

## Gourmet 711

Chapter 711: Abundant Deliciousness

A notification rang in the ears of Minhyuk, who was busy making spicy stir-fried chicken for his people.

[God's Second Knight Luo is starting to develop favorable feelings toward you.]

[You might be able to win over his heart and loyalty.]

As soon as Minhyuk brought Luo to their kingdom, he had asked Informant Abel to gather information on him. Abel, quick on his feet as always, performed his task swiftly.

*'An excessively devoted person to his wife and child.'*

*'A Sword of the Gods that is loved by the people.'*

*'The Sword of the Gods that has never caused a fuss or a problem in the empire.'*

The Swords of the Gods held both great power and authority. More often than not, they would cause trouble. It would either be them killing a soldier because they found him offensive, or taking a woman home, sometimes by force, just because they coveted their appearance. These scenarios were frequent and could not be helped. After all, the world of Athenae was set during the middle ages, and such conduct was commonplace back then.

However, Luo did not cause any stir or waves at all.

*'Why has his heart wavered like that?'*

Luo and Minhyuk had forged a relationship, akin to a master and his dog, to kill Nerva. However, it was also true that Luo would never become a true vassal if Minhyuk could not win his heart and loyalty.

?Passive Skill: God of Assassination's Blessings

?Active Skill: Dance of the Assassin

?Active Skill: Ghostly Arts

If he won Luo's heart, Minhyuk might just be able to acquire the greatest assassin in the continent.

*'We'll just have to wait and see.'*

Minhyuk put aside everything about Luo away for a moment and focused on cooking the spicy stir-fried chicken in front of him.

Sizzleeeeeee—

He had already stir-fried the chicken legs, sweet potatoes, rice cakes, cabbages, onions and perilla leaves together for the spicy stir-fried chicken.

*‘Stir-fried dishes taste even better as the sauce seeps deeper into the ingredients.’* This was what Minhyuk personally believed. Thankfully enough, the trailer was capable of producing a bulk amount of this same dish.

Once the dish was almost done, Minhyuk did not forget to add some udon noodles to the stir-fried dish. He originally wanted to make the dish and use preservation magic on it to prevent the noodles from swelling and getting soggy. After all, he planned on using different kinds of add-ons to the spicy stir-fried chicken and allow the people to choose what they wanted when he handed it over to them.

In a way, it could be said that his idea was reckless. In fact, he looked completely overwhelmed just by cooking the spicy stir-fried chicken. Furthermore, it still did not have any sauce yet.

*‘However, they will enjoy it better that way.’*

As someone that suffered from an eating addiction, Minhyuk only felt pleasure when he ate by himself before. Whether it was a hundred or a thousand dishes, he would only find it fun when it entered his mouth.

However, when he started playing Athenae and his eating addiction was slowly being overcome, he saw how food made people happy and delighted. That was when he discovered a new form of pleasure, the joy in cooking for others. The most important thing that he learned and realized as he continued to play this game was the joy of eating together.

Although his people would only be able to eat this meal once, he wanted to do his best so that they would be happy once the food entered their mouths. Since this was a dish that he wanted to make for the people of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, he naturally included a portion each for the people that he was very grateful for like Genie, Ascar, Ben, Conir, Aruvel, Mei Wei, Crow, Ace, Abel and many more.

Since there were a lot of people that helped him along the way, it was only right that he did his best for them after all.

Beeeeeeeeeeeeeeep—!

Perhaps the trailer sensed Minhyuk’s thoughts, it began to spew out Eternal Flames with more intensity, working harder for his sake. Five hours soon passed and Minhyuk had not stopped cooking yet.

[It’s already been five hours.]

[Food God Minhyuk has not yet rested in those five hours. The moment he’s finished cooking, he would immediately wipe the pot and put in a new batch of ingredients to continue cooking.]

[Athenae might just be a game but if one continues to work repeatedly then they will experience both mental and physical exhaustion once their stamina runs out. Food God Minhyuk intends to feed all of his people. However, I still cannot fathom what kind of method he intends to use.]

None of them had an inkling as to how Minhyuk would feed all of his people. Meanwhile, the viewers had started to voice their own opinions.

[He’s not going to cook for 700,000 people without taking a rest, no? Haha.]

[Guys, do you even think that's possible? How can a person cook non-stop for an entire week?]

[Even if he cooks like that, he won't be able to cook enough for 700,000 people...]

[I know, right...]

It was true that it would be impossible for Minhyuk to cook for 700,000 people even if he continued to cook non-stop.

*[But you guys know something? He's a king yet he still cooks for his people. Don't you think it's cool?]*

[Yep, yep. I agree with you. Which ruler and leader would go that far for his people and nation?]

[The rulers and leaders in reality are all busy flapping their mouths. Haha.]

The viewers complimented Minhyuk's ideals, saying that he was truly living a life worthy of pride. Among them, there were a few people that said, *'Minhyuk will be able to make it.'*? In fact, many did not know that Minhyuk had gained a new skill, the 'Divine Will'.

