

Gourmet 531

Chapter 531: Gaining an Uncle

Overlord Raldo was the king of the great Lumae Kingdom. It was also through him that Minhyuk had been able to get the Overlord's Technique. The fact that Raldo could now use the Overlord's Technique without receiving any penalties meant that his power would be completely overwhelming.

For Minhyuk, it was just a skill, but for an NPC like Overlord Raldo, gaining the power of the Overlord's Technique meant that he had reached an entirely new level; he had now climbed the ranks of Absolute Supreme NPCs.

And this Absolute Supreme NPC was politely asking Minhyuk to kill him.

The kings, the players, and even the guild members of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom were all shocked by this sudden turn of events. Among them, Haze looked like she knew something.

'No way...!'

The kings, on the other hand, gulped dryly.

'No...!'

'You can't take Raldo's head!'

Even now, the name of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom was resounding loudly in the continent. If the Beyond the Heavens' King took Raldo's head, then his name would ring more loudly in the continent and make his kingdom stronger.

Minhyuk looked at the kneeling Raldo in silence for quite some time and thought, *'What a mischievous guy'* while smiling bitterly. He knew full well what Raldo was asking for. It was because he did not have any more regrets.

Knowing the fact that his father, Ravanberg, loved him dearly was enough for Raldo. It was more than enough. However, he also regretted one fact. *'Why couldn't I be a father like that to Votto?'*

After what had happened with Ravanberg, Raldo could not bring himself to regard his family as something important. He had trained and built his kingdom and his men, but had always maintained a distant attitude when it came to Votto.

In the end, Votto had become Beyond the Heavens Kingdom's prisoner of war and even promised to take his own life in return for his men's lives.

"The fault of the people is the fault of their king. Take my head and relieve your anger."

No matter who looked at it, they could tell that Minhyuk deserved to take Raldo's life. Although he was asleep at that time, it was true that Lumae Kingdom caused great damage to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Of course, the two kingdoms did not completely wage war against each other. That meant that Raldo could very well just declare a full-on war right here and now.

However, Raldo chose to offer his life to his benefactor, Minhyuk.

Minhyuk took a step toward the place where Raldo's sword was embedded. He pulled out the sword and looked down at Raldo. Everyone turned tense as they looked at the two.

Minhyuk then whispered, with a voice so soft that only Raldo could hear, "You're a great father, just like Ravanberg."

Then, Minhyuk's soft and gentle voice continued to ring in Raldo's ears.

"You're a very cool father."

He was a father who tried to save his son by offering his own neck instead. Raldo shivered when he heard Minhyuk's words.

'Beyond the Heavens' King...'

Raldo thought that there was no shame in dying by the hands of Minhyuk. Raldo had never once recognized the kings and emperors of this continent in his life. He thought that they were just a bunch of people with large chunks of land and many people under them.

However, the same was not true for Minhyuk. He was a man that was worthy of respect and the only thing that Raldo resented was the fact that he had only met this man now. Raldo slowly closed his eyes.

'Please, spare my son Votto.'

Perhaps somewhere, his son, Votto, was crying and calling his name out. Raldo smiled at the thought.

'Father, was this how you felt back then? No, perhaps you felt more pain?'

Raldo felt relieved. Now, he could end his life and go to his father's arms. But then...

Clang—

Minhyuk threw Raldo's sword on the ground, the impact ringing loudly in the clearing. Then, Minhyuk spoke in a tone completely different from the one that he had used earlier.

"Lumae Kingdom's King, you are shameless!!!"

Everyone looked at Minhyuk in doubt when they saw him throw Raldo's sword and shout like that.

"As the king, you dare to ask me to forgive your men's sins by offering your life? I declare here and now!"

Minhyuk looked at his subordinates and the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom with a cold expression on his face. And Haze, who stood amidst them...

'No way...!'

Minhyuk, with his dignified voice, continued to speak. His voice rang loudly and spread through his subjects, the players, and even through the broadcasting cameras.

"As a prisoner of war, Prince Votto will be held captive in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom for three years. In addition, the 1,000 elite knights that came here would be

imprisoned here for three years to pay for their crimes. I declare this as the King of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom."

Minhyuk looked at Raldo coldly. Although Minhyuk's voice was cold, Raldo could tell what he meant and wanted to do, tears already dripping down his cheeks.

"Our Beyond the Heavens Kingdom will not forgive the Lumae Kingdom. Lumae Kingdom has to compensate more than five times the amount of damages that we have suffered in this war. I will not grant Lumae Kingdom's King Raldo's request, and I henceforth banish him from this kingdom!"

"...!"

"...!"

"...!"

"...!"

The buzz among the players and the people grew.

"He's banishing Raldo?"

"Doesn't that mean that the war would not end?"

"Does His Majesty intend to trample on the Lumae Kingdom?"

"Ho!"

"Wow. The Food God does not care about anything once he gets angry."

"But, isn't he cool?"

These were the thoughts of the ordinary people and the players. However, the meaning of the words that Minhyuk uttered were fully understood by Raldo, the other kings, and the 1,000 elite knights present at the scene.

Haze was amazed.

'His Majesty is truly a clever ruler.'

She was in complete awe and admiration of Minhyuk. Minhyuk might have declared that he would become Raldo's enemy by banishing him. But the truth? Bringing in Prince Votto and the 1,000 elite knights under their watch might sound like they were prisoners of war, but Minhyuk was actually using them as a shield.

'What would happen if another kingdom dared to lay their hands on Beyond the Heavens Kingdom that housed Prince Votto?'

Then...

'It's no different than laying their hands on Raldo.'

That was right. Attacking Prince Votto, who despite being a prisoner of war was also a prince of Lumae Kingdom, was like provoking the Lumae Kingdom. They would be put in a situation where they had to deal with both the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom and the Lumae Kingdom at once.

‘Not only that, but 1,000 of the finest elite knights will be in the kingdom.’

There was no information about Raldo’s 1,000 elite knights, but it could be said that the knights that Raldo raised secretly had to be the best of the best. The Beyond the Heavens Kingdom had already reached the point where their future was basically secured.

‘Trading the life of Prince Votto and the 1,000 elite knights was worth it.’

In fact, killing Prince Votto would be the signal of defeat of the Lumae Kingdom. But that fact was something that King Raldo had already acknowledged when he had knelt down on his own. Even those elite knights had already acknowledged that fact too.

‘Did he make this choice for His Majesty Raldo?’

‘He awakened His Majesty Raldo, taught him about the truth of his past, and even allowed us to save Prince Votto’s life.’

‘I will do my best and give my life for His Majesty Raldo and the king of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.’

Minhyuk had touched the hearts of these significant people, and even won their loyalty. Then, he said, “Does the King of Lumae have anything to say?”

Raldo, who was still in tears, felt extremely grateful for Minhyuk’s kindness and mercy.

“Nothing,” Raldo said as he slowly stood up. In the eyes of others, Minhyuk and Raldo had turned into bitter enemies.

Then, Minhyuk immediately heard a set of notifications.

[Lumae Kingdom’s 1,000 ‘Shadow Knights’ have sworn their eternal loyalty to you.]

[The Shadow Knights are the finest knights that have hidden in the shadows and secretly protected Raldo. The power and skills of these knights far surpassed that of the Imperial Knights.]

[They will show extreme loyalty to you.]

[You have gained 300 REP.]

[You have gained 20 CHA.]

Finally, Raldo turned around and walked away from the kingdom. A large crowd snickered at Raldo.

“Is that NPC the one hailed as the Overlord? If he’s just that, then I can also call myself the Overlord!”

“No, no. It’s because Beyond the Heavens’ King, the Food God, is really dope, you know?”

“Kyaaa~ The Food God is so classy!”

Those that did not know of the truth laughed and snickered at Raldo. But the place that Raldo was headed to was the place where the other kings were secretly watching everything unfold.

Suddenly, immense killing intent burst out from Overlord Raldo. Then, he said, “Are you telling me that this huge army is trying to lay their hands on the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom? The place where my son is currently held captive?”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

The kings could not say anything and could only keep their mouths shut tightly. After all, Raldo’s words could also mean...

‘Don’t you dare touch the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.’

Raldo, who was holding his sword high, finally lowered it.

Gulp—

Someone in the crowd gulped dryly. The people mocked Raldo, but he was not someone that could be ridiculed that easily.

“If that’s the case, then I can just wipe out 50,000 of your troops here.”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

That was a fact. It was something that Raldo was capable of. And those 50,000 strong troops? Of course, their lives did not really matter to the kings, who didn’t care even if they were threatened like that. However, the biggest problem here was that they were the ones closest to Raldo and would definitely risk losing their lives along with their troops.

So, the kings immediately lowered their tails.

“We, we’re just here to sightsee.”

“That’s right! We’re just here to sightsee!”

“We came here to express our gratitude to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s King for saving the Asgan Continent.”

“Yes, yes! What we’re saying is that we gathered the troops here to celebrate and express our gratitude to him!”

Raldo only passed by them when he saw them immediately lowering their tails between their legs. He did not leave the vicinity of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, however; instead, he waited for all the troops to leave.

The people of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom began to move on and do their jobs once again as their kingdom once again found peace. As for Raldo? He was finally able to meet with his son, a prisoner of war.

“Royal father... Why... why...”

Raldo was nothing but a scary king to Prince Votto. A harsh king that had always been cold to him and had never called out to him warmly and gently. For the first time, Raldo looked at Votto with a soft and warm smile on his face.

“Votto. Take good care of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s King.”

Prince Votto collapsed at the words of his father, the very same father that had put his own neck on the line to save him, as Raldo called his name for the first time in his life.

“I will keep that in mind.”

Only after that did Raldo move to leave Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

‘My son will definitely learn a lot from here.’

Raldo was relieved to leave his son under the care of such a king.

At that moment, a masked man appeared in front of Raldo. The man pulled his mask down, revealing the face of the Beyond the Heavens’ King, Minhyuk.

Unlike before, Minhyuk just looked at Raldo, and Raldo also did the same thing. After quite some time, Raldo asked, “Why?”

Minhyuk looked at Raldo in confusion.

“Why did you tell me that when you protected me?”

Raldo still could not understand why Minhyuk was willing to risk his life just so he could tell him the truth about his father, Ravanberg.

“Because my father is like your father.”

“...”

That was right. One of the main reasons why Minhyuk had helped Raldo that much was precisely that. Some would say that he was too emotional, but Minhyuk felt that Ravanberg and his own father, Kang Minhoo, shared a lot of things in common.

As Minhyuk suffered from an eating addiction and stopped showing up during the company’s board meetings, the board members had started to speak of other successor candidates to pressure Kang Minhoo. But his father had fought against them. Kang Minhoo had worked twice, thrice more to protect Minhyuk and to fill the vacancy that their company, a company without any successor, had.

But even while enduring such exhaustion, Kang Minhoo still came home with a bright smile on his face, because that was what a father was.

The other reason was that Minhyuk knew that sons needed to know the burden that their fathers bore. Those were the reasons why Minhyuk told Raldo the truth.

Raldo grinned and said, "All fathers must be strong."

Minhyuk just smiled softly in response. Raldo was about to turn around, when he stopped in his tracks and asked in embarrassment, "Will you be friends with me?"

Minhyuk smiled awkwardly, because he did not know what to call Raldo. Raldo thought that it was a sign of refusal, so he turned around bitterly. But then, he recalled something and turned around again while taking something out.

"Ah. You dropped this."

What Raldo held out was one of the things that Minhyuk had dropped: the chicken legs.

Minhyuk was immediately delighted the moment he saw it. He shouted, "U-Uncle Raldo!!! Can I call you uncle?!"

"...???"

It was on this day that Minhyuk gained a new uncle, an uncle by the name of Overlord Raldo.

There was a woman smiling happily as she watched Overlord Raldo hand over some chicken legs to a beaming Minhyuk. This woman was none other than Haze.

'His noona is Sword Emperor Ellie. His hyung is Emperor Asvon. And his uncle is Overlord Raldo. What in the world are His Majesty's personal connections...?'

Then, she suddenly wondered, *'Then, will he have a god as his grandfather or grandmother later?!'*

Haze was already smiling at the pleasant thoughts flashing through her head.

Chapter 532: Friend

Ascar, who was challenging the tenth floor of the Blood Tower, started to feel the weight of her exhaustion.

'I don't see any way to clear this.'

Ascar would only be able to clear the trial if she got her hand on the bloody greatsword, which was conveniently placed right behind the 60,000 monsters in front of her.

And the number of times that she died on the tenth floor?

[Asura's Trial.]

[Tenth Floor. Number of Deaths: 299.]

[Upon failure in clearing Asura's Trial, the penalty would be applied based on the number of tries used.]

That was right. She had already died 299 times. When top rankers target a dungeon, they would usually hunt repeatedly, analyzing it swiftly and in a thorough manner. This was the reason why it

was not that easy to break the records set by these rankers, even if it was in a regular time-attack dungeon.

Of course, Ascar was among the top rankers. But at this point, she had already deemed it useless. She could not find any way to attack and clear this floor. She continued to break through in a head-on battle while thinking about other methods, wondering if there was a shortcut or another path that would open if she just continued to kill the monsters, but none of those happened. This meant...

‘Only the strong can clear Asura’s final trial...’

Most dungeons could be cleared even if the players did not meet the minimum requirements to clear it, as long as they knew the patterns to attack. Unfortunately, the tenth floor’s trial was too brutal; only those strong enough to deal with 60,000 monsters alone could overcome and clear this trial.

But what about Ascar? She was only ranked in the middle of the highest top rankers, and her power was definitely insufficient to deal with these monsters alone. This was something that she realized after dying for the 250th time.

“It’s time for you to give up. Admit it. You are weak, far too weak to inherit my powers. Just like how the humans compared some existences to ‘ants’, you are that. You are an ‘ant’.”

An ant. Humans could kill ants just by pressing on them with their fingers. Ants were infinitely weaker creatures compared to humans. But instead of rage, Ascar felt amused. That was right. She was an ant.

“It seems like you don’t know the story about the ant and the grasshopper, huh?”

The ants might be fools but they did their best in everything. Even in fairytales, there were times when ants were far better than humans.

“Hmm.”

Stab—

Just as Ascar rushed forward once again, one of the monsters stabbed her chest with its rusty sword. Immediately after, a gigantic monster that looked similar to an ichthyosaur opened its mouth and devoured Ascar.

[You have died 299 times on Asura’s Trial’s tenth floor.]

[You can challenge it for the 300th time.]

[However, Asura’s Trial’s penalties will reach the maximum after the 300th try.]

Ascar bit her lips tightly. Challenging the 300th trial meant that she risked the maximum penalty for failure. Of course, it represented a great burden on her, but she did not choose to give up.

“Start the challenge.”

[Starting the 300th Challenge.]

[You will receive the maximum penalty for challenging the trial for the 300th time.]

[Something special might happen once you challenge the trial for the 300th time.]

‘Something special...?’ Ascar wondered. However, the 60,000 monsters were already rushing at her before she could even delve deeper into her thoughts. They all had varying levels, starting from Level 200, up until Level 500.

‘Rush forward while conserving as much strength as I can, and only use my skills to break through if my life is in danger.’

Ascar might not have found a way to clear the trial, but she did find a way to endure longer. She even found a few ways to cut down the monsters faster. Ascar rushed toward the monsters that blocked her path.

Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping—

Her two katanas drew two beautiful lines as she cut down the monsters in front of her. Since her basic attack was among the top in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, it was not that difficult to cut down the monsters that blocked her path. The problem usually began when she got through the ones at the front and had delved deep among the monsters’ ranks.

Ascar continued to cut down the monsters all the while rushing deeper into their ranks. There were even times when she only needed several cuts to kill off monsters with high defenses. The monsters kept on swarming at her the deeper she dug inside.

‘When driven into a corner, the enemies will retaliate harder.’

Once that happened, her HP and defenses would not be able to keep up at all. So, she cast a skill.

[Sword Tempest.]

[A storm of swords will strike all of your enemies within a ten meter radius with additional 1,200% attack.]

Shwaaaaaaaaa—

Once she crossed her swords, a huge storm made of sword blades appeared and swept away all of the monsters within a ten meter radius. Then, she took the opportunity to dive deeper into the monsters’ ranks.

Ascar continued to cut through the monsters’ ranks just like that. But as time went by, the damage that she incurred continued to take a toll, until she reached the point where her stamina was starting to run out. Her body was starting to reach its limits.

