

Gourmet 421

Chapter 421: Lesser Demon Diablo

Minhyuk took on the gamble despite the huge risk, mainly because he knew that the relationship that he built with Diablo in the past would be cut off the moment he attacked him. Lesser Demon Diablo was extremely powerful and being hostile with such a being would incur far greater losses than he could imagine.

Hence, he used his Create a Recipe skill.

[Creating a recipe that the other party desires.]

[You can now check the recipe for Tonkatsu.]

[The amount of buff that can be used has been decreased due to creating a recipe.]

? All of Diablo's stats will increase by 15%.

? Demon's Invincible Swordsmanship Level will increase by +2.

? Diablo's Frenzied State will be lifted.

The 'Create a Recipe' skill not only had the power to show Minhyuk the dish that his opponent wanted to eat the most, but it could also give him the power to increase the ability that the other person needed the most. Of course it was much more accurate when used on NPCs than when it was used on players.

When Minhyuk saw the last effect: 'Frenzied State will be lifted' written under the Expected Effects, he realized, '*You don't want to do something like this either, huh?*'. However, it was still impossible for him to know what had happened to Diablo. After all, it had been quite some time since they last met in the Demon World's Tower.

Diablo had been forcibly taken away from his single mother, leaving her alone, by the great demons to become the vessel of their demonic energy. He must have felt lonely and helpless, living a life that he never wanted to live, away from his beloved mother. And now, he was somehow in a frenzied state. From what he could see, Diablo had recognized him earlier but immediately after, he turned against him. In other words, he did not really recognize him and only faintly remembered something.

'My dish.'

It seemed like Diablo could not forget the taste of the dish that Minhyuk had made for him in the past. Then, Minhyuk dashed forward while casting Let's Have a Meal. Once Let's Have a Meal's barrier was set in place, anyone inside would not be able to attack. That was why Minhyuk hoped that Diablo would also not be able to attack him inside.

But then, Diablo tried to move his hand holding his sword, which prompted Minhyuk to immediately take on a defensive stance. Thankfully, Diablo's hands just twitched, and he eventually stopped moving.

'He's stopping himself with his remaining consciousness.'

A fragment of his memories had allowed Diablo to hold himself back, despite being in a frenzied state.

“I’m curious about your story.”

Minhyuk wanted to know what happened to Diablo so he decided to use the reward for the gold medal that he won before. Minhyuk had judged that it would not be a waste for him to use it at this point in time. After all, if he could do well here, then he would be able to win both the gold medal, as well as Diablo’s trust.

[Gold Medal Reward: Choose from artifacts, artifact materials, or cooking ingredients.]

“Cooking ingredients.”

[Please choose the cooking ingredient that you want.]

“Pork tenderloin.”

[Searching for ‘Pork Tenderloin’ among the Gold Medal Rewards. Generally, you will be able to get legendary-grade ingredients. However, there’s a chance that a God-grade ingredient will make an appearance.]

[Searching for ingredients in Athenae. Search progress 14%, 22%, 31%, 57%, 78%, 88%...]

Ring!

[You have acquired the Pork Tenderloin from a pig raised by God Athenae in God’s Farm.]

The expected dish grade that the Create a Recipe skill could estimate was based on the ingredients that were officially released, or had been discovered by players. Through some heaven-defying luck, just as he did in the past when he acquired the beef tenderloin, Minhyuk had obtained another God-grade ingredient.

‘It seems like I have good luck.’

Minhyuk immediately used his ‘Create a Recipe’ skill once again.

? All of Diablo’s stats will increase by 33%.

? Demon’s Invincible Swordsmanship Level will increase by +2.

? Movement and Attack Speed will increase by 15%.

? Diablo’s Frenzied State will be lifted.

? You might be able to remove Great Demon Verus’ spirit hiding in Diablo’s body.

‘Are you telling me that I can free Diablo from Great Demon Verus?’

Great Demons were existences akin to absolute beings like Gods. But perhaps, with something that had reached God’s level, he might really have the chance to liberate Diablo from Verus.

‘There’s no time to spare.’

Then, a series of notifications rang while Minhyuk hurriedly took out his frying pan to start cooking.

[God's Cooking Ingredient does not recognize and approve of you.]

[You will receive a huge restriction while cooking.]

[This is your second time challenging God's Cooking Ingredient. You have incurred God Athenae's wrath.]

[If the dish that you make falls short of legendary grade, God Athenae will force you to log out with his 'Power to Grant Early Death'.]

"...?!"

Minhyuk was shocked. The last time he cooked a God's Ingredient, the notifications told him that he would just face severe restrictions during the process, but this time, the risk was much greater.

'Then, why do I always get something from God Athenae every time?'

Even Minhyuk would be furious if someone kept on taking away the precious food that he raised and grew dearly.

'No. I'll probably do something far worse. Right?'

If it were Minhyuk, he would probably stalk the one that took away his precious food for days while hitting them with his frying pan, until they died over and over again. Minhyuk completely understood what God Athenae was feeling. Even though he understood that fact, he still found the risk too great to carry.

But, he caught sight of Diablo watching him pour oil on his small pot with unfocused eyes.

"Let's do this, Diablo."

Then, he started cooking with a renewed resolve. The cameras from ATV broadcasting station were solely focused on Minhyuk, which made the viewers doubt the station's decision. However, Minhyuk did not know this and just continued to move his hands. He held the egg in one hand then... *crack!*?cracked it over a bowl.

Shwaaaa—

Minhyuk's skill of cracking eggs with one hand was truly spectacular! The eggs that he used here were the eggs of the golden chicken. After cracking the eggs, he used his whisk and mixing bowl to beat them evenly. Then, he soaked the tenderloin in it.

'I have to soak it in for an hour but...'

He did not have much time. Then, Minhyuk took out a blender and some bread.

[It looks like bread. I wonder why Player Minhyuk took out some bread? What will he use it for?]

Not long after, Minhyuk ground the bread with the blender. After grinding it with the blender, what appeared was none other than 'breadcrumbs'. Tonkatsu cooked with the breadcrumbs commonly sold in stores were often only perfectly cooked on the outside even after cooking for a long time. However, with breadcrumbs made from bread itself, the tonkatsu would cook evenly and quickly.

[Ho? So, he used it to make breadcrumbs.]

[That's a good alternative for when you don't have any breadcrumbs on hand.]

Some of the viewers were starting to get interested in what he was doing. Then, Minhyuk started making the sauce. With the pan at medium-heat, he added some butter and flour, before stirring it well so that it would not burn. Then, he added some sugar, water, Worcestershire sauce, milk, and sliced button mushrooms. When the sauce started to turn reddish, he sprinkled some pepper to complete it. The sparkling and reddish tonkatsu sauce looked scrumptious, and anyone that saw it would drool.

Finally, he turned to his small pot. The temperature of the oil that he poured in the small pot had gradually increased. Minhyuk placed his hand over the pot and measured the oil's temperature to check if it was perfect for the tonkatsu. This was an amazing skill that only the Food God could do!

[The oil has reached the perfect temperature for tonkatsu.]

Minhyuk dropped some breadcrumbs in the oil.

Sizzle—

Minhyuk promptly placed the tonkatsu, that was evenly coated with breadcrumbs, after hearing the pleasant sizzling of the breadcrumbs that he dropped earlier.

Sizzle—

[Ah! He dropped it! Player Minhyuk has gently dropped the tonkatsu in the pot with oil!]

[Just seeing those crumbs floating about is enough to make me smile.]

The viewers that were getting interested with his untimely bout of cooking was increasing by the minute. But then, at that moment...

Crackle—

Tremendous pain, which seemed to have been caused by the hot and blazing flames, washed over Minhyuk's body.

[God's Barrier has interfered with you.]

'What the hell...?!'

Minhyuk could tell that this was the restriction that the notification talked about earlier. It was as if...

"Ughhh!"

...he was the one being fried inside the pot of oil as the burning pain coursed through his veins. In his recent endeavor, Minhyuk had cooked God Athenae's Beef Tenderloin to save Queen Iris. Back then, small droplets made of light tried to stop him by attacking him.

This time, it was a different restriction that was impeding him. Of course, Minhyuk's body was not really hot since he was inside the virtual reality. However, it still felt strangely weird and uncomfortable, which affected his control on his body.

[Player Minhyuk looks weird.]

[Yes. He's sweating all over and it looks like he can't control his body well.]

For a moment there, Minhyuk felt that he would collapse. Then, notifications rang for Minhyuk.

[An intense heat is putting pressure on your body.]

[The burning pain that courses through your veins will make it hard for you to control your body.]

[The intense and burning pain is interfering with your vision.]

[You won't be able to fight against this power.]

Minhyuk felt his head turn blank for a moment. Those that had suffered from such intense pain would often say that their vision had turned white and that they could not see what was in front of them. In Minhyuk's case, his vision was on the verge of turning white from the setting that the system had set. He even had a hard time holding his body up, to the point that his breathing had turned ragged.

However, regardless of what he was feeling, the tonkatsu continued to be cooked. A matter of seconds was very crucial when it came to cooking. Leaving a piece of meat on top of a piping hot grill for just a few seconds would cook the meat. The trial that he had to face appeared at a time when he could not afford to spare a few seconds. Still, Minhyuk had to keep cooking.

Perhaps the reason why Diablo wanted the tonkatsu desperately was because his mother made it for him in the past. Minhyuk could relate to him. After all, there were also times when Minhyuk would miss the dishes that his mother would cook for her.

Back then, he would eat those dishes in front of her and his mother would place a glass of water in front of him and fondly say, '*Eat slowly or your stomach will hurt later.*'. The life that everyone lived normally from day to day had become an unforgettable memory for Minhyuk. So, he had to do his best here.

There was one thing that God Athenae and the system did not know. Minhyuk had already mastered the skill 'Food God's Cooking'. So, instead of persevering with a white vision, he would rather close his eyes. And that was what he did. To others, what Minhyuk was doing was quite astonishing. How could someone close their eyes while they were cooking? But then, a notification rang for Minhyuk.

[This is the perfect time to take the tonkatsu out of the oil.]

With his eyes closed, Minhyuk used his tongs and grabbed the tonkatsu out of the pot of oil. There was also one thing that God Athenae did not know. Minhyuk really, *really* liked tonkatsu. Because of that, he had fried tonkatsu tens of thousands of times. Even with his eyes closed, he could still skillfully pick up the tonkatsu from the sizzling oil. And that was not all. *Tak! Tak!*? He was even able to smack the excess oil out of the tonkatsu before placing it on a plate.

The unbearable heat and pain that coursed through his veins disappeared the moment he placed the tonkatsu on a plate. And what greeted Minhyuk when he opened his eyes was a tonkatsu fried to a perfect golden brown. A smile curled at the corner of his mouth as he poured the sauce on top of the tonkatsu. Then, he added some corn and salad next to it, together with the warm instant soup. Finally, a delicious meal was completed. Then, at that moment...

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaa—

...a pillar of light fell from the sky and covered the tonkatsu.

[You have completed a Tonkatsu.]

[Trance. It is a dish that has your ‘efforts’, ‘passion’, ‘love for someone’, ‘spirit of a true chef’ and ‘power to overcome hardships and limits’ poured into it.]

[You have made a dish that has transcended beyond the human realm.]

Notifications constantly rang in Minhyuk’s head.

[You have made a God-grade Tonkatsu.]

[‘Anonymous’ will be known to the entire continent for making a dish closest to God.]

[God’s Cooking skill will dramatically increase.]

[You have gained 100 DEX.]

[You have gained 200 REP.]

[You have gained 10,000 AP.]

[You have gained 300,000,000 EXP as a special reward.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled...]

[God’s Tonkatsu will have a crispier skin and a juicier and chewy meat inside.]

Then, Minhyuk gave the tonkatsu to Diablo.

Diablo was able to regain a bit of sanity and break away from his frenzied state for a moment when an unidentified pillar of light fell down from the sky. And what greeted him was the same man as last time. The very same man that listened to his story, cooked for him with all his might, and cried for him.

And this man did it all over again for him. Diablo might have been in a frenzied state, but he could remember everything that had transpired around him, as well as the feeling of using all of his power to endure the effects of the unidentified force that was forcing him to collapse and submit. Even though he had lost most of the emotions that he regained from the last time he saw the man, he was fully aware that the man dedicated himself and risked his life to save him from this strange power.

‘You’re still...’

Was there anyone else who treated him like a human being other than this man? A drop of tear fell down on his cheeks unknowingly. And despite his blurry vision, he watched as his body took the tonkatsu on its own. He thought, *‘If I go with him then...’*

Diablo looked at the smiling Minhyuk.

‘...can I be happy?’

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[Heok! A, a God-grade dish has appeared in the competition!]

[Right now, the entire world is watching Player Minhyuk!]

[Almost all of the cameras broadcasting all over the world had zoomed in on the pillar of light that fell from the sky.]

[Minhyuk and Diablo are both at the center of attention.]

It was not only ATV's cameras, almost all of the cameras from all of the broadcasting stations in the world had zoomed in on Minhyuk and Diablo. They all watched as Diablo accepted the tonkatsu and sat side by side with Minhyuk. Just in time, another dish created from Minhyuk's 'Joy of Eating Together' skill appeared in front of him. The entire world watched as the two of them ate their tonkatsu happily.

The first thing that Minhyuk tasted was the warm instant soup.

'It really whets your appetite.'

A small smile curled at the corner of Minhyuk's lips as the soft yet thick, salty soup entered his mouth. He drank one sip, two sips, three sips of the delicious soup. Diablo, who sat beside him, copied him down to the T.

And the entire world that was watching them...

[Aaaaaaaaah! I know the taste of that soup very well!]

[It's just some instant soup, but the taste can really whet your appetite. It's a flavor that will definitely make you come back for more.]

After tasting the soup, Minhyuk grabbed his fork and knife and cut a piece of tonkatsu covered with the thick scarlet sauce. He placed the piece in his mouth as a...