[You have triggered the skill: Divine Will.]

[All of your skills and abilities related to DEX will temporarily increase by 30%.]

[All of your stats will increase by 8%. Your attack and defense will increase by 6%.]

Divine Will was far more special than the original skill, 'Will', that Minhyuk obtained before. For Divine Will, Minhyuk only needed a quarter of the efforts that he needed to trigger Will. Furthermore, if he could trigger it again within thirty minutes, his DEX would increase by another 15%. If he could repeat this feat again, then he would be able to get a total of 60% increase in DEX. It could even cleanse his mind and body of the fog and fatigue, making him feel refreshed and energetic, as if he had just woken up and washed up.

*'Come to think of it, I went through all sorts of hardships and trials just so I could get ingredients and cook, no?'*

God-grade ingredients were very tricky and troublesome to cook. Some of them had released blazing flames that engulfed Minhyuk and caused him to suffer burning pain all throughout his body. There were also some ingredients that were extremely heavy, forcing him to groan from the weight as he flipped the dish over. There were also some ingredients that sent strong and powerful attacks that created injuries all over his body. There was even a time when Minhyuk had foregone sleeping for a few days just so he could harvest ingredients.

Knowing that there was no penalty and that he had the Divine Will in his arsenal, Minhyuk was far more relaxed than before. Nevertheless, the continuous efforts made Minhyuk reel and stagger as he tried to make another batch of spicy stir-fried chicken.

"Kghhk..."

The people watching him cook all turned anxious when they saw him shake his head and hold it with one hand.

"Your, Your Majesty..."

"Your Majesty Minhyuk!"

The soldiers wanted to rush to his aid but Minhyuk just shook his head at them. "...I'm fine. I have to continue to cook so you must never enter here!"

"B, but Your Majesty..."

"I promised my people that I will cook for them. How can my words as the king of this nation be taken so lightly? My words should carry their weight in gold."

"Your, Your Majesty..."

The soldiers felt tears begin to well up in their eyes, stepping back as they tried their hardest to not let a single drop fall. Warmth started to bloom in the hearts of the people when they heard those words.

That was not the end, Minhyuk was waiting to deal the decisive blow!

"Trust this king of yours and just wait."

"*Huhuhuhuhu. Your Majeeeeeeeeesty!*"

"Long live His Majesty Minhyuuuuuuuuuuk!"

At that moment, a set of notifications rang in Minhyuk's ears.

[The patriotic spirit of the people of Beyond the Heavens Kingdom for their own kingdom has grown deeper. Their loyalty to their king is higher than the loyalty of the people of other kingdoms and empires.]

[You are deeply respected by the people of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.]

[Even though you are a king, it is still not an easy feat to win the hearts of all of your people.]

[A special reward will be given to you!]

[You have gained +1 in all of your stats!]

A glib tongue and a face full of sincerity would usually get one out of trouble. If Minhyuk were to be honest, it was not really that hard to win his people's favor. All he did was mix the truth with some small actions and duped them somewhat! However, what he did was not necessarily all that bad. The fact that he was still doing his best for them did not change.

That was how four straight days passed by.

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It was not only Korea, the entire world was also in a buzz. At first, the world was only slightly interested when they heard that Beyond the Heavens' King Minhyuk would cook bulk dishes for his people. However, the biggest reason for their outburst was the fact that the Beyond the Heavens King had not even slept a wink in four days and was still cooking.

The commentators could not help but admire his will.

[I really don't know what to say. Just thirty minutes ago, Food God Minhyuk was struggling from exhaustion.]

[I can see his sweat all over his body but he never stopped cooking.]

[Look at his eyes, he looks really exhausted. However, his firm determination to feed all his people is keeping him awake.]

[Ah... As we speak, the Food God has collapsed.]

The commentators could only sigh. They were very speechless at what they were witnessing. One of them gritted his teeth and tried his hardest to speak, his voice quivering slightly.

[Look at all the people that have said that the Food God is nothing but a genius. Even if he is, beyond a doubt, he's a hard worker. At this moment, I can say with my own heart that I really respect the Beyond the Heavens' King, Food God Minhyuk.]

[That's right. I would also like to express my support for him, but my words fail me. Please do your best.]

All of the viewers and commentators were in awe and admiration as they watched him with their throbbing hearts. Every person watching this scene was cheering for him, albeit in a small voice.

*'We hope you can do it.'*

It was true that Minhyuk was exhausted, but only to some extent. It was not actually as hard as it seemed to them.

*'Wow, isn't the Divine Will really amazing?'*

The Divine Will was supporting Minhyuk so perfectly that he did not even get tired even after several days of hard work. He was truly experiencing mental fatigue but the rest of his reactions were somewhat exaggerated.

It finally happened on the fifth day.

*'At this point...'*

Clang, clang, clang, clang—

Minhyuk stumbled and collapsed.

"Your MajeEEEEEEEEEEesty!"

"Your Majesty Minhyuuuuuuuuuuk!"

