

Gourmet 41

Chapter 41: During Weekends Too...

"Oh...!" Minhyuk let out a gasp in surprise. The sweet and sour pork that he made was a rare grade dish? He immediately checked the information to make sure.

(Sweet and Sour Pork)

Ingredient Grade: C

Grade: Rare

Requirements: ?None

Shelf Life: 7 days

Preservation Time: 24 hours

Special Abilities:

?+10 increase in all stats

?+10% increase in critical hit probability.

?Permanently revive the sense of taste.

Description: This dish was made by the disciple for his master. He poured his heart and soul into it to make it more delicious. The Orc Chieftain's Essence has also further improved its taste.

"Olé!" Minhyuk shouted in delight. It was because he saw the?‘further improved its taste’?in the description. He was so happy that he even got up and danced Shin-chan’s hula dance.

"Hula, hula~ hula, hula~"

Besides, he was also excited that Len would finally have his sense of taste, and be able to eat a more delicious sweet and sour pork. After checking the dish’s information, Minhyuk quickly placed the sweet and sour pork inside his Food Storage Inventory.

'There's also Trance.'

All of the information displayed under the Trance skill was marked as ‘???’. There was only one hint. From the hint, it could be said that Trance had the ability to increase the dish’s grade depending on various factors. There was also the Achievement Points (AP). Achievement Points were obtained if a player reached a certain achievement in their class, or if the player created something personally based on their class. From what Minhyuk heard, these APs could also be exchanged for items or skill books later.

After checking through everything, Minhyuk sat down and waited for Len’s arrival in mounting excitement.

Dressed in his most comfortable clothes, Len walked towards the cooking carriage to taste the first dish his disciple had made for him.

'I can finally taste the dish...'?He thought, chuckling lightly.

Minhyuk welcomed him with a wide smile the moment he entered the cooking carriage. It seemed like he had been waiting for his arrival. He asked, "Did you relax and take a breather today?!"

"...But taking a breather is a bit troublesome," Len said, playing along with his tune.

"Did you wash up?!"

"I didn't."

"What about your butt?!"

"Hmm..." Len groaned a bit, as if what he heard was too much.

Minhyuk burst out in admiration and said, "Wow! You're really leisurely."

"Well?" Len said, smiling in embarrassment as Minhyuk guided him to the front of a table that had been spread out inside the cooking carriage. He watched as Minhyuk took out the dishes from his Food Storage Inventory, starting with the black bean noodles and spicy seafood noodles. The amount of both dishes looked to be about twenty servings.

Then, Minhyuk narrowed his eyes and said seriously, "The next one is the most important main dish."

He took out the sweet and sour pork from his inventory and placed it on the table. The sweet and sour pork was well fried and looked very appetizing. It looked so crispy that just a touch would give out a crunch. Even the dark sauce was glowing slightly.

Minhyuk smiled brightly and looked at Len to say, "I prepared this specially for you, master! This sweet and sour pork is made with Orc Chieftain's Essence! Well, to be exact, it went into the sauce. Fufufu...!"

"Oh," Len gasped in awe. The smile on his face was slowly fading away. Len wanted to keep smiling but he could not. He was so nervous. After all, he had never tasted anything even though he had spent his whole life cooking for others. Tears started welling up in his eyes.

Just then...

Grab!

"Boy, what do you think you're doing right now?!"

"Eh? I'm trying to pour the sauce on the sweet and sour pork?"

"No! Why would you fry it if you're going to pour the sauce on it? Didn't you learn that frying food is to make it crispy? I have never taught you this!"

This was the moment that the confrontation between the dipping faction and the pouring faction began. Minhyuk slapped his hand on the table and said, "Master, you can pour the sauce on the sweet and sour pork. That way, the breadings will become soft and moist and will create a fantastic taste."

"No, no, no. Frying food means that you want the crispy and crunchy texture. Why would you fry it if you're going to do that?! You might as well have stir-fried it!"

"Master doesn't even know what it tastes like. You haven't tried pouring it yet, have you?!"

"Oho. Boy, I may not know what it tastes like but I do know something! I should hear the crunch whenever I eat fried food!"

"Ugh...!"

"Ugh...!"

The two men glared at each other. Then, Minhyuk said, "Then I will explain it to you logically."

"Go on."

"There's only one reason why you should pour the sauce on sweet and sour pork. Master. It's bad to leave food behind, right?"

"Yeah."

"If you dip it, then you would throw away plenty of sauce. However, if you pour it then the amount of food that you will waste will be less."

'...My god!'

That was right. Logical. At the very least, Minhyuk was an educated man. Len started laughing.

"Kgghk."

"Huhu."

"Hahahahahaha!"

"Hehe."

The two of them laughed loudly as Minhyuk divided the sweet and sour pork in half. Half of it would have sauce poured on it and the other half would be dipped in the sauce. Minhyuk did this because he hated the gloomy atmosphere that suddenly surrounded Len. Of course, that did not change the fact that he was still a huge fan of pouring sauce on sweet and sour pork.

"Oho, this way we can both taste the crispy texture?and?the soft texture of the breadings of the sweet and sour pork."

"That's right."

.

"Then, let's eat."

"Please eat this first," Minhyuk said, pushing the sweet and sour pork towards Len. Although Len was a supporter of dipping it in sauce, Minhyuk still wanted him to have a bite of the sweet and sour pork soaked with sauce, so that his taste could be revived.

Crunch—

The sauce was poured not long ago, so the breadings were still not soggy and the texture was still crispy.

Crunch, crunch—

The more Len chewed, the softer it became in his mouth. Faintly, very faintly, he started to feel something at the tip of his tongue. Although it was slow, Len could feel a slightly sweet taste. After a while, his mouth began to be filled with the sweet, juicy, and sour flavor of the pork.

Len could taste! All his life, he felt like he was chewing dirt whenever he ate. Others might be happy to eat but he was not.

"It's delicious," Len said, picking up the black bean noodles placed in front of him.

"This is how you eat it," Minhyuk said, grabbing his own bowl of gleaming black bean noodles and demonstrating how to eat.

Slurp!!!?He slurped the noodles without cutting anything off, before stuffing a piece of pickled radish in his mouth.

Crunch, crunch.

The freshness of the pickled radish, combined with the oily, greasy flavor of the black bean noodles, went perfectly well together. Then, Minhyuk grabbed a piece of well-fried meat and some onions. The black bean paste brought out a deeper flavor in the meat, while the onions added a crispy texture, making it even more delicious in Minhyuk's mouth. Len followed Minhyuk's example and ate it as he did.

Slurp!!!

"You're doing well!"

Len closed his eyes and savored the flavor of the noodles, the corner of his mouth curling into a smile. Then, he grabbed the spicy seafood noodles.

"This one might be a bit spicy."

Slurp!!!

Len did a great job slurping the noodles! He felt a slight tingling in his mouth the moment he inhaled the noodles. Then, he sampled a piece of pickled radish, before picking up the bowl and tasting the soup. The spicy, deep flavor of the seafood in the soup was excellent.

"What is this? It's a bit spicy but it's also refreshing?"

"This is the charm and beauty of spicy seafood noodles!"

Len grinned widely and said, "It's absolutely delicious!"

Delicious. It was just these three syllables. This word was a word that everyone used often but Len said those words as if it was the only thing he could say, "It's really, really delicious!"

Minhyuk laughed happily, and then...

Slurp!!!

...he started to inhale his noodles again. The same was true for Len. The two of them slurped their noodles as they sat in front of each other.

Lee Minhwa was speaking into her phone urgently, "Is this the Chinese Restaurant?! Yes, I'm on the seventh floor of the Athena building. Yes, yes. Black bean noodles, spicy seafood noodles... oh, and sweet and sour pork."

"Hey! Add some dry black bean noodles too!"

Hearing those words, Lee Minhwa looked around and saw Seonwook from the Customer Center. She said to her phone, "Yes, please add one more dry black bean noodles~"

Lee Minhwa hung up the phone and turned to look at Seonwook asking, "When did you arrive?"

"Just now. Wow...Those two are eating so well," Seonwook said.

"Yeah," Team Leader Park answered instead of Lee Minhwa.

"But, Leader, you shouldn't be spaced out here like this, right?" Lee Minhwa said, bringing Team Leader Park back to his senses. His mind instantly flew away after watching the black bean noodles mukbang on the monitor.

"Yeah. But in the end, he really got it. Phew..."

"He got... what?"

"The artifact that Twilight Chef Black was supposed to get."

"You're talking about Kim Seokhyun, right? Did that player get the item that Kim Seokhyun was supposed to receive?"

Team Leader Park nodded solemnly in response.

Seonwook grinned and said, "But... aren't you guys too worried about this player? True, he has cooking skills, and he can increase his stats whenever he eats. But, no matter how strong this player gets, he wouldn't be strong enough to be a balance breaker. Also, I don't think that he's going to distribute buffs carelessly with his personality. Just look at that other god class, Death Knight, that guy really made a mess by continuously summoning things."

Seonwook could say this with confidence since he believed that Minhyuk did not have the personality nor skills to become a cause of concern. However, Lee Minhwa shook her head at his words.

"You're really..." Team Leader Park spoke softly after hearing Seonwook's confidence.

"You think that he will only get stats?"

"Does that mean that he will get something else?"

"You'll know once he gets his second class."

"What is it? Tell me!"

Lee Minhwa and Team Leader Park glanced at each other before saying at the same time, "Secret."

Len left the cooking carriage saying that he would go out for a while and come back soon. While he was away, Minhyuk took the opportunity to lick the bowl of the sweet and sour pork sauce clean. After finishing the meal, Minhyuk smiled happily and said, "The subjugation is complete!"

Minhyuk did not receive any buff effect since only one person could receive the buff from a single maxed-buff dish. However, he was still happy. After all, the calorie count for this dish was probably the same as the listed calories for black bean noodles on the internet.

'Ha... Now I only need to get my Sun's Wheat reward.'

He wondered what he could make with it. This was his blissful problem. Should he make some bread, and dip it in eggs to fry and sprinkle some sugar on it? Or should he make some knife-cut noodles, and eat it with well-ripened kimchi? He was already picturing his blissful and happy future. Then, Len came back holding something that was wrapped in cloth.

Len was currently very,?very?happy. God of Athenae? Well, screw yourself! Although Minhyuk did not receive the quest from him, he was still able to finish the task that needed to be done. He gave Len his sense of taste. So, what about the quest's reward? Of course, Minhyuk should be the one to take it.

'As expected...'?Minhyuk thought. It seemed like it really was a quest but he wondered why he did not hear any notification about it. Then, he saw Len pull the cloth away revealing a kitchen knife with an impressive pattern on the hilt. The pattern was none other than a phoenix.

[You have received Ellie's Kitchen Knife.]

[You have gained 10 REP.]

[You can now learn all skills related to DEX.]

Although Minhyuk had not received any notifications about the quest, he heard the notifications about the rewards. Right now, he was able to learn skills related to DEX. From what he heard, players could learn production skills like cooking, repairing, fishing, painting, sculpting and plenty more. However, there were limits to learning these skills. Usually, players could only learn one production skill before Level 200 and two more production skills before Level 400.

Len smiled softly and said, "This is a present for my disciple."

"This is too much..."

"Why? You're not going to take it?"

"No! Of course, I'll take it. I'll use it well!" Minhyuk answered loudly, as he reached out for the kitchen knife. The moment he touched the knife, he felt the hilt of the knife wriggle. Minhyuk turned curious and checked the information.

(Ellie's Kitchen Knife)

Class:?Epic

Requirements: No requirements for primary level. Level 120 required to unlock secondary level.

Durability:?

Attack Power: 50

Primary Level Special Abilities:

?DEX acquisition rate x4

?DEX +40

?Can be equipped with a sword.

?Can automatically clean itself.

?Can change to a variety of tools.

Secondary Level's Special Abilities:

?Sealed

?Sealed

?Sealed

Description: This was an artifact that the Empress bestowed upon Len, the best chef in Eivelis Empire.

'Oh...'

The artifact was quite mysterious. Even the durability was set to infinity. ?Athenae's concept of durability was different from other games. It was not a concept of being corroded or broken during battle. Even if the blade broke or became dull and corroded, artifacts with infinity in the durability would be completely repaired after 24 hours. Minhyuk continued to check the rest of the detailed description.

'What does it mean, the secondary level is sealed?'

[The secondary level requirements is only applicable to growth-type artifacts. You will be able to use the artifact upon meeting the primary level requirements. Satisfying the secondary level requirements will unlock all abilities.]

Simply put, he could use all of the abilities in the primary level since the requirements were met. And once Minhyuk reached Level 120, he would be able to unlock all of the 'sealed' parts of the artifact. In any case, Minhyuk really liked the artifact. Because...

'The DEX acquisition rate has been raised to x4!'

Having DEX would mean that he could also gain 'flavor'. The artifact that Len gave him was something that he really needed.

"How is it? Do you like it?"

"Yes, yes. I really, really, really like it! But Master, what does it mean when it says that I can equip it with a sword?" Minhyuk asked, tilting his head in confusion.

"Take the knife to your sword."

Minhyuk brought the knife near his sword.

[Do you want to equip Ellie's Kitchen Knife on the Sword of Rebellion?]

[Yes / No]

'Yes.'

Then, something amazing happened. The kitchen knife slowly transformed into liquid and stuck itself on the Sword of Rebellion, assimilating with it.

'Gasp...!'

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The Sword of Rebellion was covered with a bright light when the assimilation ended. As the light dimmed down, the once-black Sword of Rebellion had now completely changed.

“Ellie’s Kitchen Knife is an Equip Artifact. It can be changed into a kitchen knife, a blacksmith’s hammer, or even a fishing rod. It will always be clean too, with its self-cleaning function.”

The Sword of Rebellion had a completely different appearance now. The hilt had now turned red with the phoenix engraved on it. Minhyuk checked the information right away.

(Ellie's Sword)

Class: Epic

Requirements: No requirements for primary level. Level 120 required to unlock secondary level.

Durability:?

Attack Power: 211 + 50

Special Abilities

?STR +4, AGI +3

?Skill: Dauntless Strike

Primary Level's Special Abilities:

?DEX acquisition rate x4

?DEX +40

?Can be equipped with a sword.

?Can automatically clean itself.

?Can change to any type of cooking tool.

Secondary Level's Special Abilities:

?Sealed

?Sealed

?Sealed

Description: This was an artifact that the empress bestowed upon Len, the best chef in Eivelis Empire.

The item was literally equipped. After equipping Ellie’s Kitchen Knife onto the Sword of Rebellion, the sword’s attack power had increased by +50. It was also a much greater artifact than what he initially thought since he retained the +40 on DEX just by equipping it. Minhyuk smiled happily as he said, "Thank you, Master!"

"But... who's Ellie? The information said that it was Ellie's knife?" Minhyuk asked. Of course, he had already checked it. Ellie was the empress of the Eivelis Empire, and this item was something that she bestowed to Len. Minhyuk continued to say, "Right. Master is definitely much greater than what I imagined, for you to receive a knife from the empress."

Len grinned and said, "She used to be my lover." However, his smile soon turned bitter as he continued, "I used to work as an imperial chef in the past."

"Y... you're a big shot."

"Ellie loved my cooking. She had a very hard time when she was young, thinking about stepping up and sitting on the throne at a young age. But, every time she ate my food, she said that she would always get her strength back."