Crunch—

...a loud crunch resounded. Each of Minhyuk's bite was accompanied by a loud crunch that stimulated the ears of everyone watching. Despite being soaked in sauce that Minhyuk had poured in advance, the God's Tonkatsu remained crunchy. It was both a mystery and a miracle. Minhyuk could not help but smile as he gulped down the meat in his mouth.

[He took a bite! Player Minhyuk has taken a bite out of the tonkatsu!!!]

[He's the one that's chewing but I feel like I'm the one tasting it. It's definitely making my mouth water!]

[Ah! That smile...! That's definitely a smile that we make when we eat something delicious! Right? It's definitely that smile!!!]

[Right now, the number one search term is tonkatsu. 'Tonkatsu' has taken over the global portal sites!]

[I think I'll get some tonkatsu for dinner later.]

But Minhyuk and Diablo's mukbang was not yet over. Minhyuk mixed the apple dressing with the salad. The salad, with its sweet flavor and crispy texture, was the perfect dish for a change of pace

whenever Minhyuk felt tired of the crunchy texture of the tonkatsu. The thinly sliced cabbage and its crisp, fresh texture was a delight to the mouth.

Then, there was the corn. The savory flavor of the corn, with the occasional burst of sweetness, would spread inside his mouth in every bite.

Scrape, scrape—

The sound of Minhyuk's spoon scraping every last bit of the sauce on his plate rang loudly! His firm determination to not leave a single drop of sauce and a single grain of corn was perfectly displayed at this very moment!

[Player Minhyuk is literally licking the plate clean.]

[He's not letting anyone else know what he ate on his plate! That's the true spirit of a mukbang BJ!]

After their peaceful mukbang ended, Diablo began to twitch. The players that were hunting named monsters near them began to retreat after realizing that an unusual situation was about to unfold.

“Keuheok!” Diablo roared to the sky as black demonic energy poured out of his open mouth.

Puhaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

Vast amounts of black demonic energy shot up and shrouded the entire stadium in darkness, until it eventually took on the shape of a demon's head.

[Once again, you... interrupt... trifling... human...]

The demon was none other than Great Demon Verus. The entire world watched with bated breath. Great Demon Verus was an existence that appeared in all of the servers and was a figure that struck fear and terror to everyone. According to the information that Athenae had published, Great Demon Verus' main body was a supreme being that none of the current players could confront right now.

However, Minhyuk just looked up at the Great Demon Verus and said, “It's time for you to get lost.”

As if on cue, Verus' figure slowly dissipated. Minhyuk's intuition was telling him that this incident would definitely lead to an episode one day. Then, the notifications rang.

[You have freed Lesser Demon Diablo from the demons' demonic energy.]

[Diablo's frenzied state has been lifted. His sanity has returned.]

Then, a quest notification popped up in front of Minhyuk the moment Diablo looked at him.

Ring!

“Of course. I will find her for you,” Minhyuk nodded.

Diablo smiled lightly. Then, Minhyuk took out a sword from his inventory. The sword was none other than the Devil Judge’s Sword, an Absolute Demigod artifact that was originally owned by Diablo. Diablo slowly reached his hand out to take the sword. This scene made the players and the viewers realize...

‘Diablo and Minhyuk will cooperate.’

‘This competition is now heading to an unknown route.’

‘We can’t guarantee our victory or our defeat now.’

All of the players had gathered enough data on Minhyuk. They were aware that the buffed dishes that he could make carried a supreme and absolute power that was far beyond anyone’s imagination. If Minhyuk’s normal dishes were already that powerful, what about the dish that Diablo ate? That was a God Dish!

On top of that, he even gave Diablo a strange-looking sword.

“Our ratings are rising quickly!”

“The competition’s ratings have increased dramatically!”

The broadcasting officials shouted in joy.

There were two main reasons why their ratings were increasing dramatically. One, just an hour ago, an article revealed Minhyuk as the sole successor of his father, the chairman of Ilhwa Group, one of the top ten global companies, Ilhwa Group.

Two, Minhyuk liberated the supreme and absolute named monster, a never before seen existence, from his frenzied state and returned him back to being a Named NPC. The said NPC even had a great bond with him. All of this combined could pique anyone’s interest. Those that were looking at the real-time search results,, those that were listening to the discussion of the people around them, and those that were watching from their mobile phones and TVs all rushed to watch the competition’s live broadcast.

Diablo and Minhyuk stood up and walked side by side to the place where Diablo originally appeared. The two of them looked at the crowd of players around them. The players, who were hunting named monsters just a few moments prior, all stopped in their tracks and looked at Minhyuk and Diablo warily with sweat dripping down their foreheads.

“Our, our highest viewership rating since the start of the World War has been broken!!!”

The ratings of the broadcasting stations from each country were slowly rising to reach and surpass their highest ratings. This was all thanks to Minhyuk. He often created shocking and big situations, ones that could increase his already astronomical value even further.

‘Daehan Group, the one that dared to attack me, will no longer be able to chase after Ilhwa.’

Simply put, not only would he win this fight, he would also win his fight in reality. And the fact that this game was a time-limited game played a very important role. What would happen if the players were logged out in the middle of the game? Then, they would not be able to raise their scores anymore. Everyone was nervous because they already knew that fact.

Then, Minhyuk leapt forward and aimed for his first target. His first target? It was none other than Calauhel. Minhyuk already knew that Calauhel’s Merciless Hero’s Armor, the armor that helped him reach the ‘Summit’s ranks’ was destroyed. After all, he was the one that destroyed it. Without the protection of that armor, it would be easy for Minhyuk to deal with him. Minhyuk had judged that Calauhel, who was hostile to him, should be dealt with first. But before Minhyuk could use Like the Wind to reach Calauhel with his God-rank sword...

Clatter—

...a strange sound rang loudly in the stadium.

The players all turned to look at the direction where the sound came from. What greeted them there was a black scythe connected to a chain flying fiercely towards Calauhel. The power packed behind the flying scythe was so strong that it could dig up the ground and create rubbles that flew all over the place.

Crack, crack, crack—

Calauhel failed to counter Diablo’s attack and was forced to fly back the moment his sword collided with the scythe. However, Diablo did not let him go so easily, his scythe continued to fly after him to try and completely destroy him.

Ping, ping, ping, ping—

Of course, as someone that reached the Summit Five, Calauhel had fantastic control. Despite being sent flying back by the impact of Diablo’s attack, Calauhel was still able to try and defend himself from the scythe’s irregular attacks. However, no matter what Calauhel did, Diablo’s scythe was like fish in water. A flick of Diablo’s wrist and it would fly up, down, left, right while ripping and tearing apart every part of his body. And the worst part...

[Your enemy’s sharp attack has broken a string of muscle in your body.]

[The movement on your right leg will be severely restricted.]

[The movement on your left wrist will be severely restricted.]

Diablo’s scythe was a long-range weapon. It gave him more freedom and fluidity than when he was using a sword.

‘It seems like Diablo and the Devil Judge’s Sword is the perfect fit. Huh?’

Even Minhyuk was amazed with how amazing Diablo was using the sword. He landed on the floor and quickly used ‘Like the Wind’ to dash to where Calauhel was. Then, he used Scattering Sword, with an attack power that was several times higher than normal with the help of Continent Destroyer Sword, on the severely restricted Calauhel.

Baaaaaaaang—

Calauhel slowly disappeared from view as he slammed straight into the ground. It only took six seconds for Minhyuk and Diablo to deal with Calauhel. Recalling his death in the Penalty Shoot-out event before and watching him die pitifully in less than ten seconds during this Named Monster Hunting Event gave birth to an idea in everyone's mind.

'Is Calauhel born to become Player Minhyuk's second fiddle?'

The idea that appeared in their heads made them even more shocked. After all, Calauhel, although known to be the weakest, was still a part of the Summit Five.

Claaaaaaaang—

The Hunting King sent out a black energy from his sword and attacked Minhyuk.

Shwaaaaaaak—

Minhyuk flew back from the impact of the attack. However, he was able to quickly center his balance and land stably on his feet. Then, he looked around. He could see that the other players have realized the most important thing that they needed to do in their situation right now. This was especially the case for the Hunting King. He quickly gathered the players around him.

"Hunter's Roar! Graaaaaaaaaaaaaa!" A strange roar, akin to that of a tiger's roar, broke out from the Hunting King's mouth. Tremendous force surrounded the Hunting King and the players that surrounded him. These were the notifications that they heard right after..

[The Hunter's Targeted Prey's great power has been activated.]

[You will be able to temporarily gain the same power after hearing the Hunter's Roar.]

[If you successfully land an attack on your prey, the damage that you will receive will be reduced by 50% and your evasion rate will increase by 500%.]

[The buff's duration is thirty seconds.]

That was right. The Hunter's Roar was the renowned skill that placed the Hunting King in the summit of monster hunting. It was also a skill that exerted more power when triggered and applied to his allies. This was because the skill would give the same power to his allies. But the most shocking part was...

'That's crazy! We're not even in a party but it still worked on us?!'

'So this is the power of the Hunting King...?'

This was the strongest monster hunter.

Dozens of players, who realized that this was their only chance to hunt Diablo, rushed forward.

Slaaaaaaaash—

Diablo's scythe swung fiercely to stop them. But with a swing of Gravity Master Lupin's hands, Diablo's scythe was forced to stop in mid-air. Seeing this, the players continued to fiercely dash forward.

“God’s Revelation!”

Shwaaaaaaa—

A gigantic sword made of light shot straight towards Diablo.

“Fist of Death.”

Baaaaaaaang—

An Indian close-combat class player by the name of Vyanjan sent a fist containing a tremendous force towards Diablo. Dozens of attacks were sent towards Diablo.

Diablo immediately retrieved his scythe and turned it into a sword. Then, he stopped for a moment before splitting the sword of light that was stretching towards him with a swing of his sword.

“...!”

The sword that split the sword of light did not stop there. It stretched forward and even split the Fist of Death along with several other skills, effectively offsetting every attack that was coming his way.

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Despite seeing everything up close, the players still could not believe their eyes.

Diablo was an absolute genius with a talent that could shock even the great demons. That was why they gave him the name...

Lesser Demon Diablo.

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Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang—

Ten players rushed forward with their swords and sent their attacks at Diablo. However, these ten swords that clashed against Diablo’s sword were all useless. And...

Baaaaaaaang—

...even their owners were sent flying back from the impact of Diablo’s sword strike.

“Ur... urk! This... this is already the damage after the 50% damage reduction has been applied...?!”

There were only a little over ten seconds left with the buff. Just when everyone’s nerves were tense from anxiety...

[Ghost of the Battlefield.]

[Movement Speed will increase by 350% within a 30 meter radius.]

[Attack and Defense will increase by 30% within a 30 meter radius.]

...Alexander swiftly made his move.

Clank, clank, clank, clank—

Alexander, with a ridiculous increase in his movement speed, greatly overwhelmed Diablo in terms of speed. He gathered a huge amount of force in his arm and struck Diablo.

Baaaaaaaang—

For the first time, Diablo staggered and took one step back. But Alexander did not stop. Up, down, left, right, his sword continued to attack Diablo, forcing him to take more steps back. The viewers, even the players in the stadium, could not follow his movements with their eyes. Alexander left dozens of afterimages and left extreme pressure on Diablo. As long as they worked together and did not miss this chance, they might have a chance of hunting Diablo! A ray of hope finally shone on the players.

Meanwhile, the viewers watched them at the edge of their seats.

‘This is fun! So fun!’

This was the new type of game that Minhyuk had created. Minhyuk and Diablo, versus forty players! The players rushed to fight against Diablo’s supreme power. However, one player, Minhyuk, was starting another spark on his own.

“Continent Destroyer.”

Minhyuk flew high up in the sky. And as if in sync, Diablo also flew up.

“...What?!” Alexander felt something unusual. He immediately jumped up to attack Minhyuk but Diablo easily offset his attack with his sword, now turned into scythe.

A powerful force wrapped around Minhyuk’s sword, until it gathered at the tip of his sword. Then, he stabbed his sword straight down into the ground.

Baaaaaaaaaaaang—

“Huh, huuuuuuuuuh?!”

“What the hell?!”

The players in the vicinity lost their balance and fell down on the ground. Then, a powerful shockwave stretched out and caused damage to the players that fell down.

[Continent Destroyer]

[The moment the sword gets stabbed into the ground, everyone within a 35 meter radius will incur an additional 500% damage from powerful shockwaves.]

[Lava will rise five meters from the ground and cause an additional 1,600% damage to anyone that it touches and will continuously incur additional 100% damage.]

The players with a good sense of balance, or those that had special skills immediately jumped up to the sky. However, there were still quite a few players that had been forced to log out by the sudden changes in the terrain.

“We’re saved...”

“That’s crazy...! I almost got logged out there!”

All of the surviving players sighed with relief. This was because they were all at the same level as Diablo, so they were safe from the damage of Minhyuk's attack. But then, Minhyuk, who had already used Like the Wind, looked at Diablo. It was a sign that asked Diablo to use his scythe to grab onto Minhyuk. Diablo immediately understood what Minhyuk meant.

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang—

Diablo was pulled up as the chains of his scythe wrapped around Minhyuk’s arm. And as if waiting for this moment...

Puhaaaaaaaaaa—

...a gigantic pillar of lava erupted from the ground and engulfed the players that flew in the skies, incurring 1,600% additional damage.

“Keuhaaaaaaaaack!”

“Aaaaaaaaaack!”

The players started to turn gray and disappear. Among them, there were quite a few people that had been exhausted from fighting against named monsters. In fact, even with players that had high flame resistance, it was hard for them to resist that attack.

All but one player. Alexander stepped on some mysterious beads and pulled himself out of the area of effect like a ghost. Then, he pulled out his mysterious pocket and recovered the beads while gulping dryly in trepidation.

‘What the hell is that player?!’

Alexander could not help but compare Minhyuk to all the countless NPCs and monsters that he had encountered. After all, he had encountered many of them with at least this much power. However, no player had reached that level yet. And Alexander, someone who could hunt monsters that were as powerful as that, was hailed as the strongest simply because he was the strongest player in existence.