“Haa... Haa...” Ascar drew one ragged breath after another as she cut down another enemy.

‘But more and more appears in front of me...’

Ever since she started this, the most challenging attempt was the current 300th try. No matter how many times she tried, she was still far from enough. She was only halfway through, but among the monsters swarming in front and behind her, the number that she had killed was only around 6,000.

Slaaaaaaaaash—

“Ugh!” Ascar fell down with a groan after blocking a three-headed ogre’s ax.

‘Is there really no other way...?’

Was this truly something that she could not achieve, despite giving it her all? Actually, Ascar knew it well. However, she was continuously rushing forward, trying to make the impossible possible, because she made a promise with *him*.

Ascar was already weak as she was. But if things continued as it was, then the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s Ghost of the Battlefield would disappear without doing anything at all.

Kiiick—

Ascar, who was hit by one of the monsters’ kicks, collapsed in a heap. Even her HP was already reaching rock bottom so it was about time for her to be forced to logout. Ascar fell down on the ground, her breaths turning ragged while her consciousness began to fade.

[Your Stamina and HP have drastically dropped in a short period of time.]

[You’re slowly falling into a fainted state.]

But the notifications did not end there.

[You’re the one that has tried to challenge Asura’s Trial for the 300th time.]

[You kept on challenging the trial despite knowing that it’s impossible for you.]

[Something special is now happening.]

[You can now choose a helper. If your chosen helper answers your summons within a minute, they would be able to participate and fight with you.]

[You will fall into a four-second fainted state.]

‘I can choose a helper... Then, the helper that I choose is...’

In the end, Ascar lost consciousness.

Haze was very excited to give her report to Minhyuk.

“On average, the members of the Shadow Knight Order are at Level 570. With the passive skill ‘Secret Knight’, we could expect them to exert 1.3x their original power in the dark, a tremendous display of power if I may say.”

Haze could not help but be excited after knowing what Minhyuk received from the Lumae Kingdom.

Mumble, mumble, mumble—

The moment Minhyuk’s new-found Uncle Raldo returned to his kingdom, he filled carts of weapons, armors, gold, and even their specialties and sent it to them. Haze continued to report excitedly, but she ended up pausing when she saw the look on Minhyuk’s face. It was because Minhyuk looked distracted as he stared at the Blood Tower that could be seen out of the windows of his office.

Actually, it was Haze that had reported to Minhyuk that Ascar was there. She could tell from Minhyuk's expression that he was very worried about Ascar.

"Ah, sorry. Go on."

"Yes. The funds that we received as compensation from Lumae Kingdom amounted to 50,000 platinum. It's more than enough to repair all of the damages that we have received in this war. In addition, many of the foreigners have started migrating to Beyond the Heavens Kingdom after having seen the war and seeing plenty of possibilities in us. The number of people that migrated today..."

Haze suddenly stopped. It seemed like she had made a mistake and had forgotten to bring the tally of the players that have migrated today.

"I'm sorry, Your Majesty. Please excuse me for a moment."

"Alright," Minhyuk answered as he turned to look at the Blood Tower again.

Haze went out while thinking, *'Ascar is trying harder because you're that kind of king.'*

She smiled bitterly at the thought. After getting the report, she once again opened the door to Minhyuk's office and entered.

"Your Majesty, the number of foreigners that migrated today..."

But Haze suddenly stopped in her tracks, head tilting in confusion. It was because Minhyuk was nowhere to be found. The only thing that appeared in the room was the wind blowing through the open windows.

"Your Majesty...?"

A little later...

Baaaaaaaaaaaaaang—

Rumble, rumble, rumble—

Strong and powerful tremors engulfed the entire Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Haze hurriedly hid under the table at the sudden shaking and only came out to look after everything died down. What she saw outside were powerful black flames blazing on top of the Blood Tower.

"Your Majesty...?"

Ascar's consciousness was slowly returning. She was able to choose a helper just before she fainted. And the helper that she chose was none other than Minhyuk. Perhaps it was because she was not fully conscious at the time. Ascar knew that nothing would change even if Minhyuk answered her call in that short minute and appeared here. Actually, the reason why she called Minhyuk as her helper was because she wanted to see him.

Once her consciousness returned to her, she saw his wide back in front of her.

Minhyuk, who was chosen as Ascar's helper, was notified about the number of times that Ascar had challenged the trials the moment he entered the tower. Minhyuk was left in awe of Ascar's perseverance, knowing that the trials were so difficult and mentally straining.

"You're really great, Ascar," Minhyuk said sincerely as he looked back at her.

But Ascar's vision was still a bit blurry so she could not see his face clearly.

"Come, wrap one of your hands around my shoulders."

Minhyuk hugged Ascar, who was now slowly coming back to her senses. With one arm wrapped around Minhyuk's shoulders, Ascar mumbled groggily, "There are too many monsters..."

"It's alright."

Ascar thought that no matter how strong Minhyuk was, there was no way that he could help her against all these monsters that filled the entire floor.

Minhyuk hugged Ascar with one hand, while holding his sword with the other and casting his 'saved' skill, the Sword of Absolute Death.

Ping—

The attack immediately knocked down one of the tallest boss monsters that were blocking their path.

Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping—

Then, hundreds of sword blades appeared and swept away the monster corps that blocked them, creating a thirty meter long path. Minhyuk hurriedly ran while hugging Ascar.

[40 seconds, 39 seconds, 38 seconds, 37...]

Time continued to flow as they continued to run forward. Then, Minhyuk suddenly jumped to the skies, the sword in his hand pointing to the ground.

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaa—

[Continent Destroyer.]

The Continent Destroyer Sword's ultimate skill was triggered, sweeping the area around the two. Minhyuk continued to run while the monsters were still reeling from the sudden earthquake. He stomped on some of the flying boulders that flew from the earthquake, even going so far as to stepping on monsters that flew too.

At this moment, Minhyuk, who was running with Ascar in his arms and the explosions of lava behind him, looked like he was the main character of an action movie.

Shwaaaaa—

Shwaaaaa—

[19 seconds, 18 seconds, 17 seconds...]

The timer continued to tick but the podium holding the bloody greatsword was still far away from them. Suddenly, tens of thousands of monsters appeared and blocked Minhyuk's path again. The

problem was that there were even Named Monsters that exceeded Level 500 among the monsters that blocked their path here on the tenth floor.

‘It’s impossible...’ Ascar thought, biting her lips amidst the commotion.

But Minhyuk looked down at Ascar with a gentle smile on his face. His expression seemed to tell her that there was nothing to worry about as he said, “It’s alright, Ascar.”

Ascar felt her heart thump like crazy when she met Minhyuk’s warm and soft gaze. Even her cheeks flushed red without her knowing it. Then, jet black flames bloomed on Minhyuk’s sword.

Crackleeee—

The powerful force that erupted from his sword shook the surroundings.

Rumble, rumble, rumble—

The ground shook and the skies rumbled as the air in the surroundings heated up. And Minhyuk, who flew in the skies, struck the ground with all his might.

[Overlord’s Technique.]

[The one that has received the Overlord’s Technique will be able to trigger 150% of the power of the Overlord’s Technique without using the Overlord’s Mana for one time.]

[The Overlord’s Technique covers the entire world!]

[The Overlord’s Fire, with an additional 5,000%~8,000% attack, will attack everyone within a 60~80 meter radius.]

[The Overlord’s Fire is a fire that will not be extinguished so easily. If the fire licks and touches a body, it will continue to deal damage to that individual.]

The amount of damage that Minhyuk dealt was several times stronger than the original Overlord’s Technique’s power. This was because it was Minhyuk’s very first use. On his very first usage of the skill, he could utilize 50% more power without the need to fill his Overlord’s Mana.

As soon as Minhyuk’s sword struck down, a black wave stretched out as the power of the Overlord’s Technique was expressed to the world. The wave instantly turned the monsters that blocked their path into bones until they disappeared into ashes. The black flames opened the path for them. In fact, the power of the Overlord’s Technique was so strong that it even tore apart the walls of the tower’s tenth floor as strong flames burst out. The beautiful black flames mesmerized Ascar.

Then, Minhyuk looked down at Ascar with a gentle gaze as he lowered her into the ground and said, “It’s your turn now. You’re not going to give up, right?”

“...”

At that moment, Ascar felt as if the same Minhyuk that warmed her with his words in the past flashed in front of her.

‘That’s right. I won’t give up.’

Ascar immediately ran to the unblocked path created by the black flames with the last of her strength the moment Minhyuk lowered her into the ground. However, her HP was still at rock bottom and her stamina was going down. Still, all Ascar did was to grit her teeth and run.

“Kihyeeeeeeek!”

“Kihyaaaaaaaaaack!”

[The monsters will desperately try to stop you the closer you get to Asura’s greatsword.]

Crackleeeeeeee—

Thousands of monsters devoured by the black flames rushed after Ascar until they disappeared into dust. Ascar continued to run forward alone without any fear as thousands chased after her.

‘There’s nothing in the world that I can’t do!’

Nothing was impossible. Especially after Minhyuk showed her his strength and power.

Dash, dash, dash, dash—

Ascar’s speed seemed to increase and become faster as time went by. Even the thousands of monsters that were chasing behind her began to throw themselves at her to stop her. Just when an ichthyosaur-like monster tried to devour her...

“I’ll make it, no matter what!”

Grab—

...Ascar grabbed the hilt of the greatsword.

Flaaaaaaaaaash—

Then, a bright red light illuminated everything in the world, turning all of the monsters into ashes.

[You have successfully completed Asura’s Trial.]

[With your successful completion of Asura’s Trial, you can now change to ‘God Class: Asura’.]

[You have overcome your limit and completed the trial.]

[You have gone beyond your limits and even reached God. The powers of Asura that you will be able to inherit will be stronger.]

[With your transfer to a God Class, your level will drop to Level 266.]

Ascar smiled brightly amidst the shining red light. Her eyes curved up into crescents as her white and neat teeth peeked through the gaps of her lips. The red light even highlighted her white skin, straight nose, and sharp jawline. The smile that she showed right now was beautiful enough to charm the entire world. As she smiled like that, she turned to look at *him*.

“You know...”

Chapter 533: Friend

Ascar was able to grab onto the hilt of the bloody greatsword and inherit Asura’s power thanks to the help of her chosen helper, Minhyuk. She turned to look back at Minhyuk with a bright smile on

her face. For some reason, she felt like she could tell him that she was Da-Sol, the girl that he helped in the past.

So, she slowly opened her mouth to say, "You know..."

However, when she turned around, Minhyuk was not there anymore. She could not even hide her disappointment.

"This..."

That was her chance. She thought that she might even be able to invite him to watch her walk in the fashion show. But it was all for naught. All she could do was stare blankly at the place where he disappeared from, for a long time.

A festive mood surrounded the entire Beyond the Heavens Kingdom because Ascar, the Ghost of the Battlefield, was able to successfully transfer to 'God Class Asura'. Everyone congratulated her.

Ascar remained expressionless as she read her guild members' congratulatory messages on her phone as she traveled the streets of New York.

'Thank you, everyone.'

She was definitely happy, but her face remained as expressionless as ever. It was strange, but Ascar kept on looking at her phone waiting for someone to send her a congratulatory message. And although it was just a little too late, she felt extremely nervous.

Then, the message came in.

Ascar looked at the message for a long time. It was definitely the same congratulatory message, just like the same message that others sent, but strangely enough, it could bring her mood up, and even bring it down at the same time.

'What did I even expect?'

Ascar climbed the plane and sat on her first-class seat. Just before her plane to Paris took off, her phone rang. It was Genie.

"Hello."

['Scar, are you not really going to tell the guild members?]

Genie was also invited to watch Designer Crystal's Fashion Show, that was why Ascar told her in advance that she would be the one to walk the finale. Designer Crystal had always loved a very hot and secretive stage. That was the reason why the model that would walk the finale was not yet released to the media.

"It's alright, unnie. Everyone's busy."

[That might be the case but... is that really alright?]

This was the problem of an introvert. Although it was definitely not okay, their mouth would always say something else.

"Yes."

But deep inside, Ascar disagreed. Truth was, she really wanted everyone to watch her on stage and congratulate her. But she knew that everyone in Beyond the Heavens Kingdom was busy. She did not want to burden them at all. She was also afraid that they would not come, even if she extended her invitation because they were busy.

[Okay, I got it. I'll see you later then.]

"Yes."

Ascar looked at the window of the plane after the call ended.

'But it's not really okay at all...'

At Designer Crystal's Fashion Show that was held every two years.

Crystal's fashion shows created a lot of buzz and held as much weight as those luxury fashion shows like *Gutti*, *Louis Vuitton* and *Channil*. After all, Crystal was one of the best designers that were recognized by the entire world. Those that participated in Crystal's fashion show were world-class actors, singers, and models. Especially the finale, it was mostly done by the world's top celebrities and had always exceeded everyone's expectations.

Thousands of reporters from all over the world gathered at the fashion show's venue. All of them were busy clicking their cameras and taking pictures of the world-class celebrities that were getting off of their luxurious sedans.

Click, click, click, click, click, click, click—

Countless cameras clicked away as the reporters talked among themselves.

"Do you know who will walk the finale this time?"

"I don't, but Designer Crystal's Fashion Show finale was always spectacular and beautiful. I can't wait to see it, you know?"

Everyone, including the reporters, the celebrities invited to the fashion show and the viewers watching it on their screens, was curious about the person that would walk the fashion show's finale.

"Huuuh? It's, it's Genie!!!"

“It’s Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s Vice Guild Master Genie!!!”

At that moment, a huge uproar erupted among the reporters and the celebrities. The popularity of Athenae’s rankers had already reached the point where they exceeded most of the actors and top models. That was why there were many cases where popular world rankers even became actors or idols.

Among them, Genie or Im Jihye, the vice guild master of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom that was founded by a player, had an appearance that was on par, perhaps even greater than most actresses. Because of that, her appearance had created a huge buzz in the scene.

Click, click, click, click, click, click, click—

“M-maybe Genie’s a participant in this fashion show?”

“No way, are you telling me that she’s the finale?”

“Eyyy. No way.”

“If Genie’s here, does that then mean that the other guild members will also be here?”

“That’s crazy... Isn’t that going to be a huge scoop?”

The reporters talked with great fanfare and excitement. The Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s guild members were all very influential people, both in their country and the world. It was not just Genie, someone that was famous for being a world-class fashionista; even the other members of the guild were well-known for their great fashion sense. In fact, most of them could create huge ripples with the items that they wore on their bodies.

What would happen if the Beyond the Heavens’ guild members gathered here?

“This will be the greatest fashion show among all of the fashion shows to have ever been held.”

But that was just something that was straight out of a fantasy. After all, all of their members were so busy with their own things that gathering in this place was almost impossible. But what if they really gathered here together?

“Can we even breathe if they are gathered here?”

None of them could deny what one of the reporters said.

Ascar, or Im Da-Sol, sat inside a special waiting room, quickly taking out some medicine from her handbag and gulping it down with some water. They were medications for the panic disorder that Da-Sol was suffering from. That was also one of the reasons why she was quiet even when in Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Because she was suffering from such a disorder, she was trying to stay out of the public’s eye as much as possible. Thankfully, it was not that bad today.

Im Da-Sol hurriedly put away her pill box inside her handbag, just in time as a staff member came inside.

“Are the members of Beyond the Heavens not coming today?”

“...”

Da-Sol chewed on her lips. She had already heard that question from the staff at least thirty times today.

“Yes.”

“...Shit. I’m in trouble. The organizers were really looking forward to it.”

The staff member glanced at her and hurriedly went away. At this point, Da-Sol had started to notice something.

‘Don’t tell me...’

And in less than two minutes...

Knock, knock—

“Are the members of Beyond the Heavens not coming today?”

...Another staff member came in and asked. Only then did Da-Sol fully realize, *‘Maybe it’s not because of me but it’s because of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom...?’*

“Why don’t you get out of here?!”

A man pulled the staff member’s arm and kicked them out of Da-Sol’s waiting room and entered the room himself. This man was the world-class designer, Crystal. Crystal, a middle-aged man dressed in a fancy white tuxedo and glamorous make-up, huffed as he stopped in front of Da-Sol.

“Nervous?”

“Yes, I’m nervous but...”

