior had scolded him earlier, at the fact that the number of volunteers for the subjugation quest was abysmal. It would definitely feel exhausting after being scolded for something that was not his fault. Even players would also scold the soldier, Rand.

'Can't you just do it like this?'

The volunteers most definitely hated the rewards. Many volunteers that would willingly apply for subjugation quests usually came for the rewards. However, the rewards for the Bordy Plains were widely looked down upon.

"Really? Boy, I haven't laughed like this in a long time. Thanks to you, I was able to laugh happily and relieve my exhaustion. Fufu. But, did you know?"

"What?"

"I'm good at receiving naggings and scoldings! Bwahahaha!" Rand laughed loudly, as he pounded his chest.

"Haha, that's very funny!"

"Hahahahahaha... haha... Uhm..."

However, despite laughing so loudly, Rand's face slowly turned sullen once again. Seeing this, Minhyuk approached him and patted him gently. It was as if he was trying to tell him to cheer up and be positive.

[You have gained Rand's favor.]

Belo clicked his tongue after watching the scene. He thought, 'That guy's an idiot.'

What was the point of getting close to a measly soldier? Even the other players were looking strangely at Minhyuk. They all had the same reaction. After all, none of them would be able to receive a good quest or higher rewards just from getting close to a simple soldier.

Then, at that moment...

"Soldiers and volunteers! Have a meal first before we depart!" A man who was wearing impressive plate armor, something completely different from the ordinary soldiers, shouted out. The man was none other than the captain of the subjugation troops.

Minhyuk's ears perked up. His body began moving restlessly like an excited puppy waiting for his treat. Then, he asked, "You're feeding us too?"

"Of course. We shouldn't starve you since we're asking you to hunt for us."

"Wow! Wow!"

With the mealtime starting, Rand had no other choice but to suspend his interview.

"Our Isbin Village chefs have the best food."

"...Oh!" Minhyuk exclaimed lightly. Then, the chefs started to line up and distribute the food.

"Shit! Quick, we have to leave!"

"Ah, what's with this food?! Am I supposed to eat this the moment I log in?"

The players began to grumble and complain.

"It's been a long time since I last tasted a military meal like this."

Just like in reality, the military meals provided in Athenae were not delicious. It was meant to follow the truth of reality as closely as possible!

"Ah. Mister Soldier, I'll bring over your share too," Minhyuk said as he jumped up and stood in line. He opened his eyes wide to have a better look at the breakfast menu.

Then, one of the soldiers shouted, "Hamburgers have been prepared for the foreigners. Come and get your meals!"

Chapter 30: Food God Becomes a Chef

However, the players just snorted. They did not pay any heed to the NPC soldier's words. They grumbled even more, acting as if they were some lazy reservists.

"DIY Hamburger? Tch! That thing will give you diarrhea instead!"

"Help yourself, my ass."

On the other hand, Minhyuk was looking at the meal in shock. He thought, 'I...it's hamburger!'

Any sane person would know what kind of an existence the hamburger was. It was considered to be the representative of fast food. It was also one of the two towers standing tall in the flour-based industry, together with pizza.

"A beef patty sandwiched between two sesame buns, with a special sauce and lettuce~ Cheese, pickle and onion, yeah," Minhyuk hummed a strange song happily. He could barely contain his happiness after seeing the meal. Hamburger with fries and a refreshing iced cola! It might be considered a heavy meal for breakfast, but Minhyuk was ready to welcome it with open arms.

After getting his meal, Minhyuk returned to where Rand was, before sitting down and staring at the big hamburger in amazement.

'Kyaa.....This thick patty and crunchy lettuce, oooh, it even has cheese on it.'?Minhyuk thought. He was someone who personally liked his hamburger with plenty of vegetables.

"Please have some!"

"Alright. Boy, you should eat too. You'll definitely be surprised at the flavor," Rand said, nodding his head towards the meal as he picked up his own hamburger.

Minhyuk quickly grabbed the bread tightly, preventing the lettuce from falling off. Then, the usual notification from 'Food God's True Worth' rang out. He swiftly finished the set-up for the skill, before focusing his entire attention on the hamburger.

"Chomp!" Minhyuk opened his mouth as wide as he could. It seemed like he wanted to take the biggest bite that he could.

The moment the hamburger entered Minhyuk's mouth, he felt the soft texture of the bun together with the crunchy and crispy lettuce. The tomatoes also brought freshness to the burger, enhancing the rich, meaty flavor of the patty. Finally, the creamy and savory flavor of the cheese rounded off the flavors in a complete harmony.

Chew, chew—

The sweet, special sauce inside the hamburger met with the harmony of flavors, creating a pleasant taste that slowly spread out in Minhyuk's mouth. Then, Minhyuk grabbed the can of cola beside him and sipped it to alleviate his slight thirst. The sparkling freshness of the ice cold cola washed away the greasiness of the fast food meal in front of him. This was truly a tried and tested combination!