However, this was a game and the players would eventually grow in three, five, seven, or ten years, and be able to hunt monsters of that caliber. And at this very moment, everyone had witnessed Minhyuk’s level, one where none of the current players could reach.

‘And what’s more shocking is...’

Minhyuk’s main class was a chef.

Cold sweat dripped down Alexander’s forehead. The area ravaged by Continent Destroyer had now literally become hell on earth. What about the players that were using cooling potions to pull themselves out of the fire? Of course, Minhyuk and Diablo did not let them go. Minhyuk easily killed those that tried to get out. After all, it was easy to deal with exhausted players. Those that Minhyuk had trouble dealing with, or missed out, were easily overpowered by Diablo. Most of the

named monsters that were loitering in the field had also been dealt with, thanks to the Continent Destroyer's far-reaching radius.

It was not long for Korea, who was last in the rankings, to reach eight place. Furthermore, this event was a 'time-limited game', the one that could hunt the most named monster within the time limit would win. In other words, those that had been logged out would no longer be able to score, while those that survived would still be able to score.

The only ones left in the stadium right now were Minhyuk, Diablo and Alexander.

[It all comes down to Alexander vs. Minhyuk and Diablo! The situation may not look very good, but we all know that Alexander is a legend. He's definitely not a pushover!]

[That's right. He has tremendous power. Besides, he still hasn't used his 'Ghost's Frenzy' in this competition yet.]

The commentators and the viewers all looked at them in anticipation. How would Alexander fight against them? Who would exert even more strength? But then...

"I surrender," Alexander declared before going further away. "It's a hard battle."

Alexander had thought about dropping out of the game, but if he did that then even the silver medal would be lost. 'Dropping out' meant that he would give the game up and his score would be reset. However, surrendering meant that he would no longer fight. Besides, he was aware that Minhyuk was very clever and cunning.

'I'm sure he's not showing all of his strength since he knows that I'll eventually lose, right?'

The game was already decided. If it was a 1v1 fight between him and Minhyuk, Alexander was sure that Minhyuk would lose. But with Diablo in the mix, it was a different story. Alexander and Diablo were on different levels. This was a fight that he would not win, and he would be foolish to think otherwise. He could already tell that he would be poured with a bucket of criticisms, but he still remained calm.

'Why would I even show all of my strength when it's already a losing battle?'

Alexander did not have to fight recklessly here. And Minhyuk did not really need to attack him either. Whether he surrendered or got killed, the fact that he would only be able to get the silver medal and that Minhyuk would win the gold medal was undeniable.

Minhyuk quickly narrowed the distance in scores between him and the other players by hunting the named monsters. His score was able to dramatically increase since the only players left were him and Alexander. And finally...

Minhyuk won another medal. After confirming his gold medal, he quickly stopped fighting and turned to Diablo and talked to him. And once the game was over, he was covered with a flashing light and disappeared from sight. Just like that, Minhyuk won two gold medals. As of now, only he and Alexander had won two gold medals.

This was a story that took place after the events of the Athenae: World War.

Minhyuk visited Diablo, handed him two pieces of paper and then disappeared. Diablo followed the path that was written on one of the pieces of paper that Minhyuk handed to him.

Whether it was under the cold rain, or over huge mountains, he continued to walk, until he finally reached the house that he used to live in. It was a house that he could not really remember that well, since it had turned into a fragment of a very distant memory.

Diablo looked at his already collapsed house. After looking at his house, he moved forward and headed somewhere else. It was not that far from his house. The place was covered with a myriad of tombstones.

‘My mother...’

Perhaps his beloved mother had died waiting for him to return. Diablo felt horrible. He was a son that had never even visited his mother’s grave. Perhaps, her grave had already disappeared with the sands of time. Or if, by any chance, it was still there, it would definitely be unmanaged.

Diablo suddenly stopped in his tracks. The grasses that were growing around his mother’s grave were neatly trimmed. There were even flowers that were planted in a beautiful arrangement around it, flowers that were in full bloom and facing the sky. They were sunflowers, flowers that meant ‘waiting’ in the language of flowers.

An old man that was trimming the grass next to his mother’s grave spoke up, “It’s a bit strange, but sunflowers always grew on that grave. Even if you pluck it, it will grow again and again. It’s really strange.”

The old man paused for a moment as if he thought about something before continuing to speak, “Ah, that’s right. Not too long ago, a man that can eat as much as an elephant came here with some people to clean that grave. He seems like he’s in a high position, but he cleaned the grave with his own hands.”

Tears welled up in Diablo’s eyes. He watched as the squirrels jumped around and played on his mother’s clean and neat grave, while ladybugs frolicked around after falling down from the plants. This was what Minhyuk and the Hybrid Race did. When he looked down, Diablo discovered something written on her mother’s tombstone as a memorial.

[Helen, Mother of the Great Hero that sacrificed himself for mankind, rests here.]

He was a lesser demon, not a hero.

Hot tears dripped down Diablo’s cheeks. Then, he started walking again. This time, he was following the directions written in the other note. He climbed mountains and crossed rivers. When he felt thirsty, he would drink river water, when he was hungry, he would hunt wild animals. Still, he walked.

He walked for days on end, but his steps remained powerful and energetic. Finally, he reached his destination.

“Grrrrrr!”

“Grrr?!”

A three-headed dog greeted Diablo the moment he arrived.

“Grow hair! Grow!”

Then, he saw a strange man shouting loudly in public.

“Ack! Rascal! Why is your poop so little today?!”

Turning around, he saw a black-haired old man checking a cat’s butt, and a dark-skinned boy taking a nap with a white wolf. There was also a burly man whose height could rival his own, emitting a fierce aura despite chewing on hay and humming, while lying among the pigs.

Finally, Diablo reached an extremely huge mansion with a door that could only be reached after climbing a flight of stairs. The huge doors opened as a man came out and stood atop the stairs. The man looked down at Diablo with a smile on his face. Seeing the smile on the man’s face made Diablo recall the words written on the note in his hands.

[Lesser Demon Diablo. What’s your real name?]

The words were written together with the directions to this place.

“El... pi...” Diablo stuttered. Although he had returned to his human form, he was still clumsy in his speech, since it had been a long time since he last spoke. However, the man did not feel irritated and just listened to him patiently.

“Elpi... s...”

Elpis. Minhyuk knew the meaning of this word. In Greek, this word meant ‘hope’.

“What a good name.”

Diablo knelt on one knee and spoke with a low and somber voice, “I want... to stay... together... with... you...”

Then, Diablo tried to look up at the man, with a bright smile on his face. However, it had been a long time since he had last shown an emotion on his face, so his muscles had turned stiff. His lips moved slowly and awkwardly and it took him a long time, but he was still able to show Minhyuk a broad and bright smile. One could say that his smile was charming and beautiful.

He was Elpis, the man that would become Let’s Eat Sect’s shield.

Chapter 424: Beanie’s Performance

The event that would mark the end of the first ever World War had firmly caught everyone’s attention. This event was none other than Prince(ss) Rescue Event.

One of the reasons why the Prince(ss) Rescue Event was gaining a lot of attention was because the players’ pets would be participating. Pets, while similar to summons in terms of appearance, were different in one aspect: they had an ‘owner buff’ effect, whereas summoned monsters did not.

Also, anyone could have pets even though they were not summoners, since pets were not exclusive to the summoner class. However, unlike other RPGs, pets in *Athenae* could not be purchased in stores and could only be obtained through sheer luck. In other words, although anyone could have one, the difficulty in obtaining one meant that the number of players that owned pets was not that high.

Another reason why the ‘Prince(ss) Rescue’ event was gaining a lot of attention was also because of the pets’ cuteness, which played a big factor.

Still, the biggest reason was because it was the final event. The Prince(ss) Rescue was the final game that would determine the winner between South Korea and America, the two countries that were neck and neck, and were tied in terms of gold medals won. Also, compared to players, information on pets was relatively unknown. This resulted in higher expectations for the battlefield where cool pets, cute pets, and beautiful pets would appear to fight.

Of course, there were also requirements for those that would participate in the event. Only one pet could participate per country and this pet should have a certain amount of intelligence, before they could be accepted to join the game.

The lights started to flash as the start of the game approached quickly. The first pet appeared in front of the screens that turned on all at once.

[It’s Japan’s Nyan-nyanmon!!! Nyan-nyanmon is a small bipedal cat acting as Japan’s mascot. He has plenty of fans under the fanclub ‘Nyanshaimase’. And as if to cater to Nyan-nyanmon’s small build, he also has a small katana hanging on his back!]

Then, another small figure made a splendid appearance, breaking through streams of black energy and slashing his sword down on the ground.

[Crack, crack, crack, crack—]

The ground cracked as a blast of heat burst out of the seams. What appeared in front of everyone was a small Death Knight the size of a goblin.

[Here we have a strong candidate for gold! Death Knight Lynn has appeared! Unlike Nyan-nyanmon earlier, he’s in charge of coolness.]

Pets started to appear one after the other. With over forty countries participating, various pets were making their appearance! Just then, one of the pets that appeared caught everyone’s attention the moment it made its appearance.

[Puhaaaaaaaaaak—!]

A powerful flame burst out inside the stadium. What appeared after the flames died down was...

[Heooooooooook!]

[It’s... it’s a hatchling! A hatchling!!!]

[Hatchlings are considered to be baby dragons. According to America’s Player Parker, a player that owns a hatchling, they are pets that will never grow past the hatchling stage. They’re also only as big as two adult man’s fists put together. However, you can’t look down on them just because they are small.]

...literally a hatchling. The overwhelming appearance of the hatchling gathered the attention of countless people. In fact, this was the first time that a hatchling has ever made its appearance in public. The hatchling, who was named ‘Dragonine’, was also a strong candidate for gold. Now, there were only two pets left to be announced.

[Ah. The pet that I'm going to introduce this time is a bit special. Ah, I stand corrected. It's not the pet, but the pet owner that's special.]

[How come?]

The commentators' words aroused the curiosity of the viewers.

[Don't worry, we have gained the consent of the pet owner before informing everyone. The pet owner, a Chinese, said that they had lived a lonely and sad life for the past thirty years and even got rejected by Athenae NPCs a hundred times. Ah~ My goodness~]

The stands sighed along with the commentators. Then, the commentator continued to speak...

[Just like that, they found an existence that was similar to them. It was their pet, another special existence. According to the owner, their pet, previously a monster, had waited for one person, and one person alone, in the Korean server for a very long time. But after waiting for a very long time, the monster decided to roam the world and look for this person. The 'Goddess of Love' Lovia, as if to respond to the monster's feelings, blessed the monster and gave them a new strength, which helped them to wander the world to find the person that they were looking for. Well then, without further ado, we present you...!!!]

The viewer's expectations soared at the commentators' words. It was the encounter of a dignified man, who had been single for thirty years, and a pet that had been waiting for someone for a very long time! And that existence was none other than...

[China's Immortal Monk!!!]

[Just like we have mentioned earlier, Monk was originally a monster. But with the power that Lovia has bestowed upon her, she has turned into a pet. It's truly an unprecedented scenario.]

The monk, who appeared on the screens, shyly tucked her hair behind her ear.

[Okiikii!]

The viewers looked at the monk in curiosity. They were very surprised at the fact that a monster had turned into a pet.

Meanwhile, one man among those that would be 'prince(ss) rescued' sat in a large cage, trapped like a bird. This man was none other than Minhyuk. He sat up in shock and exclaimed, "M... Monk?!"

That was right. The monk that appeared was the same monk that Minhyuk met during the preliminaries of a competition that Eivelis Empire held a long time ago! Minhyuk could clearly remember her because she gave him bananas. And, he was someone that never forgot someone that 'gave him food'.

'I wonder who she's waiting for?'

The dense Minhyuk did not know that the one that she was waiting for was actually him!

Amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the crowd, one final pet stood on the stage. He was Korea's mascot, the pet that played a huge role during Vormon's hunt. Everyone knew him, that was why they were looking forward to his appearance.

Finally, he made his appearance. He was wearing a golden robe, the robe usually worn by wrestlers before they entered the ring, as well as a pair of sunglasses, and a snapback on his head. There was even a thick golden necklace hanging on his neck from who knew where.

[Beanie has appeared! What a strange appearance!]

[Beanie is dancing to the rhythm. He's overflowing with swag!!!]

[He actually looks like a rapper.]

Minhyuk supported his forehead helplessly.

'Where the hell did he get that?'

Beanie had been watching *Show Me The Money* in the summoning room these days. Minhyuk did not think too much about it, but in the end, something this worrisome had happened due to his negligence. However, the more shocking part was when Beanie took out a small mic and held it in his tiny paws. It was as if someone had handed him the mic with his posture.

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

Cheers echoed loudly in the stadium. Then, Beanie raised one of his three fingers and gently placed it on his lips as if to 'shush' the crowd. Surprisingly enough, the tens of thousands of crowd in the stadium turned silent after seeing his action.

Beanie smirked while nodding haughtily, as if he was satisfied with their response. He then stood firmly before slashing his neck with his tiny finger in a gesture as if he was announcing to the world that he would slaughter all of his enemies! Then, his wrestling robe flapped loudly with the wind as he turned around smugly amidst the loud cheers of the crowd.

"...?"

Minhyuk might not understand them, but the audience found the baby piggy's unique style and appearance, together with his round and protruding belly, extremely cute.

The Prince(ss) Rescue Event was finally about to begin. More than forty pets appeared in the field. Every single one of them was maintaining a distance from one another. There, in the distance, was a huge castle where large cages, which imprisoned the pet owners, sprang up one after the other.

[It's pretty self-explanatory, the pets' owners are locked up by the cruel and vicious Adaels Kingdom.]

[The pets can gain attack points, defense points, and command points. Of course, the more enemies they hunt, the higher scores they would get. But if the pet saves their owner first then they would get the highest score.]

[In addition, the Adaels Kingdom will have the same number of 'knights' as the number of participating pets. And from what I heard, these knights are extremely strong.]

[I'm very excited to see the pets' unique characteristics.]

With those words, a hundred troops with similar characteristics to each pet appeared behind them. Just like how a hundred 140cm small bipedal cats appeared behind Nyan-nyanmon, a hundred 140cm bipedal pigs also appeared behind Beanie.