Crystal immediately noticed what was plaguing Da-Sol’s mind when he saw her hesitate. So, he shook his head and said, “That’s not it at all, Da-Sol. I never expected them to come at all. I chose you because I saw your video. Don’t even think about the nonsense that the others are saying.”

Crystal truly meant it. It was not him that wanted the members of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, but the organizers. Crystal had chosen Da-Sol to walk his finale with utmost sincerity because he knew that she was a jewel that had yet to shine in the world. Still, despite Crystal’s recommendation, the organizers only accepted it in hopes that the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom would make their appearance.

“Just think about your walk and your performance. The whole world will definitely be surprised to see you on that stage.”

“...Alright,” Da-Sol nodded at Crystal’s sincerity. But after he left, Da-Sol could not hide how miserable she was feeling inside. Da-Sol stood up and went to the bathroom, letting out a trembling breath the moment she entered.

“Hooooo...”

While she was wiping her hands, a woman came inside accompanied by the loud clicks of her heels. The woman straightened her clothes and fixed her make-up before saying, "Everyone must be disappointed. After all, they set up Ascar as the finale only because of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom."

"...?"

Da-Sol looked at the woman that was speaking sarcastically in confusion. When she turned around, she finally saw the face of the woman. She was a woman around 176 centimeters tall, with long wavy hair and a beautiful face. Her looks might not be as pretty as Da-Sol, but she was pretty enough. This woman was none other than Lee Ji-Hee, a Korean actress and a global star. She was also one of Da-Sol's classmates back in elementary.

The most disgusting fact about her was the fact that she was the one that took the lead in bullying and isolating Da-Sol.

"In the first place, someone as unqualified as you will walk the finale? That's ridiculous, even the people that would walk the same stage and the audience would find it ridiculous. They just gave it to you because of your background."

Lee Ji-Hee's voice was very aggressive. After all, she was expecting to be the very first Korean to walk Crystal's finale. But Da-Sol? She was only known because she was Beyond the Heavens Kingdom's Ascar. Also, she was someone that Lee Ji-Hee had easily bullied before. Since she could not say anything about it, Lee Ji-Hee was very furious. So, she took this opportunity to trample on Da-Sol and her confidence.

"What's more, you're just an ugly half-blood, you know?"

Half-blood. That was the word that Lee Ji-Hee used to bully Da-Sol in the past. Right now, Da-Sol's beauty was dazzling, everyone who saw her would definitely find it to be indescribable. But every so often, there were people like Lee Ji-Hee who denied this fact and acted as if that was not the case, even going so far as to attack her.

Lee Ji-Hee caressed Da-Sol's hair, making Da-Sol tremble.

"Oh my? Are you scared? Did you remember the past? Why don't you cry like before and ask him to stop me? If you do that, then I'll stop!"

Lee Ji-Hee cackled happily. She believed that she would be able to keep Da-Sol out of the stage if she could psych Da-Sol out. Then, she moved her index finger to poke Da-Sol's forehead...

At the same time, at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.

A man in a suit led a group of thirty people, gaining the attention of everyone present.

"I, I have never seen an Asian like that before... He's as tall as any European... even his features are very handsome..."

"What the hell? Is he a model?!"

Among them, someone looked at the rushing man and said, "The, the Food God...?"

“It’s, It’s Beyond the Heavens!!!”

Murmur, murmur—

The entire airport was in a buzz.

Just when Lee Ji-Hee’s index finger was about to touch Da-Sol’s forehead...

“Why are you shaking?”

“...?”

Lee Ji-Hee’s face changed rapidly after finally witnessing the sharp glare of Ascar, the woman hailed as the Ghost of the Battlefield. Her eyes were glinting sharply through the gaps of her silver hair. For a moment, chills ran down Lee Ji-Hee’s spine. Only then did she realize that something was wrong. But before it could fully settle in...

“I’m so glad that I can pay you back for everything back then.”

Da-Sol grabbed Ji-Hee’s finger and snapped it back.

Crack—

“Kyaaaack!!!” Lee Ji-Hee shrieked sharply. But Da-Sol did not stop. She raised her foot and kicked Lee Ji-Hee on the abdomen.

Kick—

“Ugh!”

Da-Sol watched Lee Ji-Hee roll on the floor while clutching her belly. Then, she grabbed one of the cups used for brushing teeth on the counter.

“D-do you think you’ll be fine after doing something like this?!”

Da-Sol’s face immediately turned cold after hearing Lee Ji-Hee’s words. She said, “No, not at all. In fact, I may not get out of this unscathed. But... what would happen to you? What would happen if what you did in the past gets out in the open?”

“...”

Lee Ji-Hee’s pupils started to shake. Da-Sol was not ashamed of her past. After all, Da-Sol had survived, got through her roughest patch, and came to this place. Then, Da-Sol tipped the filled cup in her hand over Lee Ji-Hee’s head.

Fwoooooosh—

Clatter—

After throwing the plastic cup away, Da-Sol covered her mouth and said, “Oops. Sorry. It seems like you need to get your make-up done again.”

After doing all of that, Da-Sol turned around to leave the bathroom. Before she could do so, Lee Ji-Hee's voice rang out, "You're someone that can't do anything without Beyond the Heavens Kingdom! Everyone will definitely laugh at you!!!"

"They can laugh all they want. I will still be the one to walk that stage."

Da-Sol will soar brilliantly. That was about to start now.

Chapter 534: Friend

A limousine was moving swiftly on the roads of the beautiful city of Paris, with several black SUV's around it, as if they were protecting the luxurious car.

Genie actually contacted Minhyuk.

'What do you mean it's fine?!'

Anyone would definitely want to be congratulated on their debut. No one would ever want to be hidden. Minhyuk knew this too well. After all, he had always said 'It's fine' when he started suffering from eating addiction.

But once he turned around and was left alone, he would oftentimes feel bitter and lonely, hiding himself under the covers of his blanket.

Da-Sol did not tell anyone in Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Despite everyone's busy schedules, they stopped what they were doing and rushed to Incheon International Airport to fly to Paris the moment they heard that Da-Sol was about to debut as a model.

When Minhyuk turned on his tablet, he searched for the three words 'Beyond the Heavens'. Articles immediately popped up on his screen.

[Beyond the Heavens have arrived at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.]

[Where are the Beyond the Heavens' guild members heading to?]

[The only thing that's noteworthy as of now in Paris is... Crystal's Fashion Show. We can assume that they're heading to Crystal's Fashion Show. If that's the case, then we can expect this year's Crystal's Fashion Show to be the best fashion show in existence.]

"..."

Minhyuk stopped reading the articles. He thought for a moment before saying, "Mister Driver, let's arrive at Crystal's Fashion Show when it's finished."

"Eh? What do you mean?" The driver asked in confusion.

Minhyuk just smiled softly and said, "I believe this is for the better. After all, this is our friend's fashion show. She should be the only one shining brightly on that stage."

Minhyuk looked out of the car's window with a slight smile on his face as the driver instructed the rest of the drivers through their radios. Then, the limousine began to circle the roads of Paris, heading somewhere that was not towards Crystal's Fashion Show.

Crystal's Fashion Show finally kicked off, with world-class celebrities sitting side by side on both sides of the stage. It was filled with brilliant lights, refreshing music, and wonderful models, highlighting Crystal's designs and making them shine brightly on the stage.

"Woah..."

"Crystal's Fashion Show is truly the best."

All of the invited celebrities were in awe. Even the officials of the broadcasting station that was broadcasting Crystal's Fashion Show could not close their mouths in shock and admiration. The fact that Crystal had given his all for this fashion show was undeniable. Meanwhile, the organizing committee was in a buzz.

"Wha, what? Beyond the Heavens is not coming?!"

"Yes. We have confirmed that they arrived in Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, but strangely enough, they are only roaming the streets of Paris in their limousine."

"What in the world does that mean...?!"

The reason why they accepted Ascar as the finale of the fashion show was because of 'Beyond the Heavens'. In fact, the finale was mostly done by famous celebrities. But Ascar? Even though she was also famous, they could have easily chosen someone more famous, like Genie or Alicia. Perhaps they could even choose some other rankers that were known for their world-class beauty. Ascar was someone that had always covered her face with her silver hair and was surrounded by a gloomy atmosphere. She was far less known than most of the celebrities present here, this was a fact.

"Tell Da-Sol that if she wants to walk a fashion show that we're hosting in the future that she should contact the members of Beyond the Heavens right now, otherwise, she can dream on!!!"

"That..."

One of the staff members looked embarrassed. The very same staff member spoke up after one of the members of the organizing committee glared at him, "If you say 'Beyond the Heavens' one more time, I will kill you... was what she said."

"Impudent...!"

The organizing committee member was dumbfounded. If it were not for Designer Crystal's insistence, and that she was from the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, Da-Sol would not have been accepted in this fashion show.

'What the hell is with those impudent words?!'

Despite all of their ruckus, Crystal's fashion show continued to proceed in a very spectacular and brilliant manner.

[Crystal's fashion show is now coming to an end.]

[Everyone has a high expectation for the star of the finale.]

[Crystal has given his words. He said that we should look forward to the finale. That's why everyone in the world is paying attention to the finale.]

[If the finale is successful then we can expect that Crystal's fashion show would remain in the hearts of every fashionista for a very long time.]

This was ten minutes before the finale came on stage.

Da-Sol turned to look at the clock on the wall. She was on standby after finishing her make-up and felt as if everything was very distant to her.

'I'm very nervous...'

She would soon step in front of the eyes of everyone in the world. Perhaps it was because of that fact that she felt as if her anxiety was growing, making her reach for her handbag once again. That was when she saw that there was not much medicine for her panic disorder left.

'I drank a lot of them today...'

Da-Sol chewed her lip as she felt cold sweat drip down her back.

"Please standby," One of the staff members said. Da-Sol immediately hurried to the backstage while several people approached her to check her clothes. They did it until the very last minute before she went on stage.

The women that approached Da-Sol all lost their words when they saw her face and ended up staring at her for quite some time.

"Excuse me?"

"Ah, ah... yes... so, sorry."

The women hurriedly checked Da-Sol and her attire for the last time. Once Da-Sol had turned around and left for the stage, they immediately looked at each other and broke out in a buzz.

"Did you see...?"

"Y-yeah... I-I saw..."

"She's Ascar, right? She's really pretty..."

"I thought she was already pretty when I saw her with no make-up on... but now that she's in make-up..."

The woman did not finish her words and only looked at Da-Sol's back in a daze, as if she was possessed by something.

"The Finale's starting."

Designer Crystal often held unprecedented fashion shows and garnered a lot of attention. The clothes usually displayed in fashion shows would often make ordinary people say, 'Ack?! You're

wearing something like that? I definitely can't wear something like that outside!'. However, such fashion statements often took away the hearts of the fashionistas.

And Crystal's fashion show's finale? It was broadcasted all over the world with a lot of people looking forward to it and watching it attentively.

"She shouldn't make mistakes..."

"Damn."

The organizing committee looked at where Da-Sol was supposed to be, feeling more anxious than ever. What if everyone looked at her and found her ugly? They were also very worried that she would make a mistake and ruin this perfect fashion show. Amidst everyone's concerns, the lights turned off and the round lights lined up at the edge of the stage glowed.

Then, a woman walked on stage.

"Wow..."

"What, what the hell?"

Murmur, murmur—

As the woman walked out on stage, the celebrities that sat on both sides of the stage exclaimed in admiration. The celebrities were shocked by the woman's beautiful face. Her bobbed silver hair was gently hung behind her ears, her bangs laying softly in a wave on her forehead. Her beauty was not even overshadowed by the fancy and shimmering earrings hanging on her ears. In fact, it even highlighted her blue eyes, straight nose, sharp jawline, and clear skin. Even the world-class actresses were breathless as they looked at her.

Then, she began to walk.

"Woaaaaaaaah..."

"Wow..."

Another burst of exclamation rang in the audience. Most of the works that the models displayed in Crystal's fashion show this time had a black tone. However, the heroine that walked the finale was wearing a pure white dress. The dress came up to her knees and was lined with sparkling jewels that highlighted her beautiful legs. The back of the dress was open, showing a peek of the soft line on her back, which invoked another sigh of admiration from the crowd. She was even holding a bouquet of flowers with both of her hands as she walked towards the front of the stage. It was reminiscent of a picturesque wedding that everyone wanted.

Crystal's finale was practically showing everyone the most beautiful bride in existence.

A person from the organizing committee, who was enraptured by the scene, said, "Who, who's that?"

Then one of the staff members said, "What do you mean who? That's Ascar."

"For, for real?"

"Really?"

“...”

The staff member looked at the organizing committee as if they were pathetic, while a buzz broke out among the members.

“But... that’s not the Ascar that I know...?”

“She’s that beautiful...?”

Da-Sol did not always wear make-up. Also, whenever she was seen in Athenae’s broadcasts, her face was always covered with blood. The beautiful face that had always been hidden was now revealed to the world.

Then, someone from the organizing committee said, “Ask her if she wants to sign with us!!! We have to have her on our next stage too!!!”

“She probably won’t, though?”

“Why?!!! How come?!!!!”

The organizing committee went wild. One of the staff members answered, “Because you told her earlier that if she would not call for the members of Beyond the Heavens, then you would not let her walk your stage.”

“...What?”

“And she said, ‘Even if you want it to, I would not walk on the stage that you organized. Ah, I would think about it if it’s Crystal’s stage.’”

“...”

“...”

“...”

Everyone immediately regretted the words that they uttered just a few minutes prior. They could tell at this moment that Da-Sol would become one of the world-class models. Meanwhile, the celebrities who did not know of Ascar began to talk.

“Who in the world is that?”

“An Asian? A westerner? Who is she?”

“No way, there’s such a beautiful person like that in this world?”

The world-class actresses that watched Da-Sol walk felt both envy and admiration for her. Despite the jealousy, they could not help but acknowledge her and her beauty.

Then, one of the women that were watching the fashion show with her legs crossed said, “That’s our ‘Scar.’”

“Yes?”

Everyone turned their attention to the woman. This woman was someone that no other celebrity could overwhelm in terms of beauty and momentum. No, perhaps there were even more cameras focused on her than the other actresses. She was none other than Im Jihye or... Genie.

“She’s the Ghost of the Battlefield, Ascar.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Countless women present shut their mouths in astonishment. The Ascar that they knew was someone that always had a frown on her face and was covered with blood while rushing towards monsters.

But what about now?

Ascar practically looked like an angel. Genie clapped loudly as she watched Ascar walk back towards the backstage.

Clap, clap, clap, clap, clap—

With her lead, the audience began to clap as loud and as hard as they could. A long applause rang loudly after the fashion show ended.

After the fashion show.

Many reporters appeared to film the stories and commentaries of the models and celebrities that attended the fashion show. But among them, the person that the reporters wanted to interview the most was Ascar, the person that walked the finale.

But all Ascar wanted to do was get out of here as fast as she could. She wore her hat low on her face and a jumper covering her body. After all, she was someone that suffered from panic disorder and hated the lenses of cameras focused on her. She smiled bitterly as she tried to walk as fast as she could.

‘They’ll definitely know that I participated in a fashion show soon.’

Ascar was still unaware that the members of Beyond the Heavens were already in Paris. Then, someone grabbed her wrists while she was sighing loudly at the number of people that surrounded her.

““Scar”

“Ah, yes.”

Genie, or Im Jihye, looked a little embarrassed as she smiled at her and said, “I know that you want to get out of here as fast as you can. But... I think that might be a bit hard now.”

“Huh?”

Da-Sol looked at Jihye suspiciously. She could not understand what she meant at all.

“All of the guys are in Paris. Minhyuk told me that they did not attend the fashion show on purpose since you should be the one shining the most on that stage. They did not want to see the fashion show get ruined because of their presence.”

“...”

Da-Sol’s eyes widened at Jihye’s words.

Murmur, murmur—

The fashion show venue was suddenly turned upside down as thousands of reporters, celebrities and models burst out in admiration.

“That person... Isn’t he the Beyond the Heavens’ King, the Food God...?”

“My god... He looks even more amazing in person, right?”

“Even the Beyond the Heavens’ executives look amazing. It’s like we’re watching another fashion show...”

All of them looked at someone with awe and admiration. Minhyuk, who passed by countless people in the crowd, appeared with a bouquet of flowers in hand. Dozens of their guild members trailing behind him. Da-Sol quickly took off her hat as she stepped away from him subconsciously. He was someone that had always been considerate of her, be it the past, now, or even in the future.