Minhyuk was starting to see where this was headed.

"But in the end, a chef like me and someone like her, we could never be together. Her vassals framed me and accused me of false charges. As a result, I was driven out of the palace. And the day before I left the palace..."

Len recalled his memories as he continued, "...we both made a promise to each other."

Minhyuk perked his ears up and listened attentively.

"Her father, His Majesty Ellen, was called the Sword Emperor. Since she was a genius, I promised that I would treat her to a very delicious meal once she inherits that title."

"Oh...! Master, you're really cool!"

Perhaps, Len did that so she could focus on what she wanted to do and not grieve over him leaving her side.

"A long time has passed since then, I heard that she has already surpassed the former emperor, His Majesty Ellen."

"So you're going to the palace now?"

"No."

Minhyuk looked at him strangely.

"Her vassals would definitely not let me enter the palace."

Minhyuk nodded. It was definitely possible. From what he heard, the empress had reached the peak. Her vassals would definitely not allow her to play some sort of love game at this point in time.

"That's why I want to ask you for a favor, boy."

"A favor?"

"Yeah. Cook for the empress on my behalf."

[Linked Quest: Meet Ellie.]

Rank: B

Requirements: The one recognized by Len.

Rewards: 15,000 EXP

Penalty for Failure: None

Description: You have received Len's recognition and he is now asking you for a favor to cook for the empress on his behalf.

"I understand."

"Thanks," Len said, smiling lightly.

Minhyuk might have accepted the quest, but he was still unsure if he would do it or not. After all, he was playing this game for the food, right? Besides, the empress was not someone that a person like Minhyuk could meet just because he wanted to. Based on the things that he heard from Len, there was a high possibility that he would get kicked out of the place before he could even step foot inside the palace. Not to mention if he went there and said, 'I'm Len's disciple!'. That meant that he had to make a way for him to meet with the empress.

It did not seem to be easy though. Of course, the reward was tempting but, wasn't it better for him to just eat than getting the reward?

"Boy, are you going to use the Return Stone now?"

"Nope."

Usually, most of the players would choose to use the Return Stone and go back to the village immediately once the subjugation quest was over. In fact, Minhyuk was the only player left right now.

"If I hunt the monsters from around here then I would be able to get an extra Sun's Wheat, right?" Minhyuk asked. He had already received an additional notification after the subjugation quest had ended, saying that he would be able to get Sun's Wheat as drops if he hunted monsters like goblins in the area. All the other players had paid no attention to it and just directly used the Return Stone to leave the camp.

"That's right."

"I was thinking of killing some of them."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"But, boy..." Len started. However, he knew of Minhyuk's skills, so he was not too worried.

Minhyuk bowed and told him, "Thank you for everything!"

Len smiled at him and said, "How about having another mukbang battle sometime in the future?"

"Hohoho. I won't go easy on you."

"You should keep in mind that I'm not an easy opponent."

Not long after, Minhyuk left the cooking carriage.

Roughly fifteen minutes later, Twilight Chef Black appeared. He was finally able to catch up with the returning subjugation troops after riding on his own carriage.

‘Two billion is probably enough for him. He’s probably on his toes waiting for me.’? Black thought, chuckling darkly.

He planned to deal with the chef first before finishing Len’s ongoing linked quest. Throughout his progress with the quest, Twilight Chef Black received a hint that he would be able to receive a treasure personally granted by the empress. Twilight Chef Black also learned that one of the rewards as he progressed further, would be the opportunity to learn from the person hailed as the Sword Emperor herself. The epic-ranked skill, Ellie’s Swordsmanship, would give him the chance to possess enormous strength once he acquired it. He would show those who had mocked and ignored him for being weak. Soon, Black’s carriage came to a halt.

"Neigh!" The horse neighed loudly.

"I heard that there is a talented chef in your military kitchen," Black spoke.

Vald suddenly became wary after hearing his words. He was also someone who liked and loved Minhyuk. He asked, "What's your business with him?"

“Ah. I found out that he has outstanding skills, so I came here to make a proposal to him.”

It seemed like the unknown man’s purpose was just to recruit Minhyuk. But unfortunately, Minhyuk did not go back with them. He had decided to stay in Bordy Plains for a while.

"He's gone."

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"The subjugation is already over, you know?"

"N, no. That can't be!" Black said dumbly, his expression turning weird. He believed that Minhyuk would be waiting for him to come here. He wondered why Minhyuk had dropped those hints before.

‘What about those buffed dishes that he sent out for free to the players? After all, doing something like that would quickly spread his information and location. Was he really smart?’ Black was confused, mistakenly believing Minhyuk’s actions to be signaling for his attention.

"What are you so surprised about? It’s only natural that the foreigners would go back since the subjugation is already over."

"T, this can't be...!" Black said in disbelief. Then, he calmed down and thought, ‘Phew. It’s ok. I’m supposed to come here for that epic artifact anyway.’

Black coughed with awkward laughter, before asking, "Then, where is the cooking carriage?"

"Over there," Vald said, pointing to the cooking carriage. And as if on cue, Len walked out of the carriage, sporting an uncanny resemblance to Minhyuk as he munched on some hard bread happily.

"Are you Len?"

"Yeah."

"I'm Twilight Chef Black."

"I see."

"...Well, don't you have anything to say to me?"

"I don't think so?" Chew, chew. Len answered as he continued to munch on his bread.

"T... the quest told me to come here!"

"Ah, that. Sorry. My disciple has already taken it."

"What are you saying?! That's impossible!"

"Sorry about that, but what can you do if my disciple has already completed the quest?" Len said, patting him on the shoulder.

Black trembled as he asked, "T... then the epic artifact...?"

"Gone."

"Then, is there anything else for me?"

"Anything else... Sorry, but I don't have anything else to give you. You should be a bit hungry after your long journey, so take this," Len said, handing over a piece of hard bread. Then, he continued to console Black, "You've worked hard."

Black silently looked at the bread, his hands shaking in anger. He had spent two months on this quest. The quest that would have probably given him an epic artifact, and even allow him to learn the empress' swordsmanship. But, all he got was this piece of bread?!

Throw!

Black threw the bread on the ground and trampled it under his foot. Seeing this, Len's eyes narrowed sharply as he remarked, "I guess I was right in giving it to my disciple as a gift. He is really the right owner of that item. I don't think I will ever regret that decision."

"Are you telling me now that the bastard from before is better than me?!" Black shouted, his anger boiling at Len's words. He could not believe that he was being compared with that mysterious chef, and that someone else was better than him. After all, he was the best!

"That's precisely what I said. That's right. My disciple is better than someone like you, who can't appreciate how precious food is. My disciple cherishes even this hard bread. 'Twilight Chef?' Tsk," Len said, clicking his tongue at him. Black was completely frustrated.

'I...Impossible!'

Black had been too angry to realize that Len was an excellent chef that would have probably given him anything, and the value would have been priceless. He only realized it too late.

"It was my fault. I was overwhelmed with anger. Please, give me a quest."

"Get out!" Len shouted. Black became dispirited. At that moment...

"Len. Is it true that our rookie left already?"

"He just left."

"No! I promised to marry my beautiful daughter to him!"

"No! I need to get the quest! Give me the quest, not the bread!"

Black and Venetto's eyes met. Venetto looked suddenly happy as he said, "Boy, you're very handsome. Would you like me to introduce you to my beautiful daughter?"

"W... what the hell is this again?!"

Then, Venetto showed him the picture that he showed to Minhyuk.

"Ugh, aaaaaaaaack. Damn it!" Black shrieked, shutting his eyes and grabbing his head in frustration and fear.

Minhyuk immediately sat down after disconnecting from the game, and proceeded to eat his cherry tomatoes and gulp down a variety of nutritional supplements.

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"Puhaa...?Why aren't there any nutritional supplements that tastes like meat?"

There were plump and chubby animals running around in the wild so how could there be no meat-flavored nutritional supplements?! After imagining the taste of the meat-flavored supplement, Minhyuk calmed down and organized his thoughts.

'I should first focus on getting more of the Sun's Wheat until the subjugation troops return to the village.'

Vald had told Minhyuk that he would be given thrice the amount of Sun's Wheat as a special reward. However, considering his rate of consumption, thrice the amount of the regular reward would not be enough. He would finish it too quickly. Besides, the percentage next to his class had already reached 90% too.

'Who knew that unlocking and finding out new things can be this interesting.'

Minhyuk realized that discovering how these systems worked was quite pleasant too. Of course, eating was still number one for him. Minhyuk went to the Athenae's official website to browse and search for 'Ellie'. He was still undecided if he would do the quest, but it would not hurt to know more.

'Well, what if something delicious comes out? Ha...'

There were quite a lot of articles related to the search term that he used.

[Wow. Today I went to the Emperor's City and saw Empress Ellie... ?She's really pretty... My legs almost turned into jelly...

kdkcml5: Propose! Haha! He who has the courage gets the beauty!

BeautyLovesApples: Oh, a virtual marriage transcends above interracial marriage.]

Minhyuk saw a lot of articles praising her beauty. Then, the next article...

[Guys. I went to see the empress since I wanted to go and learn the empress' swordsmanship. She was like the devil of the sword. I went to her and said: Please accept me as your disciple! But! She locked me up in the dungeon ?? waaaaah. I've been sentenced to 10 years in prison... Someone save me... ??]

hjbja52: LOL. Hahaha. Delete character hahaha.

WatchOut: You should go and broadcast live on Paprika. It's going to be fun! Hahaha

nbhyqwm7: Ah, guys. I'm being serious here ?? Can anyone please save me ???]

Chapter 43: Sweet Potato Pumpkin?

Minhyuk giggled after reading that a player had been locked up in prison. He continued to browse through the related articles.

[Is the empress really looking for an heir?

hkdad31: Yep, yep. Facts only. But there's one condition and it's really hard. They said that you have to join and win the tournament held in the Eivelis Empire.]

"Tournament?"

Athenae?usually hosted competitions and tournaments from time to time. These competitions and tournaments were often held as events. Talented players would be able to gain fame and reputation through these events. Curious, Minhyuk looked at the contents of the article more seriously.

[Don't you think that there would be lots of fun in this coming tournament that will be held in the Eivelis Empire?

GrowYourHair: I'm excited! I'm sure it will be fun. The tournament participants will definitely be amazing... But I think the champion is already decided.

afhjl25: IKR... One of the participants this time is the sister of the top three in our local rankings, Cain. What's more surprising is that she's more talented, more powerful than Cain. She even has a legendary class. They said that everything about her is overwhelming. The best part is, her level is still low.]

"Ho..."

Third in the rankings...

Minhyuk continued to scroll down.

[I'm posting details and information about how the tournament will be held. First, all of the participants will be placed on a small island together. Please check the map.]

Minhyuk clicked on the map that showed a tiny island. From what he read, the exact contents of the tournament and what the participants would do inside the island was still unconfirmed. For all they knew, they could be asked to hunt for monsters or even asked to fight with other players. However, Minhyuk's eyes were trained on the center of the map.

"Huh...?!"

He could not tear his eyes away. The thing located on the center of the island was none other than a convenience store! It even reminded Minhyuk of the logos of the three convenience store franchises in the country.

"Gasp?!?W... what's this?!" Minhyuk exclaimed in shock as he searched? 'Eivelis Empire's Convenience Store'? in the search bar.

[Does anyone know what the convenience store on the island in the tournament is?

SevenDeleven: Hello, gullible customer. We have prepared this for you. It would be expensive so please buy from us a lot.

faddadd5413: Is the person above for real LOL hahaha. The convenience store is going to be used as a rest area for the players during the game. They say that you can use and eat as much as you want of the food and items you can find in there. I heard that all of the convenience stores in the country combined and integrated for this event, so there's practically nothing that will be missing in there.]

"Wow...!"

Minhyuk was suddenly filled with interest even though he only had the intention of checking out these articles, before deciding if he should carry out Len's quest or not. After seeing the convenience store, it seemed like Minhyuk thought about something else.

He imagined himself awake at two in the morning while everyone was fast asleep. It was a time when eating late-night snacks at home might wake everyone else up. So, he would slowly tiptoe towards the door. Once he reached the door, he would press the open button and, this is the most critical moment, close the door gently so it would not make a sound. Then, he would run to the convenience store nearby to buy a cup of ramen, a triangle seaweed roll, and a hot bar. He would proceed to put it in a microwave inside the store, a perfect meal for the perfect weather, a night that was not too hot nor too cold, it would be just right.

The seaweed roll would be the first thing that Minhyuk would taste. After all, this was the crown prince item of convenience stores, just like Jeonju had their mixed rice. It would be the best if it was tuna mayo flavored, or paired with tuna mayo ramen. Then, he would open his steaming hot ramen and stir it with his chopsticks before slurping the noodles up. Minhyuk would also take a gulp of the ramen soup whenever he felt like the seaweed roll was a bit too dry.

"Keuhaaaaa!" Minhyuk unconsciously burst out in awe. He wondered what it would taste like if he also took a bite of the lightly flavored hot bar?

Chew, chew—

Minhyuk's mouth unknowingly moved as he imagined the scene. But would that be everything? Of course, Minhyuk believed that grabbing some green tea ice cream from Manistop on his way home would be the perfect end for his impromptu trip!

'Convenience? stores truly do have everything!'

Minhyuk's interest in the tournament had reached the peak. This was the moment that he decided what he should do in the near future.

'I have to participate in that tournament...!?'Minhyuk thought as he enthusiastically searched the website for more information. The first thing that he read through was the official announcement and the consolidated information.

"Only those above Level 80 can participate."

To some extent, the label of being a?'novice'?was somehow removed once the player reached Level 80. Besides, the viewers unexpectedly found it more exciting to watch novice tournaments than high-leveled players battling it out. After all, even if they were low-leveled, there would be hidden classes, secret classes and even legendary classes, that appeared in tournaments like this. Things like that often added more excitement for the viewers. It was also mentioned that plenty of rankers would be watching from the tournament's VIP section. Minhyuk even saw a familiar name on the list.

'Alicia?'

This was the girl that promised to treat Minhyuk to a meal. After searching for information, Minhyuk checked his status on his phone.

(Minhyuk)

Level: 22

Class: Food God 90%

HP: 851?MP: 360

STR: 134+17??AGI: 90+35 ?STM: 65+15

WIS: 25+11 ?INT: 25+11?DEX: 13+40

Charisma (CHA): 2?REP: 50

Fullness: 100%

Bonus Point: 0

Minhyuk's DEX had increased by quite a bit after cooking all day long. However, he still needed to increase his level by 58 to be able to participate in the tournament. After realizing that he did not have any time to dilly-dally, Minhyuk stood up and went inside the capsule to log in to?Athenae.

Minhyuk hunted and ate for three consecutive days inside the game. He was able to raise his level to Level 55 during that time. Although he had the God Class Penalty and could only level up after gaining thrice the normal EXP amount, his speed was still ridiculously fast.

"Tasteless bastards! You taste like herbal medicine!"

"Chwiiik. H...human... Crazy human...!" The orcs shouted, breaking down all at once after hearing Minhyuk's mysterious words.

"Phew." Minhyuk let out a breath as he looked at his status window.