“Oink, oink! Oink! Oink, oink!” Beanie squealed somberly while the hundred pigs behind him listened intently. By the end of his spiel, Beanie lifted his black kitchen knife up which...

“Hwiiiiiiiiik!”

“Oiiiiiiiiink!”

...effectively increased the morale of the pig troops.

[I’m sure what Beanie said to them was: ‘Evil and vicious people have imprisoned my master. I want to save and protect him so please lend me your strength! Let’s fight together!’.]

[This is a pet’s firm will and determination to save his master!!! Beanie really cares for Player Minhyuk. This is really heart-warming.]

However, it was just their wishful thinking. The reality was different from the picture that they painted.

“When that master bastard called me early in the morning, there’s a delicious smell lingering on his clothes. He must have eaten something without me! Pigs, do you think that’s fair?! Let’s catch master and scold him! Also, my master has a lot of delicious food in his inventory!!!”

Of course, the pigs had no choice but to cheer loudly.

‘Let’s take all of my master’s food!!!’

“Oink, oink!!!” Beanie looked at one of the bipedal pigs grimly and asked it to walk on four feet. The pig, then, crouched down as Beanie rode on top of it. And with the golden crown on his head, Beanie glared at the battlefield. Then...

Vwoooooooooooooooooong—

The blare of the horn that rang deep inside the castle marked the beginning of the war.

“Oiiiiiiiiink!?(*For the master’s food!!!*)”

“Oink! (*The master’s food!*)

”

“Hwiiiiik! (*The master’s food!*)”

‘Dragonine’, the hatchling, ran at the forefront, with 140cm tall dragon warriors following behind him, the moment the battle started. As he flew forward with his small wings, he opened his mouth and let out a huge breath of fire.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

The kingdom's troops rushed out of the castle as the gate exploded from Dragonine's attack.

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump!

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump!

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump!

Even archers and mages appeared on top of the walls! Meanwhile, Beanie, who was sitting on top of one of the pigs, dashed forward. A fire arrow flew straight towards him.

Fwoosh—

However, Beanie easily dodged the attack by ducking his head. He continued to run forward, with his hundred-strong pig troops, to get as close to the castle as possible.

Finally, the humans started to get serious and sent hundreds of their cavalry out!

[Aaaaaaaaah! Nyan-nyanmon is running like a samurai!]

[Nyan-nyanmon is going to use his skill! It's Nyan-nyan Punch!!!]

Nyan-nyan Punch was the skill name that Nyan-nyanmon's owner had given the skill! The moment the skill got cast, something round and furry appeared in front of each member of the cavalry!

These furry and round things were none other than Nyan-nyanmon's paws! And each of these paws were holding a samurai sword.

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—

The samurai swords stabbed the horses and brought the cavalry down. In the end, the cavalry and the pet troops collided.

Baaaaaaaang!

The Immortal Monk had been waiting for Minhyuk for a very long time! She felt impatient knowing that the love of her life was right here and being imprisoned by evil men! She was sure that this was what he would tell her once she saved him: *'Monkie, thank you for coming to my rescue. Actually, I... to you...'*

Then, they would go behind the bushes together and...

"Kiikii!"

Monk shyly tucked her hair behind her ears, her face flushing red at the thought! However, this was a momentary mistake. She should not be in a daze in the middle of a battlefield. The ground shook from the explosion spell cast by one of the human mages.

"Kii?"

Monk hurriedly tried to use Blink to avoid the attack, but she was already too late. But then, at that moment...

"Oiiiiiiiink!"

Someone hugged her tightly and brought her to the skies.

Baaaaaaaaaang—

Reflected in Monk's eyes was a manly figure highlighted by the huge explosion behind them.

'Aaaaaah. This pig is so handsome.'

The pig smirked at her as he gently put her down on the ground before sweeping his imaginary bangs up with his paw. And in Monk's head, a BGM was playing...

?~Moonlight is falling~?

?~Shalalala~?

Then, the pig, with his princely and gentle smile, turned around with his paw raised above his head, waving goodbye to her.

"Kiikii... (So cool...)"

Unbeknownst to Monk, Beanie fell into his own narcissistic thoughts the moment he turned around.

'I'm so charismatic, oink!'

Chapter 425: Beanie's Performance

A fearsome battle broke out as the pet troops clashed against the Aedels Kingdom's troops! The human cavalry's spears, with the aid of gravity and speed, exerted power that far surpassed the norm which made it harder for the pets.

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—

"Nyaaaaaaang!"

"Mooooooooo!"

"Kiheeeeeeeck!"

However, despite the battlefield being rife with shrieks and screams, the pet troops were not being pushed back. At that moment, Dragonine the hatchling, the strongest favorite for the championship, spread his wings and flew up to the sky, creating dozens of magical attacks which he sent straight towards the enemy human troops!

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

[Dragonine's fierce momentum has allowed him to take the lead since the start of the game!]

[As expected of the greatest existence in the world! Even though he's just a hatchling, the fact that he's a dragon still remains! He's extremely powerful!]

The difference in points in the rankings was very huge.

The pets continued to score points using their abilities. But then, the gates opened once again only to release another unit of troops.

“Kyaaaaaaaaaack!”

The hatchling felt a great sense of urgency. He knew that their path would remain blocked if they could not break through those incoming troops. But at that moment...

“Oink!!!”

...Beanie flew up in the sky and cast his skill! The skill was none other than the skill attached to the ‘Food God’s Kitchen Knife’, the ‘Rain of Kitchen Knives’.

Stab—

A kitchen knife fell down from the sky, stabbing one of the soldiers from Adaels Kingdom’s troops. With that kitchen knife as the signal, kitchen knives began to rain down from the sky, effectively wiping out the Adaels Kingdom’s leading unit. The power of the attack did not lag behind the power that the hatchling displayed before.

[Am... amazing. He wiped out the troops’ vanguard unit in no time at all!]

[This game determines Korea and America’s fate. It seems like that fate is in the hands of Dragonine and Beanie.]

This was the finale of the very first World War. Beanie and Dragonine’s eyes met as they led their own troops forward.

“Oiiiiiiiink!” Beanie raised his paw and pointed at the castle. With that, the pig troops finally advanced forward and entered the castle!

Dragonine, with his fierce momentum, also followed right behind them. After successfully entering the castle, Beanie climbed the stairs and fought fiercely against the troops blocking his path. He sneaked under their legs and stabbed their backs with his kitchen knife.

Stab—

“Oink!”

He also stepped on the fallen soldiers to leap forward and slash the neck of the next human ahead.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

That was right. Beanie and the hatchling were completely different. Beanie was a ‘melee class’, whereas the hatchling was a long-range class. And Beanie... he was the strongest among all of the melee class pets.

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—

Countless soldiers, who stepped on the narrow passage to stop them from advancing, all fell under Beanie’s kitchen knife.

“Oiiiiiiiink! (*Just you wait, master bastard! I won’t let you go!*)”

Beanie tried to climb up again but the hundreds of troops were able to gain back their momentum and take control of the situation. At that moment...

Grab—

Grab—

Grab—

“Hi, hiiiik!”

“What... what the hell is that?!”

Mysterious black hands suddenly appeared in the gaps of the walls! The black hands grabbed the soldiers by the neck and pressed them against the walls.

“Keheok!”

“Keuhaaaaaaack!”

In an instant, the road in front of Beanie opened. When Beanie turned around, he saw Immortal Monk looking at him with a shy smile on her face.

“Oink!”

Beanie reached the top of the ramparts and saw Minhyuk with the hatchling right at his heels.

Keuhaaaaaaaa—

Dragonine sent out a frightening breath from his mouth, which melted and dealt damage to the incoming troops and knights lined up together and waiting for their arrival. At the same time, Beanie opened his mouth wide and...

Keuhaaaaaaaa—

...sent a hatchling's breath towards the troops and knights guarding Minhyuk's cage, effectively melting the troops and some parts of the cage down. This was Beanie's Predator's Authority.

“Beans, quick!”

This fight would mark the end of the World War. So, Beanie wanted to make a splendid grand finale. However, something strange happened. More and more knights flocked to where Beanie was.

“This punk!”

“Oink!” Beanie oinked as he continued to fight fiercely against the knights.

In fact, it was not just him, even the hatchling was being crowded by knights. It seemed like the knights moved to prevent them from trying to open the prison that held their masters. Although Beanie stood at the pinnacle of pets, it was still tough for him to fight against five knights all by himself.

Punch—

A punch slammed the tiny Beanie straight on the ground. Even the hatchling was in a sorry state, with one of his wings ripped off by the knights. Despite fighting against each other in the beginning to arrive faster than the other pets, the two of them were forced to cooperate to fight back against these knights. Even after working together, in the end, the hatchling struggled and failed to stand up.

Beanie, who was able to stand up, was just about to engage in another fierce and tough battle. However, one of the knights released his aura and shot a powerful force straight towards Beanie's face.

"Oiiiiiiiink!"

Beanie could tell that he could not avoid this blow. But then...

Staaaaaab—

...the sound of the attack hitting someone's flesh rang. Strangely enough, Beanie did not feel any pain. This meant that the attack struck someone else. Beanie's eyes widened when he saw Immortal Monk take the attack in his stead.

Then, at that moment, Beanie decided to show the world his secret skill. He quickly swapped his weapon with Hepas' Flipper Blade and used the skill: Flipping Blade.

Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping—

Attacks constantly poured out from Beanie's swiftly moving flipper blade which made the knights scream and collapse. After dealing with the knights surrounding him, Beanie gently laid the head of the dying Immortal Monk on his lap.

"Oiiiiiiiink?! (Why?!)"

Hearing his words, Immortal Monk looked up at him. She looked at Beanie's pink nose that fluttered with every breath, at his round eyes and his cherry-red lips!

'Aaaah! A sexy sire!'

At this very moment, Monk's love for Minhyuk had completely transferred to Beanie. She raised her trembling hands and tried to caress Beanie's face, but in the end...

Flop—

...Monk's HP reached zero. Until the very end, the thought that lingered in her head was a steamy night of mating with Beanie.

"Oiiiiiiiiiiiiink! (Nooooooooooooo!)"

Beanie hugged Immortal Monk tightly and looked up at the sky and roared. The scene looked just like the usual tragic scenes in movies. No, in fact...

'They're playing around too much...'

The dense Minhyuk was speechless at both Beanie and Immortal Monk. Then, at that moment...

Shwaaaaa—

...the hatchling, which was also surrounded by knights, succumbed to one of the attacks and disappeared into nothingness. Not wanting to let Immortal Monk's sacrifice be in vain, Beanie moved quickly and took advantage of the knights' daze.

Clack—!

Beanie successfully unlocked Minhyuk's cage.

[Bea... Beanie successfully breaks the lock! He's the first one to do so! This means that Korea has won the first World War!]

[That's very shocking!]

Beanie and the rescued Minhyuk both disappeared in a flash of light. At the same time, the entire nation jumped up from their seats and jumped around in joy. Minhyuk and the members of Let's Eat Sect were also very happy with the outcome. Not long after, the winners of the event's silver and bronze medals were announced.

Everyone turned to look at the electronic display board after all of the events ended. And on the board...

“Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

“Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

Passionate chants of the Food God's name resounded in the stadium.

Atlas, City in the Skies.

The pigs, cows, and chickens, in short, all of the livestock of the entire territory were given a little freedom. This was all thanks to the efforts of Brod, who now dreamed of becoming the Livestock King.

Brod had taken care of the monsters around Atlas Territory and asked for permission to allow the livestocks to graze in that area from Ben and Haze, the people in charge of Atlas' management.

“We did it!”

“Oiiiiiiiink!”

“Mooooooooo!”

“Cluck, cluuuuuck!”

“Meeeeeeeeeeeh~”

Brod felt genuinely pleased to watch the animals under his care roam around freely and happily. Some pigs...

“Hwiiiiik!”

...even shed tears.

Then, the notifications rang for Brod.

[You have successfully led the livestock to a better path.]

[Aevalin, the God of Livestocks, was deeply moved by your actions.]

[God of Livestock Aevalin has granted you new powers.]

[You have learned the Livestock Training skill.]

[You have learned the Livestock Communication skill.]

Brod, who immediately checked his new skills, was shocked when he saw the Livestock Training skill. It was a very shocking skill that gave him the power to train the livestock and make them stronger! On top of that, the Livestock Communication skill also gave Brod the charisma to make the livestock believe, follow, and trust him more.

Brod turned to the animals and asked, “Would you like to grow stronger with me? It’s alright if you don’t want to. All I want is for you guys to be happy.”

The pigs cried loudly in answer, “Hwiiiiik! Kwiiiiik!”

Their cries conveyed their willingness to go through any trial with Brod.

“Cluck, cluck!!!”

“Moooooooooooooooooh!!!”

“Meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeh!!!”

Thousands of animals showed their firm determination to follow Brod. From that day forward, Brod began training the livestock! Mercenary King Brod had a huge knack for teaching. On top of that, he was armed with the very surprising Livestock Training skill. Both played a huge role and helped promote the strength of the livestock at a fast rate.

Ever since then, Brod always brought the livestock on a morning run. The pigs, cows, and chickens would climb the top of the mountain with him and look down with delighted smiles on their faces. They continued to train like that and...

[Oinky 1’s AGI has increased by +1.]

[Oinky 2’s AGI has increased by +1.]

[Cow 103’s STR has increased by +2.]

[Cluck-cluck 13’s Beak Attack Power has increased by +10.]

The livestock continued to grow day by day. Brod continued to stay with them, even to the point of eating together and sleeping together with them after training, with hay hanging in his mouth. When the chefs tried to take them away once again, Brod went to Haze and had a serious meeting.

“You know that it’s survival of the fittest out there, right?”

“Then, I will find a substitute meat for Atlas Territory,” Brod said and left Atlas Territory. He was a supreme existence that could cross continents. The place that he went to was a dragon lair located in the American Server’s continent.

‘These are special seeds that can grow pork, beef, chicken, and mutton once sown.’