The soldiers immediately ran to Minhyuk. Of course, Spear God Ben was among them.

"Are you alright, Your Majesty?" Ben held Minhyuk's hand carefully and asked.

However, Minhyuk did not move.

*'Did he really pass out?'*

Just then, Minhyuk suddenly gave Ben's hand a gentle squeeze and took it out of his hold. Then, Ben saw him squint and wink at him.

There was a saying: A school dog will recite a poem after three years.[1] Ben had been with Minhyuk as his vassal for quite some time. Of course, he had learned how to put on a show from Minhyuk.

“Aaaaaaaaah. Goodness! His Majesty fainted after cooking non-stop for five days for the sake of his people! Aaaaaaaaah. Our king truly cares about his people!!!”

“Aaaaaaaaah!”

“Huhuhuhuhuhu. Your Majejeeeeeesty!!!”

“Let us all never forget the care and the effort that our dear and noble king has done for us.”

“That’s right.”

“Long live Your Majesty Minhyuuuuuuk!!!”

“Your Majejeeeeeeesty!”

“Aaaaaah...”

The timing was perfect. Ben even did an adlib and slowly placed his ears near Minhyuk’s mouth.

“His Majesty is saying something!”

The people and the soldiers, even the viewers and commentators all held their breath as they waited for Spear God Ben to convey the words that Minhyuk wanted to say.

“I will not stop cooking for the sake of my people.”

“...!”

“...!”

[...This is truly a very touching moment.]

[I have been a commentator for four years but this is the first time that I have cried without even realizing it.]

[Hoo... Our Lord, the Food God. Is there even a name that is more fitting than that?]

Ten minutes later, Minhyuk stood up once again after drinking some cold water. Amidst everyone’s worried stares, he tried to prepare the ingredients and cook once again.

[Who are they?]

[Why are there suddenly a lot of people walking toward the trailer?]

[Isn’t the person standing at the forefront quite familiar?]

A man led a large number of chefs in front of the trailer. This man was none other than ‘Twilight Chef Black’. Black and the Louvert Guild had decided that only those that volunteered would go and help Minhyuk.

Seeing them, Minhyuk slowly came out of the trailer. Black looked at him silently. He had been watching him for a few days and had once again started to rethink the dreams that he had when he was a child. Not too long ago, Black had mocked Minhyuk’s challenge, saying that it was reckless. However, at this very moment, he was filled with respect and admiration for the man in front of him.

“Beyond the Heavens’ King Minhyuk, I could not help but feel shame as one of the top ten chefs in the world after watching you.”

“???”

“Thanks to you, I was able to remember the mindset that I had once before, the same mindset that I had when I just started cooking. Thank you.”

“???”

Then, Black slammed his fist on his chest.

“Our Louvert Guild is honored to have stayed by your side, the one with the pride of a true chef. From this day forth, we vow to always walk by your side through thick or thin.” Then, tears started to fall down Black’s face as he continued with a bright smile on his face, “We too want to join you.”

Wipe, wipe, wipe—

Black turned around beautifully and wiped his tears. But then, he suddenly turned back and gave Minhyuk a thumbs up. “You really are a cool punk.”

Minhyuk, who watched the entire thing, thought, ‘...*What’s wrong with him?*’

Minhyuk had suddenly gained the loyalty of Black and the entire Louvert Guild.

## Chapter 712: Abundant Deliciousness

While Black was renowned as one of the top ten chefs in the world and the master of the Louvert Guild, he had spent his childhood in poverty. Back then, even though he was poor, Black felt happy with just three meals a day and often dreamt of becoming a chef. He had dreamt of cooking a delicious dish that everyone can enjoy regardless if they were poor or rich.

However, as Black grew older, he realized that being a chef did not mean that he could cook as many delicious dishes as he wanted. And yet, Minhyuk was different from him.

*‘He’s cooking purely for the sake of the people.’*

Black looked back on his past as he watched Minhyuk do his best until he ‘collapsed’.

*‘I wanted to become a chef for the people but I ended up going after power.’*

Because of this, Black remembered once again why he became a chef. At that point, he decided to be loyal to both Minhyuk and the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. The same was true for the members of the Louvert Guild. They also received great inspiration as they watched Minhyuk cook for his people.

“What should we do?” Black had a grave expression as he asked. They all understood that there was a severe shortage of workers right now.

Ten minutes later.

Scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch—

Black, a chef among the top ten in the world, was seen crouching down and peeling the radish for dongchimi.

“Ah... Mr. Black, you did not peel this part here.”

“Ah. Oh... Yeah...”

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Five days was not a short amount of time. During that time, Minhyuk had only slept minimally to continue cooking. Although he deliberately collapsed and pretended to be tired, it was not a walk in the park either.

*‘The Divine Will is an overpowered skill but...’*

It would be a lie if Minhyuk said that he did not experience mental exhaustion. In fact, there was this constant urge to rest and sleep that was running through Minhyuk’s head. On top of that, there was also this desire that was incessantly nagging at the corner of his head.