‘You might not remember me but...’

But that was not the truth.

“You have to keep your promise from ten years ago and sign an autograph for me, you know?”

Minhyuk did remember. And Da-Sol, who was in the middle of taking a step back away from him, suddenly ran forward and hugged him tightly.

Grab—

“Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!!!”

Click, click, click, click, click, click, click—

Hundreds of cameras flashed as they focused on the two of them.

Chapter 535: Friend

“Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

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

Hundreds of cameras flashed brightly as they captured the scene of Da-Sol hugging a very surprised Minhyuk tightly.

Actually, Minhyuk already knew who Ascar was when he saw her for the first time. After all, how could he forget? There was no other girl with platinum hair as beautiful as hers and eyes as deep

and blue as a lake. On top of that, she was someone that might be cold on the outside, but warm on the inside. She was a person that Minhyuk could never forget.

If that was the case, why did Minhyuk pretend not to know her? At first, Minhyuk thought that she might not remember him. But not long after, he realized that that was not the case at all. He could tell that Ascar was not saying who she was for some kind of reason.

‘Perhaps...’

Minhyuk thought that she might be keeping her identity a secret to keep their promise from ten years ago. Minhyuk thus became considerate of the girl’s choice. If she got scared after he revealed that he knew her from the past, then she might leave the guild suddenly.

Actually, there was also another reason why Ascar never revealed the fact that she knew Minhyuk from the past. And now...

Graaaaaaaaab—

...Da-Sol’s body was trembling. She realized that she had done something that she should not have, especially in public.

“Ghost of the Battlefield Ascar hugs the Food God?!”

“This is a scoop!!!”

“By any chance, are the two of them...?”

Da-Sol was suffering from a severe panic disorder. In fact, due to the fashion show, she had taken too much medication. Her vision blurred as the cameras continued to flash around them. At the same time, Minhyuk hugged her and blocked her eyes from the constant glaring flashes while members of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom immediately surrounded them.

Then, the bodyguards appeared, escorting them and opening a pathway for them through the large crowd. The limousines quickly left the scene one after the other after the guild members boarded them.

On this day, Crystal’s Fashion Show had created the greatest buzz of all time. The first issue? The fashion show created and produced a new global top model in Im Da-Sol. The second issue? The Beyond the Heavens’ appearance in Crystal’s Fashion Show and the hug between Food God Minhyuk and Im Da-sol.

The entire world was turned upside down with Crystal’s Fashion Show at the center of everything. Just the views of the broadcast in Ztube alone had risen rapidly to the point that it reached the top ten of the most viewed videos this year.

But that was not all.

The appearance of the members of Beyond the Heavens at the end of Crystal’s Fashion show had created a huge impact. And Da-Sol’s finale also created the same impact. Because of that, plenty of articles poured out in just less than half a day.

[Da-Sol's angelic appearance on stage was showing her desire for the world-class designers to put her on their stages even through SNS.]

[The Gutti handbag that Beyond the Heavens' Vice Guild Master Genie used during the fashion show is gaining a lot of discussion from all over the world.]

[Netizens are shocked by Alicia, the former master of Artheon, and her beautiful appearance.]

[The true finale of Crystal Fashion Show is the members of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom?]

[Which brand of suit did Food God Minhyuk wear?]

[The price of the limousine that Food God Minhyuk rode? Enough to make our mouths gape.]

[Food God Minhyuk and Ghost of the Battlefield Ascar... are they a couple?]

[There are plenty of great rumors between Food God Minhyuk and Ghost of the Battlefield Ascar. Is Ghost of the Battlefield Ascar truly the only daughter of the Jeongsang Group? Rumors continue to spread.]

[Food God Minhyuk has declared a tough response against rumors...]

[A downpour of love calls are coming for everyone from Beyond the Heavens. Plenty of people had shown their interest in them, including those in Hollywood and the fashion world.]

When the members of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom showed up in full attire at Crystal's Fashion Show, the entire world realized how huge the impact and the ripples that they could create.

And these were the viewers' reactions...

[From Alicia to Lucia... to Genie... and now to Ascar...]

[Looking at this... Isn't Minhyuk a thief blessed by the gods?]

[That's right. He's a true and genuine thief... God, I'm jealous...]

[He might not have saved a country in his past life, but he did build a country this time... Haha?]

Many people expressed their jealousy toward Food God Minhyuk. However, the problem was that it was not just envy, many of them had started to spread rumors between Minhyuk and Ascar.

[I heard that the Food God was originally dating Genie but switched to Ascar. Aren't Ascar and the Food God too much?]

[Ah. So that's why Genie's expression did not look good when she got caught by the camera? Hahahaha.]

[The world of the rankers is as dirty as the world of the celebrities... haha.]

Perhaps this was only natural. Those that were jealous of their achievements would definitely find the hug between the two as an interesting 'playground' where they could create a variety of stories.

Right now, the members of Beyond the Heavens were sitting inside the most expensive suite in the Lark Hyatt Hotel in Paris. All of their phones were ringing constantly. They were phone calls from various advertisements and even movie appearances.

Only Locke's phone was silent. But then, the phone in Locke, or Jisoo's hand suddenly rang. The sulking Jisoo hurriedly answered the call.

“An, an advertisement?!”

The eyes of the guild members, who were constantly receiving love calls, were bright as they looked at the once-sullen Jisoo after hearing that he finally got a love call of his own. Jisoo was also smiling smugly. It was as if he was bragging to them with that wide smile on his face.

However, his smug expression soon turned ugly.

“An, an advertisement for dog food? No, why would a person do an advertisement for dog food... N, no. I have to go! Bye!!!”

The guild members chuckled at Jisoo’s unfortunate incident. However, they were in a situation where they truly could not laugh. It was good that Da-Sol made a successful debut on stage and that the members of Beyond the Heavens appeared to congratulate her. The problem was the rumors between Minhyuk and Da-Sol that continued to spread, despite them strongly expressing that they would give a tough response.

These rumors were initially mostly related to Genie and Alicia, but soon, even the other male guild members were being involved and dragged into a love triangle. Of course they did not really care that much about it.

However, Da-Sol cared a lot about it. She looked around them and said, “I’ll reveal my past and my backstory with Minhyuk.”

Even though they heard Da-Sol’s words clearly, none of the guild members felt relieved. This was because they have heard the complete backstory back in the limousine. That was why the Beyond the Heavens members believed that they should not keep their hands off, while it was the parties involved who had the say in this matter.

When Da-Sol’s eyes turned to Minhyuk, Minhyuk opened his mouth calmly and said, “If you don’t want to do it, you don’t have to.”

Minhyuk had always lived in a way that he did not care much about what the others said about him. But Da-Sol knew that it was her rash actions that brought harm both to Minhyuk and the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

But what would happen if she revealed her past? It was clear that the image of Minhyuk and the Beyond the Heavens’ member would change for the better.

“I want to reveal it.”

Minhyuk nodded silently as an awkward atmosphere surrounded the two of them. Everyone was quick-witted, so they left the room one after the other, leaving Minhyuk and Da-Sol alone.

Minhyuk stood up and walked to the balcony. Since this was the top floor of Lark Hyatt, the beautiful view of downtown Paris was spread out beautifully beneath him. Even the moon was shining beautifully down on him.

Da-Sol, who had kept her feelings for Minhyuk hidden, thought, *‘I was so happy to see his face that all of my thoughts stopped at that moment...’*

She only glossed over that fact with that. For quite a long time, the two of them just stared at the moon hanging in the skies. Then, Minhyuk opened his mouth, “You’ll be leaving, right?”

“...Yeah.”

Da-Sol was very surprised. It sounded like Minhyuk had already seen through her mind. Da-Sol's level had been halved the moment she changed her class to Asura. Asura's skills might be out of this world, but she would never be able to cross the walls created by the level gap with just that.

However, once she reached her previous level, there was a high chance that she could express a strength that was several times her previous power. That was why she had to say goodbye to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom for a while, to raise her level.

“I hope you can come back soon,” Minhyuk said, grinning softly at her.

Da-Sol looked at his face for a long time and made a vow, ‘*Definitely. As fast as I can...*’

And perhaps one day, she would also gain the courage to confess to him.

Tonight was a night where the skies were filled with twinkling stars.

The moment Da-Sol posted an official statement on the internet, those that spread rumors and cursed at them for half a day immediately quieted down. In fact, the viewers even cheered for Minhyuk and Da-Sol. One hugged the other without any discrimination and kept the promise that they have made when they were young, sincerely congratulating the girl who finally achieved her dreams of becoming a model. Although there was a slight mishap, the value of each of the members of Beyond the Heavens soared to greater heights after their appearance in Crystal's Fashion Show.

Not long after Minhyuk returned to his mansion, a black sedan stopped at the entrance.

“Excuse me, who are you?”

The guards could not remove the shock in their eyes after seeing the person sitting on the back seat of the car when the windows rolled down.

“I came to meet with the Food God.”

After stating the purpose of their visits, the guards allowed the car to pass. Minhyuk's personal health trainer Oh Changwook, immediately ran out of the mansion just as two men got out of the car. These two men were none other than Joy Co. Ltd's President Kang Taehoon and Team Leader Park Minggyu.

“Hello. You said that you want to meet with Minhyuk?”

“That's right.”

President Kang Taehoon was as much a bigwig as Ilhwa Group's Chairman Kang Minhoo. In the past, Kang Taehoon met with the Food God inside the game, Athenae. But this was the first time that the two of them would meet face to face.

‘*He'll come running once he knows that I'm here,*’ Kang Taehoon thought.

However, Park Minggyu smiled bitterly while thinking, ‘*Minhyuk is not someone who cares about those?kind?of things.*’

The boy was polite, but after living with him for quite some time during the Athenae: Korean War, Team Leader Park Minggyu already had a grasp of Minhyuk's personality.

Not long after, Oh Changwook said, "I'm sorry, but Minhyuk has already started his exercise."

"Ah. Is that so? It's fine. We can just wait in your waiting room."

"He's going to take a while. From what he said, he was going to do all of the exercises that he missed yesterday and the exercises set for today."

"Hahaha. It's fine. I can spend that much time for the Food God," President Kang Taehoon laughed. People generally exercised for around an hour and a half. If the exercise for yesterday was added, then that would take at most three hours. Including the time for washing up and getting ready, then Kang Taehoon believed that Minhyuk would be out in four hours. So, they waited for four hours while sitting in the waiting room.

"Is the Food God still not done?"

"Yes. He's still in the middle of exercising."

After six hours.

"He's, he's still exercising?"

"Yes."

After eight hours.

"He, He's still doing it?!"

"Yes... I think he's almost done by now."

President Kang Taehoon could only click his tongue while thinking, *'Isn't it strange for a person to work out for eight hours straight?!'*

Once again, Kang Taehoon realized why the Food God could become a king in Athenae. Also, there was something that he found unusual.

'He must have heard that I was here.'

In a way, Kang Taehoon's visit was unannounced. But considering the weight of his name, there were many people that would gladly rush out to welcome him, even if he appeared uninvited in their homes. But that was not the case with the Food God. Kang Taehoon could feel bad about this, but he only just chuckled at the thought.

'That's right. If you're the king of a nation then you should act like this.'

But then, Taehoon felt the pangs of hunger gnawing at his stomach.

"By any chance, could I have some light meal and tea to go along with it? I've been waiting for a long time so I've already grown hungry. Ah, please prepare some for Team Leader Park too."

“No. I’m fine, you don’t need to prepare a share for me.”

“Why? Aren’t you starving?”

“I’m really alright, President!”

Team Leader Park Minggyu vehemently refused the offer with a strong wave of his hands. He had lived with her for two weeks before and had eaten the meals that they have prepared.

‘No, thank you.’

Food was immediately prepared for President Kang Taehoon. The first dish was...

“So, it’s a salad. A salad without a sauce? You’re living healthily, huh?”

The second dish was...

“...Tomato steak?”

The third dish was...

“To-tomato canapé...?!”

He was also served some tomato juice without sugar and dried tomatoes for dessert. For some reason, Kang Taehoon felt like he was in a weird country with only tomatoes.

Oh Changwook took things a little further and asked, “We have some tomato ice cream. Would you like me to bring some for you?”

“P-Please stop with the tomatoes...”

“Ah. Yes.”

President Kang Taehoon was once again impressed with Minhyuk.

“Does the Food God always eat this kind of food?”

“Yes. I only ate it for a couple of days but it’s too bland... Now... I’ve grown sick and tired of seeing tomatoes.”

“Ho...”

For the second time since coming here, Kang Taehoon expressed admiration for Minhyuk. For him to only eat these kinds of dishes on top of exercising that much, that was worthy of admiration. In fact, he even felt respect for the boy.

After admiring the boy for a long time, President Kang Taehoon finally said, “It would be really good if the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom will agree to participate in the trailer for the Continent Integration.”

The purpose of their visit was finally revealed.

Chapter 536: Continent Integration’s Trailer

Continent Integration.

There were more than a dozen countries playing Athenae, and every country was represented by a continent, just like how the Korean Server was in the Asgan Continent. As such, there were numerous continents in Athenae. In fact, there were even cases where countries had to start in mountainous areas or even under the sea.

With the Continent Integration, Athenae would be connected and united. That was the difference from the other online games. However, would the servers be connected and integrated so suddenly after an update? That was nigh impossible, even for Athenae. After all, the scenarios and episodes that they had created would be destroyed if they proceeded like that. That was also the reason why everyone was already preparing for the Continent Integration at the same time Athenae launched. Right now, the preparations were almost ready, and integration could happen soon.

If that was the case, then what did they need now?

Of course, they needed a spectacular declaration, one that would announce the beginning of Athenae's second era! This was so the players that had left before this large-scale update would choose to return and play the game again. And Kang Taehoon chose Beyond the Heavens as the vanguard, the frontrunners of this endeavor.

After waiting for a long time, Minhyuk, who had finished washing up, finally came inside the waiting room.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

"No, no. It's my fault for not contacting you in advance."

This was the first time that President Kang Taehoon had met Minhyuk in person. He could not help but look at the man in awe, especially with his still-wet hair and large, bright, gentle eyes. Yet, those eyes could turn sharp and fierce like that of a beast in an instant. Even the veins of his forearms were bulging, a testament to how much the man had been working out.

After sitting down, Minhyuk said, "Ah, how about having something to drink..."

"I'm good! It's alright! No! Really, it's alright!!!"

"...?"

Minhyuk tilted his head in confusion. He was unaware that President Kang Taehoon was just treated to a tomato party just an hour prior.

Meanwhile, Team Leader Park Minggyu smiled softly and said, "You've changed a bit."

"Yes. It's a relief, really," Minhyuk answered with a smile while Kang Taehoon looked at the two alternately in confusion.

"Can I tell him?"

Only after seeing Minhyuk nod did Park Minggyu open his mouth and said, "Back then, you can't even drink a cup of tea in this place. Even though I lived here for two weeks, I didn't even drink a cup of basic tea like chamomile or something like that."

"Don't tell me the reason is..."

Kang Taehoon whipped his head to look at Park Minggyu in shock. It was Minhyuk who answered.

“That’s right. I can’t stop myself even if it’s just those simple teas. If it was back then, then I would either have probably grabbed the tea in the president’s hands, or sat here sweating in anxiety.”

“Hoo...”

Kang Taehoon looked at Minhyuk in surprise.

‘Are you telling me that it’s a disease where you can’t even drink a cup of tea? Is eating addiction something that terrible?’

Originally, people would never know the pain others were experiencing because they either have not seen it or experienced it themselves. Kang Taehoon wondered, *‘What if I was in his place?’*. Just the thought alone made him gulp dryly.

‘He must have felt hopeless every single day.’

But Minhyuk overcame this disease and stood up with his own efforts. He was a living miracle in the medical world.

‘He’s a man that has overcome such a terrible disease with his mental power alone. He’s really amazing.’

Minhyuk looked at Kang Taehoon, who could see from the look in Minhyuk’s eyes that he wanted them to get straight to the point. So, he said, “Exactly forty days from now, on August 22, all of the servers in Athenae will be integrated.”

“So the integration is finally happening.”

Minhyuk could only groan lightly after hearing Kang Taehoon’s words. Server integration meant that they would have a new opportunity to explore a new world and meet other strong people. There were definitely strong people that were on par, or perhaps even stronger than Minhyuk in Athenae. They were just working silently and hiding their existences. This fact was enough to bring both nervousness and excitement in Minhyuk.