However, what was surprising about these special seeds, other than the fact that they could grow meat, was the fact that they could produce the same number of seeds as the original number everyday. Of course, Brod was also a very shocking existence himself to be able to go inside a dragon’s lair and get those seeds!

Brod easily acquired the ‘Livestock Seeds’ from the dragon lair, whose owner was asleep. But just when he was about to turn around to leave...

Turn!

...his gaze turned to the place where a nest was quietly laid out. In the nest sat a bright and smooth red egg the size of a child.

‘I’m sure the Lord will like that if I give it to him. He’ll definitely make some fried egg with that.’

He could already imagine what Minhyuk would say to him once he presented the egg to him.

‘Sir Brod. It would be nice to have some delicious soy sauce egg rice after eating that huge fried egg, right? Hehehehe!’

‘He will definitely be happy!’

Brod grinned as he grabbed the egg and put it in his backpack. Brod, who thought of giving a dragon egg to make fried eggs, was no different from Minhyuk, who would be happy to receive such an egg. And although he was still unaware, Brod was already barreling straight towards the peak of being ‘Minhyuk-ified’.

Chapter 426: Beanie’s Performance

“Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” The entire world cheered loudly.

Minhyuk, with his black suit and swept up bangs, stood at the center of the stadium. This was not an image projected on the screens, but Minhyuk’s figure in reality. He looked around the huge stadium where he stood alone before looking down at his hands and thinking, *‘This is where I should be.’*

Although Minhyuk had reached his target weight of seventy five kilograms, his fight against his eating addiction was far from over. Besides, reaching this weight was largely attributed to the medicine that he took before and was only a temporary stop gap measure to his disease. A single moment of carelessness and he might just go over the hundred kilogram range once again. Minhyuk believed that he would only be completely free of this disease once the voices that shouted *‘Eat, go on. Eat.’* disappeared from his head.

And if those voices truly disappeared then...

‘I might be able to continue running to the top.’

Although he appeared as someone that did not care about power and was totally in disregard of authority, to the point that he looked like he wanted to divide and share his merits with his friends and family, Minhyuk was still a man. Yes, he was still someone that wanted to stand at the peak of the world, and be the object of people's admiration. And perhaps, at this very moment, Minhyuk might have reached that dream.

Minhyuk lifted his fist silently, yet proudly.

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

“Woooooooooaaaaah!”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

The Korean flag drawn on his left wrist fanned the burning flames in the heart of every single Korean watching the scene. At that moment, the notifications for *Athenae*, which was linked to his mobile phone, rang for Minhyuk.

Ring!

He quickly took his phone and checked the notifications.

[All of the gold medal winners in Korea will receive a 25% EXP buff for two weeks.]

[All players of Asgan Continent will receive a 10% EXP buff for two weeks as a special benefit.]

Minhyuk quickly clicked on the title that he obtained.

Unique Title

? All stats will increase by 4%.

? Physical Attack and Defense will increase by 300.

? You can acquire the ‘Gods’ Land’.

? You can gain 2,000 REP.

? You can gain 50,000 AP.

After checking the notifications, Minhyuk looked at the crowd. Whether they were from America, France, Russia, China, Japan, India, Vietnam, or another country, they cheered loudly and enthusiastically. Minhyuk smiled silently and went down from the stadium. America's Alexander, who was waiting below, approached him.

“Congratulations.”

Minhyuk thanked Alexander with a smile.

“I heard that there will be PVP events added in the next World War. Don't you think that it will be interesting?”

“Yes, it sounds interesting.”

Alexander was not sure if Minhyuk would participate at that time, but he still hoped that he could play against him when the time came.

“More enemies will appear in front of us in the future.”

“Yeah,” Minhyuk nodded in agreement.

Having the Athenae MVP title meant that he was officially recognized as the strongest powerhouse. However, that was only among those that were officially recognized by the public. Perhaps, those that chose to hide their powers from all over the world were sneering at them and saying, *‘Empty vessels make the loudest noises.’*

These hidden powerhouses would deliberately opt out of most of these events. After all, it would be like a ‘death sentence’. This was because participating in events like the World War meant that they risked revealing the extent of their strength and power to the world. Knowing what artifacts and skills one’s opponent has would bring a huge benefit in a battle.

On the contrary, the opponent would find it difficult to fight against them if they were not aware of what skills and items they had in hand. Fame could be easily gained but one had to consider the risks that came along with it.

And there would definitely be a growing number of these hidden powerhouses that would aim for Minhyuk, the official strongest.

“There’s a high chance that God’s Children are keeping their eye on you now.”

“...Is that so?”

Information about God’s Children were still mostly unknown to the public, since they usually only do covert operations. However, a few top-ranking players knew about them. The God’s Children were holders of God classes.

“I don’t exactly know how many they are, but from what I heard, these God’s Children belong to the ranks of ‘Supreme Gods’. Just so you know, I fought with one of the God’s Children...” Alexander smiled bitterly before continuing to say, “Six minutes.”

“...?”

“That’s the time it took for them to make me submit and kneel.”

Minhyuk’s expression morphed into that of surprise. After all, he knew that Alexander was hailed as the world’s strongest. But it only took them six minutes to make such a man kneel?

“They are a group of individuals called by one name: God’s Children. I believe the strongest among them is the unofficial global number one in Athenae.”

“Why are you telling me this?”

Alexander chuckled after hearing Minhyuk’s question. Then, he said, “Of course it’s to build a good relationship and connection with you.”

Minhyuk grinned. Alexander was showing him goodwill by telling him this. And the answer to that goodwill was...

"You should definitely come to visit us here again sometime. Although, I'm not sure if I will be able to offer you a meal when the time comes."

"Of course. I'll definitely come to visit," Alexander grinned. Then, the two of them left and moved to different directions.

Indeed, Minhyuk was not yet the 'strongest'. After all, there were still existences like the God's Children out there in the world.

The entire country was in a constant state of excitement. The Food God, who won the MVP position, had led South Korea to victory during the World War. Not a single day had passed by without the words 'Food God' and 'Ilhwa Group' on the real-time search results. There were even countless articles being published about them everyday.

[Ilhwa Group's stock prices have increased tremendously. This is the crazy influence that Athenae has on reality.]

[The Chairman's son, Kang Minhyuk, has rejected all of the advertisement offers sent to him. His reason? To 'focus on treatment'.]

[Minhyuk ranked number one as the Ideal Husband and Ideal Blind Date, number two, losing against Beanie, as the Children's Idol.]

There was a buzz every day.

A young man looked at the computer screen in one of the rooms in Blue Orphanage. This was the same orphanage that Minhyuk frequented when he was younger. The young man fixed his horn-rimmed glasses on the bridge of his nose and thought, '*Hyung, congratulations.*'

Then, the young man began to tap away on his keyboard. The story that he was writing right now was his and Minhyuk's story. Before the young man came to this decision, he had hesitated a lot. He was an orphan and he had to reveal who he was to publish this story so the people would know that his story was not just a marketing strategy.

However, his desire to repay the favor and grace that he received from Minhyuk in the past triumphed over his fears. The young man's name was Im Jae-Seok and he was Seoul National University (SNU)'s Medical admission test's top scorer this year.

Minhyuk had always taken care of him and treated him as if he was his younger brother. Minhyuk told him once, '*You are a very precious person, Jae-Seok. Don't ever give up. Continue to move forward.*'. Minhyuk's words gave Im Jae-Seok the strength to continue on his path. And with hard work, he was able to win the title of the top scorer of SNU's College of Medicine.

Tap!

Jae-Seok's finger tapped on the enter key as he uploaded his story.

'Now, I can repay you for your kindness.'

And it was not just him. Plenty of people all over Korea were tapping at their keyboards to repay the kindness and grace that Minhyuk had given them in the past. With Im Jae-Seok as the spark, their stories continued to gain more attention.

“Waaah.”

Im Jae-Seok leaned back on his chair and said, “Congratulations on becoming the best in Athenae, hyung.”

A bright smile lingered on Jae-Seok’s face as he continued to look at his screen.

The entire country was once again in a buzz after Food God remained as the top real-time search result for a few days. Even the news was filled with articles about the good deeds and kindness that he did in the past. There was even an interview with the top scorer of SNU’s College of Medicine admission exam about him.

‘The Food God is really the best!’

‘Hooray for our Lord the Food God!’

‘Kyaaa! Look at how kind our Food God hyung is!’

‘Don’t you think that he’s the perfect example for the unpretentious, kind and handsome guy?’

Some of his anti-fans could not even make a splash and eventually got buried from the onslaught of praise and admiration for him.

Meanwhile, silence pervaded Ilhwa Group’s board meeting. All of the board members were shocked and speechless at the endless amount of articles being published and shared on their mobile phones, tablets, and computers, as well as the ever increasing stock prices of their company.

[Not all angels have wings. With the continuous exposure of Minhyuk’s good deeds and kindness, many people campaigned to purchase their electronic products and groceries from Ilhwa Group...]

[Whether it is Ilhwa TV, Ilhwa Groceries, or Ilhwa Construction, Ilhwa Group is a group that walked on the righteous and clean path. And it seems like the Chairman’s son, Minhyuk, is also walking on that same path.]

[Ilhwa Group’s stock prices have reached an all-time high, leaving Daehan Group in the dust. Meanwhile, Daehan Group’s chairman has been reportedly admitted to the emergency room. The reason... a stomachache?]

“Does anyone have any objections?”

At Chairman Kang Minhoo’s words, those that clamored and shouted to the point that their throats got sore and their blood vessels popped in their neck, for Minhyuk to do work and train as the group’s successor, all shut their mouths.

“Ahem...”

“Keuheum...”

After all, Minhyuk, despite having eating addiction, achieved something that none of the people present here could achieve.

“So, there are no objections.”

Chairman Kang Minhoo smiled softly while the board members looked at him in admiration.

‘That’s amazing...’

‘How can they live a clean and upright life like that...? Maybe it’s something that has been passed on to the Kang father and son?’

‘With this, we won’t be able to say anything about how he raises his son and what he should do as a successor.’

That was right. Everything was a result of Minhyuk’s hard work. Kang Minhoo stood up from his seat. He opened the window and looked out.

“Will he start training to become the successor now?”

Kang Minhoo just smiled at the question and said, “No. I’m just going to stand behind him and cheer him on while he plays games and achieve his own happiness.”

Minhoo was extremely happy. Minhyuk, his son, gave him the power to say these things.

“That child will be able to grow his own wings even more if I just watch at the sidelines and cheer him on.”

No one could argue against Minhoo’s gentle smile and agreement to let his own successor play games as much as he wanted. Then...

“I will be cheering him on.”

“I will also give my support to Kang Minhyuk.”

“Kang Minhyuk is the perfect candidate to become the next chairman of Ilhwa Group.”

Kang Minhoo smiled broadly as he continued to look out of the window while listening to the sincere words of his board members.

‘Son, a bigger and stronger wind will blow now. However, I believe the wings that you have nurtured can endure it.’

Standing at the top meant that he had to have the power to carry that weight and still stand tall. And right now, a huge gust of wind was billowing to where Minhyuk was.

Diablo, no, he was called Elpis now, had moved to Atlas Territory. Even though Minhyuk had already returned from the World War, he was yet to be assigned a mission. All he could do was to try to adapt to living as a human once again, by watching the people of the territory move about in their days. Just then, a devilish existence approached him...

“Oink!”

Elpis thought that the pig, who was arrogantly looking up at him, was quite unique.

“I think... you’re... a strange... and arrogant... pig...”

“Oiiink?!!!”

Beanie, enraged at the word ‘arrogant’ directed at him, immediately sent a one-two punch on Elpis’ leg. Then, realizing that it did not do anything, he swiftly climbed up on Elpis’ body and settled on his shoulder.

“Oink! Oink, oink, oink! *(You should follow me from now on, oink!)*”

Elpis could not understand what he should follow the pig for.

Just then, he saw the strange thing, a pair of ‘earphones’, stuck in Beanie’s ears. Athenae was a game that gave the players the ability to listen to music everyday, even if they were playing. Beanie had taken advantage of this ability by taking Minhyuk’s earphones every single day to enjoy music.

“Oink! *(I’ll play some special music for you, oink!)*” Beanie oinked as he placed one of the earphones in Elpis’ ear. The moment he pressed play, a beautiful and harmonious melody rang in Elpis’ ear.

Elpis had been searching for ‘happiness’ these days.

‘How can I live happily for the rest of my life?’

This was the moment that he realized what it was. This was it. Music. A beautiful melody that ringed in one’s ears. An amazing tune that had the effect of making any passerby feel like they were the protagonist of a movie. Elpis, although awkward, smiled.

Then, Beanie whispered, “Oink, oink, oink! Oink, oink! *(You’ll look cooler if you say this while listening to music, oink!)*”

Beanie smiled ominously as he left the earphones in Elpis’ care.

Minhyuk was urgently trying to find Elpis. He had been thinking long and hard about what task to give him and finally found an answer today. After running around for quite some time, he finally found where Elpis was.

However, something was strange.

There were earphones stuck in Elpis’ ears. And even though his eyes were closed, Minhyuk could tell that he was intoxicated and in ecstasy. Then, he said, “Music is... the only... unrestricted drug...” which was immediately followed by a streak of tears!

“...”

These were the words that Beanie had taught him to say. That was right! Elpis was also adapting well to living happily, as he quickly reached the state of being ‘Minhyukified’, no, ‘Beaniefied’!

Chapter 427: Preparing for War

Haze, who was sitting in a daze, watched as a livid Minhyuk came back from his quest to find Elpis. She asked, "Did something happen, my lord?"

Minhyuk rubbed his chin after hearing Haze's question. Then, he said, "It seems like there're no normal or sane people in this territory except for you and me, Haze."

"..."

"How can Elpis...?!" Minhyuk's arms flailed around as his body trembled.

Meanwhile, Haze thought, *'But, isn't it strange to want to make Elpis work as a fisherman...?'*

Based on what Haze was seeing right now, she could tell that Minhyuk was not able to successfully give Elpis the task that he thought of.

'My lord is also not a normal person...'