(Minhyuk)

Level: 55

Class: Food God 100%

HP: 1,239?MP: 360

STR: 220+17??AGI: 117+35 ?STM: 100+15

WIS: 25+11 ?INT: 25+11?DEX: 41+40

CHA: 2?REP: 50

Fullness: 100%

Bonus Point: 0

Even though he was hunting, Minhyuk still continued to cook diligently. Due to the quadruple DEX acquisition rate, his DEX increased quickly.

"Oh?" Minhyuk let out a curious gasp after seeing a skill book among the drops. Skill books were items that could be obtained by hunting and killing monsters.

[You have acquired the Orc's Molar Teeth.]

[You have gained 315 gold.]

[You have acquired the skill book, Warrior's Roar.]

Minhyuk checked the contents of the skill book right away.

(Warrior's Roar)

Active Skill

Rank: Rare

Requirements: STR 100, AGI 100

Mana Required: 50

Cooldown: 3 minutes

Effects: When the user lets out a roar, there's a 60% probability of frightening away all the enemies in the surrounding area. The probability will drop or increase depending on the level difference.

The skill was not that bad. Warrior-class players usually gather a lot of these skill books to learn plenty of skills. Minhyuk wondered if he could also learn this skill.

"Acquire."

Skills could be acquired just by reaching out one's hands towards the skill book. However, Minhyuk heard a different notification from what he expected.

[Unable to acquire.]

"...Huh?" Minhyuk asked dumbly, looking at his hands strangely. He could not understand why the acquisition was a failure. After all, he had met all of the requirements.

‘What the hell? Are you telling me that I can’t acquire skills like this?’

Minhyuk wondered why he could not do it while the other players could. So, he searched through Athenae’s official website to look for answers.

[Was there a special case where you can't acquire the skill in a skill book?

kbmbmvm73: It's simple. It can be the case where you have exceeded the amount of skill books that you can acquire, you haven't met the requirements, or it could be this really, really rare case where your class acquires skills in a different way.]

"...Huh?" Minhyuk's head tilted in confusion once again.

A different way of acquiring skills?

Looking back at how he acquired skills, Minhyuk realized that he had acquired his skills after learning under Len and Roina. However, anyone could learn skills from NPCs. So, he continued his search. Most of them answered that it was a special case where the player could not acquire the skill from a skill book due to the class' special characteristic. From what Minhyuk read, there had been two prior cases. The first one was because the skill was class-specific and the player could not get it. The second one was because the class used a different method to acquire skills.

'Hmm...'

Acquiring skills was something that made?Athenae?more fun and interesting.

'I'm going to have to sell this,'?Minhyuk thought, as he took out a return stone from his inventory and went back to the village.

Soldier Rand was standing in front of the military training center, giving out rewards to the players that had joined and completed the subjugation quest. A kind smile bloomed on his face the moment he saw Minhyuk arrive. He said, "Oh. You're here? Captain Vald has been waiting for you, boy."

"Where is he?"

"He's over there."

"Alright. Thank you."

"Ah, Venetto has been looking for you quite a lot these days."

'Eeeek...!'?Minhyuk shrieked in his head as he hurriedly rushed to where Vald was.

Seeing him, Vald looked happy. He said, "Oh, you're here. Rand will be giving you thrice the amount of the promised Sun's Wheat. And you will also get this special reward."

"Yes?"

Vald handed over a golden key, which Minhyuk accepted as he looked at it curiously.

[You have obtained the key to the hidden dungeon as a reward for ranking first in the subjugation troops' contributions boards.]

[You have gained 10 REP.]

"You ranked first in the subjugation troops' contribution boards, so I'm giving this to you as an additional reward. Do you know how to use this key?"

"Yes, of course," Minhyuk answered confidently. He knew about these golden keys. They were used to open hidden dungeons. It also allowed the player to move directly to the dungeon just by holding

it tight and saying?‘Move’. These golden keys were quite difficult to obtain. After all, once a player discovered a hidden dungeon, the player would gain twice the acquisition rate for EXP and item drops.

‘Maybe this can help me reach Level 80 quickly?’Minhyuk thought.

“From what I heard, there’s something that you can eat inside that dungeon. I’m only telling you this because it’s you, boy,” Vald said. Vald might be the subjugation troops’ captain but he was also a special NPC. That was why he knew something about the hidden dungeon. He only told Minhyuk this information because Minhyuk had reached the highest favor possible with him.

"Oh... Is it something delicious?!" Minhyuk asked in surprise, wondering what kind of delicious food was inside. He was suddenly filled with expectations for the hidden dungeon. Minhyuk quickly nodded at Vald in thanks before going over to Rand to receive his rewards.

"Captain said that I should go and get my rewards from Soldier Rand."

"Yeah. Here's four times the amount of the Sun's Wheat," Rand said as he narrowed his eyes and stretched his fist towards him for a fist bump.

'Hoho... This is a bonus add-on from Rand.'

Minhyuk was originally set to receive only thrice the amount of rewards, so he was elated after receiving four times the amount. He clenched his fist and gave Rand a fist bump, before hoisting the four sacks, each filled with five kilograms of Sun's Wheat that Rand had packed earlier.

[You have completed the Bordy Plains Subjugation Quest.]

[You have received 20kg of Sun's Wheat.]

[You are the player with the highest contribution in the quest.]

[You have gained 8,000 EXP.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[...leveled up.]

Chapter 44: Sweet Potato Pumpkin?

Minhyuk’s level increased by three in an instant. It seemed like what he heard about the subjugation forces giving a substantial amount of EXP was true. Minhyuk smiled in satisfaction. At that moment...

"What?! Did you say that my son-in-law is here?!" Venetto shouted loudly.

Minhyuk tensed up at Venetto’s words. He looked at the golden key in his hands.

‘I’m heading to the hidden dungeon anyway, so I might as well.’

He had already received and gathered enough Sun’s Wheat, so he had enough delicious food to eat. His job here was finished. He clenched the key to the hidden dungeon tightly

[Would you like to enter the hidden dungeon?]

"Yes," Minhyuk answered the moment he heard the notification. Then, a bright light covered his body.

Inside the hidden dungeon.

Bran, the guardian of the dungeon, heard the notification that a player had entered the dungeon.

"Phew. I'm tired."

Bran was wearing a straw hat, shabby clothes, and a pair of muddy boots. He was the epitome of what a farmer should look like. Stepping out of his hut in preparation to meet with the foreigner, he thought, "This guy will leave right away the moment he realizes what this place is."

This hidden dungeon was somewhat special. Even though it was a 'hidden' dungeon, there had been a total of five players that came and left from this place already. All of them had said the same thing.

'Eyy, f*ck. Do you think I would dig up sweet potatoes while I'm playing games?!'

'Ah, what the hell! What bullshit, 'twice the EXP acquisition rate and item drop rate'. There's not even a single mob here!'

'I have never seen such a bullshit dungeon like this!'

Bran had heard those words from all five of the players that entered this dungeon, hence he believed that this player would be no different. However, what he saw made him stop in his tracks.

"N... no way... Is this for real?!"

Bran tilted his head in confusion. He witnessed a man appear in the middle of the large farmland, looked up to the sky, and clasped his hands together to pray to the God of Athena.

"God of Athena, you gave me this blessing so I could eat more delicious things, right? Thank you. Amitabha!"

"Eh?" Bran said dumbly, looking at the man in confusion. He wondered if the man had heard what the dungeon was like before he came inside. The task for the players inside this dungeon was simple. Dig the ground, harvest the sweet potatoes and increase their EXP.

Yes, this was a very rare, and very unusual, farming dungeon. It might sound terribly boring, even lacking, compared to other dungeons, but this dungeon had hidden rewards. No one had ever cleared this dungeon because all the players were only focused at the rewards right in front of them. Then, Bran heard the man shout.

"It's a sweet potato pumpkin, wow!"

Bran thought that the foreigner was strange after hearing his words. He coughed lightly and said, "Ahem! My name is Bran, I am this dungeon's guardian."

"Oh. I understand. Bran, you seem to have an excellent taste in fashion! Even your boots look great!"

"Haha. You've a way with words, foreigner. Ah. By the way, this is not a sweet potato pumpkin, this is a?pumpkin?sweet potato."

"Alright. I understand.?Sweet potato?pumpkin."

"No, it's?pumpkin?sweet potato..."

"Eh? Yes. Sweet potato?pumpkin!"

.

"That's right. It's sweet potato pum... Huh?"

That was the moment that Bran realized that he had almost fallen to the man's momentum. He coughed again and said, "Ahem! Enough of that. This dungeon is not a difficult dungeon. You just have to dig up the?pumpkin?sweet potato with the hoe. If you continuously dig them up, you will encounter sweet potatoes that have a black glow on them. Those guys are very bad news, they suck up the nutrients from the other sweet potatoes. You should bring me twenty of those black sweet potatoes. You have three days to do it."

[Player Minhyuk has accepted the Quest: Dig Up Twenty Black Sweet Potatoes.]

"I have a question!"

"What is it?"

"Can I eat the sweet potatoes that I dug up?"

"You can," Brain said, smiling at him. He thought,?How much can you eat though?"

The main point of the quest was to dig up the black sweet potatoes, eliminating the things that suck up the nutrients from the other sweet potatoes. Once this was done, the quest would evolve into a linked quest. Minhyuk would only be able to get a huge reward if he cleared all of the quests.

"Wow! I understand. I'll work hard on digging up the?pumpkin?sweet potatoes!"

"No, young friend. It's not?pumpkin?sweet potato but?sweet potato?pumpkin."

"...Isn't it?pumpkin?sweet potato?"

"Ah, that's right. It's?pumpkin?sweet potato. Wait..."

"???"

"I must have been confused by this foreigner earlier..."Bran thought, coughing loudly in embarrassment.

"Ahem.?Digging up those sweet potatoes is not as easy as you think. You have to keep in mind that this is different from digging sweet potatoes in your world."

Bran knew that most of the players that came in this hidden dungeon were between Levels 20 - 50. Even if they improved their DEX constantly through blacksmithing, cooking, or painting, they would still find it difficult to perform the quest.

"Then, you can use this hoe."

"It's fine, I have a hoe of my own," the man said as the sword in his hand turned into a hoe.

“Oh!” Bran exclaimed in awe. He continued to say, “Then, do your best. Remember that you need to get at least five black sweet potatoes by the end of the day. Otherwise, you will be sent out of this place.”

"Yes!"

Bran turned around and headed back towards his hut.

Minhyuk looked around happily after Bran left. He thought, ‘I can’t believe he allowed me to have the sweet potatoes that I can dig...! My goodness!’

‘How could there be such a delightful, ridiculous quest in such a hidden dungeon in this world?’

Sweet potatoes were best eaten during a cold winter day while lying down under a blanket with some radish water kimchi next to it. Once the skin was peeled off, the piping hot and golden flesh of the sweet potato would appear. One would be able to enjoy the sweet, rich and flavorful taste of the sweet potato in a single bite. Next, grab a bite of some kimchi to remove the dryness in the throat. Drinking some of the refreshing and cold radish water kimchi could also alleviate the dryness in the throat. The coolness would definitely let one scream out? ‘Kyaha!’? in happiness. That was not all. There were many different recipes that used sweet potatoes. The first dishes that came to mind were caramelized sweet potato and sweet potato pizza.

‘Phew... There’s probably enough Sun’s Wheat so I should try it after digging up some sweet potatoes!’ Minhyuk thought. Before he started digging up sweet potatoes, he decided to check something first.

[Farming Skill Proficiency.]

Minhyuk received the skill the moment he accepted the quest. Once he filled up 100% of the proficiency bar, he would be able to learn Novice Farming. Furthermore, according to the quest rewards, he would also be able to receive 500 EXP each time he dug up a sweet potato, along with some Novice Farming EXP. In other words, this hidden dungeon was much better than others since he could gain a lot of EXP.

In comparison, hunting one orc would give him the same amount of EXP, but it was too tiresome. Minhyuk started to dig the ground with his hoe.

Thud!

‘What? Why isn’t it working?’ Minhyuk thought. He was confused. It was as if the ground was frozen solid. His hoe couldn’t even put a dent on it. Minhyuk tried to dig with his hoe again.

Thud!

As Minhyuk had expected, it still did not go well. Minhyuk now understood what Bran meant earlier. However, he thought, ‘Do you think that this can stop me from eating pumpkin sweet potatoes!? This setback can’t stop me at all. Let me show you my tenacity!’

Thud!

Thud!

Thud!

Minhyuk used his entire strength to dig. After around 25 minutes, he was able to dig up one sweet potato. He shouted with joy, "Ooooooooooooooh, sweeeet potatoooo!"

The sweet potato was extremely solid, and looking at it was enough to bring out a smile of delight on his face. It took him another 25 minutes to dig out his second sweet potato. Even so, Minhyuk did not rest and just continued to dig up sweet potatoes. He was able to dig around six sweet potatoes after two hours.

Bran originally estimated that he would be able to dig up five sweet potatoes, but due to Minhyuk's tenacity, he was able to surpass that number. In addition, he was already starting to get used to the work, so his speed had already started to pick up. The additional sweet potato was the glaring evidence for this. Minhyuk was also able to dig up the black sweet potatoes that was needed for the quest. However, seeing it made him look sullen.

"...I can't even eat this!" Minhyuk shouted. While he managed to dig up the black sweet potato that he needed for the quest, he was still disappointed. Why? It was because the black sweet potato was something that could not be eaten. Minhyuk went back to dig up sweet potatoes again. After quite some time, he heard the sound of a notification...

[You have gained 1 DEX.]

This notification rang since digging continuously was also a method of increasing DEX. Minhyuk felt satisfied since he would be able to increase his DEX, his EXP, and most importantly, eat sweet potatoes.

'Wow, a dungeon like this really exists in this world?!'

Personally, Minhyuk believed that this dungeon was extremely amazing. However, if any other player knew what was on Minhyuk's mind, they would find it shocking. Just like that, Minhyuk continued to dig up his sweet potatoes.

Cain, the third in the Local Rankings, was a man sporting short hair, wearing a lively and cheerful expression on his face. On the other hand, Lucia, his sister, was a cold and frigid woman with a short silver bob. The two of them were standing together in front of countless reporters and players.

Click, click, click, click, click, click!

The players that were reporters also clicked their cameras continuously.

"There's an unprecedented number of amazing novices set to join this tournament. What are your thoughts about this, Miss Lucia?"

"I think that it will be fun."

Click, click, click, click, click, click!

"Miss Lucia has acquired the country's 30th legendary class, the Shadow Warrior! According to? Athenae's official announcements, this class is considered to be among the best in the legendary classes. Miss Lucia, what's your secret to getting such great physical abilities and acquiring such a legendary class? A lot of people are curious about it, please impart us with your knowledge!"

"It's only natural that strong players get something special, right?" Lucia answered, a small smile on her lips.

However, Cain was worried as he watched his sister acting like that. He thought, 'It's released too early.'

His sister was drawing a lot of public's attention. The problem was with her sister's skills and physical abilities. It was true that no player of the same level could beat her, but Cain still thought, 'Nothing is easy in this world.'

There was no one in this world who would keep on winning. His younger sister, Lucia, was already conceited at such an early stage. She was acting as if she had already reached the top of the world. Cain was worried about how she would handle herself when she finally suffered a loss. Even so, underneath the concern, he had to admit that his sister was indeed superior in all aspects.

"Miss Lucia, if you learn Ellie's Swordsmanship, wouldn't your strength be too much of a balance breaker?!"

"Hohohoho!"