“And so, we want the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom to be the main focus in the upcoming trailer.”

“...”

Minhyuk found Kang Taehoon’s words to be shocking. The Beyond the Heavens Kingdom would become the main focus for the server integration? This meant that they wanted them to become the representative of countless players in the world and appear in their advertisements. This was something that anyone would jump at.

However, Minhyuk’s expression did not even change or shake. He only asked calmly, “What are the conditions?”

If the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom would become the main focus of their advertisements, then many people from their kingdom would appear in these said advertisements. Of course, this trailer would be shown in every country where an Athenae Server existed.

“Payment for the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom will be...”

President Kang Taehoon personally handed the envelope containing the contract.

“Twenty billion.”

Twenty billion was an amount that was enough to make anyone moan in ecstasy. If anyone else heard it, they would have definitely let out a startled shout. Even Team Leader Park Minggyu was sweating profusely down his forehead after hearing the huge amount of money. But Minhyuk’s response was even more shocking.

“It’s less than I expected?”

“...Less?” President Kang Taehoon asked in surprise.

Minhyuk placed the contract down on the table after looking at it thoroughly. Then, he placed his hands together and looked Kang Taehoon straight in the eyes. Minhyuk’s father was Chairman Kang Minhoo; this situation was not something that they could just laugh over. This was a situation where they had to talk business for the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

“Are you telling me that my Beyond the Heavens Kingdom is just worth twenty billion?”

“...”

“...”

Both Team Leader Park Minggyu and President Kang Taehoon were unfamiliar with the Minhyuk in front of them. He looked completely different from his figure when he shouted, *‘Hehe. The chicken says that if you feel bad, you should go and get chicken!’* that they saw on the monitor.

There were even times when Park Minggyu, who watched Minhyuk through the monitor, would think, *‘Is the Food God an idiot or a genius?’?*

But now, he finally came to a conclusion. The Food God was a man that was beyond the word genius. He was definitely hiding a tremendous talent as a businessman behind that smile on his face.

“Can you tell me the reason why you think it’s low?”

“As of yesterday, the value of my Beyond the Heavens Kingdom had reached an all time high. In fact, I have received around 38 different advertisement proposals just yesterday alone.”

But that was not the end.

“And it’s not just me. Genie received 29 advertisement proposals, Khan received 20, Alicia received 19...”

Minhyuk continued to list the number of advertisement proposals that his guild members had received just yesterday. But when he came to the final member, Minhyuk had to stop and think about it for a moment, *‘Should I also mention Locke’s dog food commercial...?’?* No. Minhyuk decided to skip over him.

“How much profit do you think my Beyond the Heavens will make if we invest a few days and focus on shooting those commercials and advertisements?”

Beyond the Heavens’ commercial value had reached the highest point in the industry. However, none of the guild members shot any kind of advertisement. After all, they were already pressed for time when it came to leveling up, how could they waste time on shooting commercials?

At the same time, what if they all decided to shoot those commercials and advertisements? Twenty billion would just look like it was a laughable amount.

However, it was not that Kang Taehoon had not taken this fact into consideration. He said, “Wouldn’t you also receive honor and reputation?”

The very first kingdom in Athenae would be the main focus of an Athenae advertisement, what more honor could they ask for? This compensation was definitely not unusual. After all, their names would remain in the history of Athenae forever even if their kingdom suddenly faced destruction one day.

But Minhyuk, who was looking straight at Kang Taehoon, said, “Our honor and reputation, we can create and establish that on our own.”

The hairs on Kang Taehoon’s arms stood up the moment he heard Minhyuk's words. He literally got goosebumps, his mouth turning dry at the towering confidence that the Food God, someone that stood at the top of the world, was showing them as of this moment. Kang Taehoon did not see Minhyuk as someone that was cheeky and arrogant, but rather...

“Ha, hahahahahahaha!”

...He found him both fun and interesting. Others hailed President Kang Taehoon as another god of Athenae. He was someone that had made several memorable and great achievements. And this very same Kang Taehoon liked the confidence that Minhyuk was exuding.

‘I’m very grateful that this kind of person is the one that became king.’

That was right. Kang Taehoon believed that this should be the guy that should lead Athenae.

“Then, what are your terms and conditions?”

“Give us 2% of the total revenue from the advertisement and pay us fifty billion.”

“...Minhyuk!” Team Leader Park shouted in surprise as he turned to look back at Minhyuk.

Taking a percent off the total revenue was already a huge deal, but he was also asking for another fifty billion on top of that. Putting everything together, the total amount would easily be more than a hundred billion.

A hundred billion for an advertisement? Who would even be able to get something that huge?

But Minhyuk was determined, his will unwavering. He said, “A hundred billion would not amount to much once it’s divided amongst a thousand guild members.”

That was right, especially if they considered the Beyond the Heavens' commercial value. President Kang Taehoon bowed his head before saying sharply, "In that case, we'll put a condition of our own. We will give you fifty billion immediately if we achieve the expected average. Then, we will give you a % of the revenue every time we exceed a certain section from the expected average."

The conditions were not that bad, but President Kang Taehoon was still not yet done with his words. "However, if we can't meet the average expected revenue, then we will only give you twelve billion."

Twelve billion was obviously a loss for the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. After all, they were people that could easily generate twenty billion if they set the same time to film for their own advertisements. But, the bet was worth it. After all, receiving a % of the total revenue everytime they exceeded a certain section of the average expected revenue. This meant that they could very well receive two hundred, or perhaps even three hundred billion.

Then, Minhyuk said, "If that's the case, then I'll add yet another condition of my own. We will review the scenario that will be presented in the advertisement. If we find the scenario off, allow us to modify it. You have to accept it unconditionally if we can present a far better scenario than yours."

In an advertisement, there were a lot of important things. Both the cast and the production were equally important. There were times when talented actors would be gathered together in a cast but when the audience had watched the movie they would find it boring and say, *'Ah, they used good ingredients but made a shit soup.'*

President Kang Taehoon thought, *'If they can exceed and go above our expected average revenue with their revised scenario, then not only will Beyond the Heavens benefit, even we will benefit.'*

In other words, it was a win-win situation.

"Alright. I agree. Let's write a new contract here."

President Kang Taehoon wrote a new contract then and there.

"Please sign over here."

Minhyuk was the king of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. That might not be the case in reality but all of the guild members have given Minhyuk full authority with regard to the contracts and deals that the Beyond the Heavens would receive in reality. This went to show how much they trusted Minhyuk and his judgment. Minhyuk signed his name.

Then, the two immediately stood up and shook hands.

"To a good cooperation."

"To a good cooperation."

The contract has been signed and sealed.

President Kang Taehoon, who was riding in their car on their way back, could not help but burst into laughter every few minutes.

“Can the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom even exceed the expected average revenue?”

“They might be able to exceed it. But I don’t expect them to exceed several of the sections that we will determine. At most they could take 1% of the total revenue. But even that’s a huge amount.”

Team Leader Park Minggyu also agreed with his words.

“Don’t you know it well too?”

“Yes. That’s right.”

“There are many people that play Athenae, but in the end there will always be a limit.”

That was right. Athenae might be a game that a lot of people enjoy but there were still a lot of people that did not even want to start playing it. The reason? It was because there were people that were not interested in the game or did not like to play games in the first place. No matter what the team did, they could not change these peoples’ minds. In the end, the number of players that the game and the advertisement could attract would still reach a limit.

Of course, that number was already going to be great for someone that would become the main focus and attraction of an Athenae advertisement.

“Do you think the scenario will be edited?”

“Well, I’m not too sure. But what I do know is that we’ve hired the best screenplay team in our country for this advertisement. Although I wish that we could have left it all to John, that nameless screenwriter that’s popular in Hollywood right now. Unfortunately, he outright rejected my proposal.”

“Screenwriter John? Ah, I also like his movies. I’m actually looking forward to his movie ‘Heroes: The Final War’ that’s going to be released this year.”

“That writer is a genius.”

Screenwriter John was actually an unnamed writer and was only given the name ‘John’ because none of them knew his name, age, or even nationality. There was only one thing that was revealed about him. It was the fact that he was an ‘Asian’. The Hero movie franchise that he released every year in Hollywood had always been a big hit.

As the two rode the car back to their office, they excitedly talked about the Hero movie franchise that Screenwriter John had written.

Meanwhile on the rooftop of Mount Fuji Hospital in Japan, a man was busily tapping away on his laptop. Written on the very top of the man’s document that was opened on his laptop were the words: ‘Heroes: The Returning Hero’. On one side of the man’s screen was a picture showing a boy receiving a baseball glove and ball from a handsome young man in a suit. The man could not help but stop typing for a moment and stare at the picture, a smile blooming on his face.

Then, the man’s phone rang. The name flashing on his phone made the man’s face glow bright.

“Minhyuk, what’s the matter?”

A bright smile bloomed on the man’s face. He looked like he was very happy that he was able to talk with the caller. And over the phone, a voice, Minhyuk’s voice, rang.

[Yuuta’s Dad, can you spare some time to review a scenario for me?]

Minhyuk asked Yuuta’s father, who answered without any hesitation, “As long as it’s for Minhyuk, then I’m always free.”

Chapter 537: Continent Integration’s Trailer

Ares was seething in anger at the meeting held between all of the executives of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. This was because he learnt that Minhyuk had signed a huge contract without discussing it with them.

But what made Ares more furious was the fact that everyone from Beyond the Heavens Kingdom did not react to it, nor found it strange. It was as if they were fine with it. As someone that had just joined Beyond the Heavens, Ares felt like all of them were idiots.

‘They became a kingdom through this old-fashioned bullshit of a guild operation? Was everything that Beyond the Heavens Kingdom achieved because of their luck?’

Another reason why he was furious was because of the articles that had been published. It had only been a few hours since the contract between Joy Co. Ltd. and Beyond the Heavens was signed, but articles about Joy Co. Ltd. choosing Beyond the Heavens as their main focus for the trailer for the continent integration had already been widely spread.

And these were the viewers’ reactions...

[Beyond the Heavens will appear in the main advertisement? Everything’s fine but what’s with the ‘Beyond the Heavens is involved with reviewing and editing the scenario’ part? No matter how famous they are, there are parts that they should not recklessly touch, right...?]

[The main advertisement is already done for. Hahahaha. What’s the difference between this and a famous idol that’s only learning to act as the main protagonist?]

[Trusting that everything goes well. Let’s do a good job.]

[Maybe the video is going to be cool, after all the Beyond the Heavens is a name that’s worth a lot, right?]

[Above comment, please think carefully about this matter. What do you think will happen if our country’s best actors joined together to film an already ruined scenario? The ingredients might be good, but the soup will still stay shitty, right? Isn’t there a saying like that? That’s what’s happening with Beyond the Heavens right now. It does not matter how famous they are, they still only need to do what they’re good at. Why are they even trying to get involved in making the scenario?]

Around 10% of the viewers were excited for it and 90% were all hurling criticisms and curses. That was right, each and every person had a field that they were good at. Just as doctors could not suddenly work as lawyers, most felt that the rankers should just continue to play their games. The netizens were furious that these rankers were trying to stick their noses in the production of the scenario.

However, Ares was someone that had only recently joined Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, and he was already overreacting.

Then, Minhyuk entered the room. Ares was prepared to pounce at the opportunity to release his anger and criticize him.

‘If you don’t come up with a solution to this matter then...’

In fact, Ares was already thinking of leaving Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

“I believe everyone has already seen the details of the contract through the articles published on the internet.”

All of the people that were sitting around the round table nodded. Then, Minhyuk’s gaze turned to Ares.

“And Ares, I believe I owe you an apology. Our guild has already given me full authority and rights with regards to dealing and signing contracts and deals... I should have told you in advance.”

“...”

Ares was struck dumb, watching Minhyuk bowing at a 90 degree angle to express his apology.

‘What? Why is he apologizing like this?’

Minhyuk was the king of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. They might look like they were friendly to others, but the fact that they were superior would never change. That was the foundation for the kingdom to work properly and survive for a long time. But Minhyuk apologized to Ares for his rash actions.

Seeing this, Ares’ anger almost subsided. But he thought that he should not forget his duty.

“I’m sure you’ve seen the comments in the articles, Minhyuk. Did you sign the contract without taking that into consideration?! Everyone is comparing us to idols that forcefully filmed a movie!!!”

Ares stood up, his anger out in full display. But no one stopped Ares. Genie just looked at him and thought, *‘You’ll soon realize why we left everything up to him.’*

Minhyuk just looked at Ares calmly. He nodded and pondered for a moment before opening his mouth and saying, “This might sound like an excuse, but I want everyone, including Ares, to listen to what I have to say.”

Minhyuk looked at everyone present, his voice calm and unperturbed.

“A lot of people are criticizing our Beyond the Heavens after learning the fact that we will stick our noses into the production of the scenario. However, I believe that the views of the advertisement will increase thanks to the public’s opinions.”

“What in the world...”

“Advertisements are free but movies aren’t.”

“...!”

Ares was very shocked after hearing Minhyuk's words. He had never considered that fact. Whenever an idol starred in a film and became a hot topic through the people's harsh criticisms, the people could cut off its movie ticket sales through word of mouth by boycotting.

‘But what if it's free...?’

Since they wanted to see how bad it was, more people might just turn to watch it.

“Besides, if Joy Co. Ltd. knew that releasing the fact that Beyond the Heavens would review and modify the scenario to the world would be harmful to us, was it really necessary for them to release that news?”

That was also an undeniable fact. In fact, Minhyuk and President Kang Taehoon were both thinking the same thing. Advertisements could be easily criticized since it was free for viewing. However, that also meant that it could generate a high revenue and secure high viewership ratings once it was released to the world.

“Also, what if the scenario that we reviewed and edited is better than expected?”

Ares gulped dryly after hearing the implication in his words. The number of views would already be high from the public's criticism, but if the release turned out to be better than expected, then the views would increase further through word of mouth. Simply put, the advertisement's total revenue would dramatically increase.

‘This...’

Ares blushed. Everything was contrary to what he thought, Minhyuk had already thought about everything even before he signed the contract.

“Someone very reliable is reviewing the scenario as of now, you can trust their credibility and the quality of their works. Coincidentally, we're at the phase where we have to develop our kingdom and open our doors.”

Everyone nodded at Minhyuk. They had to grow and develop. In other words, they had to do their best, even to the point that they had to move and utilize all of their NPCs and players, and use all kinds of methods to develop their kingdom.

The reason why they had to grow their kingdom was, first and foremost, in preparation for the continents' integration. Second, they had to become a stable and unyielding kingdom for the security of their people, and to avoid another incident like that incident with Akhan.

“We're supposed to do it in the first place anyway so we can just use this opportunity to increase the advertisement's revenue.”

Ares gulped once again. Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, a kingdom that had not shown themselves to the public so far, was now going to open their doors?

‘Not only will the number of the Beyond the Heavens’ immigrants increase, the fact that they are now going to go public and participate in public activities would mean that they will draw a lot of attention to the main advertisement.’

Then, Minhyuk stood up and used magic to write the number 200 billion on the large whiteboard inside the room before saying, “Our goal is to get more than 200 billion from this advertisement contract.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Two hundred billion was a jaw-dropping amount. But what made Ares truly awed was the fact that it was not impossible for them to achieve that amount, as long as the scenario and video was well-shot. It was not a far-fetched dream, especially after the fact that all of the members of Beyond the Heavens would give their all in the promotional activities.

After the meeting ended, Ares realized that they truly had a shot to get that 200 billion.

‘What the hell... is the Food God...’

The Beyond the Heavens Kingdom was now preparing to actively recruit people. This meant that they would be able to generate a huge amount of profit and also increase the number of immigrants to their kingdom. This was the epitome of hitting two birds with one stone.

Ares smiled before grabbing Minhyuk, who was about to leave the room. He said, “Sorry. You must have already thought about everything but I was too angry to realize that fact.”

Ares was known for his hot and fiery temper. It was only now did he realize that he had been too prejudiced against Minhyuk.

“No, it’s fine. I can understand where you’re coming from. However, I want you to understand this, Ares,” Minhyuk stared at Ares with warm and gentle eyes as he continued, “I will always do my best for Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, and that includes you.”