The words almost came out of her mouth, but Haze did her best to endure it. However, Minhyuk delivered another blow, "I have to do my best to remain as a normal person."

There was a saying that among a group of friends, there would always be someone that thought that they were the normal one! And that person was none other than Minhyuk. However, his anger was only short-lived. Minhyuk's expression turned serious as he thought about something. Then, he said, "From now on, we're going to use every means possible and start external activities."

"External activities?"

"We'll have to prepare for what's coming next."

Haze nodded silently. She knew that they would have to watch out for a lot of things after Minhyuk had won a lot of victories during the World War. In other words, they had to step up their efforts in building a kingdom.

"Aruvel, Ben and Corr, these three will start on our external activities. Of course, I will too."

These three were the key figures of Atlas Territory. If something happened during their absence, Atlas would receive a huge blow. However, Minhyuk believed that even if they were not here, the two beings that remained in the territory would be able to protect Atlas. These two beings were none other than Brod and Elpis, Atlas' powerful sword and sturdy shield. With these two, Atlas would not be easily breached by any forces.

"What about the Ingredient Heaven?"

"The Hybrid Race that migrated from Rocard Kingdom said that we can expect the yield of our crops to increase by at least five times. They've also expressed their surprise at the power of God's Land."

This meant that they would be able to let each soldier experience a ten-point stat increase, which would give them a ridiculous boost in their power.

"Ah. Where's Sir Brod?"

“Just like the lord had expected, he had successfully become ‘Lordified’ and has been working hard on raising the livestock. However, the problem is that he’s too into it now...” Haze said as she continued to explain about what happened and how he stopped the livestock from being slaughtered by acquiring the ‘Livestock Seeds’.

“How is the taste of the meat from the Livestock Seeds?”

“It tastes more exquisite than ordinary meat.”

“Then, there’s no problem with that.”

In Minhyuk’s view, it would not matter whether they grew it or raised it, as long as it tasted good. Then, at that moment, someone knocked on the door. Brod slammed the door open the moment Minhyuk allowed him inside.

“My lord. I brought you something that you will definitely like.”

Thuuuuud—

Brod placed a bright red egg on the ground. Minhyuk’s eyes widened, his throat moving at the sight of the egg placed in front of him.

Gulp—

“I got the egg from a dragon lair. I brought it back because I thought that the lord will definitely like it.”

“...!”

Haze was shocked when he heard Brod’s words.

.

‘An egg from a dragon lair?’

According to the books that Haze had read, the colors of the shells of their eggs matched the attribute that the dragon would have once they grew up. A silver dragon would have a silver egg, a blue dragon would have a blue egg and a red dragon, a dragon known for its power and ferociousness, would have a red egg.

‘It’s the egg of a red dragon...!’

Haze felt delighted. If this red dragon’s egg hatched and grew up, it would be a great addition to Atlas’ forces. Haze wondered if Minhyuk was trembling because he also realized this fact.

Minhyuk and Brod made eye contact.

“I... I think it would taste good if we crack it open and make some fried eggs, right?”

“Hoho. I already took your thoughts into consideration, little lord. That’s why I brought it back.”

“As expected of you, Sir Brod. No one can compare to you.”

Haze, who turned to look at Minhyuk, was shocked to see the fierce gaze in his eyes. Those were the eyes of someone that was starving to get their hands on the egg. It was true. Minhyuk was really dying to eat the dragon egg in front of him. Then, Haze thought, *'If he can really eat it, then would it give him the same power as a powerful elixir?'*

However, a problem appeared.

Baaang— Baang—

The egg did not budge at all even after Minhyuk and Brod did their best to crack it open.

“Why can’t I eat it when it’s already in front of me?! Why?!”

‘I’m just like Kim Cheomji and his ox bone soup!!!’

If someone like Brod could not crack the egg open, then it meant that no one could break it.

“My... fried... dragon... egg...”

Looking at the teary-eyed Minhyuk, Haze thought, *‘Ah. It seems like I’m really the only normal person left in this territory huh?’*

The girl who thought herself normal, was the same girl that was selling a sack of normal rice worth 30,000 gold grown in Valhalla Territory for 30 million gold by saying that it was a ‘power-enhancer’ sack of rice blessed by Food God Minhyuk. With her talents as a great merchant, Haze was able to gain a hundred times more profit from anything and everything. She was nowhere close to being normal, with how she was rushing straight to becoming a legendary swindler.

All of the dragon elders had gathered together in Red Dragon Bracard’s lair, a lair located in the American Server. Dragons were the greatest and strongest existence in the world! They might be a bit weaker than Black Dragon Vormon, but the fact that they were the supreme rulers of magic remained unchanged.

And the reason why these dragons gathered in Bracard’s lair was...

“Is it true? Was the Dragon Lord’s egg really stolen?!”

The owner of the lair, Bracard, was silent at Dragon Elder Belluc’s words.

“Haaa~ How can something like this happen?!”

“We’re in trouble. The lord’s egg has been stolen...”

It was only just recently when the previous Dragon Lord, Bediaz, fell into eternal rest. Dragon Lords were pure-blooded dragons with excellent magic that far surpassed any other person. They were existences that had ridiculous growth and speed in learning. When Bediaz laid the now stolen egg, she left a prophecy, *‘My child will become the strongest and the greatest dragon in the history of dragonkind.’*

Dragon Lords could take a glimpse of the power that the eggs they laid would have in the future. According to her, the power of the dragon that would hatch from her egg was far superior than any dragon that has ever existed. She even declared that her child could trample Black Dragon Vormon, a creature that even the strongest Dragon Lord could not fight against. Knowing this, they called for

the strongest Dragon Knight, Bracard, and gave him the task to protect the precious egg. However, someone was still able to steal the egg from under his claws.

“What were you doing when all of this happened?!”

Bracard was silent at the elder’s words. It was because he was in a deep sleep. However, just because he was asleep did not mean that he just allowed the thief to steal the egg.

“While I was still in deep sleep, the thief nullified all of the traps and mechanisms created with the dragon elders’ power. On top of that, this thief was able to escape the eyes of the strong army that the Dragon Elders have placed in the vicinity of my lair.”

“Ho... how...”

They were all in disbelief. The thief was able to nullify the traps and mechanisms that they, the Dragon Elders, had set up?! What was more shocking was the fact that this thief was also able to escape the eyes of the ten-thousand strong troops that they had stationed around the lair.

“This is definitely the work of an evil force that covets the Dragon Lord’s power. They’re definitely going to use the power of the lord’s egg to gain more strength and authority.”

“Are they trying to control the continent...?”

“No, perhaps they are trying to destroy the continent.”

“Hoo...”

“This...”

“What are you doing?! We need to quickly find the lord’s egg!!!”

However, no matter how hard they tried, they would not be able to find the egg. This was because it was already far from where they were, safely nestled in another continent.

“If we can’t find the egg, then the entire continent will be bathed in a sea of fire!”

What they did not know was that the man that stole the egg, as well as the man that received the stolen egg, did not have much interest in the destruction of the continent, nor gaining authority.

However, if the dragons knew that these two people were only thinking about making fried dragon eggs, their eyes might roll back and faint.

Minhyuk was completely disappointed when he failed to eat some fried dragon egg. But then, at that moment, Brod asked, “My lord. Can you please allow the livestock to train alongside the soldiers?”

“You want the livestock to train with the soldiers?”

Minhyuk frowned at Brod's request. Even though Brod could strengthen the livestock's physical power, they were still, after all, animals with low intelligence. It would be impossible for Brod to train them any more than what they could do before.

Of course, this was also because Minhyuk was still unaware of the miracle that 'Livestock King Brod' had created and the fact that the pigs, cows, and chicken were able to grow and gain abilities by training with him everyday.

"Wouldn't it be too hard if the livestock trained with the soldiers? I think this idea is a little rash."

Brod was the strongest and most powerful swordsman. Naturally, he would be Atlas Territory's commander-in-chief. So, how could someone like him get the crazy idea of having the livestock and the soldiers train together? Brod's thought process had now completely gone in a completely different direction from what Minhyuk thought. Minhyuk just wanted him to train a strong army while raising the livestock.

"Then, I'll show it to you," Brod said confidently as he led Minhyuk to Atlas' training ground. It seemed like Brod had already expected Minhyuk's reaction and opposition, so he had already made preparations in the training grounds.

"Attention, everyone."

"Hwiiiik!"

"Moooooo!"

"Cluck, cluck~"

"Meeeh, meeeh!"

The animals cried out as they lined up neatly.

'Crazy...?'

Minhyuk's eyes widened in surprise when he saw the animals standing neatly in a row. Then, Brod winked at the chickens. One of the chickens started to run fiercely.

"Cluck, cluck!"

"...?!"

Minhyuk's eyes widened even further after seeing the chicken run as fast as an ostrich. In front of the running chicken was none other than a target. The target, which was made of copper, was harder than the wooden targets usually used for training. After all, this was the same target used by the soldiers for archery training. Then, at that moment, the chicken flew up fiercely...

"Cluck, cluck!"

...as a bright light flashed briefly on its beak. And finally...

Thump—

“...!”

The chicken's beak struck the target fiercely. The chicken, which hung on the target after being stuck, pulled its beak out and gently landed on the ground.

‘That’s crazy...! Isn’t that ridiculous?!’

Just when this thought flashed in Minhyuk's head, one of the pigs stepped forward. The pig stomped on the ground with its hind legs as if it was a bull, before rushing forward fiercely.

“Hwiiiiik!”

In front of it stood several soldiers holding huge square shields in front of them. At that moment, there was also a powerful light that flashed on the pig's body.

‘Both the chickens and the pigs have learned a skill?’

When this thought flashed in Minhyuk's head...

Baaaaang—

...the soldiers flew back like bowling pins when the pig collided with them.

“...”

It did not end there. One of the cows ran straight towards one of the soldiers, who also rushed towards the cow. He then thrust his dull spear towards the cow. However, whether the spear was dull or not, it proved to be useless in front of the cow's tremendous defense. The cow just ignored the attack and rushed straight towards the horses.

“Hihihing!”

“Kihihing!”

The horses could not do anything against a single cow. Then, Minhyuk's gaze turned to one side.

“What’s that over there?”

There were a variety of puppies gathered together. From poodles, to pomeranians, to spitzes, to jindos, and even golden retrievers. These puppies all sat in a neat row, just like disciplined soldiers.

“They’re abandoned dogs. I’ll train them in the art of exploration, infiltration and beauty trap.”

Minhyuk blinked blankly as he looked at one place. He could not help but support his forehead helplessly.

“Why is Love, Hope, and Happiness also here...?”

The three-headed dog Cerberus, the gatekeeper of hell, tilted its heads as it looked at Minhyuk while sitting proudly in front. There were also epaulets fitted on their shoulders with the words:

[Woof-woof Squad Leader]

“...”

Minhyuk was speechless.

Chapter 428: Preparing for War

‘Oh my god! This is so ridiculous! As expected! Aaaah, just like I expected, I’m the only sane and normal person in this territory!’?

This was the thought that passed through Minhyuk’s head.

Hell’s Gatekeeper, Cerberus, became the leader of the puppy troops! In all honesty, the impact of this was no different from when Minhyuk named them ‘Love, Hope, and Happiness’. But Minhyuk did not see that fact.

‘Ignoring that, how can the livestock achieve something like that?’

This was beyond common sense! So, Minhyuk looked at Brod’s stats window.

?Passive Skill: The One with God

?Active Skill: Mercenary’s Pinnacle Swordsmanship

?Active Skill: Continent’s Tyrant

?Passive Skill: Livestock Training

?Passive Skill: Livestock Communication

Minhyuk, whose pupils were shaking, could tell that there were changes in Brod’s stats with just one glance. The first thing that he noticed was...

‘His potential increased?’

Having a high potential meant that there was a chance that they would become strong. However, growing stronger did not mean that their potential would increase. After all, potential was, for most, a stat that could not grow nor develop further.

And yet, Brod’s potential had grown from 115 to 135. Simply put, raising the livestock had opened up a new path for Brod to become even stronger than he was before.

There was one more thing.

‘His passive skill Dreaming Talent has become the passive skill The One with God...’

The effects of his original passive ‘Dreaming Talent’ were as follows:

Passive Skill

That was right. Dreaming Talent was the skill that could allow Brod to reach the pinnacle of something as long as he had the passion for it. He could be whatever he wanted. For example, if he had the passion for magic, then he would be able to become a great mage. Or if he chose to become a priest, he would be able to become a pope. But this skill changed and became 'The One with God'.

Passive Skill

? God came to watch over the one with the Dreaming Talent, after seeing him devote his efforts to one thing more than anybody else.

? God will build him a foothold to grow further and stronger.

? As he grows further and stronger in his field of choice, God will bestow him gifts.?

'Hoo...?'

The description of the skill '*The One with God*' had astonishing content. In fact, the contents of the skill gave Minhyuk a hint as to why the livestock was able to become special like that.

'So God intervened?'

Brod also had two new skills, the 'Livestock Training' and 'Livestock Communication'. Minhyuk immediately checked the information of the new skills.

Passive Skill

? The animals, with every training, will be able to learn and grow like humans.

? Whenever the animals train, their EXP acquisition rate will increase by 100x until they reach a certain level.

? Whenever the animals train, their stat acquisition rate and skill proficiency acquisition rate will increase by 100x until they reach a certain level.?

? When they reach a certain point, the animals will 'evolve'.

? Brod, the skill owner, will be able to see through the animals characteristics and attributes and create skills that will match them.

? The Livestock Training skill will ignore all of the animals' 'potential'.

'By a hundred times...?'

Minhyuk finally understood. Generally, no matter how much an animal was trained, it would be difficult for them to raise their stats. There was also that skill that the chicken had with the beak before, it did not make sense for a normal chicken to have a skill like that! But if it was increased a 'hundred times', then the story would be different.

'I feel like it's a bit of a pity that it only works for the animals.'

If ordinary monsters were included in the scope of the skill, then they probably could raise a Level 1,000 goblin. Then, he moved on to the next skill.