"Hahahahaha!"

The reporters laughed happily, but Lucia only smiled a bit.

"Mr. Cain, can you please tell us a bit about this tournament?"

"The world is big and there are plenty of strong people. I cannot predict anything in this tournament."

"You're quite modest."

However, it was really what was on Cain's mind. He thought, 'There are plenty of variables that exist in this world.'

"Phew! Phew!?Pumpkin sweet potato!"

Thud, thud!

Minhyuk dug up the sweet potatoes for seven hours straight. The amount that he dug up continuously increased the longer he spent digging. Right now, he could dig around four sweet potatoes in an hour. He even dug up more than ten black sweet potatoes already. Minhyuk wiped the sweat off of his forehead; he was having a lot of fun.

[You have gained 1 DEX.]

"Oh yeah!" Minhyuk shouted happily. By right, a normal player would probably already feel tired after digging potatoes for so long, but there was not a trace of fatigue on his face at all.

[You have leveled up.]

Minhyuk truly found it fun to raise his level and EXP this way. His speed had also increased. In fact, he had already dug up around forty sweet potatoes over the course of the quest so far.

Thud, thud!

Minhyuk, who was still digging up sweet potatoes, saw the pot begin to boil. The sweet potatoes that he dug up earlier were inside the pot, boiling happily.

"Fufufufufu." Minhyuk chuckled as he lifted the lid off of the pot. He could see the sweet potatoes shining with a golden luster inside the steaming pot. It seemed like they were ready to be eaten.

"Well then, shall we try it?!"

After eight hours, Bran walked out of his hut. He thought, 'I haven't heard any notification about him getting out yet.'

Bran arrived at the place where he left Minhyuk off earlier, but what he saw there made his eyes go wide. He said, "B, boy... what's all of this?!"

"Chew, chew, I'm eating sweet potatoes!"

"No, I can see that... What I wanted to know is why you're doing that in there...?"

"It's more delicious to eat it this way!"

'What...? Is this guy crazy...?' Bran thought. After all, Minhyuk was lying on his stomach under a blanket while peeling and eating sweet potatoes.

Chapter 45: Sweet Potato Pumpkin?

Minhyuk wriggled under his blanket and said, "It's dangerous outside the blanket!"

"Boy, you're the one who looks more dangerous!"

"?!"?Chew.?Minhyuk chomped hard at his sweet potato as he looked at Bran strangely. He went back to eating it, together with some well-ripened kimchi. He said, "Hehe, life is like sweet potatoes! Eating some dry sweet potato with some spicy and sour kimchi is the best!"

"Oh, there's something like that?" Bran asked. He had never seen kimchi his entire life. So he sat down in front of Minhyuk, and asked curiously, "Can I have a bite too?"

"Are you sure that it's just?one?bite?"

"Yeah."

Bran was the guardian of the dungeon and Minhyuk was aware that Bran's favor towards him would probably fall if he did not give him a single sweet potato. So, Minhyuk handed over a sweet potato to Bran. He carefully peeled off the skin and placed a piece of kimchi on top of it before taking a huge bite.

"This is how you eat it, right?"

"That's correct!"

Chomp.

Bran chomped on the kimchi and the sweet potato. The taste caused his eyes to widen.

'What, what in the wor...!'

Bran felt like he could hear some sort of heavenly harmony in his ears, as the sweet taste of the sweet potato met with the spicy and sour flavor of the kimchi, complementing each other in his mouth.

Crunch, crunch—

The crunch of the kimchi with every bite made the experience even more enjoyable. Bran exclaimed, "Wow... It's really delicious."

"Isn't it the best?"

"Yeah! It's the best! Chew, chew!"

[You have received Bran's favor.]

Bran was finally able to see the black sweet potatoes piled up at one side after he finished eating his sweet potato and kimchi.

'One, two, three, four, five... Gasp?! 17?!'

Bran was shocked to see that Minhyuk had dug up this much black sweet potato. It was completely unbelievable. After all, black sweet potatoes were crops that would not be uncovered easily. Generally, they would only appear after an appropriate amount of sweet potato had been harvested. Based on the number of black sweet potatoes that Minhyuk had harvested, Bran could tell that the boy in front of him had already eaten at least thirty sweet potatoes.

'How did this happen?'

In fact, players would really find it difficult to dig up one, let alone two, piece of sweet potatoes inside the dungeon in just an hour. Although Bran was unaware, Minhyuk was a player that was a cut above the rest in terms of DEX. This was the main reason why he could work faster than other players despite not having the farming skill yet. Besides, he had dug continuously without taking a rest, so his proficiency in the skill had increased to the point that it had already reached 90%.

"Huh?"

Bran suddenly found something strange. He asked, "Why are there no sweet potatoes around?"

"...Hmm," Minhyuk hummed, pretending to be clueless as Bran looked around the area. Based on Bran's estimate, there should have been around thirty sweet potatoes. Even if Minhyuk had eaten a few of them, there should at least be around twenty or so lying around here. So, the question was, where did all of them go?

Bran continued to look around until his gaze drifted back to Minhyuk. He said, "D...don't tell me you..."

"..."

"You ate all of it?!"

"Eyy, how can one person eat all of that?" Minhyuk responded dismissively, slowly wriggling inside his blanket to hide from Bran.

However, there was no way that the clever Bran could be tricked any further. Bran roared, "How can you eat all thirty sweet potatoes...?!"

"You said that I can eat anything that I dug up. A man should not take back his words, right? Besides, the sweet potatoes that you grew were all ve~ry delicious, so much so that I finished them all without realizing it," Minhyuk smiled, poking his head out of the blanket.

Bran thought,?'There's nothing I can do since he dug it himself...'

After all, that was part of the dungeon's rewards. However, none of the players before were happy with this reward even when Bran told them that they could eat as much as they could. Even though he knew this, Bran was still sullen. He sadly said, "My farm..."

[Bran's favor towards you has decreased.]

The few favor points that Minhyuk had worked hard to increase, went down in an instant. Minhyuk had no choice but to do something to increase his favor again. He said, "Then, let me make it up to you! I will make you something delicious with sweet potatoes later."

Bran just turned around without answering him. He thought,?'Don't tell me that he's still going to continue to eat them? Eyyy, there's no way a person can eat all of the sweet potatoes here.'

However, Bran knew that this was just his hopeful thinking. He trudged back to his hut and looked at the distant mountains. He sighed deeply, his expression looking like he had just understood the true meaning of life.

Minhyuk began to dig for sweet potatoes once again after he finished eating all of the sweet potatoes that he harvested before.

[You have earned 100% farming proficiency.]

[You have acquired the Novice Farming Skill.]

[You have gained 10 DEX.]

Minhyuk checked the notifications about his little successes.

(Novice Farming)

Passive Skill

Level: 1

Effects: You will be 4% faster whenever you gather or dig for materials and ingredients.

‘Then, this means that I can dig for more sweet potatoes at a faster pace!’?Minhyuk thought as he imagined himself eating all of the sweet potatoes in the field. If he had not set it as his goal before, then it would be his goal now. Then...

Thud!

Thud!

Another black sweet potato emerged from the field, it was the final black sweet potato. Minhyuk immediately picked it up and placed it in a box, before heading towards Bran’s hut. He said, "Bran, I finished gathering twenty black sweet potatoes."

"...That's really fast!"

[You have received Bran's favor.]

Bran might not have appreciated Minhyuk for eating all of the sweet potatoes that he farmed, but the fact still remained that Minhyuk had given him a pleasant surprise. In fact, he was not confident that Minhyuk would be able to dig up all twenty of the black sweet potatoes within 24 hours, but he was able to finish it.

[You have completed the Quest: Dig Up 20 Black Sweet Potatoes.]

[You have completed the Secret Quest: He Who Cherishes the Little Things.]

[You have gained 1,000 Novice Farming EXP.]

[Your EXP acquisition rate has increased by 2x for one week.]

[Novice Farming has leveled up.]

[Novice Farming has leveled up.]

[Your DEX acquisition rate inside the 'Farming Dungeon' has increased.]

[For Player Minhyuk only. The effect of Ellie's Sword and the rewarded DEX acquisition rate have been stacked. Your total DEX acquisition rate has increased by 6x. This will only be applicable inside the Farming Dungeon.]

"Huh...?!" Minhyuk exclaimed. He was very happy to have completed this secret quest.

Bran smiled and said, "To be honest, I actually wanted to ask you a favor and help me farm..."

Bran's smile turned bitter as he continued to say, "Who would want to come here and dig up sweet potatoes, and to top it all off, they could only dig up one to two per hour. You know? Who else would be so interested in farming sweet potatoes? Also, no one would feel rewarded by digging up sweet potatoes..."

This secret quest was very, very, difficult. Just as Bran said, who would even do this quest earnestly? Farmer? It was considered as the lowest among all of the non-combat classes. To be honest, there was virtually no one who would take 'Farmer' as their class. In fact, the percentage of people that took this class was far lower than that of chefs. Nevertheless, Minhyuk still did his best.

Of course, Bran would not forget how Minhyuk ate all of his sweet potatoes. However, he also knew eating the sweet potatoes that he had farmed and praising it as something that was more delicious than others was truly an act of sincerity on Minhyuk's part. Bran knew that Minhyuk had completely met the qualifications.

[You have received Bran's favor.]

"Thank you. I will cook a delicious meal made out of sweet potatoes for you later. You'll probably be surprised!" Minhyuk said happily. There was only one reason for his delight and that was...

'My DEX acquisition rate has increased inside this dungeon...!'

With the effect of Ellie's Sword, he now had a total of 6x increase in his DEX acquisition rate. This meant that if other people could gain one point of DEX for every six hours of work, Minhyuk would be able to gain one point of DEX in an hour! Minhyuk also checked his leveled up Novice Farming skill.

(Novice Farming)

Passive Skill

Level: 3

Effects:

?You will be 10% faster whenever you gather or dig for materials and ingredients.

?You have a 3% chance of obtaining better materials and ingredients.

'Oh...!'

Minhyuk was very moved.

'My goodness! With this...! With this, there was a chance that I would be able to get a more delicious ingredient!'

"Boy, I want to ask you for an additional favor. You see, from now on, Sweet Potato Men will appear in the field."

"Sweet Potato Men?"

"That's right. They're the ones that usually suck up the nutrients that the black sweet potatoes gather from the other sweet potatoes. Since you dug all of the black sweet potatoes up, the chances of these mobs coming out of the ground to attack you has increased. There's not many of them, so you don't need to worry too much. You only need to hunt ten Sweet Potato Men and one Sweet Potato Warrior."

[Quest: Hunt 10 Sweet Potato Men]

Rank: D

Requirements: Available only to those who have completed the 'He Who Cherishes the Little Things' quest.

Rewards: For every Sweet Potato Man, the drops are: 1 million gold, a seed and an increase in DEX acquisition rate.

Penalty for Failure: Bran's favor will drop.

Description: Only for those who have completed the quest, He Who Cherishes the Little Things. Hunt 10 Sweet Potato Men and 1 Sweet Potato Warrior.

"Be careful. The Sweet Potato Warrior has a special ability that can help it recover its HP by eating the sweet potatoes nearby. That guy is also over Level 30, so it might be a bit difficult for you. Don't strain yourself."

"Yes. I understand. I'll accept the quest," Minhyuk said, accepting the quest despite Bran's concern. The quest had extremely good rewards for every Sweet Potato Man that he hunted. Furthermore, there were a total of ten Sweet Potato Man that would appear. One Sweet Potato Man would give him one million gold, so a total of ten would give him ten million gold in drops alone. There was even some kind of unknown seed among the drops.

Bran continued to speak, "Oh yes, if you hunt a Sweet Potato Warrior, you'll definitely find something that you'll like. Hohoho."

"D, don't tell me..."

Bran nodded in answer.

"Ooooooooooooooh!" Minhyuk shouted, his body suddenly filled with strength and enthusiasm. He had a hunch that something delicious would definitely be dropped.

"As for the seeds, I'll let you know once you hunt the Sweet Potato Warrior."

"Alright!"

Swoosh!

Minhyuk moved back to the field. He dug sweet potatoes up like a whirlwind. His entire focus was placed solely on this task.

[You have gained 1 DEX.]

Not long after, he heard the DEX notification.

Thud, thud, thud!

As Minhyuk diligently dug up the sweet potatoes...

"Gumaguma!"

A monster suddenly popped out of the ground. It looked like a peeled sweet potato and was around the size of an eight-year-old child. It looked adorable with the tiny sickle in its hands.

"Gumaguma!"

The Sweet Potato Man quickly narrowed the distance between them. Minhyuk, who was digging sweet potatoes, swung out his fists.

"Noisy!"

Punch!

"Guma, kueeck!" The Sweet Potato Man shrieked as it crashed directly into a wall. Minhyuk only used one punch to deal with it. Then, a green seed dropped along with some gold. He quickly picked up the drops.

[You have acquired one million gold.]

[You have acquired a seed.]

Minhyuk continued to dig sweet potatoes again. He was so determined since he believed that the Sweet Potato Warrior would definitely give him something delicious in the end! His appetite and desire for food made him focus intensely on his task. Then, he heard a notification.

[You have gained 1 Will.]

"Huh...?"

The notification broke Minhyuk's concentration. He checked the detailed explanation about the new?Will?stat.

[The Will to do things. Your fatigue will disappear whenever you're very eager or very focused on something. This is a stat that can't be increased with bonus points.]

"Oh...!" Minhyuk gasped in awe. The stat was great. Usually, players would only gain stats like these once they reached Level 50 and had reached certain conditions. However, fulfilling those conditions was never an easy task. Of all of the players playing?Athenae,?only 3% of the total population had these special stats. After checking the stat, Minhyuk continued to dig sweet potatoes again.

[You have acquired a sweet potato.]

[You have acquired a sweet potato.]

.

[...sweet potato.]

Minhyuk's hand began to get faster and faster. Along with his speed, his DEX continued to rise, which gave him confidence. He could now dig up around four sweet potatoes in an hour.

"Guma! Aaack!"

Minhyuk once again punched the noisy monsters whenever they appeared and started shouting loudly. Then...

[You have successfully hunted 10 Sweet Potato Men.]

[A Sweet Potato Warrior has appeared.]

Baaaaaaang!

An earth-shattering sound was heard along with the explosion on the ground. Minhyuk, who was still digging the sweet potatoes, finally stopped what he was doing when he heard the notification. The guy that he was waiting for had finally appeared. The Sweet Potato Warrior was much larger than the Sweet Potato Men. Instead of holding a sickle, it was wielding a spear in its hands.

"Huh?" Minhyuk muttered dumbly as he looked at it in surprise.

'What's that?'

Compared to the Sweet Potato Men that Minhyuk had seen before, this Sweet Potato Warrior was something else. It was definitely a monster, but there was a glow that surrounded its body.

'It's glowing with a black light?'Minhyuk thought. This was the first time that he saw a monster, not an ingredient, glow with light. On top of that, it was also the first time that he had seen a black light.

Chapter 46: Eating to Acquire Skills

'What the hell is this...?'Minhyuk thought. He had received a hint earlier about receiving something delicious once he hunted a Sweet Potato Warrior. He could not help but wonder about it when he saw this strange light.

'A monster is glowing with light?'