Minhyuk’s words thrilled Ares to the bones. This was because Minhyuk’s voice was so reliable.

‘Food God...’

Ares, who was regretting joining Beyond the Heavens Kingdom just a few hours prior, had now made up his mind.

‘Thank you for accepting me as part of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.’

Then, Ares asked, “Then, how are you going to promote the kingdom?”

“By doing what I’m good at.”

The guild members of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom began to promote their kingdom using various methods. However, Minhyuk made sure to tell everyone that the promotional activities should not interfere with their daily lives.

Khan chose to promote in a very unique way, a PVP battle with certain conditions. In his battles, if the other player lost against him, then they would move to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. If Khan lost against them, then he would pay them twenty platinum.

Genie decided to start her own beauty blog, while Alicia decided to make appearances on local TV and radio broadcasting stations. Locke even made an appearance on a broadcasting program called 'Ah! My Doggy!'. Everyone tried to promote the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom in their own way.

As for Minhyuk? He tried to do what he was good at. And that was none other than eating. But before doing so, he made sure to discuss it with Know-it-all Dictionary, someone that had reached the peak of the Korean BJs.

'Actually, you don't have to do anything flashy. You only need to do what you're best at, Minhyuk. If you do a mukbang, I'm sure that there will be a huge impact on the promotions.'

Minhyuk understood a little of what Know-it-all Dictionary said.

'Do others really enjoy watching someone else eat?'

He did not understand that part but he still decided to try it. Right now, Minhyuk had around eighteen kilograms of samgyeopsal piled up like a mountain in front of him. He also had a special guest, Beanie, sitting right beside him.

Since Athenae and the player's personal broadcasting channel were linked, any player could summon a camera to do a broadcast of what they were doing. After summoning a camera in front of him and Beanie, Minhyuk immediately decided on the 'title' of his broadcast.

[Minhyuk's Lonely Meal has started broadcasting.]

Minhyuk intended to do what he usually did in this broadcast and do a mukbang. However, he displayed the words *'The Beyond the Heavens Kingdom is recruiting players. 1,000 lucky immigrants will be given buffed dishes every week.'* in large fonts and pinned at the top of the broadcast viewers' chatting window. After doing that, Minhyuk and Beanie did not pay any heed to the camera and went all out on their mukbang.

"Kgghhk. Look at that color..."

Minhyuk gulped at the sight of the samgyeopsal in front of him as the stone grill began to heat up. Once the grill was properly heated up, Minhyuk grabbed some samgyeopsal with his tongs and lined up four in a row on top of it.

Sizzleeeee—

Smoke fluttered above the grill as the pleasant sizzle of the meat rang.

Bubble, bubble—

The oil from the samgyeopsal bubbled and danced on top of the grill.

“Oiiiiink! Oink!” Beanie said, gesturing to Minhyuk with his cute and tiny paws to grill some kimchi.

Minhyuk immediately placed the red and well-ripened kimchi where the samgyeopsal’s oil had gathered on the grill.

Sizzleeeeeee—

The loud sizzle of the kimchi made both Beanie and Minhyuk lick their lips in anticipation. Of course, that was not all. They also had plenty of sides, especially the spicy ones prepared and boiling in the earthen pot right next to the grill, like the dish usually served in a set with the samgyeopsal in meat restaurants.

Sizzleeeeeee—

With perfect timing, Minhyuk flipped the cooking meat. When he flipped it, the other side was perfectly golden. Once everything had been cooked, Minhyuk immediately took out his scissors and cut the meat into bite-sized pieces. Then, Minhyuk grabbed a piece, dipped it into the prepared flavored oil before placing it in his mouth. The juices from the meat coated Minhyuk’s mouth with every chew, the oil and salt adding a savory flavor to the meat and creating a pleasant flavor.

“Wow... Beans, it’s melting. The meat is melting!”

“Oiiiiiiiink!”

Of course, Beanie was not going to lose against Minhyuk. He quickly reached out with his adorable piggy hooves, and grabbed a piece of lettuce and a piece of perilla leaf. Then, he grabbed two pieces of samgyeopsal, dipped it in ssamjang, before placing it on top of the leaves. Of course, he also added some garlic, some of the grilled kimchi that Minhyuk prepared earlier, a bit of green onion and wrapped everything up. The finished wrap was almost as big as Beanie’s face, but he was a bold and brave piggy. He opened his mouth wide and placed everything inside, successfully chewing on it, while a delighted smile bloomed on his face.

“O, oiiiiink...”

Seeing this, Minhyuk thought that he should not be outdone. So, he scooped a spoonful of sweet and warm freshly cooked rice in his mouth which was immediately followed by a spoonful of spicy soybean paste stew.

“Kghhk~ This is cooked really well.”

Beanie immediately copied Minhyuk, scooping a spoonful of the soybean paste stew. Of course, his spoonful was filled with zucchini and tofu. He dumped the spoonful of stew on his rice, mixing everything together before eating a huge mouthful.

“Oiiiiiiiink!”

Minhyuk and Beanie were two beings that knew how to eat well and happily. They continued to eat the eighteen kilograms of samgyeopsal happily. But was that all? Of course not. Minhyuk also took out some cold noodles from his inventory and ate it with Beanie.

“O, oiiiiink!”

Beanie mixed some mustard and vinegar on his bowl. Then, he lifted his entire bowl and slurped the cold soup.

“Oink!”

Beanie smiled brightly at the pleasant tingle that appeared in his head. Then, he clamped a mouthful of noodles and... *Sluuuuuuurp!*? Then, he immediately placed a piece of samgyeopsal on top of the noodles, grabbed everything with his chopsticks, and slurped everything up.

After finishing everything, the two looked at each other as if they were congratulating each other for eating well.

“It feels a bit sad, right?”

“Oiiiiink...”

Originally, eating a mouthful of delicious food was said to relieve and console someone that was sad. It was absolutely not something that two beings that finished around eighteen kilograms of meat should say.

Then, the two prepared the finale to wash their mouths clean from grease. They filled their own glasses with ice cubes and poured cold and refreshing cider in it.

Fwiiiiish—

The bubbles from the drink rose as the two toasted and clinked their glasses together.

Ting!

The grease and oil from the samgyeopsal was slowly getting washed away by the refreshing and cold cider.

Gulp, gulp, gulp, gulp—

Gulp, gulp—

“Oink!”

After eating, Minhyuk said, “See you guys tomorrow. Same time, same channel.”

Then, he ended the broadcast. After finishing everything, Minhyuk tilted his head, thinking, ‘*Will people really watch this...?*’

Minhyuk and Beanie really just ate on their own. He did not even bother to check the chat window. Actually, he did not check the responses because he was a bit afraid that he would see subpar reactions to his broadcast and be disappointed.

With those thoughts flashing in his head, Minhyuk stood up and went to deal with the pile of work left for him to handle.

The next day. The second day since Beyond the Heavens Kingdom had started their full-fledged promotional activities. Truth was, Minhyuk was already a day later than the other guild members

when doing the promotional activities. During the day when the other guild members started, they were able to attract a hundred more immigrants to the kingdom. Assuming that they only received around 150 immigrants regularly, the fact that they could increase it by a hundred more on the first day meant that they had increased the amount by a lot.

‘Since His Majesty has started to do promotional activities, would the numbers improve a bit?’ Haze thought, calling for the captain of the guards with a bit of expectation.

“How many of the foreigners wanted to move to Beyond the Heavens yesterday?”

To that question, the captain of the guards replied, “There are 3,311 people.”

“I see. So there are 331 people... The numbers improved a bit, just a tiny bit. Ah, it’s a bit disappointing though.”

“...Miss Aide”

“Yes?” Haze asked, looking at the captain of guards with confusion.

“It’s not 331, it’s 3,311 people.”

“...?!”

Haze was very shocked.

‘From what I heard, His Majesty only ate?!’

It was something that far surpassed her comprehension and common sense.

Chapter 538: Continent Integration’s Trailer

In the establishment of a kingdom in Athenae, the migration and settlement of both NPCs and players were important. The kingdom needed funds to operate and it went without saying that the key to getting these funds were the players and the NPCs. The NPCs would make items and products that would be taxed by the kingdom, while the players would work and pay tax, or buy these taxed items. When this structure was maintained, the kingdom would run in an orderly manner. That was why the kingdom would always be at the risk of falling into ruin if the number of immigrants were low.

Just yesterday alone, the number of immigrants that flocked to Beyond the Heavens Kingdom reached 3,311. Considering that they had only recorded an average migration rate of around 200 daily, the number of immigrants that entered their kingdom yesterday had jumped to more than ten times that number. And the one that made the greatest contribution to this? It was, without a doubt, Minhyuk. Strangely enough, it was not just him, there was also Beanie.

Immediately after Minhyuk started his broadcast, ‘Lonely Meal’ topped all real-time search terms. What was funnier was that the second place was Beanie, while the third place was the Food God. Actually, there were quite a lot of people that were jealous and envious of Minhyuk and his achievements, thus, he had a lot of anti-fans too.

But Beanie? He was like a global top star ever since the end of the Athenae: World War and had gained plenty of fans all over the world. It was to the point that Athenae considered if they should make Beanie the World War Mascot after seeing his popularity as the Korean War Mascot. That was how great Beanie's popularity was. That was also the reason why their mukbang was a hit. The scene where a handsome man and the global star Beanie ate eighteen kilograms of samgyeopsal happily attracted a lot of people.

In fact, shocking articles were even published after that.

[The sales of samgyeopsal restaurants increased by 400% on the day the Food God and Beanie's Lonely Meal was broadcasted.]

[Plenty of office workers flocked to samgyeopsal restaurants last night.]

[Jam-packed samgyeopsal restaurants. Is this the effect of the Food God and Beanie?]

[It has several times more effect than when the famous idol group's Hha-Sa in <I Do Everything Alone> in the past.]

When people watched the edited clips of the video, they could not help but drool.

[Wow. Guys, have you seen the Food God's mukbang with Beanie...? Ah, how can they eat samgyeopsal so happily like that?]

[I started to feel like I was smiling like a mother when I watched the broadcast. Just watching them eat is making me feel at ease. And that sizzleeee—, it's an enchanting melody! Kghk!]

[Beanie is so cuuuute. ?????]

[I'm going to ask my mom for samgyeopsal today.]

[They're going to broadcast again today. I wonder what they'll eat this time?]

On top of that, Minhyuk's broadcast, which had been edited and uploaded to Ztube, had exceeded 500,000 views in just a short amount of time. In fact, even foreigners from abroad could not help but click on the video to watch Beanie and the Food God's mukbang, which created a huge ripple effect. The most surprising fact was not the huge amount of views, nor the countless players tuning in to their broadcast.

It was something else.

Surprisingly enough, even those that did not play Athenae were very interested in the mukbang. That was right. Mukbangs had always been something that had been enjoyed by everyone, even those that did not play the game. It was a phenomenon that everyone enjoyed for a long time now. Because of this, more and more people were thinking of taking this opportunity to try Athenae.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk, who finally accessed the game again, heard the notifications in his ears.

[There are 3,311 players that applied to migrate to Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.]

[Once you approve the migration of the 3,311 players, you will be able to collect kingdom taxes from them and strengthen the kingdom by suggesting jobs like soldiers, mages, and knights.]

“...???”

Minhyuk wondered if the effect would really increase this much after simply eating. Actually, he had heard from others before that they felt at ease and relaxed whenever they watched him eat. However, the ripples that they created with just that broadcast alone was tremendous.

And Minhyuk could see that the greatest contributor to this was Beanie.

“Fortunately things are going well,” Minhyuk said to Haze. Haze looked at him as if she truly did not know how to answer those words.

“As expected of the Food God. I can only use this expression.”

“Right. But it only went up this much since I only just started. Once the heat dies down, the number of immigrants will decrease again.”

That was a fact. The recruitment drive would definitely not perform like that continuously. It will increase to some extent, reach a plateau, before decreasing again. This was also why they needed to find a fixed method to recruit more players, and even recruit NPCs. The effect of the main advertisement would only be greater if they could maintain the high number of immigrants each day.

“That’s where the method that Your Majesty said will come into play, cooking buffed dishes for a thousand people.”

“That’s right.”

Many people have testified that the Food God’s buffed dishes were out of this world. However, there were many cases where the public only thought of this as a set-up by kingdom. In fact, they had good reason to think so. After all, countless scenes where the Food God’s guild members suddenly gained overwhelming power after receiving his buffed dishes, were indeed very questionable.

After all, the detailed information of the dishes had never been revealed to the world. In other words, the viewers could not believe them since they did not see how powerful the dishes could make them, and if they were truly out of this world. The only thing they saw was the members of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom suddenly becoming stronger and overcoming their crisis after eating those dishes.

“The one thousand lucky foreigners would take a screenshot of the dishes’ effects and post it on their SNS before eating it. If that happened, then they would create a huge ripple and would rake in plenty of people. After all, many more would be tempted to move to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom after seeing something like that.”

It was just as Minhyuk said. It was just like when people flocked to a kingdom with good blacksmiths to get better artifacts. However, in the case of blacksmiths, they could only produce a few artifacts per day and would oftentimes need a few days to create good ones. This was the case where the demand was high but the supply was low.

But for Minhyuk? He could easily feed many people with his buffed dishes thanks to his trailer’s bulk cooking function. The people would try to do their best to move to Beyond the Heavens

Kingdom once they saw the buffed dishes' effects with their very own eyes and taste its excellent flavor with their mouths. Also...

"We'll put monster subjugation quests and other quests like that, with the 'Food God's Dish' as a reward."

"That's really... genius."

Players were given the ability to create quests after they became a lord of their own territory or a king of their own kingdom. There were also quests that would naturally form on their own based on the NPCs' will. The former was labeled as the 'King's Production Quest' or the 'Lord's Production Quest'. In the future, they would not need to rely on their luck to get their hands on the Food God's dishes. They could eat the Food God's buffed dishes just by simply completing the quests posted in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

'There will definitely be a lot of immigrants. In fact, I believe it will not be foreigners alone but even the guardians will flock to this place,' Haze thought, admiring Minhyuk. At the same time...

'How can I clean the pockets of these new foreign immigrants?'

Haze, someone that once dreamt of becoming a great merchant, was currently having bad thoughts.

Minhyuk continued to broadcast for an hour each day for an entire week, which resulted in the steady increase in Beyond the Heavens Kingdom's number of immigrants. Soon, the numbers started to decline. In other words, the initial heat had dwindled and was already on the verge of slowly dying down.

Of course, during the first few broadcasts, the views of the Food God's mukbang had reached an unprecedented level. Among the immigrants that came from the heat of that first broadcast, 1,000 were chosen to get the chance to taste the Food God's dishes. One of them was a man named Alex.

Alex was a reporter, and in his line of work, he had published plenty of articles, ranging from celebrity scandals to rankers scandals, even information about various guilds and plenty of other topics. There was even a saying among the people that the moment Alex dug into that person, that person would eventually become ruined. He was very lucky to be a part of the 1,000 chosen people.

'I wonder how many lies did the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom weave for the public?'

No one has ever written an article with depth and substance when it came to Beyond the Heavens. That was how top secret their information was, especially with the help of the Food God's father, Ilhwa Group's Chairman Kang Minhoo. He kept a tight leash on their information. Aside from that, Alex could not think of anything about them. Also...

'Making a buffed dish that could satisfy these 1,000 people? Is he out of his mind?'

Actually, Alex had also written an article filled with speculation saying, *'The Food God's buffed dishes are just a marketing ploy, right?'* Strangely enough, what he wrote matched reality.

Why did the Food God not reveal the detailed information of his dishes??

Why does the Food God always appear late? Is it because he wants to create a dramatic scene like those in the movies to gain more popularity?

If the dishes of the Food God are truly great, why are they not selling it??

Today, Alex vowed to uncover the ugly truth about the Food God and Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

‘I should hunt more... Why is my leveling up speed so slow?’ Alex rubbed his chin in thought. He was also a player of Athenae, it was a natural instinct to want to level up faster, especially since he was at the height of his hunts. After all, when he was in Athenae, he never thought like a reporter, but went around the game with enjoyment in mind.

‘No way. What if they give us exorbitant amounts of money so that we will exaggerate whatever will happen today. Is he really going to do that?’

This thought even swam in Alex’s head, many thoughts were swimming in his head. Then, the Food God finally made his appearance.