*‘I really want to eat something good.’*

However, the thing that bothered Minhyuk the most was the pressure.

One week. Minhyuk was the one that made the firm declaration to feed all of his people in such a short amount of time. However, after looking at the amount that he had finished cooking, he thought that perhaps it was impossible to achieve. Right now, Minhyuk had only reached around 44% of his target amount.

These notifications had also rang in his ears:

[You have already achieved quite great results in your ongoing quest.]

[You will be able to obtain quite good rewards.]

Any person doing a quest would want to get the best rewards that they could obtain in this situation. That was also the reason why Minhyuk found it quite regrettable.

*‘If I can’t finish everything in a week, then I’ll just add a few more days to compensate.’*

However, even if he did that, the rewards that he would obtain would not get better. At the rate that he was going, it would be impossible for him to feed all of his people. In fact, even the players in the community site were also expressing their regrets.

[I guess there are just things that people can’t achieve even if they work hard.]

[He truly did his best, even foregoing sleep for a few days. This is making me feel sad.]

[In the first place, it was ridiculous to declare that he would feed all of his people in just one week.]

[Nevertheless, I still support you!!! Our Lord, the Food God!!!]

Even the people were looking at Minhyuk sadly. They thought that their king would blame himself if he failed to do what he promised.



*'Your Majesty, you have already done great.'*

*'Your Majesty, thank you for thinking of the people.'*

The people cared about him more than anyone else. That was why they had to wonder if he would be disappointed with himself. However, Minhyuk just looked at them with a soft smile on his face.

Beeeeeeeeeeep—

For five straight days, the Eternal Flames had continued to spew out blazing flames through the vents of the trailer. It never died down, as if it was representing Minhyuk's passion and will for the people.

Shwaaaaaaaaaaa—

Minhyuk's hands turned stiff as he flipped the chicken inside the pan.

Buuuuuuuuuzz—

Perhaps it was because of the accumulated pressure and tension, as well as the mental exhaustion and fatigue that he endured under the watchful gazes of his people, because a ringing appeared in his ears and everything turned dizzy for a moment. When his vision cleared, Minhyuk only saw the ground getting closer and closer until he made contact with it.

Thuuuuud—

"Your Majesty!!!" Spear God Ben hurriedly rushed forward. He knew right away that this was not a performance on Minhyuk's part.

For Minhyuk, everything passed by in slow motion. Even the sound of one's breath in his ears sounded like those in the movies.

*'Haa... Haa...'*

The people that ran forward looked slow as they approached Minhyuk.

*'I can't stop cooking.'*

He had to do it for his people and for himself. If Minhyuk was someone that gave up at the sight of several hardships and trials, then he would not have been able to produce miraculous results in his fight against his eating addiction.

It would be easy for him to just give up, however, if he gave up here, then he would not be able to move forward and reach his goals.

Grab—

Minhyuk grabbed the cooking shovel with a trembling hand as he tried his hardest to stand up. "... I'm okay."

Spear God Ben caught a glimpse of Minhyuk's strong and stubborn will. He immediately stepped back and raised his hand to stop all of the people that rushed to help Minhyuk from getting closer.

However, the problem was Minhyuk did not have the strength to even lift his finger. His exhaustion had been constantly nulled and voided by the Divine Will skill. However, the mental fatigue had

already accumulated to the point that his body did not listen to him at all and it was making it very hard for Minhyuk to get up.

Then, at that moment, a petal slowly and gently fell on him.

Vwooooooooooong—

Petals appeared and flew in with the wind, falling gently on Minhyuk, who had collapsed on the floor, and turning into light until they seeped into his body.

[The God that Likes to Cook is cheering for you.]

[Some of your accumulated fatigue has been relieved.]

[God's Special Power will help you double the amount of food that you make.]

[You have received God's support.]

[The proficiency of your skill: Thousand Swords has increased.]

That was not the end. The petals that the God of Cooking had sent were pink but there were still other petals of various colors that were gently falling down on Minhyuk's body.

[The God that has the Courage to Never Back Down is...you.]

[The God that has the Courage to Never Back Down...]

[Some of your accumulated fatigue...]

[God's Special Power has increased your cooking speed by 30%.]

[...God's support.]

[...proficiency...Thousand Swords...]

[The God Standing at the Peak of Magic...]

[...accumulated fatigue...]

The falling petals soothed Minhyuk, washing away his exhaustion. They also carried plenty of special effects that opened up several possibilities for Minhyuk, who did not want to give up.

Then, a very surprising notification rang in his ears.

[The God that is Good at Commanding the Army is cheering for you.]

[...fatigue...]

[God's Special Power has temporarily increased all of your stats by 20%.]

[The proficiency of your skill: Thousand Swords has increased.]

This god was clearly one of the Absolute Gods, the Battle God, the very same God that gave Nerva Sephiroth his powers. Right now, he was watching Minhyuk with interest.

Grab—

Minhyuk tightened his hold on his cooking shovel. He stood up once again and washed it clean.