Minhyuk thought that there had to be a reason for this. After all, he had not seen anything like this before. He looked back at everything that he had experienced so far, and he recalled that the percentage beside his Food God class had already reached 100%. Beyond that, he did not hear any notification about it whatsoever.

"I did not see any light when I killed the orcs, the goblins and even the Sweet Potato Men though...?" Minhyuk wondered out loud.

‘So, why is black light only appearing on this Sweet Potato Warrior?’

Team Leader Park murmured, "Because... that's a named monster."

Hearing his words, Lee Minhwa nodded in agreement. The two of them were monitoring Player Minhyuk's movements when he reached 100% in his class. It meant that he was ready for the second class advancement now. Before reaching that point, he would not have noticed the black light on monsters, especially named monsters.

"The first class of the Food God focuses on the usual and most common food."

If that was the case, then what did the Food God's second class focus on?

"I wonder if Player Minhyuk is willing to eat monsters?"

“However, Player Minhyuk is?really?lucky. If he did not enter the hidden dungeon, then he might have had to deal with eating the common monsters first.”

"Yeah. That's the hardest part."

No matter how much Player Minhyuk loved to eat, could he stomach eating a monster? That was the hardest part with this class change. However, Player Minhyuk was very blessed to meet an appropriate monster for his first time, protecting him from something else that might have been gross and unappealing.

"Anyway, a monster is a monster. Who can stomach eating them in the first place?"

“But... he still needs to eat a monster to satisfy the condition for his second class advancement, right? If he fails to eat a monster within two weeks of reaching 100%, then he will not be able to change to his second class and only remain at the Food God's first class, right?”

"Yeah. If Player Minhyuk fails to reach the conditions within the time limit, he will remain as a God Class that's only good at cooking.”

However, the question still remained. Would he eat monsters? Once he did that...

'He'll be able to acquire more special abilities.'

Minhyuk thought for a while and came to the conclusion that he would find his answer after hunting the Sweet Potato Warrior.

"Gumaaa...!" The Sweet Potato Warrior roared as it launched the first attack.

[Bardy Swordsmanship]

[+12 increase to all 5 basic stats for 6 minutes.]

Power filled Minhyuk's body as he watched the Sweet Potato Warrior thrust its spear towards him.

Clang!

Minhyuk easily parried the Sweet Potato Warrior's strike and scattered the force behind it. At that moment...

Crackle, swoosh!

The Salamander's Double Ring's effect came into play and set the body of the Sweet Potato Warrior on fire.

[Salamander's Blaze]

[Your attacks will inflict continuous damage to the enemy.]

At that moment...

Sniff, sniff, sniff—

Minhyuk's nose twitched at the aroma that wafted through the air. It was a very familiar smell.

"T, this...!" Minhyuk shouted, his eyes widening in disbelief. He continued to say, "Roasted sweet potato!"

"Gumaaaaaa?!" The Sweet Potato Warrior roared as it struggled to put out the fire on its body. Strangely enough, Minhyuk felt his hunger soar. He licked his lips in anticipation.

"Roasted sweet potato... Delicious..."

Roasted sweet potatoes tasted completely different from boiled sweet potatoes. Roasted sweet potatoes bought on the street had slightly burnt skin and steam rising off of it. Whenever one peeled off its skin and took a bite they would say, "Hot, hot, hot, hot!" And, no matter how hot it was, one would still bite it. In fact, the best way to cool it down was to roll it around in their mouth. After all, no one would be willing to waste the sweet flavor of hot sweet potato that spread in the mouth.

"Gumaaaa!" The Sweet Potato Warrior roared nervously as it watched Minhyuk gulp down his saliva.

'De, devil...?'

Minhyuk's throat bobbed as he gulped once more, his lips turning moist. Subconsciously, he was licking his tongue over them as he said, "You look very yummy right now, you know?"

Screech!

The Sweet Potato Warrior was trying to put out the fire on its body when it suddenly stopped and took a step back.

"Don't put out the fire or you'll taste bad!"

"Gu, gumagama..." The Sweet Potato Warrior stuttered, fear engulfing its body at Minhyuk's words.

'Wait a minute...!?' Minhyuk thought as he stopped in his tracks.

'The black light might mean that it's an 'ingredient' that I can eat...'

In other words?

'I can eat it?! Oh yeah!'

Minhyuk watched the Sweet Potato Warrior extinguish the fire on its body before placing its hands on the ground. It stuck them deep underground as if the ground was some sort of soft tofu. Then, it pulled out some sweet potatoes and threw them in its mouth. Then, something surprising happened.

[The Sweet Potato Warrior's HP has recovered.]

'Its HP recovered after eating?'

This was something strange. However, Minhyuk now knew what he needed to do. He narrowed the distance between him and the monster in a blink of an eye as he sent attacks continuously towards the Sweet Potato Warrior.

Before long, the Sweet Potato Warrior ended up as a cold, dead body that collapsed on the ground. Then, something dropped from the Sweet Potato Warrior. It was a sweet potato surrounded by a golden light.

[You have acquired a Golden Sweet Potato.]

"Oh! I got a good item, a golden sweet potato," Minhyuk said, picking the item hurriedly and checking its information.

(Golden Sweet Potato)

Material Grade: C

Special Abilities: +20 increase in STM

Description: A more delicious golden sweet potato that can only be obtained by hunting the Sweet Potato Warrior. Even if someone ate it with you and died, you wouldn't know how delicious it is.

"Woow! It's an even more delicious sweet potato!" Minhyuk shouted in happiness. Not only was it much more delicious than normal sweet potatoes, it could even boost his STM by 20 points. It was even bigger than Minhyuk's fist!

Minhyuk hurriedly kept it in his inventory. What he needed to do now was to deal with the roasted sweet potato in front of him. However, he hesitated after taking a look at it.

'Hey, it's a monster though...?'

The Sweet Potato Warrior was a monster that was just attacking him earlier.

"Well, it's zero calories if it's delicious!"

Minhyuk was a simple man. He moved urgently, bringing out a lot of foil from his inventory. Then, he wrapped the Sweet Potato Warrior with several layers. The Sweet Potato Warrior was so big that Minhyuk had to use a few rolls of foil just to cover everything up. After doing that, he rushed to Bran's house and shouted, "Bran! Bran!"

Minhyuk's voice sounded urgent.

"What's the matter?"

"Do you have any firewood?"

"Firewood?"

"Yes, can you please lend me some firewood?"

"It's in the back...?"

Fwoosh!

Minhyuk ran as fast as the wind. He even used the spell Haste. Then, he returned in front of Bran with his arm full of firewood. He looked so restless as if he wanted to get back to whatever he was doing quickly, but he knew that he still had to express his gratitude.

"Thank you for your help!"

"Boy, you look really happy?"

"Yes! I'm very,?very?happy!" Minhyuk shouted, expressing his joy loudly. He even made a joke.

"Bran, do you know what we should say to an angry, roasted sweet potato?"

"...?"

"Anything, just butter them up!! Hehehehe!"

Bran watched Minhyuk hurrying off into the distance, scratching his head at Minhyuk's bizarre behavior.

"Just butter them up, huh? That guy is crazy..."

Soon after...

"Angry roasted sweet potatoes... just butter them up? Pfft!" Bran laughed loudly at the joke.

Tap, tap, tap—

Minhyuk looked very excited as he watched part of the dead Sweet Potato Warrior roasting over the firewood. When he poked it with Ellie's sword, the sword went through easily. Minhyuk cut off a portion of the roasted sweet potato. Steam wooshed out the moment he removed the foil.

[Please choose one from Buff Ability and Food God's True Worth.]

"Food God's True Worth."

[The Sweet Potato Warrior is selected as the main ingredient.]

"Hot, hot, hot, hot!" Minhyuk shouted as he transferred the sweet potato between his hands, alternating them until the sweet potato cooled down a bit. He then quickly took a big bite off of it.

"Hooo..."

The sweet potato in his mouth gave off plenty of steam.

Chomp—

Minhyuk blew out loudly as he rolled the steaming sweet potato around his mouth, before savoring the sweet flavor that slowly spread in his mouth.

"D, delicious...!" Minhyuk groaned in pleasure. He was quite taken aback. Its flavor was much sweeter compared to regular sweet potatoes. It was extremely delicious. He chewed the delicious sweet potato well and finally gulped it down.

Chew, chew—

Minhyuk quickly devoured the section of the roasted sweet potato. Then, he cut the remaining giant sweet potato into pieces and wrapped them in foil. The wrapped sweet potatoes were then placed in the fire again. He did it this way because the Sweet Potato Warrior was truly large, and it might not be cooked well if he roasted it at one go.

He had even prepared cold radish water kimchi that was covered with a thin sheet of ice, placing it in front of him. Previously, he made various kinds of kimchi to serve as side dishes when he went to eat pork. Since he could set the temperature of his Food Storage Inventory, it was easy for him to make a thin sheet of ice form on top of the radish water kimchi.

"Gulp, gulp, gulp."

Minhyuk felt his teeth chatter after drinking the cold radish water kimchi. However, the sour and refreshing taste soothed the dryness from the sweet potato. This was the cool and refreshing taste of radish water kimchi! He might have not noticed, but his smiling face was smeared with soot. Others would probably have laughed at him if they saw his appearance while he was eating his roasted sweet potatoes. When he finally finished eating all of his roasted sweet potatoes...

[Food God's True Worth.]

[You can acquire the Sweet Potato Warrior's Skill: Absorption Conversion.]

[Would you like to acquire it?]

‘What?!’

Minhyuk was shocked to find out that he could acquire skills through this method.

"Acquire," he said, deciding to give it a try.

[Acquisition rate 11%... 22%... 36%... 68%... 88%... 100%.]

[You have successfully acquired Absorption Conversion.]

[Your eccentric eyes have opened.]

[Your job has changed to Eccentric Food God.]

[The skills for Eccentric Food God have been unlocked.]

[Food God's Legacy Quest has been unlocked.]

Minhyuk pondered as he listened to the notifications. Did he really just acquire a skill by eating? This was something completely surprising. Was it truly possible to acquire skills by eating? Then, Minhyuk thought, 'Ah, so that's why...!'

This was likely the reason why Minhyuk could not acquire skills from skill books. That was when he finally realized that his class only allowed him to acquire skills by eating. Minhyuk thought, 'The Sweet Potato Warrior probably had a skill because it was a special mob.'

And these special mobs usually appeared as boss monsters or named monsters. Then, he checked his skill window.

(Absorption Conversion)

Active Skill

Level: None

Mana Required: 200

Cooldown: 20 minutes

Effects: You can recover 30~40% HP whenever you eat something.

‘...I think... this is something extremely incredible?’

Even the foodie Minhyuk, who was usually only moved by food, could not help but click his tongue in surprise. He could recover around 30-40% of his HP by eating something through this skill? He knew that healing and recovery-type abilities were extremely expensive. So, Minhyuk quickly sent a whisper to General.

[Minhyuk: Hyung, Hyung, are you busy?]

[General: No, no. We're doing a guild dinner and get-together. Why?]

[Minhyuk: I just wanted to ask you something.]

[General: What is it?]

[Minhyuk: It's nothing special, I just received a recovery skill.]

[General: Oh, a recovery skill? Isn't that a good thing? Recovery skill books are much more expensive than normal skill books since they don't drop normally. What's the recovery rate? 10%? Or 15%?]

"..."

Minhyuk went speechless for a moment. He realized how amazingly game-breaking the skill he obtained was, after seeing Changwook's message. He thought, 'Well, potions are really expensive...'

Then Minhyuk continued to send his whispers.

[Minhyuk: It's 30~40%.]

[General:...You're not trying to make me call you hyung again, right?]

[Minhyuk: It's true. Besides, I have never lied to you before. You know?]

[General: OMG... 30~40%? What's the skill rank? And what's the cooldown?]

[Minhyuk: There's no rank and the cooldown is 20 minutes.]

Their whisper window was silent for a moment. Minhyuk could even imagine General's blank face right now. His reply only came after a while.

[General: You've hit the jackpot...]

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Chapter 47

[Minhyuk: ???]

[General: You rascal...?]

[Minhyuk: ???]

[General: Wow, amazing... Do you really have that skill book?]

[Minhyuk: I got the skill after eating a monster.]

[General: At this point, I'm not even surprised anymore. You're really a star among stars. The best healing skill book available in the market is currently at the unique rank with a recovery rate between 25-30% and a cooldown of 40 minutes. Do you know why healing skill books are expensive?]

[Minhyuk: I sent Hyung a whisper because I don't know?]

[General: Potions are really expensive, and you'll have to share the EXP with someone else if you bring a priest to the dungeon. But, with a healing skill book, you won't need to bring a priest with you, and can monopolize the EXP. What do you think would happen if the rate was at 30-40%, like yours? It basically means that a player can recover their HP every 20 minutes by around 50% even without using a potion. In other words, your skill is enough to maintain your HP at max levels, almost all the time.]

[Minhyuk: Oh...!]

Minhyuk was quite surprised after hearing General's explanation. The skill would allow him to recover 30-40% of his HP every 20 minutes. This meant that he could always keep his HP full and move forward as long as he had good control. For high-leveled players that hunt using potions, such a skill would help them stay in the dungeon longer.

[General: You can save on the price that you would pay to buy potions, and you can run dungeons again and again. This is why high-leveled players are willing to buy healing skill books despite their steep price. Right now, the best rated healing skill book in the market is around 100 million won and its recovery rate is only around 20-25% too.]

[Minhyuk: I see, thanks.]

[General: Yeah. Have fun!]

[Minhyuk: Yes, have fun too!]

Minhyuk ended his whisper with General. A hundred million won? Of course, it was true that Minhyuk might not care about anything aside from food, but the reason why he wanted to confirm with General was because...

'I need to learn just how strong I can get by eating.'

After listening to General, Minhyuk realized that the skill that he acquired today was so overpowered that it made him terrified.

'Monsters usually have stronger attributes compared to players...!'

Indeed. Monsters would generally have one special skill, or attribute on them. On the other hand, players tend to fight with different skills. They would even equip various items on their bodies and fight together to hunt monsters. So, what was important about monsters with special attributes?

These monsters could completely pressure players with just the power of their special attribute or skill. That one single skill they have in their arsenal would be more powerful compared to the players' various skills. In other words, in obtaining the Absorption ability of the Sweet Potato Warrior, Minhyuk was already on par with a boss-level mob, compared to players around his level.

'I got something good after eating something delicious. Hehehe...'?Minhyuk thought. He felt happy that he received a good skill, but even more so to know that he got a special skill by eating what he wanted to eat. Minhyuk immediately checked the skills of Eccentric Food God.

(Eccentric Food God)

Passive Skill

Level: God

Level: 1

Effects:

?Ignores the penalty when eating toxic food or ingredients from monsters.

?You acquire skills by eating monsters. The number of skills that can be saved and stored: 1/3.

?Acquiring skills might also fail. Also, for monsters with several skills and attributes, you may choose the skill that you want or acquire random skills. In the case of choosing random acquisition, a skill dice will be used. However, there's still a possibility of acquisition failure.

?The monsters that can be eaten will depend on the level of Eccentric Food God. Edible monsters will glow black.

?You can't eat common monsters. Only monsters above rare rank can be eaten.

?You can visualize the ingredients that can be taken away whenever you encounter an edible monster.

?Monsters will have a similar taste to modern ingredients but will be more delicious.