Passive Skill

? The more Brod interacts and communicates with the animals, the more they will trust and devote themselves to him.

? The more Brod interacts and communicates with the animals, the more their 'INT' will increase, albeit little by little.

? The animals will be able to communicate and interact with other humans aside from Brod. There's also a chance that they'll be great friends.

Minhyuk cast *Earth King's Authority. King's Eye*, a power that he acquired from Queen Iris, and used it on one of the pigs.

? Active Skill: Oinky 31's Dash.

? Active Skill: Oinky 31's Shield.

? Passive Skill: Oinky 31's Pig-Out

'Hmm...'

Minhyuk thought that it would be worth the try, even if they only tried it once. First of all, the livestock would be very useful to catch their enemies off guard.

'They might be necessary to prevent the gusts of wind blowing our way.'

On top of that, there were a lot of livestock in Atlas Territory. There were more than 10,000 of them as of the moment. What would happen if all of them could fight?

'They'll be able to exert more power!'

Under Brod's earnest eyes...

"I'll give you permission."

“Thank you, my lord! I will make sure to show you results in return for your grace!”
Brod, after getting permission, immediately turned around to rejoice with the pigs, cows, and chickens. They even shed tears!

‘I ... really can’t get used to scenes like this...’

Brod was genuinely pleased. This was because they would no longer be recognized as ‘livestock’, but as ‘soldiers’. They would no longer be regarded as the ‘livestock’ that was born to be eaten, but as precious soldiers! And these livestock also had no regrets even if they lost their lives. After all, they were all destined to die and get reborn!

Just like that, a wind of change blew in Atlas. Minhyuk began to dispatch his subordinates outside.

Arda Territory was a territory created by refugees, war orphans, prisoners of wars, and soldiers in the past, when a war broke out between Ethos Kingdom and Barras Kingdom. In fact, Arda Territory was not so much a territory, rather, it was a place located between the borders of Ethos and Barras Kingdoms, one where they went to hide during the war.

However, once the war ended and peace came, those that lost their homes and the places that they could return to chose to stay in Arda.

Barras Kingdom and Ethos Kingdom did not do anything to the territory as a ‘sign of peace’. This was because citizens of both Barras and Ethos kingdoms coexisted in Arda Territory. Even a fool would know that. So, the two kingdoms decided to leave those they considered traitors and double-crossers alone.

The truth was, the territory was no longer a part of any kingdom. However, the reason why they could withstand and survive the attacks from players and monsters was mainly because of Knight Lauvredo, an NPC over Level 480 with power comparable to a knight commander, a position he sought to become, as well as the strong troops that lived in the territory.

The people were flocking to Arda Territory because of a mysterious person.

“According to Lord Talmor’s testaments... Believe! If we believe it, then we’ll be able to grow black hair too!”

The mysterious man stood on top of a platform with a grave and solemn expression on his face, as he looked at the ‘sparkling heads’ of the bald people gathered together in front of him.

Paladin Corr opened a book titled ‘Talmor’s Testaments’ and read it as if he was reading the bible! Corr, with a solemn voice, spoke loudly, “A poor and pitiful soul, Ared, started to lose hair at the young age of five. After discovering Talmor, he devoted himself to serve the Lord and eventually started to grow hair each and every day. Aaaaaaaah! This is a very touching and astonishing deed!”

“Aaaaaaaaah!”

“Uwaaaaaaa!”

“Uwoooooooo! Lord Talmor!!!”

All of the religious fanatics present went wild as Corr continued to read 'Talmor's Testaments'. The crowd turned silent when they saw Corr lift his index finger to his mouth.

"Everyone has to put their trust in the Lord. If you put your faith in the Lord then your hair will grow. Now, do you believe in the Lord?"

"We believe!!!"

"Do you believe?!!!"

"We do!!!"

Then, a warmth covered their shiny and sparkling heads as Corr began to play his recorder. Among these believers stood Lauvredo, the man that once dreamed of becoming a Knight Commander. That was right! Lauvredo was also bald!

Shockingly enough, Corr's abilities had improved to the point that he could grow hair in a day. Of course, Corr did not forget to add these words, "Lord Talmor does not wish for much. Talmor only hopes that you can give a little aid, when and only when Atlas Territory, the place where the power of Talmor originated and resides, is in danger."

Then, a dark smile flashed on his lips.

In another place, somewhere in the wide expanse of Asgan Continent, a man with black skin and a pair of sunglasses nestled on the bridge of his nose appeared there! The moment this man sat down, a huge crowd gathered around him.

"That man is Aruvel, the author of the novel: 'Why Did the Prince Go Out Tonight?!!'"

"The unfortunate genius born from God! *Sob, sob, sob*. I did not expect to see him in person!!!"

"Mister Aruvel, please take me!!!"

Aruvel held a signing event. Surprisingly enough, among the dense crowd of his fans, there were also players! Then, he stood up from his seat and looked at the crowd. As soon as he stood up, the women fainted while the men stood in a daze.

"Aaaaaaaaah~!"

"Please give us some spoilers!"

Then, Aruvel said, "Well then, let me tell you a bit about my new work: 'The Prince's Magic Tools'."

"Ooooooh!"

"Waaaaaah!"

More people gathered around him. Then, Aruvel opened his mouth, "The prince, even though he could hold any woman that he wanted, felt a deep sense of emptiness wrap around his very being every night. Growing tired of his promiscuous nightlife, he started to crave for something new. One day, the prince got his hands on an ancient book and learned about the existence of the magic tools

that the 'God of Night' had left on earth! So, he started to look for them. These tools can help him seduce any woman. And once a man and a woman did it together then..."

"Once they did it together?"

Everyone gulped dryly as they listened intently to Aruvel's words.

"They will feel immense pleasure."

"Waaaaaaaah..."

"Uwoooooooooo!"

Everyone burst into screams of admiration.

"In this book, the protagonist, the prince, travels around the world to acquire these magic tools and write down their uses, the best posture to use them, and much more information about them! This is my next work, the Prince's Magic Tool!"

"I... I want to read it as soon as possible!"

"When will the book be published?!"

"I will definitely buy it!"

After hearing their warm response, Aruvel grinned and said, "I will distribute this work for free. However, in exchange, I hope that you can help me in times of need."

"Of course!!!"

"Aaaah! Aruvel, you're my idol!!!"

"I will drop everything and run if you call for me!!!"

Aruvel was very pleased.

At the same time, in another place.

Grandpa Ben, while combing his black hair, sat inside the lord's castle in Eid's Territory, a huge territory with powerful troops under Marquis Bard.

"Tsk, ts. The lord is like a stick, so stubborn and inflexible."

Grandpa Ben, as someone that personally taught them at one point in time, was regarded as the father of all of the spear masters.

"B... but... *Cough...*"

"Ho? Are you falling? Do you want me to make you stand on one arm for an entire day like in the past?!"

"N...No. Not at all, master!"

Eid Territory's Marquis Bard felt his body, which was the epitome of 'burying the head in the ground', shake at the thought of everyone seeing him like this.

Then, Ghost Spear Ben said, "As a child, you did not have any talent for the spear. However, I did not give up on you. When you were a baronet, you grew until you were hailed as a 'spear master', a feat that allowed you to get promoted to the position of a marquis.

"I remember! I will never forget your grace and kindness!"

That was right. To others, Bard was a marquis. But in front of Ben, he was just a young and immature disciple.

"I don't want you to help me officially. Secretly. You just need to help me secretly."

"Then, then... even though our numbers are small, we will still come to help you!"

"Stand up."

"Yes, sir!"

Marquis Bard's face was flushed from the effort of maintaining his posture earlier. He was even sweating profusely. Ghost Spear Ben looked at him happily as he opened his notepad and crossed out the name 'Bard' on the list.

"I'll drop by your territory sometime soon. I'll make you a cup of cat luwak coffee."

"Thank you, master!"

As he left the lord's castle, Ghost Spear Ben thought, '*Next will be Spear God Asveto's territory.*'

All of the people that Minhyuk dispatched were working hard on diplomatic activities, in their own special ways.

Chapter 429: Preparing for War

King of the Dead, Death, had been receiving treatment for his burns recently from Kennedy, the world-renowned specialist and authoritative figure on burn treatment. It was thanks to the number that Minhyuk had handed to him before. He was very happy when he heard Kennedy say, '*Medical technology these days is far more advanced than the technology from five or ten years ago. Especially here in America. Our new treatment technology can erase up to 99% of the burn without leaving any scarring.*'

Kennedy's words meant that Death would be able to get almost completely treated. In other words, he would finally be able to get rid of the thing that made the others call him a monster for a very long time. And it was all thanks to Minhyuk.

'I have to change.'

Although Minhyuk did not accept him as a member of the Let's Eat Sect, Death decided to become their silent and invisible shield. And just like any other day, Death headed to Rocard Kingdom again.

"Damn bastard! You came again?!!"

"I'll definitely take your head with my hoe today!"

Creepy words that could make one shiver were once again hurled at Death. However, he just remained silent as he summoned his huge legion, before sending them to the buildings that were on the verge of collapse. As if familiar with this, the Hybrid Race did not stop them and surprisingly enough, the Undead Legion began to lift and clean up the remnants of the collapsed buildings. But what was more shocking was the fact that there were even Death Knights among the troops that Death had sent out. Death and his troops continued to work here and help them on their restoration. But of course...

“This goddamn bastard!”

“Do you think we’ll forgive you if you help us like that?!”

...the Hybrid Race did not forgive him. And Death, who was trying to change, said to them, “Hey! You lowly farmers!!! You think you’ll be able to kill me if you’re dressed like beggars in this cold weather?! You definitely live up to your name, penniless farmers! You guys are so annoying! Put this on! I just picked it up on my way here!”

Death threw hundreds of warm and toasty sweaters in front of them before going back inside Rocard Kingdom. This time, a boy rushed towards him and slammed a wooden sword on his leg.

“Bad guy! Die!!! I’ll definitely grow to become a strong guy like Sir Brod and kill bad guys like you!”

“Ey! You brat! Do you think I, Lord Death, the King of the Dead will die with something like that? Oh? I think it hurts a bit? Brat, it seems like you have the talent, huh? Ah. So annoying. Should I kill you? Hey, you annoying brat! Take this sword that I picked up on the way and get lost!”

Then, Death threw a shiny, well-sharpened sword on the floor and disappeared from the boy’s sight. He wandered around and greeted the people that he passed by as if he was going to the market.

“What are you looking at, old hag?! Don’t you know that the weather is already cold?! Why are you going around without wearing gloves?! So annoying, here! Take this pair of gloves! I picked it up on the way. What a damn nuisance!”

“What are you looking at?! You damn drunk old man! You reek of alcohol! So pathetic. Here! Have 100,000 gold and eat a warm bowl of soup with rice and get sober!”

Death continued to wander around. However, he had lived alone for a very long time and had long forgotten how to say friendly and nice words to others. He was basically the prime example of a tsundere! He was tsun-tsun Death!

Queen Iris watched as Death wandered around like that. They even made eye-contact for a moment.

‘Even if you do this, you know that none of them will forgive you. Right?’

‘But I’ll still come. Each and every day.’

This was because this was the only atonement that he could offer to them. Then, at that moment, Death...

“What are you looking at, granny?! You’re over 300 years-old huh?! Your bones must be cold! Every part of your body hurts?! This is why you have to go home quickly when you’re old! What are you doing out in the cold, huh?! I’ll put a stove in your house! Ah, don’t feel pressured, I only picked it up on the way here!”

“...”

Iris was dumbfounded with Death’s actions and words.

Atlas Territory was still continuing to develop and strengthen their military force, even after half a year had passed in Athenae, which was equivalent to two months' time in reality.

Brod had the Hybrid Race and the animals train together in a 1:1 training! Each Hybrid Race soldier was assigned an animal to train with. They could choose from the chickens, ducks, pigs, cows, horses, dogs and many more. However, at first, the soldiers felt that training with them was completely absurd.

‘Are you kidding me?’

‘We’re going to train together with the livestock?’

‘Did Sir Brod hit his head or something?’

They had no choice but to think like that.

“Cock-a~ doodle-do!!!”

The worse part? The soldiers had to live together with these animals. The chickens would crow loudly in the morning and wake them up. For those that were used to taking their time in waking up, they could not help but feel annoyed at this. And when they started training with the livestock...

‘Damn. Why are these damn animals so passionate about this?’

‘The animals are that eager to train?’

‘Do they not get exhausted?’

The soldiers watched the animals incredulously as they gave their all in training, even to the point of forgoing rest just so they could repay Brod’s kindness and love.

But after a week of intense training, the livestock grew tremendously. The big cows that were not swift on their feet could now move fast. What about the chickens? They could now fly like birds and sting and destroy things with their sharp beaks. The horses? Their speed increased tremendously and even their hind kicks could blast a soldier of decent power backward.

Was that all? Of course not.

The ducks that took flight in the sky flew faster by the day! Even the bulls charging force was getting harder to stop by the shield unit. However, the most surprising were the puppies. The puppies’ movement speed grew faster and their sense of smell heightened to around ten times their previous sense. They even started to see through the traps, mechanisms, and magic laid in front of them.

Brod even fanned the flames by saying, "It seems like you guys are far worse than the *damn pigs* that you ignore, huh?" and comparing the soldiers to the livestock! This was a huge blow to their self-esteem and pride. The biggest blow? The animals did not stop training until two in the morning. All of these combined made the soldiers feel pathetic and useless.

'This... are we really far worse than those guys?'

'Did I... did I already forget the pain of almost losing Rocard Kingdom before?'

'Goddamn! Of course I also want to grow stronger!'

And...

"Cock-a-doodle-do!!!"

...they gradually began to welcome the chickens' loud crows early in the morning.

"Our dear Cluck-clucks woke us early today too, huh?"

It did not end there. The soldiers started to ride on top of cows instead of horses! This was because they grew fond of the cows' fast speed, solid and sturdy defense, and incredible charging force.

"You might be slower than the horses, but your charging force is much higher! Haha!"

"No one would be safe if you charged at them with your head!"