*'I feel refreshed.'*

In fact, he felt much more refreshed than when the Divine Will skill was triggered. He even thought that reaching his goal was possible now. With the power bestowed upon him by various gods, he could cook faster and serve several more dishes than before.

Sizzleeee—

So, Minhyuk stood in front of the blazing Eternal Flames and began to cook once again.

There was a man watching everything unfold from afar. The left sleeve of his shirt was fluttering loosely with the wind, evident of his missing arm. After watching Minhyuk, the man turned around and returned to the training ground.

At the training ground, Nero, together with the chosen assassins of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, were training diligently. The truth was, Nero actually has a lot of worries in his head.

*‘How can we win over Mr. Luo’s heart?’*

Luo looked like a machine and did not seem to have any interest in him nor in any of the assassins whatsoever. From what he knew, the man had signed a contract of obedience with Minhyuk. That was why Nero wondered if it was even possible for them to grow closer with him because of that. In fact, Nero just wanted to share the bond of a teacher and pupil with Luo.

“You’re still very clumsy,” Luo, who returned after going out for a while, scolded Nero for the first time and grabbed his arm to help him correct his posture.

“Yes...?”

So far, Luo had never taken interest in whatever stupid or clumsy posture they made when he taught them. Out of the blue, he was correcting Nero’s posture.

“Starting tonight, I will give each and every single one of you special training. After that, I will teach you the God of Assassination’s Assassination Arts.”

“Is, Is that true?” Nero rejoiced at those words but Luo maintained his silence. However, Nero could feel it. He could tell that Luo was now willing to open up to them.

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A week had passed since Minhyuk started cooking. There were many players in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom and all of them came to watch Minhyuk cook.

“Wow... how can a person...”

“But don’t you think he’s cool?”

“I never thought that watching someone cook would look so cool.”

“Kyaaaaaack!!! Oppa, please take me!!!”

“Honey, you will turn 45 the day after tomorrow...”

“Shut up.”

“H, honey... why are you grabbing my collar...”

People did not come to ogle at Minhyuk as if he were an animal on display in a zoo, but to show their respect for him.

[A huge crowd has gathered in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. People from all over the continent have come here to see Minhyuk.]

[Perhaps the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom will usher in more immigrants after this cooking event ends.]

*[Just like the desperate wish of the people and the players, I am also desperately hoping that the reckless yet amazing Food God Minhyuk will be able to finish what he wants to do safely.]*

[I am also looking forward to other things.]

[What other things?]

[If you make various achievements in Athenae, you will be able to obtain titles and stats. Since he cooked a lot of dishes in a short amount of time, I'm pretty sure that he will be able to obtain various titles or even artifacts. From what I can see, there's a chance that Food God Minhyuk has already surpassed the limits of the requirements to receive a reward.]

[I also can't wait. I wonder what kind of titles and rewards he will receive?]

Minhyuk, who was covered in perspiration while still cooking, was finally reaching the end of his goal.

*‘Fortunately, we were able to prepare enough buckwheat noodles and dongchimi.’*

With the majority of the members of Louvert Guild joining to help, they were able to finish preparing all of the buckwheat noodles and dongchimi that they needed.

The problem was that Minhyuk was only able to make around 500,000 servings of the main dish. Of course, that was already a ridiculous amount of dishes to be prepared in just a week. However, this feat was only possible because he received various buff effects and help from the gods. Still, the fact that he was about to fail to cook for all of his people was still undeniable.

This morning, these notifications rang in Minhyuk's ears:

[You have succeeded in making numerous tasty dishes and attaining dazzling achievements more than the previous Food Gods!]

[You will obtain the most outstanding and amazing reward.]

The contents of the quest required Minhyuk to make more dishes than the other Food Gods and not to cook for all of his people. However, Minhyuk never stopped because he had promised his people.

*‘I have to do it even if it would take a few more days.’*

He had decided to continue to cook even after the quest had finished.

The end of the quest was just right around the corner. Minhyuk did not stop moving his shovel, his hands growing more urgent as the time ticked by. There were even veins popping out of his arms as he exerted more power into his stirring. Even his breath had turned ragged from exertion.

Sizzleeee—

With one final flip, he had completed another spicy stir-fried chicken. With that, the quest was over. However, Minhyuk washed the pan once again and immediately tried to prepare another dish. At that moment, something happened.

[Ravier, the Food God and the God of Cooking in the past, has given you strength!]

[The 513,516 servings of spicy stir-fried chicken that you have made for your people will be multiplied until they correspond to all of the people, soldiers and players under your command!]

[You have completed your Class-specific Quest with amazing achievements!]

[...!]

[...!]

[...!]

[...!]

Notifications constantly rang in Minhyuk's ears. However, the accumulated fatigue had already gotten to Minhyuk. After he finished cooking for his people with the help of a very unexpected person, Minhyuk collapsed. He could not hear the notifications that kept on ringing in his ears as he fell into deep sleep.