As he gulped down the first taste, the best taste of the cola, Minhyuk felt the tell-tale tingling at the back of his throat. However, this tingling sensation amplified the sweet and unique flavor of the cola. Minhyuk smiled happily as he drank the cola and washed down the greasiness of the hamburger. Then, he reached out for the fries. The golden fries and the ketchup, which tasted a lot stronger than the ketchup inside the hamburger, was the perfect combination! Minhyuk dipped more fries in the ketchup and placed them in his mouth.

Crunch, crunch!

The crisp, crunchy sound of the perfectly fried fries rang out loudly with every bite. Anyone would know that fries were best eaten when it was just fresh out of the pan and dipped with ketchup. Soggy, cold fries were never a good idea.

Chomp—

Once again, Minhyuk opened his mouth and bit down on his hamburger. After swallowing the food in his mouth, he mumbled, "Aren't your military chefs really skilled?"

"That's right! Fufu. Foreigners usually say that our food is barely passable, but I'm really proud of it!" Rand said, banging on his chest puffed up with pride.

"The military chefs in our Isbin Village are the best in all of the?Eivelis?Empire," Rand said proudly. Then, he sneakily looked around before lowering his head to continue to say, "You're the

only person that I will tell this to. Our chef, Len, cooks the most delicious dishes. None of the other dishes that I have tried can compare to his craftsmanship. Whether the dish is just for a single person or a group of people, he will always cook it well.”

Minhyuk's eyes widened. It seemed like Isbin Village had its chef Len, just like Joseon had Janggeum.

"So, what do you think? Isn't it good?"

"Yeah! It tastes really, really, really delicious!"

Minhyuk only said those three syllables, delicious, but it was more than enough for Rand. Besides, those words were truly fit for the dishes. After all, he tasted it himself and he had just found out that the dishes had been prepared by the military chef, Len, which were truly delicious. Just from seeing the fries alone, Minhyuk could tell that the chef who prepared it was meticulous. The fries were served in the best way they could possibly be served, hot and crispy.

Then, the notifications rang in his ears.

[Food God's True Worth.]

[You have gained +1 STR and +1 STM.]

[The Ability of a Skilled Chef.]

[You have gained +1 STR.]

'Oh...!' Minhyuk softly exclaimed as he thought, 'So it can also give me additional stats if I eat well-made dishes!'

But then, Minhyuk's forehead suddenly creased.

'What the hell, are you saying that I'm a terrible cook?'

In a way, Minhyuk had only been able to cook and eat by himself by following the recipes on the internet. However, the dishes that he made were something that was still completely different from those who knew how to cook.

'Just like I thought, I really need to pick up cooking skills...'

Minhyuk had already thought about acquiring the skills that would allow him to cook. The cooking skill was freely available to any player. It was classified under production skills. There were even players who would willingly learn this skill and turn it into their main class. However, these people were only few and far between.

'It's because the buff abilities that came from food are usually lower than an ordinary priest's buff abilities.'

In addition, ordinary priests only needed to prepare themselves and walk the path of priesthood. It was a path that was a lot easier, compared to a chef's path where they would need to make food and let others eat.

However, Minhyuk played this game to eat. He was different from others. Besides, he definitely wanted to learn how to become a chef, as well as the skills attached to the class. It was not for the buff ability but just so he could make the food that he wanted to eat more delicious!

And yet, even though he had wanted to do so, there were no NPCs in Isbin Village that could teach him how to cook. Thankfully, there was someone hidden in the subjugation troops. Who would even think of doing something like this?

The answer was Minhyuk, and Minhyuk alone. He was the only one crazy enough to want to learn cooking skills from a military chef in the subjugation troops!

"Rand."

"Huh?"

"I want to volunteer myself in the military kitchen. Is that possible?"

"...The kitchen?" Rand asked, tilting his head in confusion.

"Boy, don't you want to level up?"

The guardians of Athenae were also people who grew stronger by leveling up. That was why they were aware that the foreigners could level up too. Besides, the foreigners were even more gung-ho about leveling up more than them. However, the boy in front of him wanted to go to the military kitchen?

"Heh..... I'd love to do some chores and help make the soldiers' meals more delicious!"

"Oh! Boy, you have a good attitude."

It was very difficult for the guardians to manage the players and make them listen to them. Most of the time, they could just opt to not give them the rewards. However, the players still would not listen to them, saying that they were just NPCs.

However, right now, Minhyuk's eyes were twinkling as he looked at him. What else could he do?

"Well, the kitchen is a bit full, so I really shouldn't send any foreigners over there, but... Sigh, I'll make some room for you," Rand said. He was a person who had experienced a lot in the subjugation troops to the point that he could be considered as a veteran.

However, he was also the soldier in charge of personnel management, which meant that he had jurisdiction over the unit's manpower assignment.

"A foreigner volunteering to go to the military kitchen. Sigh. Ah! There's something that I have to tell you though. Len is very tough and strict. He also hates foreigners."