“Hello, everyone. I’m the Beyond the Heavens’ King, the Food God.”

“Waaaaaaaaaah!”

Plenty of the people present were very happy. It was as if they had finally seen the object of their admiration. But that was not the case for Alex.

Then, the Food God said, “Shall I guess the buff that everyone here wants most?”

Everyone’s attention focused on his next words.

“It’s EXP buff, right?”

“That’s right.”

“My EXP is not going up!!!”

“Dishes with EXP buffs are so damn expensive...!”

That was right. Just like what they said, buffed dishes with EXP buffs were four times more expensive than regular buffed dishes. And the effects? Very disappointing. Even if they bought an EXP buffed dish, the buff would only last for three days and would only allow them to have a 5%~7% increase in EXP during that time period.

“We will prepare buffed dishes for those of you who decided to move to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Rest assured, the quality of our ingredients are very good. After all, most of them had been grown here in our kingdom.”

The Beyond the Heavens Kingdom had an amazing piece of land called ‘Ingredient Heaven’. With the Food God as its owner, all of the ingredients grown in that land had become more excellent than before.

‘Make EXP buffed dishes for 1,000 people on the spot? What kind of bullshit are you spouting? I’m sure you’ve already prepared everything beforehand.’

It was something that was truly impossible in reality. No chef could make dozens of EXP buffed dishes at the same time. This was because they would always face the limits of their buff volume. However, what they did not know was the fact that Minhyuk’s buff volume was enormous. On top of that, his trailer had a bulk-dish cooking function.

Grrrrrrrr—

At the heart of Valencia, the capital of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom...

Piiiiiiiiiiii—!

...A trailer began to work. The eternal flames burned strongly, as white smoke bloomed from the chimney.

“The dish that I will make this time is braised spicy chicken. Please wait for an hour, can you do that?”

Then, inside the trailer, Minhyuk began to stew huge amounts of chicken while chopping the vegetables and mixing them thoroughly with his ingredient mixing skill.

“Wow... what a crazy skill...”

“As soon as his hands touched them, the potatoes began to peel and cut themselves, did you see?”

The Food God’s skills were specialized for cooking. Alex had acknowledged this part, *‘His class is called Food God, it’s not surprising to see him cook a large amount of food.’*

Then, Minhyuk grabbed a huge kitchen shovel as he stirred the braised spicy chicken in the huge cauldron.

‘Braised spicy chicken cooked in a cauldron... I can’t wait to taste it.’

Alex had been trying his hardest to find fault with Minhyuk but so far, he was not able to find anything at all. Rather than finding faults...

‘He’s a king but he’s actually covered in sweat while cooking.’

If one thought of Minhyuk as a king, then his figure right now was unbecoming. At the same time, the sweat that was flowing down his muscular forearms and body was giving off a very manly charm.

‘Damn.’

Alex felt a strange sense of inferiority after looking at Minhyuk’s figure. Because of that, he vowed to criticize and peel layers and layers out of the buffed dish that Minhyuk would present to them. Finally, the braised spicy chicken was finished. They began to distribute one to each of the players present here.

The one that received it first was Alex.

‘Let’s see? I wonder how much his buff volume can support.’

Alex made a guess on his own. Even if the buff effect was true and genuine, he believed that it was nigh impossible for Minhyuk to supply around 900 of the people here with buffed dishes. He thought that everything here was set-up by the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Perhaps making a buffed dish for 100 people? That was Alex’s rough estimate of what was possible.

“Keheooooook?!”

But then, Alex let out a burst of exclamation after looking at the braised spicy chicken that he received.

“What’s the matter?!”

“What? What’s wrong?!”

“Hey, are you alright!?”

Everyone hurriedly looked at Alex, who could only stare at the braised spicy chicken in his hand and Minhyuk, who was a distance away from him.

.

‘This is crazy...!’

The people around Alex realized that he had already checked the effects of the braised spicy chicken in his hands. So, they focused their attention on him instead of checking their own dishes.

Seeing the look in their eyes, Alex said, “The, the EXP will... increase by 21%... for ten days...”

Alex immediately released a detailed article that very same day. The article was well thought-out and was filled with praises for Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

[The detailed information about the dish that was made for the 1,000 lucky immigrants that moved to Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, the braised spicy chicken, has been a very hot topic. The braised spicy chicken that Food God Minhyuk made can increase around 22% of one’s EXP for ten days. On top of that, the flavor and taste of the dish was superb. For those that seek to level up faster and for those that are still looking for a kingdom or an empire that they will stay in for a very long time, you have to immediately rush to Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.]

The very next day, the notifications rang for Minhyuk, who logged back inside the game.

[There are 8,464 players that applied to migrate to Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.]

[Once you approve the migration of the 8,464 players, you will be able to collect kingdom taxes from them and strengthen the kingdom by suggesting jobs like soldiers, mages and knights.]

The Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s population was growing rapidly.

Chapter 539: Continent Integration’s Trailer

Ares recalled the incident in the previous meeting where he ran wild after learning that Minhyuk signed a huge contract without telling them. Despite him lashing out in anger, Minhyuk calmly and confidently explained his points one by one. However, the most surprising fact was...

Buzz, buzz—

“What?! We can eat the dishes made by the Food God if we complete the kingdom quests?!”

“Are you telling me that I can also get an EXP buff from a buffed dish too?!”

“Kyaaa~ I’m so glad I moved to Beyond the Heavens Kingdom!”

...only one week had passed since the meeting, and the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom was already starting to become crowded with players.

‘I also want to be of help to Beyond the Heavens.’

Ares began to reflect on himself.

‘Genie checks on the cats’ anus but she is the vice guild master of Beyond the Heavens. Elpis dances and cries to children’s songs but he is the shield of the kingdom. Locke might be ugly but he is the one hailed as the Dog Slaughterer. Kaistra does the dishes but he is the owner and master of a divine beast. Aruvel writes erotic novels but he is unusually strong.’

Everyone was acting strange and Ares did not know why they were acting that way. As he walked and pondered like that...

“Mister Ares~ These are the golden sweet potatoes that I grew myself, would you like to try some?”

...a woman, who was busy working on the field, rummaged through her basket and handed a piece of golden sweet potato to Ares.

‘From what I heard, many of the citizens of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom are farmers.’

They were the immigrants from Rocard Kingdom, a kingdom of farmers. These citizens of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom had always tried to share their harvests to the executives, knights, and ordinary soldiers. Every time this happened, Ares would always try to refuse it in a chic and slick manner.

“It’s alright...”

But then, it suddenly hit him. He wanted to serve Beyond the Heavens Kingdom but he was ignoring the citizens of that kingdom? Minhyuk was someone that was generous and kind, someone that could embrace anyone in his kingdom, regardless of their status or race.

Hence, Ares picked a piece of golden sweet potato that was as big as his own fist, albeit with some unwillingness.

‘Actually, I can’t understand them. Everyone from Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, from the citizens to the executives, love and enjoy the Food God’s dishes. However, ordinary rankers had always chosen to eat beef jerky or bread to fill their fullness stat.’

It was a fact. Ordinary rankers always believed that keeping their bellies full inside the game was just so they could maintain their characters and not collapse from the fullness reaching zero. Ares could not understand but he still peeled the skin of the golden sweet potato, as the still-warm and steaming golden flesh of the sweet potato appeared in front of him.

‘Well, it looks really delicious.’

The woman looked at Ares expectantly as he took a big bite of the sweet potato in his hands. With the sweet potato still warm and steaming, Ares had no choice but to roll the still steaming bite of sweet potato. However, the unmistakable deep sweetness and the smooth texture of the sweet potato in his mouth was superb.

“...”

He was left speechless from the unexpected taste.

‘What’s this...’

Ares had never tasted sweet potato as delicious as this in his life.

‘No, could sweet potatoes really taste like this?’

As the question floated in Ares’ head, he took another one, two, three, four bites of the sweet potato in his hands. He ate everything so fast that he even choked.

“Cough. Is there something to drink?”

“Here, try some dongchimi.”

The woman handed a bowl of cold dongchimi covered with a thin layer of ice to Ares, who immediately gulped it down. The sweet potato that got stuck in his mouth and throat was immediately washed down by the refreshing dongchimi.

“Kghhk...” Ares let out an exclamation unknowingly. Then, at that moment...

[You have eaten a ‘Golden Sweet Potato’, a special product developed by the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.]

[Eating a golden sweet potato will give your character a special effect. This will only be applied once.]

[Your STR and STM has increased by +1.]

“...?!”

Not only did it taste good, it could also raise two of their stats! Most of the items that permanently increased stats could only be traded with an exorbitant amount of money. However, that was not important now. What was more important was...

“Are there more of this sweet potato?”

“Ah. Of course. Here, help yourself,” the woman said as she handed her basket of sweet potatoes to Ares.

Munch, munch, munch, munch—

Ares' eyes were opened to a new world. The sweet potatoes from Beyond the Heavens Kingdom were so delicious that it could make anyone that tasted them cry. But then, Ares' hands patted the bottom of the basket.

Pat, pat, pat—

‘There’s no more...?!’

Ares ate all five of them in an instant!

‘I want to eat more...!’

Ares hurriedly chased after the woman, following the road that she passed through earlier. After seeing the freshly harvested sweet potatoes, Ares reached his hands toward them.

“Mister Ares! You can’t touch them!” The woman shouted, an unusual and overwhelming energy bursting out from her body and restraining Ares’ movements, “There have been more than a few people that acted like Mister Ares and ate hundreds of sweet potatoes and potatoes in a day...”

“Is, Isn’t there something that can be done?”

Ares was the leader of Ares Guild, one of the four great guilds but he bowed his head and asked sincerely. However, the woman and the other farmers remained firm and unyielding, “No. However, we can pay you with them if you help us in harvesting.”

“...Okay,” Ares agreed.

‘Do I really have to help in harvesting?’

To be honest, he was a bit reluctant. But what could he do? He could not stand it, he wanted to taste more of that sweet potato. So, he used his skill.

[Self Blessing.]

[Your AGI will increase by 40% and you will maintain your STM for 30 minutes.]

Ares used his skill and ran swiftly with the hoe, digging the sweet potatoes and potatoes that he passed by.

“...Wh, what the hell?”

“Who the hell is that man?”

Ares was one of Korea’s best fighter players. Although his specialty was in kicking, his body was built differently from the ordinary rankers.

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump—

On top of his fast speed, Ares did not get tired of digging the sweet potatoes and potatoes. Even his yield was nearly six times that of others.

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump—

When almost thirty minutes had passed...

[You have acquired 1 DEX.]

‘What is this? I only worked in the field but I acquired a DEX point?’

DEX was also a very important stat for a fighter. For every point they have in their DEX, they would be able to gain a +1 effect in their physical attack and defense. This was important for every close combat class player, as they would have an increased damage effect the more points they had in DEX.

[You have acquired 1 DEX.]

[You have acquired 1 DEX.]

[...acquired 1 DEX.]

Only then did Ares realize, *‘The-the people of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom are not strange people after all!’*

This was the reason why Genie, who only looked at cats’ anuses, Best Selling Author Aruvel and Elpis were strong! It was because they cultivated themselves! Ares decided to do the same thing. He spent three days working on the fields alone while munching on golden sweet potatoes and potatoes.

In that amount of time, Ares was able to increase his DEX by 70.

‘This is fun! This is really fun! Hahaha!’

Then, Ares thought about how the members of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom were giving their all in promoting the kingdom. On the other hand, here he was, only doing something for himself. He felt a bit sorry for them.

‘I hope I can help them just a bit. Maybe I should do a broadcast too?’

Ares turned on his cameras and started broadcasting too while farming. He did not even turn on the comments. He just silently dug up the sweet potatoes and potatoes while wearing his straw hat, eating some snacks, and drinking some makgeolli with the farmers.

“Wahahaha! Makgeolli is the best!”

However, something strange happened. The number of viewers, which were initially low, that were watching his broadcast started to increase at a rapid rate.

The viewers that were living their day-to-day life filled with exhaustion began to feel a sense of comfort from Ares as they watched him drink some cold and refreshing water while wiping his sweat with the towel on his neck and looking up at the skies.

Actually, all of them thought, *‘Why am I watching this?!’*, but they still kept on watching the broadcast despite themselves. The ratings of his broadcast went up just like that and even reached a level that was almost the same as Minhyuk’s mukbang.

That was right. Ares finally found his place in Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

Meanwhile, In Minhyuk’s office.

“Today, there are a total of 13,000 foreigners that migrated to the kingdom.”

“...???”

“Around 4,000 of the players are clamoring to do farmwork.”

“...???”

“Your Majesty, this is a very good thing. These people would do their best to grow better tasting crops and perhaps even develop crops with better special abilities.”

“Super lucky?”

The release of the main advertisement was just right around the corner. As the time approached, plenty of articles had been published and released around the world.

[Athenae’s second era is just right around the corner and we can expect countless major and minor updates. The main trailer is said to be two hours long. Is it like a blockbuster movie?]

[The revision of the main scenario of the advertisement had been requested by the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.]

[According to the interview with Screenwriter Kim Pil-Soo, the person in-charge of writing the scenario, he would carry out legal actions against Joy Co. Ltd. ‘The scenario proposed by Beyond the Heavens Kingdom is ridiculous...’]

[Netizens have high expectations for the trailer to be released tomorrow.]

In the end, the scenario was completely edited. Because of that, many of the viewers expressed their concerns and doubts.

[Kim Pil-Soo is Korea’s best screenwriter. But Beyond the Heavens Kingdom had completely revised his scenario...?]

[But I don’t think Screenwriter Kim Pil-Soo is a good choice? He’s a writer that’s an expert on romantic comedy.]

[But what would Beyond the Heavens know about writing a scenario? Hahaha. I’ll definitely watch how the main trailer fails tomorrow and make an in-depth review!]

[I heard that a lot of people have moved to Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Will they leave after watching the main trailer tomorrow?]

[They’re doomed. GG.]

[That’s a bit too much...]

[Athenae’s doomed...]

The Continent Integration would have the biggest impact compared to all of the events and updates that they had issued so far. However, countless people were already expressing their discontent and disappointment.

The next day, three hours before the trailer aired, inside one of the conference rooms of Joy Co. Ltd....

Baaaaaaaang—

“You can’t even tell me the name of the screenwriter?! Explain why you changed my scenario!!!!”

Kim Pil-Soo, the one who was originally in charge of the scenario, was running amok.

Kang Taehoon looked at him with a bitter smile on his face as he said, “I’m the only one who knows who the current screenwriter is. No one heard who he was except for me. Despite the screenwriter’s high prices, he only asked for 500 million won from Joy Co. Ltd. He even promised to pay a billion won if the scenario failed. On top of that, even after we have told you that your scenario did not fit ‘Athenae’’s trailer after our review, you still ignored us and continued to push through with that, right?”

“That...”

“Ah. Since you have demanded it so much, I have asked for Minhyuk’s understanding and even asked for his phone number. How about talking to him directly?”

Kang Taehoon felt his head throb. Kim Pil-Soo had kept on asking for a call with Minhyuk. Fortunately, Minhyuk was kind enough to accept his demands.

“Just know one thing,” Kim Pil-Soo said, glaring at everyone in the meeting room, “This Athenae trailer is doomed to fail.”

Kim Pil-Soo angrily dialed the number on his phone after receiving it from Kang Taehoon.

Clack—

[Hello. This is Kang Minhyuk.]

“This is Screenwriter Kim Pil-Soo. Why the hell did you change the scenario?!!!”

The reason why Kim Pil-Soo was seething with anger was because someone that did not even know how to write dared to touch his scenario and even changed it completely.

[Because it doesn’t go well with Athenae’s main trailer. This was something that everyone from Beyond the Heavens Kingdom has agreed upon and was also approved by our screenwriter.]

“Which part?!”

[...Do you really not know?]

There were plenty of stubborn writers and Kim Pil-Soo was among them, perhaps even ranking at the top.

[The continents were at war against each other and it’s filled with plenty of romance in between? Of course, it doesn’t matter to me, but if I watched that trailer then I would definitely not play the game.]

“What the hell do you know about writing a scenario?! You f*cking bastard, you...!”

In the end, the string of reason in Kim Pil-Soo’s head broke and he crossed a line that he should not have. Then, he heard a cold voice over the phone.

[Yes, there's a contract. But Joy Co. Ltd. was not satisfied with what you presented so they terminated it and paid you the contract violation fee. So, what's your problem? On top of that...]