At the same time, the reporter that came to film the scene pointed his camera to the skies. With the gods praising Minhyuk for his achievements, just like snowflakes, millions of petals fell down from the sky and covered the entire kingdom.

“Woaaaaah!”

“That’s beautiful.”

“The petals look like snow...”

In the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s training grounds.

Luo smiled faintly when he caught sight of the millions of petals falling from the sky. At the same time, another set of notifications rang in the sleeping Minhyuk’s ears.

[God and Knight. Luo has started to develop a deep respect for you.]

[Perhaps you will be able to gain his eternal loyalty!]

Chapter 713: Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s Shadows

The streets of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom were festive and lively. People took to the streets to dance and sing Minhyuk’s praises. Even the players joined in on the fun, partaking in the happiness of the people of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

Minhyuk finally woke up after sleeping for around thirty minutes. The spicy stir-fried chicken that he had made was being distributed to a long line of people that was centered on the trailer.

“Your Majesty, thank you for the food!”

“Your Majesty Minhyuk, thank you!”

Minhyuk smiled faintly as he listened to his people’s greetings and words of gratitude. This challenge was both very meaningful and rewarding to him.

*‘Well then, now that the week-long hard work was over...’*

Although he still felt a bit tired, Minhyuk could tell that his condition was fine.

*‘Is there something more delightful than having a good rest after eating to your heart’s content?’*

Of course, sleeping right after eating was not good for the body. But did it matter? Athenae was a virtual reality game. Besides, his body in reality was most definitely hungry too. Minhyuk unknowingly rubbed his hands in anticipation as he looked at the spread of food in front of him.

There was a round grilling pan in front of him filled with glossy red spicy stir-fried chicken. Even if he was just going to eat once, Minhyuk always preferred to eat properly. He looked like he was inside a shop that specializes in selling spicy stir-fried chicken.

There was a bowl of buckwheat noodles with a thin sheet of ice covering it placed near the grill, along with some radish, ssamjang, garlic, perilla leaves, lettuce, kimchi, and dongchimi. In the middle of the spicy stir-fried chicken was a long stretch of cheese and some udon noodles on top.

The first thing that Minhyuk grabbed was a piece of spicy stir-fried chicken.

Munch, munch, munch—

Since the dish was stir-fried really well, the meat was completely soaked with sauce.

.

“Kghkk...”

The amazing flavor struck him even more because he ate it after a hard day’s work. However, Minhyuk did something different today. Today, he opened a can of beer.

Fwiiiish—

The loud and cheerful sound of the can opening rang loudly in Minhyuk’s ears. Usually, whenever Minhyuk was eating, he was solely focused on eating. The same was true for drinking. He would only drink when it was time to drink. Perhaps it was because of how hard he worked these past few days, but strangely enough, Minhyuk was craving for some beer.

*‘Well, it’s just one can of beer.’*

Minhyuk smiled faintly as he gulped down the cold and refreshing beer in one go. Beer tasted the best when one drank a lot in one gulp.

“Fwaaaaa!”

He savored the refreshing taste of the beer before picking a piece of chicken meat and dipping it in the cheese. The cheese that stuck on the chicken stretched all the way to Minhyuk’s mouth.

“Hahahaha!”

The delightful taste caused him to burst into laughter. This time, he grabbed a piece of sliced radish together with two pieces of the spicy stir-fried chicken and placed everything in his mouth.

Crunch, crunch—

The sweet and sour taste of the radish was a tasty addition to the savory flavor of the spicy stir-fried chicken. Then, he grabbed a piece of chicken and placed it on top of a perilla leaf. Of course, he did not forget to put some garlic dipped in ssamjang and some radish slices before placing everything in his mouth.

“Kghhk...”

Minhyuk could not help but shrug his shoulders in a happy dance as the fragrant scent of the perilla leaf wafted through his mouth. This time, he picked up the chicken with some cabbage.

*‘Yo! Yo! Seasoned cabbage is also very delicious. If prepared and cooked properly, it could have a crispy texture.’* A happy smile curled at the corner of Minhyuk’s lips when the spicy stir-fried chicken and the cabbage entered his mouth.

Then, he held the plate in one hand and grabbed some udon noodles with the other. The still steaming udon looked so scrumptious as he placed them on the plate. He could even feel drool pooling in his mouth at the sight. Then, Minhyuk opened his mouth wide as he chomped on a huge mouthful of udon noodles. The pleased smile on his face grew even wider as he continued to chew the food in his mouth. Well-seasoned udon noodles were the charm and the highlight of spicy stir-fried chicken.

This time, he stretched his chopsticks towards the cold buckwheat noodles, shaking it to loosen the noodles inside the soup. Then, he added some vinegar and mustard based on his preference before taking a huge bite of the ice-cold buckwheat noodles.

“*Sluuuuuuuuuuuurp!*”

The cold and refreshing chewy noodles cleansed his palette immediately. The buckwheat noodles had a much softer texture than the ordinary cold noodles, a true delight to the mouth. Of course, Minhyuk did not forget to hold the bowl to his lips and drink the cold soup.