The common monsters are usually ranked normal. All mobs that were above normal were called Named Monsters. Rare Monsters would usually have a high drop rate for rare items and skill books. Unique monsters would have a high drop rate for unique items and skill books. The rest followed the same principle.

At the same time, the higher the level of the monster, the harder it was to fight against them. At the very least, a player challenging a unique monster for their class change quest would need to ask for tips or request help from other players and compensate them.

'Oh...!'

However, to Minhyuk, the most amazing thing about the skill was at the end of the skill description window. It said that the monsters would taste similar to modern ingredients and would be more delicious than them. Of course, nothing would happen if normal players ate it, the effect would only apply to Minhyuk who had the Eccentric Food God skill.

From what he gathered, the effect of ignoring the penalty from toxic food and eating monsters would be useful in the event of a situation like the poisonous apple from the sweet python from before. He also had three slots to store skills, of which, only two were left currently. There might be a chance that the number of skills that he could store would increase once the skill level went up, but this was only his assumption at this juncture. So, he still had to be careful about it.

'If that wasn't the case...?'

If that was not the case, then Minhyuk only needed to fill the remaining two slots with the best skills.

'If I eat a dragon, will I be able to get Hellfire or Meteor as a skill?'

Dragons were named monsters and were mostly known through legends. However, the thought of eating one to gain a skill just made Minhyuk nod happily while caught up in his daydreaming. However, the thing that made him most satisfied was the fact that the range of food that he could eat had expanded.

'Monsters have a taste that is similar to those ingredients in modern times. And it's even much more delicious than normal ingredients...'

Then, he thought aloud, "What would a real dragon taste like?"

Minhyuk was tilting his head in thought but anyone who heard it, they would feel that his words were truly brutal.

"I want to try and eat one!!" Minhyuk shouted, finding a reason to become much stronger. Finally, Minhyuk decided to check on the Food God Legacy Quest.

[Class Quest: Food God's Legacy]

Rank: Sealed

Requirements: Level 150

Rewards: Sealed

Penalty for Failure: Sealed

Description: Sealed

'Legacy quest, huh...'

Minhyuk felt that it was unusual. Just then, he thought, 'By any chance, in the past...'

Did it mean that an actual Food God existed in the past of Athenae? Minhyuk thought that it was possible. Of course, it was still true that he was not given some class like 'Food God's Descendant', but it was still a very likely possibility. In any case, he would only be able to get more clues once he reached Level 150. However, the real reason why he was excited about this quest was, 'The Food God might know where all the good food is!'

It seemed that Minhyuk would always start and end his thoughts with food.

After finishing the quest, Minhyuk went directly to Bran. Over the course of the quest, he had earned ten million gold, a million gold from each Sweet Potato Man. Considering that he only gained 100,000 gold during the subjugation quest, this was a great reward.

[Your DEX acquisition rate in the 'Farming Dungeon' has increased.]

[For Player Minhyuk only. Ellie's Sword and the rewarded DEX acquisition rate have been stacked. Your total DEX acquisition rate has increased by 6x. This can only be applied inside the Farming Dungeon.]

[Novice Farming has leveled up.]

[Novice Farming has leveled up.]

Notifications rang after he had completed his quest. Minhyuk was once again surprised, especially when his DEX acquisition rate and stat had increased again. Minhyuk usually cooked around fifty servings each time, a feat that any normal chef player would find impossible.

Most chefs would not even cook at home, so why would they cook inside the game if it was not needed? It would truly be difficult. As for Minhyuk, he found it enjoyable and delicious, so he kept on cooking various dishes. He also repeated his actions several times a day which improved his DEX by a lot. What's more, he had kept on digging out those sweet potatoes too. In other words, the increase in his DEX reflected an unimaginable speed, along with his massive acquisition rate.

'It's real... I can definitely sense the flavor and taste getting better and better, even if it's just by a little bit.'

It was a strange thing. The flavor of his food was becoming more delicious. It had been a vague feeling. However, over time, he could see that the seasonings were getting more perfect. It also seemed that he did not get tired of the food easily even when he ate it over and over again. If that was not delicious, then what was? Delicious food, in a way, would make someone unconsciously eat two bowls of rice in one go. Of course, in Minhyuk's case, he would be eating 200 bowls, instead of 100 bowls of rice.

So, Minhyuk made a promise to himself. He thought, 'I will definitely dig up all of the sweet potatoes here and eat them!'

Then, he checked the contents of his farming skill right away.

(Novice Farming)

Passive Skill

Level: 5

Effects:

?You will be 16% faster whenever you gather or dig for materials and ingredients.

?You have a 9% chance of obtaining better materials and ingredients.

'Each time the Novice Farming levels up, my speed at collecting materials and ingredients will always increase by 3%. Even my digging speed and chances of harvesting a more delicious potato increase by 3% too.'

Minhyuk was extremely pleased with this development. Then, he left all thoughts of his skills behind and began to cook again. This time, he wanted to make some caramelized sweet potato and sweet potato pizza. Caramelized sweet potato could be done easily. All Minhyuk needed to do was chop the sweet potatoes evenly and fry them in oil at an appropriate temperature. He easily finished the dish by sprinkling some corn syrup, or honey, as well as some sesame seeds. Another alternative to honey or syrup was boiled sugar. Then, Minhyuk began making sweet potato pizza.

Whenever he thought of sweet potato pizza, he would always remember one memory from his school days, 'I used to buy and eat plenty of pizza from Pizza Schoon.'

Minhyuk had hidden the fact that his dad, Kang Minhoo, was the chairman of his own company when he was attending middle school. He lived his life simply back then. There was this 5,000 won pizza store near his school called Pizza Schoon where he and three of his friends would always go to. He would usually collect 1,000 won from the other two to eat the sweet potato pizza in the store.

'Kyaa. Pizza Schoon's sweet potato pizza. I can still remember the taste clearly!'

Minhyuk recalled the thin crust of pizza covered with a thick layer of sweet potato and a drizzle of sauce. He also recalled paying a few hundred of won to buy separate pickles and 500 milliliters of coca cola poured in plastic cups. Minhyuk smiled happily at the thought as he finished cooking everything.

'I'm going to eat the golden sweet potato by myself~'?Minhyuk thought, deciding to eat the delicious golden sweet potato later when he got the chance to be alone. He looked at the finished products in satisfaction as he listened to the notification asking him to choose between Food God's True Worth and Buff Ability. There was also a notification about choosing the main ingredient of the dish. Minhyuk quickly selected his choices.

"...The sweet potatoes that I worked so hard to farm," Bran sighed sadly. He looked like he was about to cry. After all, there were around 15 sweet potato pizzas in front of him, together with a large basin filled with caramelized sweet potatoes.

"Hey, come on and have a taste. It will not taste as good when it cools down."

Glare!

Bran glared at Minhyuk who was already licking his lips as he picked up a slice of sweet potato pizza.

Stretch—

The cheese softly stretched out as Minhyuk pulled the warm pizza away. Then, he quickly took a big bite of pizza the moment the cheese broke off.

Aaaaaaaah, chomp—

Almost half of the pizza disappeared in a single bite. Minhyuk even slurped up the stretched-out cheese. The sweet flavor of the sweet potato, the sweet sauce, the cheese, and the thin crust blended perfectly in Minhyuk's mouth. The soft and chewy cheese was rich, yet mellow. Although a bit

greasy, the sweetness of the sauce and sweet potato complemented it perfectly. Then, Minhyuk reached out for a paper cup and poured some cola inside, before eating another slice of pizza. This was the part where he had to exercise some delicacy. Minhyuk picked up the cup with the palm of his hands, in order to prevent his oily, sauced-covered fingers from staining the cup. Only then, he drank his cup of cola happily.

"Keuhaa!"

Minhyuk could feel the fizziness of the cola flow down his throat, leaving a tingling sensation behind along with a burst of sweetness. He could not help but admire the fact that the cola could easily wash away the greasy taste of the pizza.

"Amazing. This is really delicious!"

[You have received Bran's favor.]

Bran, who was sitting on the opposite side, also expressed his admiration. He had a sulky expression on his face just a while ago, but right now, he looked extremely satisfied. Minhyuk grinned at him as he poked his fork in the caramelized sweet potato, before chewing on it. The sweet and thick taste of oligosaccharide, followed by the dry sweet potato, spread inside his mouth. Minhyuk looked genuinely happy. Seeing this, Bran unknowingly showed a fatherly smile. Then, he stopped himself as he thought, 'He ate all of my sweet potatoes!'

"Boy, don't you think it's about time that you left?" Bran said.

Minhyuk was sly and quickly said, "These sweet potatoes, I have to dig them all up. Plus, I still have to make full use of the double EXP here."

"You might get the EXP, but you won't get any items, aren't items important too?!" Bran grumbled. This was the very first time that an NPC told a player to 'Please leave!'.

"It's alright. Bran's sweet potatoes are so delicious that I'm very happy to keep on digging them!"

"..."

Bran was left speechless in defeat.

'Why was there a man like this?'

"It's also fun to increase my DEX!"

"I... is that so?" Bran said in hesitation. However, he also looked quite pleased. He thought, 'Perhaps...'

Bran wondered if Minhyuk would be able to get the last reward that was left in this dungeon. Still, he shook his head, thinking, 'It's not possible, he will definitely choose the immediate rewards.'

As conflicted thoughts ran through his mind, Bran continued to eat. Once they finished everything, Minhyuk finally patted his stomach in satisfaction.

"Ah, I should have some boiled sweet potatoes for dessert!"

"..."

Bran looked at him in silence for a moment before speaking, "I can only say this."

Minhyuk sat up properly after seeing his solemn expression.

"Yes?"

"Elephants eat an average of 150 kilograms per day. Boy, I think you're similar to that."

"..."

"But... For an elephant, for every 150 kilograms that it consumes, it will release 130 kilograms of excrement. From what I heard, it's because they have a high fiber diet. If that's the case, do you excrete around 130 kilograms per day?"

"...!"

Minhyuk was astonished by what Bran said!

Chapter 48: Eating to Acquire Skills

"Wait, what exactly are the seeds?" Minhyuk asked, quickly diverting the topic to avoid answering Bran's question. He had obtained a total of seven seeds after hunting the Sweet Potato Men. Each of the seeds was in a different color.

"A fruit will grow from that seed if you plant it."

"Oh!" Minhyuk shouted in awe. This meant that the seeds in his hands would provide him with fruits and vegetables other than sweet potatoes!

"Those aren't yours though, boy."

"Not mine? But... but these are the rewards that I received!"

"Wait a bit. The one for you is different," Bran said as he went inside his hut.

Bran thought, 'There's no way that he will choose the seeds.'

Minhyuk had met the final condition. So, Bran had to put him to a test. When he went inside his hut, he opened a small jewel box, which contained an expensive-looking ring. It was a unique artifact that went by the name 'Mahava's Double Ring'. Mahava's Double Ring was a great artifact among all of the existing double rings. Artifacts like this could definitely only be counted on one hand.

'It's an artifact that increases the magical defensive power by +40, and has the special ability Absorption Skill attached to it.'

The skill Absorption attached to Mahava's Double Ring had a 50% chance of absorbing a skill as long as the opponent that released the skill did not have more than 100 level difference with the player that had the ring equipped. The skill that the ring absorbed could also be used within ten minutes since the skill was absorbed. In other words, it was an extremely valuable ring. The trial would involve Bran presenting the ring to Minhyuk, in exchange for the seven seeds.

'If he chooses Mahava's Double Ring, then he will only get the ring. He will not get anything related to the seeds.'

In fact, this was a path to a hidden piece, as well as the trial's secret.

'Of course, everyone will think that Mahava's Double Ring is more important than the seeds,' Bran thought. In fact, even he himself found Mahava's Double Ring to be more profitable and useful than a seed. However, a notification had rung in Bran's head asking him to drop a hint, that the fruits or vegetables that would grow from the seed would be more delicious than normal crops. This was so he could test the player if they could achieve the hidden piece, the perfect reward for this Farming Dungeon.

Then, Bran walked back to where Minhyuk was and said, "Well, this is the final reward. Once you hand me the seeds, you will be notified that you have completed all of the quests in the dungeon, and I'll give this to you as a reward."

[You can now acquire Mahava's Double Ring.]

"But, what happens once this seed grows into a fruit?!"

"Hey, it's nothing special. It will just produce a much more delicious fruit. Just give me the seeds, don't you want this ring?"

"Much more delicious than normal fruits?"

"Yeah, much more delicious. Quickly give me the seeds, you won't be able to complete the quest if you don't give them to me quickly! Don't you want this ring?!" Bran said, thinking that this rascal was quite lovable. However, no matter how much he liked Minhyuk, he still believed that Minhyuk would not receive the final rewards.

Then, Minhyuk smiled while in a daze, and said, "A more delicious fruit. Wow!"

"...?"

Bran looked at him in puzzlement.

"Are you telling me that there will be seven delicious fruits?!" Minhyuk asked. It seemed like he was not even interested in Mahava's Double Ring.

"Then, I will not give you any seed at all. I will grow them myself and eat the delicious fruits!"

"...Are you serious?"

"Isn't that obvious? Anyway, the seeds with the delicious fruits are much better. Who cares about items? Are items more important than eating?!" Minhyuk declared solemnly, living this truth every day. He continued to say, "When I eat, the food gets absorbed in my body, but an item is just an item."

Minhyuk's words sounded strangely convincing, but Bran's mouth twitched, as he said, "Boy. You're really curious about what the seeds will bear, right?!"

"...?"

Minhyuk looked at him with suspicion.

'What does he mean? All I want is to eat something delicious!'

Then, the notifications suddenly poured in.

[You have received Bran's favor.]

[You have received Bran's favor.]

[You have received Bran's...]

"Boy, you're really qualified to become a true farmer! My world! You're even wondering what kind of fruit the seed will bear!"

"No, more delicious..."

"Boy, you have inherited the blood of a natural farmer!"

Misunderstandings could lead to delusions. In fact, it truly did not make any sense for a person to choose the seeds, just so they could eat something much more delicious than the regular produce. In addition, Minhyuk was also someone who had worked hard to dig up sweet potatoes. Hence, it naturally caused Bran to misunderstand, believing that Minhyuk loved and cared for farming deeply.

"It's my good fortune to have met you in this lifetime!"

Minhyuk did not answer him. He just placed the seeds in his bosom and chuckled lightly. He thought, 'I'll just sneak away like this so these seeds will be mine!'

"Well then, you can take this."

Minhyuk was shocked at Bran's sudden actions. He thought, 'H... he still hasn't given up?!'

"I... I don't like it. No way! I won't give these seeds to you! I will never give these seeds to you!" Minhyuk shouted urgently.

Bran just laughed at him as he placed the Mahava's Double Ring in his hands. He said, "No, you can have it. This Mahava's Double Ring, and even these seeds too. You are their true owner."

At that moment, a series of notifications rang in Minhyuk's head.

[You have achieved the Hidden Piece: He Who has the Disposition of a True Farmer.]

[You can now cultivate the seeds.]

[Novice Farming has leveled up.]

[Novice Farming has leveled up.]

[You have acquired Mahava's Double Ring.]

Surprisingly, it was a hidden quest!

Minhyuk looked at the notifications in bewilderment. He thought, 'But, wasn't it natural to choose the seeds?!'