"I...is that so?"

"That's right. But... my boy, I think you should be able to convince him."

"Alright," Minhyuk answered and nodded. Just then, he noticed something, "There's still plenty of food left, are there no more soldiers or foreigners who still want to eat?"

"That's right. With that glib tongue of yours, he will definitely... Huh?" Rand said. He turned to look at Minhyuk, who had just been chewing on his hamburger, only to discover that he had disappeared right in front of him. Minhyuk had already flown out of his seat and lined up in front of the food stand. Then, Rand saw him come back after sweeping most of the remaining hamburgers up and chomping on another one happily.

"Hahahahaha, boy, you really weren't kidding when you told me that your specialty was eating well!" Rand said, laughing loudly at his antics.

[You have gained Rand's favor.]

Minhyuk followed behind Rand after he finally finished eating his fill of the hamburgers. Not long after, they arrived at the cooking carriage where the military kitchen was located. The cooking carriage was a mysterious magic tool that looked quite similar to the kitchen trailers used in the military in reality. The two of them went inside, finding the space to be a lot bigger than the outside. Then, they saw the military chefs all lined up.

"Oh. Isn't that the foreigner who ate a lot of the hamburgers earlier?"

"Brock. I will leave this boy here in the military kitchen."

"Huh? Aren't we already full?"

"Eyy. Come on, let this slide, just this once, eh? He'll definitely work hard. Why don't you give him some miscellaneous chores?"

The cook, named Brock, had a bigger build compared to ordinary soldiers. His biceps were even as big as a melon. He said, "You?do?know our Captain Len's personality, right?"

"Anyway, please help me! Just this once!" Rand said, quickly escaping after saying his piece.

Then, Minhyuk stepped up and introduced himself with a "Hello!" and bowed his head politely.

That was when a man entered the cooking carriage. The man was as tall as Minhyuk, and had hair so short that none of the strands swayed with the wind. There was even a knife scar covering one of his eyes.

"What's this? A foreigner?"

This man was none other than Len. Len's expression hardened when he saw Minhyuk standing inside the cooking carriage. Then, Minhyuk nodded and said, "Yes, I applied to volunteer in the military kitchen."

"We're full. Find another place."

"But, I really want to stay here."

"No, I don't want you here, aren't you here just so you could benefit from us?"

‘Benefit from them...?’

Minhyuk was taken aback by the scathing remark. The reason that he came here was to see if he could eat more delicious food since this was the kitchen. He also came here to pick up cooking skills. However, despite Len's cold attitude, Minhyuk still did not give up.

"I'll do all the chores that you want me to do. I'll definitely do a great job on it!" Minhyuk said, bulging his biceps and tapping it strongly.

Len's forehead wrinkled at his words. Then, he thought, 'Chores...'

However, even if Minhyuk was tasked to do chores, he still needed to have cooking skills. And Len knew that he was the one who would have a hard time training Minhyuk if he allowed him, who was unfamiliar with the kitchen, to stay here.

Besides, Minhyuk would leave the moment the subjugation quest was over. Len could not find any reason why he would allow it. Then, Len went outside of the carriage for a moment. When he came back, he had a sack in his hand.

Len threw the sack in front of Minhyuk and said, "Peel all of the garlic in this sack in twenty minutes. If you can do that, then I'll take you in and teach you how to cook."

[Quest: Peel the garlic in 20 minutes.]

Rank: D

Limit: ?None

Rewards: ?You will be able to join the Military Kitchen.

Penalty for Failure: ?Len's favor towards you will decrease.

Description: ?Len doesn't need a useless person, he will take you in if you are able to help and assist the military chefs. However, it's very difficult to peel all of the garlic in the sack in twenty minutes.

"Captain, you're very sly, aren't you? How can he peel all of that in twenty minutes?" Brock said, ? whistling slyly, as Len turned to leave the carriage.

It was apparent to him that Len did not want to have a new addition to the military chefs. In the first place, it was not easy to peel a few of those garlic quickly, what more than an entire sack? It might be a simple garlic, but the speed between a skilled and an unskilled person was entirely different.

"Ingredient Acquisition."

'What did he say?'

Brock was puzzled when he heard the foreigner murmur something. He said, "Well, boy, if you can't, you should go back and use your sword or spear to hunt those goblins."

The moment he turned around to leave, Minhyuk quipped, "I'm finished, Brock."

"...Huh?" Brock asked, mouth agape. Only thirty seconds had passed since Len went outside again. However, Minhyuk was telling him that he was already done.

‘What kind of bullshit is he spouting?'

Even he was unaware how long it would take to peel that sack of garlic himself. According to ?his estimate, it would probably take twenty minutes at the fastest, thirty minutes at the slowest.

Brock strode towards Minhyuk with a stiff and stern expression on his face as he said, "No matter how much you want to join the military kitchen, you can't lie... hmm?"

Minhyuk opened the sack in front of him. All of the garlic inside the sack was peeled cleanly and perfectly.