“Kghhhk—” An exclamation escaped his mouth at the taste.

This time, he grabbed a piece of spicy stir-fried chicken and added it on top of the buckwheat noodles. The sight brought a delighted smile on his face.

He also did not forget to gulp some of the dongchimi that was also covered with a thin layer of ice. His eyes, which had been closed as he savored the dongchimi, snapped wide open from the coldness that pricked his head.

After finishing his meal, a set of notifications rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[You have eaten Spicy Stir-fried Chicken.]

[The dish is Magic Grade.]

[The dish boosts your energy and calms your body and soul.]

[The buff will last for five days.]

The buff effect of the spicy stir-fried chicken was obviously not good enough. However, considering that the dish was created for around 700,000 people, Minhyuk was still very grateful for it.

Minhyuk turned to look at his people. He watched them as they enjoyed the spicy stir-fried chicken that he had made. After watching them with a smile on his face, he turned to look at his notification window to scroll through the notifications that rang for him before he fell into deep sleep.

His eyes suddenly grew wide when he came across one among the many notifications that he was scrolling through.

*'This, this...'*

He had no choice but to be shocked by what he saw.

\*\*\*

Several people from different teams had gathered in the Special Players Management Team. In fact, even the employees of Athenae had been interested in watching Minhyuk challenge the bulk dishes quest.

Some of them even shouted loudly until veins popped out of their necks, arguing whether Minhyuk could not do it or not. Among them, Team Leader Park Minggyu and Employee Lee Minhwa were staunch supporters of team 'He Can Do It' and did not budge at all.

"Are you telling me that this is because you two know Player Minhyuk the most?" The Story Team Leader asked as he put pressure on Minggyu's shoulders.

However, this was not the main point. The main point here was the rewards that Food God Minhyuk had obtained.

"What are the rewards?" President Kang Taehoon, who was also in the Special Players Management Team, asked.

The artifacts owned by players, especially those that were very rare and scarce, should never be revealed to others. However, there were always exceptions to the rules. Artifacts of a certain level could be checked by Team Leader-level or higher-leveled individuals that had signed a non-disclosure agreement that prohibited them from revealing a player's personal information to others, just like the people present in this room. The main reason why they were allowed to know about the player's artifact was so they could plan ahead and catch the future flow of the story.

Team Leader Park immediately dragged a notification window on the monitor.

[Player Minhyuk has completed the Class-specific Quest: Even More Tasty Dishes.]

[Player Minhyuk has completed the Class-specific Quest with amazing achievements!]

[Player Minhyuk will obtain the best rewards.]

*[He will be able to obtain the Greatest and Mightiest Food God's relic, Ravier's Bizarre Cauldron.]*

[He will be able to obtain the God-grade ingredient: Poiron's Cabbage.]

"...?"



“...?”

“...?”

Question marks appeared on the heads of everyone present except for President Kang Taehoon and the members of the Special Players Management Team.

*‘What kind of Class-specific item is this...?’*

*‘A cauldron...?’*

Then, President Kang Taehoon said, “It’s only natural since his class is Food God. However, you have to remember that the previous Food God, Ravier, was both the Food God and the God of Cooking.”

“Ah...”

All of them agreed. The relics left behind by Ravier, who had held the titles of Food God and God of Cooking, were truly exceptional. There was a high chance that the cauldron that Ravier had left behind would be beyond their imagination.

Without waiting for any of them, Minggyu dragged the details of the Bizarre Cauldron and displayed it on the monitor.

#### Class-Specific Artifact

?All stats will increase by +5

?Buffed dishes’ effects would increase by 15% when the cauldron is used for cooking.

?Attack speed and movement speed will decrease by 20% when lifting the cauldron lid.

?Passive Skill: Critical Cauldron Lid

?Active Skill: Frisbee Cauldron Lid

?Active Skill: Obscure Snacks

“...?”

“...?”

“...?”

This time, even President Kang Taehoon, Team Leader Park Minggyu and Lee Minhwa had doubts written clearly on their faces.

“Why does a cauldron have 4,211 attack...?”

The cauldron's attack was a ridiculous 4,211. It far surpassed Minhyuk's Continent Destroyer Sword, which was only at around 2,000 attack.

"How can you use a cauldron to attack?"

"Maybe with the lid...?"

"Ah..."

A terrible image, the image of a person's head being cut off with a cauldron lid, flashed in Minggyu's head when he heard Lee Minhwa's words. However, there was an even worse scenario that flashed in, not only his head but also the heads of everyone present.

*'The boss mob dying after getting hit by a cauldron lid once...'*

Even the defense was beyond the charts. How could one defend with a cauldron? As expected, another ridiculous scenario was painted in their heads.

"If the Captain has a shield, then Player Minhyuk..."

"...Has a cauldron lid."

"..."

"..."

The cauldron's defense, which was around 4,000, was high enough to surpass even the god-rank artifacts in existence.

However, there was obviously one drawback to this artifact. The cauldron lid was not suitable for swinging since it was spread out widely and without a curve. Also, the movement and attack speed would decrease by 20% the moment Minhyuk raised it.