How could it be a hidden piece? This was shocking! As Minhyuk thought about it carefully, he finally realized that other players would have definitely chosen the ring instead of the seeds. After all, the players that played this game all wanted to become strong, so they would choose to get the item instead.

"Can I check the seeds?"

"Yeah."

Minhyuk quickly checked the seeds. Earlier, it was only labeled as 'A Useless Seed' so he wanted to check if there were any changes.

(The Seed of Effort and Care)

Material Grade: ???

Special Abilities: ???

Description: The seed of effort and care is a special seed that can only be acquired by a true and qualified farmer. Keep digging! The more you dig, the more you will fill the percentage bar of the 'Seed's Effort'. The fruits of the seed will vary depending on the percentage that you can achieve. In addition, if you give the seeds love and care, the seeds will also react. The seeds can grow in exactly two weeks.

Minhyuk smiled in satisfaction as he continued to check the rest of the items that he gained.

(Mahava's Double Ring)

Class: Unique

Requirements: 60 STR

Durability: 4,000 / 4,000

Defensive Power: 101

Special Abilities:

?+40 Magic Defensive Power

?Skill: Absorption

He checked the attached skills right away.

(Absorption)

Artifact Skill

Level: None

Mana Required: 70

Cooldown: 24 hours

Effects: The force of the Magical Attack or Physical Attack of an enemy with a 100 level difference or below can be absorbed once by the wearer for ten minutes.

"Well, this isn't bad."

The power of the artifact was something that he had expected from a double ring. Right now, Minhyuk had two double rings in his possession. Then, he checked his Novice Farming skill.

(Novice Farming)

Passive Skill

Level: 7

Effects:

?You will be 21% faster whenever you gather or dig for materials and ingredients.

?You have a 15% chance of obtaining better materials and ingredients.

The Novice Farming Skill did not change much, but he felt glad that it leveled up since his chances of getting better and more delicious sweet potatoes had increased.

"Come here," Bran said as he led Minhyuk somewhere else. The place they went to was near Bran's hut. It was the door at the end of the room where his firewood was stacked. Minhyuk had seen this door earlier when he went there to get firewood before. He wondered what it was for back then, but thought it rude to open it without Bran's permission. When the door opened, the scene that appeared caused Minhyuk to be in awe and admiration!

"Wow... Wow... Wow... Waaaaaa!" Minhyuk shouted happily.

Bran looked at him proudly and said, "This time, it's potatoes!"

"Uwaaaaaah!" Minhyuk's shout grew louder. Without further ado, he quickly started digging for potatoes. Of course, he did not forget to plant his seeds too.

There were countless dishes that Minhyuk could cook with potatoes. French fries, potato salad, or even dishes like stir fried potatoes that were best served as side dishes for rice. From then on, he solely focused on digging potatoes. There were 24 hours a day in reality which was equivalent to 96 hours inside the game. He spent most of his hours digging potatoes and only slept for about two hours each day. Sleep? Sleep would not stop Minhyuk when there was something that he could eat in front of him.

[Novice Farming has leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have gained 1 DEX.]

[You have acquired Potatoes.]

Minhyuk dug potatoes continuously.

Two weeks had gone by inside the game. The tournament was right around the corner. Minhyuk looked like he was in a daze the moment he got out of the game.

"Minhyuk, don't you want to get some sleep?"

"It's fine. Hehe. I have already gathered a?lot?of potatoes!"

Minhyuk made a big gesture to appease Lee Jinhwan's worries. His face might have looked tired, but he felt happy. Today was another big day. Minhyuk had to go and check his weight, so everyone headed together towards the weighing scale. Taking a deep breath, Minhyuk slowly placed his heavy body on top of the weighing scale. Then, the numbers started to change. Everyone was looking at the scales nervously. It was a bit unfortunate that his father was not able to come today. He had something urgent to attend to, but everyone else came to support Minhyuk. Minhyuk closed his eyes in trepidation.

'Gasp...!'

'Aack?!'

Everyone around looked at the scale in shock, but they tried their best to keep quiet. After all, it would be better if Minhyuk saw it himself.

"Can I open my eyes now?!"

"Y, yeah!"

Minhyuk slowly opened his eyes to look at the number on the scale. The moment he looked at the weighing scale...

172.7 kg.

...his legs softened and he fell down with a thud. That was a whole 500 grams missing from his previous weight.

Clap, clap, clap, clap!

Everyone applauded.

"Congratulations, Minhyuk!" Changwook exclaimed, slinging his hands over Minhyuk's shoulder.

"Minhyuk, congratulations!"

"Congratulations, Kang Minhyuk!"

"I knew you could do it!"

All of the people present were smiling happily as they congratulated Minhyuk. However, he could not hear them at all. He had always thought that he would die at any moment. Always believing that he had no hope anymore, that he would die without eating anything delicious. But something had changed. It might just be 500 grams. No, for others, it might just be a measly 500 grams, but for Minhyuk, this change was something that he longed for, more than anybody else. That was when tears started to fall from his eyes.

"Hiiik, waaaaaaah!" Minhyuk wept loudly and sadly.

Perhaps, he could really have the figure that he had in the game. Just maybe, he could turn that into reality.

"To be honest, we still have to observe you further, Minhyuk. But, there's clearly a change and you're definitely eating less right now," Jinhwan said quietly.

'Perhaps we can expect some big changes in the future, once he can finally satisfy his hunger and appetite in the game.'

But, Jinhwan knew that this was not yet the time to tell Minhyuk.

"Heuk, heuk, heuk, heuk!" Minhyuk continued to cry pitifully. The people around him were at a loss, feeling his sadness.

"Hey, hey. Why are you crying? Your hyung's heart hurts seeing you like this."

"Waaaaaaaah!"

"Hyung will buy you candies in?Athenae. Some rice cakes too!"

"...OMG?"

"Gasp..."

"Keok?!"

Minhyuk, who was crying his heart out, suddenly stopped crying when he heard the word 'candy'. He quickly wiped away the tears in his eyes before looking at Changwook, as if he did not just cry. Then, he said, "You know that strawberry milk is also really delicious, right?"

"...."

"...."

"...."

Minhyuk smiled widely, looking forward to the taste of delicious candy.

Chapter 49: A Dangerous Companion

It seemed like candies could make anyone stop crying!

'What the hell? Did you cry just so I will buy you something to eat?!' Changwook thought.

Minhyuk had an incredible amount of patience and tenacity when it came to food so it was no wonder that Changwook thought like that!

'He even sacrificed his sleep to eat, you know!'

"Ah. That's refreshing!" Minhyuk said as he came down from the weighing scale. He already let his feelings out so now he was only filled with joy. A smile hung gently around his lips showing the people around him that he was really happy. Even his heart was pounding wildly with elation. He imagined himself after losing weight.

'Maybe I can really look like I am inside the game?'

Just the thought was enough to put Minhyuk into a good mood, his butt swaying and wriggling to a beat as he went down the scale.

"Doo doom chit! Doo doom chit!"

The sight was quite comical, his dancing making everyone smile and laugh.

"Hahahaha!"

"Hohohoho!"

It was definitely a touching day, and only laughter rang loudly in the room. After a while, Oh Changwook approached Minhyuk and said, "Hey, how high is your DEX now? You said that you're still going to the dungeon today, right?"

"Yes. Hoho. Today is a very big day. Today is the day that I will finally harvest my fruits," Minhyuk said happily. Today was the day that the seeds that he planted would bear fruits. Once he obtained the fruits, he would leave the dungeon.

"So, what's your DEX now?"

"I think it's at 298?"

"..."

"..."

"...Ridiculous."

The people present were suddenly in an uproar. Even Oh Changwook looked astonished. He said, "You're telling me that your DEX is almost 300 now...?"

"Yes!" Minhyuk answered with a nod. His DEX acquisition rate inside the dungeon had already increased by 8x. With an incredibly high acquisition rate, coupled with non-stop digging and cooking every moment of the day, it was only natural that his DEX would increase by that much.

"From what I heard, our guild's blacksmith only had a little over 400 DEX when he went from intermediate to advanced level...?"

"...Is that so? Maybe he couldn't increase it? Ah. No. Maybe it's because my DEX acquisition rate has increased by 8x. That's why mine increased that fast."

After thinking deeply, Changwook still believed that an 8x acquisition rate would not allow Minhyuk's DEX to increase to that level in such a short period of time. Then, he said, "I think I know the reason."

"What?"

"From what I heard, increasing DEX has various rules. But, the first rule to increase DEX is to continuously repeat an action. Right?"

"Yeah," Everyone answered in agreement. This was something that everyone knew.

"I heard about other rules too. From what I've gathered, it seems like concentration and working non-stop are also factors. The rate at which DEX increases, increases little by little the moment these factors overlap together. The more they overlap, the more the rates would stack. But there's no notification about it."

"Oh, I see?"

This was something unexpected. To summarize, Minhyuk's DEX acquisition rate had risen more when he was in the 'zone' and did his job continuously. In any case, Minhyuk was very happy to hear that. Then, he said, "Well then, I'm going back to eat some fruit and celebrate."

Minhyuk swayed and wriggled his butt again as he entered his Athenae capsule. Meanwhile, Changwook recalled something. He thought, 'I seem to recall that players will receive benefits once they reach 400 DEX...'

Bran was completely shocked and astonished. He thought, 'This is too ridiculous...' his body trembling. He was looking at the branches of the huge trees that grew from the seven seeds that Minhyuk had planted. Each of those branches had a fruit shining brightly, covered with some sort of light.

The light glowing from the fruit was only visible to Bran. This light represented how much effort the player had given to the seeds. In fact, reaching 50% was already considered to be a difficult task. However, if the player failed to achieve 50%, then the fruit would only become a little special, and more delicious than other fruits. The effects of the fruit would increase correspondingly when

the light reached 60%, 70% or higher. It might sound easy, but it was definitely not an easy task. Even Bran himself could not guarantee that he could reach 60%.

Hard work was important but to raise the percentage, one had to cherish the seeds. Right now, the fruits that the seeds had borne were reflecting various colors, speckled with golden light. This phenomenon meant that the percentage of effort was more than 90%. This was the reason why Bran could not believe it. Just then, Minhyuk logged back inside.

"Doo doom chit! Doo doom chit!" Minhyuk sang happily as he swayed his butt to his own rhythm. Then, he shouted loudly, "Hello! I'm back!"

"Y, yeah. Boy, today's the day that you'll be leaving, right?"

"Yes! Hohoho. But, I have to harvest my fruits before I go," Minhyuk answered, face filled with anticipation. However, Bran just smiled awkwardly at him.

"What's wrong? Why do you look like that?"

"N... nothing," Bran said, speechless. He could not believe that someone would work hard and give their full effort, while still making sure to give enough care and affection to the seeds. Looking back, he realized that Minhyuk had always pampered and cared for the seeds whenever he was not digging or cooking.

Minhyuk quickly approached the seven trees in anticipation. The fruits were all in different sizes and were covered in a shell similar to coconut shells, which made it hard for him to determine what the fruits were.

"You can just reach your hand out and say 'harvest' to get the fruits."

Minhyuk followed Bran's instructions. He reached his hands out towards the trees and said, "Harvest."

[Would you like to harvest the fruits?]

[Yes / No]

"Yes."

Plop—

The fruit that was just on the tree suddenly fell down on its own, before flying straight towards Minhyuk, landing gently on the ground in front of him. Then, cracks appeared in the middle of the coconut-like shell, until the parts fell down on both sides.

Plop, plop—

The fruit inside of the shell was finally revealed, and its appearance had Minhyuk in shock.

"Waaaaaaah..." Minhyuk exclaimed in admiration. It was a delicious watermelon!

"I... it's a watermelon...!"

"Yeah. The watermelon looks really delicious."

"Ah. Good. Great. Watermelon. Applause!"

"...?"

"You don't know this song?"

"Boy, I don't know what you're saying! Just go after you finish clapping."

"Hmph!"

"Ahem!"

The two of them coughed in embarrassment after making bad jokes. Then, Minhyuk checked the watermelon's information.

(Harvested Watermelon)

Ingredient Grade: C

Special Abilities:

?Acquire 30 DEX.

?Acquire 30 WIS.

?Tastes much better compared to normal watermelons.

Description: Your hard work and love for the seed have paid off. You truly have the qualities of an excellent and true farmer.

"The description... said that it tastes better than normal watermelons!"

"Yeah? What abilities did you get..."

"Wow! I wonder how delicious it is if it's much better than normal watermelons?! The normal watermelons are already delicious!"

"Look at the abilities!"

"What abilities..." Minhyuk said, shaking his head as he continued, "It's not that bad~"

Minhyuk thought that acquiring 30 DEX and 30 WIS was alright. However, the abilities paled in comparison to the effect of having a better taste. Then, Minhyuk checked the next fruit. It also appeared once the shell split on its own.

"S, strawberry!"

(Harvested Strawberry)

Ingredient Grade: C

Special Abilities:

?Acquire +10 for all five basic stats.

?Can increase the level of a general attack skill by one.

"Aaaaah!" Without any hesitation, he picked it up and opened his mouth the moment he saw the strawberry, which was the size of his head. It looked red and ripe, with its seeds gleaming with a black light. He opened his mouth wide and chomped on the luscious and juicy strawberry.

"Chomp!"

Chew, chew—

Minhyuk was in absolute bliss as he savored the sweetness of the strawberry, as well as the texture of the black seeds embedded in its flesh. The more he chewed, more juices spread in his mouth, and the more he felt refreshed. Anyone who saw Minhyuk eating a strawberry the size of his head would be surprised to see him eat it without cutting it into pieces.

Chew, chew—

Minhyuk kept on eating the strawberry.

"...Y... you look like a hippo," Bran said. It seemed like Minhyuk had gone from being an elephant to being a hippopotamus, in Bran's mind.

Minhyuk ate the entire strawberry in one go. The strawberry looked to be around four kilograms in weight, but it was finished in one sitting. Then, he stopped in horror before crying out, "I'm, I'm an idiot!"

"What's wrong?"

"Sob.?I wanted to eat the delicious strawberry fruit juice, strawberry cake, strawberry macaron, and strawberry sandwich! I'm an idiot!" Minhyuk wailed. The strawberry was so delicious, but he regretted eating it on the spot. He calmed down soon enough and thought, 'It's okay, Minhyuk. You still have a watermelon.'

He quietly wrapped the watermelon with its shell again to give himself some semblance of control. He planned to eat half of the watermelon as it is, while the other half would be made into a fruit punch! Then, a string of notifications popped in his head.

[You have eaten Harvested Strawberry.]

[You have acquired +10 in all five of your basic stats.]

[Please select a general attack skill.]

When it came to attack skills, he only had one. So, he did not have any other choice whatsoever.

"Bardy Swordsmanship."

[Bardy Swordsmanship has leveled up.]

[You have mastered Bardy Swordsmanship.]

[Chapter 1. As a reward for mastery, the attack power of Vital Strike will increase by a large margin.]

[Chapter 2. As a reward for mastery, the Three Consecutive Quick Assault will deal additional damage.]

[Chapter 3. As a reward for mastery, the increase in stats and duration of Bardy Swordsmanship will be greatly increased.]

The rewards for mastery referred to the additional rewards that the player would receive once they mastered a skill. Just like in the notifications above, players would usually receive 3% additional attack power once they mastered the skill.

Minhyuk quickly checked his skills window.