Minhyuk's voice turned fierce.

[...There was a scene like this during a war? Before Ellie and I join the war, I will look back at her and say these lines...]

Kim Pil-Soo had no choice but to turn silent as he listened to Minhyuk's words. Everyone in the meeting room perked their ears up as they listened to the voice from the phone.

[Noona, after this war ends I want you to look at me as a man and not as a younger brother.]

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

A moment of silence enveloped the room. Actually, some of the people here were not given the opportunity to read the scenario. This was so they could prevent leaks.

But when they heard this line, all of the people present did a massive facepalm in their minds.

'What a nutjob...'

'Crazy shit. Who the hell would think of adding that kind of romance in the middle of a war? This is Athenae's main trailer, do you think this is your regular Monday-Tuesday drama?'

"So?! What's wrong with that line?! That nameless screenwriter of yours does not even know jackshit about the scenario! Huh?! Everyone is dying to see the romance between you and Ellie...!"

[I'm hanging up. Watch the trailer then give your judgment.]

Minhyuk ended the call with that.

Kim Pil-Soo's face blushed as he said, "That line will definitely set the fire in everyone's hearts!!!"

"Cough."

"Cough, cough..."

"Hmm..."

Yes. It would definitely set fire... to Joy Co. Ltd.'s headquarters.

Kim Pil-Soo huffed as he waited for the trailer to air. Not long after, the trailer began.

'This trailer will definitely fail,' Kim Pil-Soo was confident in his judgment as he watched the video.

'The visuals are good. After all, this is made in our country.'

A sour and moody expression continued to persist on his face, while exclamations rang from all over the room.

"Crazy...!"

"They did a really good job, right?"

"Especially the Beyond the Heavens' guild members, their appearance definitely played a huge part. It's like watching a Korean version of a Hollywood blockbuster movie."

"It's good, right?"

As time went by, Kim Pil-Soo's expression stiffened.

'What the hell??? Why is this so interesting?!'

More time passed.

'What the hell?! Why am I getting goosebumps?!'

And...

*'The f*ck! What kind of out of this world video is this?!'*

When the trailer ended, President Kang Taehoon turned to Team Leader Park Minggyu and asked, "What's the public's current reaction?"

"The response is explosive. It has reached an unprecedented level."

"Based on the current reaction, how much net profit will Beyond the Heavens Kingdom get?"

"If the momentum continues like this, Beyond the Heavens will exceed more than six of our determined sections. The expected return is..."

Everyone gulped dryly as they focused on Team Leader Park's words. With an incredulous look on his face, Team Leader Park continued, "...expected to be at 370 billion won."

This meant that Joy Co. Ltd would rake in a huge amount of wealth.

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

"Let's goooooooooo!"

"Athenae's Continent Integration is already a success! Hahahahaha!"

And among them, Kim Pil-Soo bowed his head while murmuring, "Where did things go wrong? Right! I understand now! I wrote the wrong lines. Minhyuk shouldn't say those lines to Ellie!!!"

Kim Pil-Soo jumped up from his seat as he looked around the people present in the room. It seemed like he had only realized it. Everyone reigned in their joy for a moment as they looked at him.

‘Thank goodness, he finally understands. Since we unilaterally terminated the contract, we should also be accommodating and be understanding of his feelings,’ Kang Taehoon thought that he should be generous in his understanding.

But then, Kim Pil-Soo said, “Ellie, with a sentimental look on her face, looks beyond the walls while saying the lines: From now on, don’t call me noona! I want you to see me as a woman and not as a sister! Kgghk~”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

At that moment, everyone present in the room thought the same thing: *Should I kill him right here and now?*

Chapter 540: Continent Integration’s Trailer

Many people were waiting curiously for the main trailer that would announce the beginning of Athenae’s second era. There were people sitting in front of their computers, together with their friends at school, at work, with their families and even with their beloved. Some were looking forward to it, some were mocking the recklessness of Beyond the Heavens in attempting something out of their depths, while others were looking forward to what the future updates held for them.

This was how the two-hour long trailer started...

The Beyond the Heavens’ king looked up to the skies from the castle, only to see something shocking. The stars in the skies gathered together before spreading out into a straight line.

“...?!”

Haze rushed to the shocked Minhyuk while saying, “The Stars’ Path has opened...”

“The Stars’ Path?”

“This was something that was recorded a long time ago. From what I read in an ancient book, a passage to a new world will open once the Stars’ Path opens.”

Minhyuk listened quietly to Haze’s words as he looked up at the stars that were lined up in the skies. All of the citizens of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom were also looking up at the strange phenomenon. Then...

Baaaaaaaaaaaaang—

...the stars that were spread out in the dark skies began to fall down to the ground one after the other, fascinating everyone that was watching. At the Dragon King's Sea in Asgan Continent, one of the stars that fell, flew across the waters.

Piiiiiiiiing—

A huge path was created from beneath the star, creating a path that lead to the end of the northern continent and connecting them to the American Server. Dozens of these stars fell down and created several wide and long passageways that connected the continents. But the more surprising fact was the fact that trees, waterfalls, and even other features of nature began to pop up not long after the paths were created. After creating these paths, the stars gathered in one place and...

Rumble, rumble, rumble—

... a huge castle, large territories, mansions and homes began to emerge, until they formed a new empire. Surprisingly enough, the size of this new empire was so large that it could rival a continent on its own. In fact, there were even tens of millions of people that appeared inside the empire, as if they were already there to begin with. Only then did the light from the stars disappear.

When the glaring light disappeared, it revealed their figures. The stars were in fact humans. And these were the words written above their heads.

[God's Swords.]

[They are the ones that serve the transcendental beings hailed as gods in the Land of the Gods.]

Dozens of them, wearing a cape holding the insignia of the sun and the moon, knelt down on one knee and paid their courtesy. Then, the clouds in the skies opened up as a staircase made of light fell down.

.

Step, step, step—

A man descended from the stairs of light, wearing black armor which seemed to be made from God's Ore Adamantium. His name appeared on the screen.

[Nerva Sephiroth]

[The Sword of one of the Absolute Gods, the Battle God. Those that were hailed as 'Swords' in the Land of the Gods were those that have inherited their gods' power and lived to protect their god.

Nerva Sephiroth, Sword of the Battle God, had received recognition from the Battle God and became the emperor that held absolute power and ruled over the Land of the Gods. He is the only being that can give orders to the other Swords, aside from the gods.]

Nerva Sephiroth looked ethereal as he descended. Although he seemed to be a middle-aged man, his long silver hair, white skin and golden eyes created an air of mystery that complemented his overwhelming charisma.

"Prepare to trample on and bring all of the continents under my feet. By my God's will, those that resist shall be slaughtered without mercy."

The entire scene scattered into thin air after Nerva Sephiroth's declaration, giving way to the explanation on the screen.

[Nerva Sephiroth had received the orders of the Battle God to straighten out the chaotic world beneath them, bringing them under his rule.]

Nerva Sephiroth was the Sword that had received the power of the Battle God. Upon receiving the orders of his God, he began to put pressure on the kingdoms and empires in their surroundings with his powerful knights and troops.

Nerva Sephiroth and his army's might was beyond overwhelming. They became the object of fear of the kingdoms and empires. Eventually, he began his tyrannical rule under the guise of an 'alliance'. Only a year after the appearance of path of the stars, they had brought countless kingdoms and empires of that continent to their knees. Although the Swords were also human beings, they were different. After all, they were the ones that received the power of the gods.

Finally, they began to reach their claws toward the Asgan Continent. They had only been invading for a week but around seven percent of the Asgan Continent had already died. Asgan Continent's empires and kingdoms joined forces but they were still helpless in front of Nerva Sephiroth's army. They were still pushed back.]

In the kingdom founded by foreigners, the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, everything was in flames and the streets littered with the dead.]

"Your Majesty, you have to go now!!!"

"Your Majeeeeeesty!!!"

Inside the burning castle, Genie and the other executives of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom rushed forward to urge Minhyuk to leave. Haze, who was bleeding from her head, hurriedly gave Minhyuk an ancient book.

"You have to go, Your Majesty!!! You must go now, quickly!!!"

"My people are dying as they fight to protect my kingdom! How can you tell me to run away in this situation?!!!"

"Only if Your Majesty survives will our Beyond the Heavens Kingdom be able to rise once again! Please gather all of the materials written in this book to create the 'God Slaughterer Sword'! This kingdom will only live if you live, Your Majesty!!!"

Everyone knelt down and pleaded. The king of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom looked around them and said, "Survive. I will definitely come back for you."

The Beyond the Heavens King then rushed away.

[Asgan Continent Year 617. Beyond the Heavens Kingdom disappeared from the map. Unstoppable, Nerva Sephiroth and his army devoured the entire Asgan Continent, ushering an era of war filled with bloodshed and screams. Four years after Nerva Sephiroth and his army launched their attack, the Asgan Continent finally succumbed to his tyrannical rule.]

At a time when countless people had died and many more were still suffering, one emperor that Nerva Sephiroth had deposed raised her sword. Her name? Sword Emperor Ellie.?

Continental Emperor Ellie started to gather troops from all over the continent in preparation for the final war. Many gathered under her banner. Even those that survived from Beyond the Heavens Kingdom also gathered under her command to fight the final battle. The number of troops that gathered under Great Sword Ellie easily exceeded six million.]

Ellie, along with countless powerful men and the six million troops under her banner, stood in front of Ruvian Empire, the empire founded by Nerva Sephiroth. Vice Guild Master Genie, Locke, Khan, Ascar, Elpis, Conir, as well as the people of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, a kingdom that had long since disappeared from the map, also stood beside Ellie.

“It’s been a long time since I last tasted a meal made by him.”

The members of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom all nodded and agreed with Genie’s words.

“Kgghk. His cooking is really the best!”

“Conir! Conir wants to eat hyung’s dishes!”

“I want to see His Majesty today.”

Even Sword Emperor Ellie nodded in agreement with their words.

“I also miss him.”

Four years. Four long years had passed where they did not know if he was alive or dead.

Meanwhile, countless archers and mages stood over the ramparts, watching the rebel forces as Ellie unmounted her horse and walked among the six million troops that accompanied her.

[The six million troops that gathered under Ellie’s banner were terrified by the Ruvian Empire’s might. Although they were six million strong, they were but a drop of water in the ocean in front of Ruvian Empire who had gathered countless troops from all of the kingdoms and empires all over the world. In fact, Ruvian Empire’s troops were around seven times their number.]

Ellie walked among her trembling troops before stopping in front of a sixteen year old boy and holding his trembling hands. The fear and dread that prevailed in the boy’s eyes were completely captured and transmitted to all of the viewers watching the scene. Despite his trembling body, the boy still clutched his spear tightly and stood firmly at his spot.

Ellie asked softly, “Are you afraid?”

“No, ma’am!!!” The boy shouted loudly.

But Ellie continued to speak in a soft and gentle voice, “It’s alright. You don’t have to hide it. I am also afraid. Why did you choose to participate in this war?”

“The Ruvian Empire’s Army has taken my family from me!!!”

“I have also lost plenty of people that are precious and dear to me. I’m shaking from fear too. But, does that mean that we have to back down?”

“No, ma’am!!!”

“Do we have to run away because of that?”

“No, ma’am!!!”

“Can you fight against them?”

“I will fight against them!!!”

Ellie tightened her hold on the boy’s hands for a moment before letting go and walking again. As she walked among the six million troops, she said, “We have been robbed of everything that was precious to us just a few years ago. Our friends, family, loved ones, and countless other people have died under the hands of the emperor that called himself an agent of god.”

The trembling in the six million troops’ bodies slowly died down. They were still afraid but the anger that was now boiling in their veins began to overpower the fear in their bodies.

“Our lands, the lands that we lived in, had been taken away from us, their puppet emperors and kings ruling the lands and laying the entire continent into ruins. Even their army is stronger and mightier than us. But... will we run away?!”

“No, ma’am!!!”

The voice of the six million troops rang loudly, shaking the battlefield to its core.

“Do you remember the dead?!!!”

“We remember!!!”

“Will you avenge them?!!!”

“We will!!!”

Ellie mounted her horse again, riding toward the vanguard.

“Forward!!!”

It marked the beginning of the war, with Ellie raising her sword high up in the skies while riding her white horse in the lead, the six million troops right behind her.

That was how the final war began.

[The war between Ruvian Empire and the rebel forces lasted for three weeks. Sword Emperor Ellie, with the help of Jarrod, former tower master of the Knowledge Tower, put pressure on the Imperial Army with their countless tactics and strategies. She and her troops slaughtered eight million of the Imperial Army. However, that came at a high price. 4.2 million rebels had died and 1.5 million were injured and wounded. The war was now coming to an end.]

The scene changed, showing the harrowing scene at the battlefield. The bodies of millions of people littered the ground while 1.5 million of the wounded and injured rebels howled and screamed from despair. Ellie, whose head was already stained with blood and whose armor was already broken beyond repair, staggered, her consciousness barely supporting her body.

The Ruvian Empire was now resorting to arrows and magical attacks to clear the rebels one after the other. Ellie looked around helplessly. Khan, who had fought by her side, had already died. Locke, who had laughed with her, had also died. Ascar, who was still rushing forward in the vanguard, was panting, one of her arms cut off. The scene was incredibly devastating.

"I'm sorry..." Ellie mumbled weakly. She felt heartbroken when she saw the wounded and injured stand up time and again to fight.

Then, amidst the rain of arrows, one of the archers aimed for the head of the very same young boy that was trembling from fear before the start of the war. Ellie squeezed the last of her strength, dashing forward to where the boy was.

The young man stared blankly as Ellie rushed to him while murmuring, "Your Majesty Ellie..."
Stab!

"Ha?"

The arrow pierced through the boy's head even before Ellie could reach him. All Ellie could do was hold the falling boy's body tightly in her arms. However, war was not the time to be sentimental. In just a few short moments, the Imperial Mages had already prepared a wide-range magical attack that could sweep away the remaining rebel forces. The only thing that Ellie could do was hug the boy's dead body in despair and helplessness. But then...

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

"Keuaack?!"

"Ack?!"

"Keok?!"

Hundreds of arrows flew from somewhere and kept the mages, who were casting their magic, in check. There, on a distant hill, was a man riding on a black horse with the hood of his ragged robe covering his face. The man immediately kicked the shins of his horse, urging it to gallop.

Clack, clack, clack, clack—

The horse galloped wildly, followed by four million strong troops composed of countless elves and troops from the Dragon King's Sea. Then, the man pulled out a sword and raised it to the skies.

Flaaaaaaaash—

The sword shone brightly like a beacon in the darkness, illuminating the world shrouded with the darkness of despair. And when the man swung his sword...

Baaaaaaaang—

The clouds in the skies parted as a thick bolt of lightning fell down and devoured the Imperial Army stationed by the ramparts. With every slash of the man's sword, a portion of the Imperial Army got slaughtered. He pierced through the countless Imperial Army that were trying to wipe out the remaining rebel forces.

As the man rushed forward, the hood that hid his face slipped off. The man's hair was long and unkempt, covering most of his face. But the eyes that peeked through their gaps were bright and clear, eyes that could captivate and enamour anyone that saw them.

"...You're late, Minhyuk," Ellie murmured with a bright smile on her face.

In the skies above Minhyuk...

"Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!"

"Keuhaaaaaack!"

"Kihyaaaaaaaaaack!"

...hundreds of dragons circled the skies to fight alongside him.

"The Beyond the Heavens' King..."

"Your Majesty..."

"Minhyuk..."

"Your Majeeeeeeeeeeesty!!!"

"Your Majeeeeeeestyyyyyy!!!"

The ones that had fallen squeezed out the last of their strength to stand up once again. Even the 1.5 million injured and wounded used everything and anything that they could to grab their weapons tightly. Ellie also wringed the last of her strength as she charged toward the Ruvian Empire.

As for the Beyond the Heavens King?

He leapt from his horse and flew toward the figure that was watching them from the ramparts of the empire, Nerva Sephiroth. Hundreds of arrows and magical attacks tried to stop Minhyuk but the sparks that surrounded his body stopped any attack that tried to harm him.

Finally... Minhyuk's sword slashed toward Nerva Sephiroth's neck.

"Uwooooooooooh!"

But before the blade of Minhyuk's sword could touch Nerva Sephiroth, the trailer ended.