And that was not all! The soldiers also began to train the puppies. Even though they were training on a cold day, they felt immense warmth from the puppies that came to their arms.

"Did you come to warm me up because you think I will be cold?"

"Rascal! I promise to protect you forever, you brat!"

They began to interact and communicate with the animals that they were partnered with.

[Your communication with Oinky 21 has tremendously increased.]

[All of your stats will increase by 5% and your courage will dramatically increase whenever you're with Oinky 21.]

[Your communication with Poodle 11 has tremendously increased.]

[All of your stats will increase by 5% and your courage as well as desire to protect Poodle 11 will dramatically increase whenever you're with Poodle 11.]

These notifications continued to ring in their ears! And that was not all!

[Oinky 32 has grown and reached the evolution stage.]

[Cow 42 has grown and reached the evolution stage.]

[Pomeranian 32 has grown and reached the evolution stage.]

The animals began to evolve as they continued to grow. They would either grow smarter, get stronger, or gain special powers. The animals were now on par with general and ordinary monsters. The animals might look slightly different than monsters, but they were now more powerful than

ordinary monsters. They even had a hundred times increase in their growth rate, so they grew ridiculously fast.

On the other hand...

“Sir Brod brought back another monster.”

“What kind of monster did he bring this time?”

“I heard it’s a mamboth.”

“Ho? Wait, a mamboth?!”

Brod kept on bringing in new monsters and animals from who knew where. As for the mamboths, they were huge elephant-type monsters that were larger than their animal counterpart. Their sheer power and charging force could easily overpower ogres. And right now, Brod had brought in thirty mamboths from somewhere.

Brod also gained the power which allowed him to give skills to either animals or monsters as long as he trained them repeatedly. And the skill that he gave to the mamboths was a skill that strengthened their body. Of course, Brod could not just make any skill for them, but the skill that he gave them had given these monsters a huge boost in power.

And right now, the soldiers of Atlas Territory began to grow rapidly together with the animals and monsters that Brod had brought in.

The appearance of a new king was bound to bring unrest to the kingdoms nearby. The new kingdom might start as a small one but the neighboring kingdoms, who could not know when this kingdom would grow stronger than their own, were bound to fear their existence.

And the same was true for the kingdoms in Athenae. There were two huge mountains in the form of Eivelis and Collodis Empires in the Asgan Continent. There were also several kingdoms in existence among these two large empires. And among these kingdoms was the Barras Kingdom. Barras Kingdom was a kingdom famous for their production classes. It was also famous for having the best pharmacies in the entire continent. However, a kingdom was still a kingdom and the current level of the players in the game still would not be able to deal with a kingdom’s strong military force and outstanding NPCs. This small kingdom had joined hands with the Korean Guild Alliance.

“It’s an honor to be a part of your quest to punish the Let’s Eat Sect,” Ares Guild’s guild master Ares smiled.

Standing in front of him was the king of Barras Kingdom, Grain de Freid. The king shook his hand firmly and said, “I, Grain de Freid, will give you unlimited support for the destruction and elimination of the vicious and heinous cult, Let’s Eat Sect, who’s growing in power.”

King Grain de Freid of Barras Kingdom was growing uneasy with the ever increasing fragility of his kingdom’s position. What would happen if the Let’s Eat Sect, which would soon grow to become a kingdom, trampled on them? If that happened then they would eventually be torn apart and devoured by their neighboring kingdoms.

On the contrary, if he joined hands with these allied guilds and devoured the military forces of Let's Eat Sect, as well as their infinite amount of resources, then their kingdom would become the strongest kingdom in the continent.

It seemed that Grain de Freid of Barras Kingdom was blinded by greed and had joined hands with the Let's Eat Sect Punishment Alliance.

The Let's Eat Sect Punishment Alliance was made up of more than 3,000 Korean rankers. And that was not all. Two of the four great guilds, the Ares and Iris Guilds, together with four out of the ten guilds of the Sun Guilds, had joined forces. The number of members of this alliance alone had reached 60,000. There would also be an additional 200,000 troops that would be sent by the Barras Kingdom to help.

However, Grain de Freid even made a more shocking remark, "Let's Eat Sect's force will not be easy to deal with, so I will start drafting new soldiers right now."

Grain was aware that he was now walking the thread between life and death.

A huge gust of wind was blowing towards the Let's Eat Sect in the form of the huge troops that the Barras Kingdom and guild alliance had deployed.

Chapter 430: Start of War

After seeing everyone out, Barras Kingdom's King Grain leaned back in his seat, exhausted.

"Hoo..." Grain let out a sigh, his body still trembling from the thought of fighting a war. The future of Barras Kingdom was at stake. They could either devour the enemy or be devoured. What would happen if they won the war?

Grain stood up and slowly approached the statue of the gallant knight, the previous king, riding on a horse while holding his sword! Then, he reached out for the hand holding the sword and...

Creak, creak, creak, creak—

...the wall behind the throne split apart to reveal a variety of cooking ingredients.

There were chicken, beef, pork, mutton, and even vegetables! These were the ingredients that the Barras Royal Family had been guarding and protecting for a very long time.

The main reason why these ingredients had been left as they were was because neither the members of the royal family nor the members of the Chef Tower could cook them. However, even though none of them could cook these ingredients, the value and power that these ingredients could exert were tremendous.

'These ingredients have the power to permanently increase one's attributes and power once eaten, not like the power that one would get through buffs.'

One could say that these ingredients only existed in Barras Kingdom.

'I will either take their power away.'

Or...

‘They will take my immortal ingredients away.’

Minhyuk never had a day off ever since the Athenae: World War had ended. He never stopped engaging in diplomatic activities through Paladin Corr, Best Selling Author Aruvel, and Ghost Spear Ben. That was not all. He also dragged a handcart all over the place and fed a lot of people. Of course, the food that he made in his handcart always had the ‘Sea Honey’.

At the same time, he also devoted himself to cooking dishes for his guild members and vassals. He devoted the entire two months in reality, a time equivalent to half a year inside the game, to cook for them. And once he finished everything...

“Hoo...” Minhyuk breathed a sigh. He went out and looked out from the balcony of the lord’s mansion and watched the lively Valhalla territory.

That was right. Minhyuk had been going back and forth between Atlas and Valhalla to make food. Even though he was staggering from fatigue and exhaustion, he was still grinning widely.

Minhyuk also prepared some food for himself after he finished making food for others. He looked at the table placed on the veranda with a bright smile on his face. On the table were a huge bowl of clam and knife-cut noodle soup, a plate of bossam, and a serving of freshly made kimchi.

‘Eating delicious food after a day of hardwork is really the best...!’

Before Minhyuk knew it, the weather had already turned cold. A white cloud would even puff out of his mouth with every breath now. There was also steam curling up from the warm clam and knife-cut noodle soup on the table.

“Well then.”

Minhyuk quickly clamped a heaping of noodles from the huge bowl and a ladle of soup filled with clams, zucchinis, and shredded carrots in his smaller bowl. Then, he rubbed his cold hands together.

‘Knife-cut noodles will taste better if you eat it outside!’

Minhyuk grabbed the small bowl and lifted it to his mouth for a sip of the warm and refreshing soup.

“Hoo! Hoo! *Sluuuuuuuuuurp!*?Kgghk! I can feel the warmth! It’s melting the coldness!”

The coldness that settled in his body seemed to melt away with just a sip of the soup. Then, he used his chopsticks and clamped some of the chewy noodles.

“Hoo! Hoo!”

He blew on the chewy noodles first before putting them in his mouth and slurping them up! Then, he also grabbed a piece of clam meat, wrapped it with the noodles, and placed it in his mouth again.

“Sluuuuuuuuuurp!”

This time, Minhyuk’s chopsticks stretched out to the freshly made kimchi. However, the most important thing about this kimchi was that it was ‘oyster kimchi’.

“Crunch, crunch—”

A sour taste spread in his mouth the moment he bit on the kimchi. Then, he picked out the oyster hidden among the kimchi and placed it in his mouth. Some would say that it has a fishy after-taste, but for Minhyuk, it tasted like the sparkling sea.

“This is definitely the authentic flavor. Aaaaah. Definitely.”

Minhyuk lifted the bowl again for another sip of the soup. This time, he stretched his chopsticks towards the bossam and tasted it as it was. The moment the soft and exquisite texture of the bossam meat entered his mouth, it was the epitome of the expression ‘melts in your mouth’. It was well-cooked to the point that it did not feel like the usual tough meat.

Next, he placed a small piece of tofu and a piece of kimchi on top of the bossam and placed it in his mouth. Three distinct yet harmonious flavors burst inside his mouth. For a change of pace, he grabbed a piece of cabbage, dipped it in ssamjang and placed it in his mouth.

Crunch, crunch, crunch—

The more he chewed, the sweeter the cabbage tasted in his mouth. This was especially the case for the ones that were grown and picked perfectly. For Minhyuk’s next bite, he took a piece of bossam meat, wrapped it with cabbage, and dipped everything in ssamjang. Minhyuk thought that the combination of bossam and cabbage was the next best thing since sliced bread!

‘Hwaaa...’

After finishing everything, Minhyuk stared blankly at his territory. He felt a fatigue creep up from deep within his bones after his two-month long efforts.

‘I need to get some exercise and take a nap.’

Minhyuk smiled happily at the thought of giving the precious things that he had prepared for his guild members and vassals. Then, he logged out.

Ares Guild’s master Ares and countless rankers have gathered together.

‘We can’t wait for the Barras Kingdom’s support to arrive. We have to take them down now.’

According to their estimate, the Barras Kingdom’s troops would take a while to gather. But even if that was the case, their troops that were present could already rival a large army with 20,000 soldiers and 2,000 elite royal knights. It would take time to get additional recruits so they would have to make do with their current numbers and hit their enemy unaware. If they waited for the Barras Kingdom’s troops to gather before attacking, Let’s Eat Sect might notice their movements and send Atlas to the skies.

They could expect a total number of 20,000 troops from the kingdom later. But right now, their guild alliance had 20,000 troops present. In fact, their alliance had a total of 60,000 members, but because people were usually at work or school at this time of the day, only a fraction showed up. However, more of them would start to appear and join them, and their numbers would increase as time went by.

These 20,000 troops, together with the 2,000 elite royal knights, were now currently divided and dispatched to different places. Ares would strike Atlas' upfront with most of the troops while Callian, Iris Guild's master, would attack their rear. That was how they divided their troops.

In other words, the 22,000-strong troops would be divided into three main forces, with around 7,000 troops attacking upfront, 7,000 troops attacking the rear, and the remaining 8,000 troops further split into two subdivisions that would also move to attack the territory upfront in a quick two-pronged attack.

Just when the 4,000 strong troops were about to move, Ares looked forward with a weird expression on his face. This was because there were around 500 people dressed in rags resting around a wagon a fair distance from them. They were obviously the people in charge of transporting something.

'Did Let's Eat Sect cooperate with someone without our knowledge? Are they bearing supplies?'

Ares' mouth almost split from the smile that was widening on his face. Then, he raised his hand. They were still quite a long way from Atlas and had time to deal with this.

"Archer and Mage units, prepare with the Cavalry."

These were the well-trained soldiers of Barras Kingdom! On top of that, most of the players that were logged in at this time were single-digit rankers. The only reason why these top rankers were here was because they thought of this game as their work.

"Don't leave a single one of them alive."

"Yes, sir!"

A deep smile curled at the corners of Ares' mouth.

Rocard Kingdom, which had successfully established their new home in the Northern Continent, had succeeded in sowing seeds and harvesting their crops safely. And right now, the gifts that Queen Iris had prepared to present to Minhyuk were now being transported by a transportation team.

"Oh my. This is tiring~"

"That might be the case, but you do know that Lord Minhyuk is our benefactor, right?"

"I can already imagine his happy face once he receives these, you know? Hohoho!"

The people of Rocard Kingdom regarded Minhyuk as their hero after he saved their kingdom. On top of that, he was a kind and virtuous leader, a leader unlike any other king or ruler. Whenever they gave him something delicious, he would always smile brightly at them, as if to tell them that he really liked them. And this very smile could invoke a motherly smile on their faces.

But at that moment, the sky suddenly darkened.

"Is it going to rain?"

"The sun is high up in the sky. What do you mean by rain?"

However, when they turned to look at the sky, their eyes could not help but widen. The things that covered the skies were not rain clouds, but arrows and magic!

“Hiiiiik!”

“Heeeeeooooook!”

Not long after, the arrows and magical attack rained down on them.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

“Keu, keuaaaack!”

“Kyaaaaaaa!”

“Aaaaaaaack!”

The people of Rocard Kingdom shrieked as the arrows and magical attacks blasted them away. However, another round of attacks rained down on them, increasing their casualties. Plenty of people were bleeding from their injuries. Some even died on the spot, while others had their bodies blasted and spread out in the area. It was literally like hell on earth.

“Ugh, uuuuuugh...”

However, there were still plenty of survivors. Unfortunately, that was when these survivors saw hundreds of cavalry rushing forward.

“What, what the hell...?”

“Hiiiiik...”

Fear crept up from deep within them. And among them stood a woman, Rolein, who was bleeding from her head. She saw the tip of the spear of the leading cavalry coming straight for her chest.

“Kyaaaaaaack!”

But just when she screamed, bracing herself for the inevitable pain that the spear would bring her...

Grab—

A man appeared in front of her. The man grabbed the spear before it could stab Rolein in the chest. Then, surrounded by a black current, fifteen Death Knights appeared around the man. The ground cracked as thousands of undead appeared on his left, right and even in front of him.

Rolein knew this man more than anybody else. Every time this man appeared, they would cut him with their sickle, stab them with their pickaxe, and kill him mercilessly. She was among the men that kept on trampling on this man.

The man, with his long black and messy hair, dark robe and gaunt face, looked back at her with a smile and said, “Ma’am, quickly run to Atlas Territory with your fastest speed.

Shwaaaaaaaaa—

The dark knight that the man called for cut down the cavalry that was rushing at them. And with his aloof gaze, the man rushed forward with his legion.

“I will stop them here.”

This was the moment that the King of the Dead, Death, has appeared.