The first chapter, Vital Strike, had received a 28% increase in attack power. The second chapter, Three Consecutive Quick Assault, had received an additional 10% attack power for each of the three attacks that the skill would incur. And for the third chapter, Bardy Swordsmanship, the duration of the skill was increased to ten minutes while the stats could now increase by 20 points.

After checking his skill, Minhyuk continued to harvest the rest of his fruits.

[The shell cannot be broken at your current level.]

[The shell cannot be broken at your current level.]

Sadly, the remaining fruits could not be opened at his level. However, Minhyuk still checked on their information.

(Harvested Fruit)

Requirement: Level 80

Ingredient Grade: Sealed

Special Abilities:

?Sealed

?Sealed

The rest of the fruits each had a ten level difference in the requirements. Minhyuk was able to increase his level during his stay in this dungeon. He was already at Level 79 right now. The increase in his level was truly tremendous. Assuming that a player would get an additional 500 EXP every time they leveled up, the amount needed to increase their level by one would still be staggering. After all, each level up would have an increase in the required amount of EXP.

'I need to be at least at 120,' Minhyuk thought. Only after reaching this level would he be able to eat all of his fruits.

"You worked hard."

"Yes. Thank you for everything."

"Boy, I believe that you will become an excellent farmer."

"Yes. I hope that I get the chance to see you again next time!" Minhyuk shouted as he bent his body and bowed at a ninety-degree angle. There were a lot of things that he felt apologetic for. After all, he ate all of Bran's potatoes and sweet potatoes! However, Minhyuk was still a man with a conscience.

Minhyuk approached Bran and whispered, "I left you some potatoes."

"Oh, really? Thank you. Ah, boy. You said that you will be going to Emperor City on a carriage, right?"

"Yes."

There was a level requirement for teleportation. Players below Level 100 could only teleport forty kilometers away from the village that they came from. Players from Level 100 to Level 200 could only teleport and travel freely anywhere inside their empire. Only players above Level 300 could

freely travel from empire to empire. This restriction was set in hopes that Athenae players would go out to explore and experience various places inside the game.

"Then, I'll be going!" Minhyuk said, smiling happily and waving goodbye.

'I also have a conscience!' Minhyuk thought. It was because of this 'conscience' that he left some potatoes for Bran.

Once he disappeared, Bran went to his potato field. He muttered to himself, "Yeah, of course that brat must have some conscience too!"

Bran saw Minhyuk as a polite and good boy. He might be a strange one for eating all of his sweet potatoes, but Bran felt like Minhyuk was still kind enough to at least leave him with potatoes.

Alas, when Bran arrived in his potato field...

"...This was what you left because of your conscience?!!!"

...the potato field was already turned upside down, with only a steaming and well-cooked potato left in the middle of the field. The problem was that there was only one potato there. Not a box, or a few, but one! Bran was unaware, but Minhyuk had been conflicted at the thought of leaving a potato behind.

Bran wanted to shout.

'You might as well have eaten my hands too!'

However, Minhyuk felt like he had already gone above and beyond since he left a potato for Bran. Then, Bran saw the note that Minhyuk wrote after picking up the only potato he had left behind.

[Potatoes are really the best food in rest-areas!]

Bran sighed deeply after reading the note. He looked at the potato in his hand and munched on it before saying, "...Delicious." Then, he suddenly laughed loudly for a while.

"It looks like a wild boar came and went to this farm. No... he's worse than those guys." Bran mumbled to himself before sighing once again.

1. This is a direct translation of part of the lyrics of Super Junior's song,

Chapter 50: A Dangerous Companion

A silver-haired woman wearing a luxurious, high-class mask that was black, as well as tight-fitting leather armor, stood quietly inside Isbin Village. Even though the woman was wearing armor, it could not hide the beautiful curves of her body. In fact, just her gear alone made her stand out from the crowd. This woman receiving the public's attention was none other than Lucia.

"Are you going to the Imperial Palace?"

"That's right. That would be 100,000 gold."

Lucia nodded and handed over the money to the coachman before climbing up the carriage. The carriage was currently empty. She only came to Isbin Village to complete a special hidden quest here. Since she already completed the quest, she quickly found a carriage headed towards the Emperor's City.

'Ellie's Swordsmanship...'

Lucia was a Thief class player. But, even for someone like her, the thought of learning Ellie's Swordsmanship made her mouth water. Ellie's Swordsmanship was an epic skill, the likes of which were not widespread in the country yet. If Lucia managed to build a close relationship with Ellie, she would be able to receive a lot of help once she decided to build a guild herself and create a territory of her own in the future.

'This is the only way that I will be able to surpass Oppa.'

That was right. The reason why Lucia was running around like crazy was because she wanted to surpass her brother, Cain. Lucia and Cain were only half-siblings. However, from as young as she remembered, her brother Cain had always been superior to others. Seeing him triumph over others made Lucia feel jealous. She wanted to win at least once against him and be recognized. So far, she had been unable to.

However, Lucia knew that it would be different here in Athenae. From her physical prowess, skills, and even her class, everything that she obtained inside the game was considered to be overwhelmingly strong.

'Oppa will definitely acknowledge me,' Lucia thought as she chuckled coldly. Then, she crossed her arms and slowly closed her eyes. It seemed that she was really exhausted, to the point that just closing her eyes made her feel sleepy.

"This is the carriage headed over to the Imperial Palace, right?"

"Yeah."

"Hoho. I can definitely enjoy my ride with peace of mind! Such an excellent coachman pulling the carriage. Wow! Even this white horse looks delici... no, no... cool!"

"Hahahaha! You're right, I personally raised and kept this treasure. But boy, what are you eating?"

Lucia was just starting to doze off when she heard the sound of people talking outside. However, she was so tired that she fell asleep despite the ruckus. It felt like a lot of time had passed. As she tried to sit up, she suddenly saw herself sitting in front of her Oppa, Cain, inside her dreams. Dream Cain said, 'Lucia, you're really great. You became the tournament's champion, that's really cool.'

'Thanks.'

In Lucia's dream, she and her brother were talking. Unlike her usual appearance, she looked a bit shy and demure inside her dreams. Then, she heard her Oppa say, 'And this Oppa of yours...'

"The potato is delicious!"

'...is like a potato.'

'...Huh? Oppa? What did you say?'

The words of Dream Cain were weird. What was even weirder, was the fact that the strange words continued to ring in her head.

"Wow. Potatoes! Why do you look so delicious?!?Chew, chew."

Suddenly, Dream Cain smiled at her and said, "This potato is delicious."

Then, potatoes suddenly started to rain down on Lucia in her dreams. Even the small gaps were filled with small potatoes.

"Kyaaaaaaa! H, help me...! Potatoes, I ca... can't breathe... Gasp!" She shouted, but there were so many potatoes that she was starting to feel suffocated. Then...

"Woah! There's too many potatoes!"

Lucia woke up from her dream, startled. She looked around in a bewildered manner, before heaving a sigh, grateful that it was just a dream. However, the feeling was very vivid to the point that she could smell the scent of potatoes wafting in the carriage.

"Huh?"

That was when Lucia saw a man looking at her strangely. Seeing her gaze, the man instinctively covered his hands protectively, as he continued to chew on the food in his mouth. Upon closer inspection, Lucia found out that the thing in the man's hands was a rest-area potato kept in a disposable container. It looked like it was roasted since it had a brown tinge to it. Then, Lucia watched the man sprinkle some sugar and smear some butter on it to make it more delicious.

Then, the man looked at the potato sadly before saying, "Sob. There's only one left..."

It looked as if he had lost everything in the world. Lucia looked at him absurdly as she thought, "Wh...what? He does not look like he's joking at all. Is he really that sad over it?"

Then, she recalled that it was just a potato in the man's arms. Lucia's eyes narrowed. At that moment, she saw the man shove the potato in his mouth as he mumbled to himself while savoring its flavor. Watching the man eat somehow caused Lucia to imagine the taste of potato.

After roasting the potato, Lucia would smear it with butter and sprinkle some sugar or salt on top of it before taking a big bite. Once she placed it in her mouth, she would definitely feel the heat and taste the melted sugar. Then, the moment she chewed on it, she would taste the flavor of the golden-yellow potato. Lucia woke up from her daydream, surprised to find out that she was drooling already.

"W, what... he's eating it so deliciously."

Taking a deep breath, Lucia closed her eyes and maintained her calm expression. She thought, "Let's get some sleep."

Then, another rustle rang inside the otherwise quiet carriage. This time, the scent that wafted to her nose was the savory smell of oil. Strangely enough, the smell reminded her of the times she went home during Lunar New Year, Thanksgiving, and New Year's day, having her appetite whetted the moment she entered the house.

"Hahaha. Potatoes are the best!"

"Excuse me. Please be quiet. This is a public place."

"Ah. Yes, yes. Sorry. Sorry."

Lucia spoke coldly and calmly closed her eyes again, determined to ignore the sounds this time. However, the sounds kept on coming.

Crunch, crunch, crunch—

'Isn't this the sound of someone eating a well-cooked potato pancake?'

The whole point of a vegetable pancake was its well-cooked edges. If the edges were cooked to a fine crisp, then the pancakes would definitely turn out chewy and crunchy at the same time. And the sound of someone eating those crispy edges was drifting to Lucia's ears at that moment.

Gulp.

She unconsciously swallowed her saliva.

"Aaaaaaah."

Lucia kept her eyes closed as she listened to the man open his mouth to take a bite. Lucia unconsciously opened her mouth too.

"Chomp."

She also closed her mouth as if she was the one chewing the food. Then, she said, "Delicious..."

Screech!

Pause!

Lucia was shocked at her own subconscious words. Even the man sitting in front of her was taken aback. Then, the man quickly hid the potato pancake away from her sight. He looked like someone was going to take his precious pancake away from him at any moment.

"Ah, don't worry, I was saying nonsense. I'm not even hungry. I was thinking about what I will eat in reality. I was definitely not thinking about your potato pancakes."

"Really? What will you eat?"

Lucia was a bit embarrassed, being caught off-guard, so she just said something without thought, "B, beef."

"Beef?!" The man asked, eyes growing the size of a saucer, so much so that Lucia even thought that his eyes would pop out. Then, the man tilted forward and asked again, "H, how will you eat it?"

"I'll just grill it for a bit and dip it in salt."

"Wow, wow, wow... Is that all you're going to eat?" The man asked, gulping down his saliva quickly to speak. Lucia could feel the urgency radiating off of the man's body.

"Of course not. I will also dip it in some dipping sauce before placing it on top of a lettuce and adding some garlic and other vegetables on it."

"Kyaa! Miss, it seems like you're an educated person! You're going to eat it in one bite right?"

"Hohoho, of course. Of course," Lucia answered as she felt her self-esteem and confidence soar to the sky. It felt like she became a great person just because she would eat some beef!

"Kgghk, eating beef with wasabi on top is also delicious!"

"Ah, you're right. That's also delicious."

"Yeah. Miss, did you know?"

"What is it?"

"It's nice to eat beef seaweed soup for breakfast. Then after you mix your rice with it, you can also add some well-ripened kimchi, or some seasoned perilla leaves."

"Wow. I'm already drooling."

"So, you were really drooling earlier?"

The two of them talked about food as if they were friends that had not seen each other in a long time and met on their way somewhere. They were talking so naturally and casually that they did not notice this at all.

"You will definitely feel like you have everything in the world as long as you eat beef..."

"Well, potato pancakes are delicious too."

Rumble!

At that exact moment, Lucia's stomach cried for food. It seemed like she forgot to eat after completing the hidden quest in hopes of riding a carriage quickly. Then, Lucia looked at the potato pancakes in the man's hands. She said, "Can..."

"..."

"Can I have a bite?"

"Ugh...!" The man cried in agony as he wrapped his hands around his head.

Minhyuk was brought into agony once again! He thought, 'My god... Do people really think that I'm a kind and generous person?'

Minhyuk already felt like he had given in to his conscience when he left Bran a single potato, after digging up and eating over 800 potatoes from the latter's farm. However, that decision made him very conflicted. In the end, he left Bran a piece since he did feel a little apologetic towards him.

Who would have expected that this unknown woman in front of him also asked him for food! In fact, Minhyuk realized it a bit too late that he had caused himself some trouble. He knew that he disturbed her sleep by eating too loudly inside the carriage. Of course, there was the smell too. He was someone who would not give anyone anything in the first place. However, he felt sorry for her since he had caused her trouble! So, he came to a tough decision. He thought, 'Y, yeah... Just one clamp of the chopsticks...!'

"P, please have some..." Minhyuk spoke reluctantly as he held out his chopsticks to the woman.

"Thank you!" The woman said, lowering her mask and revealing her face. The woman smiled confidently knowing that she was a great beauty. She was beautiful to the point that she could be compared to Alicia. The only difference was that if Alicia was akin to a cat, then she would be a gentle puppy. However, her cold look always managed to mask her gentle appearance.

Lucia grabbed the chopsticks that Minhyuk held out, but quickly sensed that he was reluctant to let go. She said, "W, will you please let go?"

"Ah, yes...!"

"N, no. You have to let go so I can eat...!"

"Yes!" Minhyuk said, trying his very best.

Right hand, let go of the chopsticks now!

In the end, Lucia had to resort to force to pull out the chopsticks with her hands. Then, she tore up a piece of potato pancake before dipping it in soy sauce and placing it in her mouth.

"Wow..."

The potato pancake was warm and crispy, hot and savory. The deep flavor of the potato pancakes made her feel awe. It was very chewy and pleasant to taste. She then coughed awkwardly and reached out for the potato pancake once more. However, at that moment...

Swoosh—

"Do you want your hands to get blown away?" Minhyuk uttered coldly as he pulled his sword halfway out of its sheath.

"Wow, you're too much! Aren't you too cheap?! Shame on you! You even want to PK someone just because they will use your chopsticks to get one more bite?!"

"You were supposed to only eat one bite. Frankly, you shouldn't really say anything if you get PKed!"

"Everyone, this person is trying to kill me because I tried to eat one more bite of his food! What would people say about you??'Gasp?! How can there be such a person?! It was just one more bite?!'Do you hear that? Do you hear what the others were saying?"

"Stop your bullshit. A no is a no!"

"Tsk!"

"Hmph!"

Lucia harrumphed and turned away. She could see Minhyuk eating his potato pancake with a pitiful expression through her peripheral vision. Lucia suddenly found the situation very funny.

"Pfft!"

"...?"

"Ahahahahahahaha. What even... potato pancakes? Why are we even like this?!"

The situation was not that much of a deal, but she felt like she was hurt for a brief moment back then. However, the more she thought about it, the more Lucia found it funny. The man in front of her was giving off a funny and interesting energy, but he was still sulky.

"Hey, don't be angry."

"Hmph! You're just like all those younger sisters! You said that you will only have one bite of ramyeon but, you will just end up eating it all!"

"Ramyeon? Ah, right. I have ramyeon..." Lucia said.

Minhyuk's face immediately changed at the speed of light the moment he heard her words. He said, "Great! Now that I look at it, aren't you a great beauty! Wow, even your hair and eyebrows are

thick, huh?! Come to think of it, the mole near your lips is also very,?very?pretty. Wow! Even your nails are pretty!"

It was truly a rapid change of attitude! Then, Lucia said again, "Ramyeon..."

"Wow! Now that I listened to it more closely, even your voice sounds great!"

"Shall we eat it together?"

"Yes!"