"This is crazy..."

As for the passive skill: Critical Cauldron Lid, if one attacked using the cauldron lid, they would have a 40% chance of incurring a x2 critical damage to the opponent. A 4,000 attack and a x2 critical damage? And the probability was as high as 40%?

Then, there was also the Frisbee Cauldron Lid. This skill had a thirty minute cooldown time.

"You will be able to hit the enemy with 4x the attack and 4x the flying speed?"

"..."

"..."

They were just imagining it but they could already feel how much it would hurt. There was still another active skill.

"Obscure Snacks."

It was an interesting skill and was probably the skill that Food God Minhyuk was in love with. It was also an excellent skill. Once the skill was activated, a snack that could be easily and comfortably eaten at any given circumstances, would be created inside the cauldron within five minutes. The snacks would not have any grades but the buff effect would be set to what the item

user needed the most. Also, the buff effect would be very random and would either be very helpful or very harmful to the item user.

In other words, this skill would allow one to eat during battle and receive buffs that could overlap with the effects of an ordinary buffed dish.

“This is overpowered...”

“Really overpowered.”

The fact that they could overlap the buff effects with the effects of a buffed dish was already a cheat.

After they checked the ingredients that Minhyuk received, they immediately turned their attention to Minhyuk. The Bizarre Cauldron was a bit special, but it was without a doubt, an amazing artifact. They wanted to see his reaction. Right now, Minhyuk’s figure that was reflected on the monitor could be seen to be shaking and trembling after he had received the cauldron.

“He must be happy, he deserves it.”

“He must be very shocked that he can make snacks and eat them during battle while also receiving buff effects.”

Team Leader Park Minggyu and Lee Minhwa both shook their heads at their words.

“I don't think that’s the reason why he likes it,” Park Minggyu said.

Minhyuk looked so thrilled on the monitor. He could not contain his excitement any longer as he shouted out.

[Kghhk! Cauldron lid samgyeopsal. I have always wanted to try it since long ago. Keuhahahahahahaha!]

“...”

“...”

“...”

As expected of Minhyuk.

\*\*\*

The Luvien Empire’s Divine Assassin Corps was the best group of assassins that Sword of the Gods Luo had raised and nurtured. Every single one of them was at least Level 550 or higher. They were so strong that even the number one player at the Assassin Rankings would not be able to contend against any one of them.

Right now, there were a total of fifteen Divine Assassin Corps members hiding in the shadow of the castle of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, which was in a festive atmosphere.

Nerva was deeply disappointed by their loss in the war earlier. So, he resorted to the dirtiest among the dirtiest tricks in the book.

*‘Bring me the heads of the people that the Food God loves and cherishes.’*

There was no better opportunity than today, when the entire Beyond the Heavens Kingdom was in a very festive and cheerful atmosphere. Of course, even if they were not in a festive mood, it would still be very easy for the Divine Assassin Corps to infiltrate the kingdom.

Levone, the deputy leader of the Divine Assassin Corps, checked the details of their first target on the parchment in his hands.

[Beyond the Heavens Kingdom's Prime Minister. Haze.]

Their target was a woman. Levone was confident that he would only need ten seconds to deal with her. An easy job. They had even surrounded the office where she was working while hiding all signs of themselves.

Deputy Leader Levone made eye contact with one of the members and nodded. The member slowly grabbed the door handle and pulled the door open. Once the door was fully opened, the woman would die without even knowing what hit her.

Creeaaaaaaaaaak...

Just when the door was halfway open, the hand of the member that held the door handle was cut off, blood spurting out from the injury that was sustained.

Spuuuurt—

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Everyone was shocked. But that was not the end, blood was already gushing out from the neck of the member that had his hands cut off, his body collapsing from two quick and fatal blows.

The man that cut down the assassin quickly sheathed his dagger to his waist while using that hand to drag his mask up to cover everything beneath his eyes. The man's eyes were fierce, killing intent spilling out from his pupils while the sleeves of his left arm fluttered loosely with the wind.

“Y, you...”

“Commander Luo...”

“Why, why is the commander here...?”

The man in front of them was none other than the Sword of the Gods Luo. However, Luo just quickly pulled out the dagger that he sheathed on his waist in response to their questions.

“I am the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom's...” Luo spoke coldly, his killing intent growing stronger by the second.

*‘They are the ones that were once my comrades, the disciples that I raised. But today, I have finally come to a decision.’*

“...dog.”

Luo had decided to swear his eternal loyalty and allegiance to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

#### Chapter 714: Beyond the Heavens Kingdom's Shadows

After ending the training with the assassins, Luo had walked back to the home that was prepared for him. The streets that he passed by were very lively and festive. All of the people were enjoying the delicious food that was given to them.

*'...This makes me want to keep looking forward to what you can do.'*

Luo was fully aware that Minhyuk was only the king of a small nation, and was infinitely weaker than Nerva. He also knew that it was very foolish for him to stand up against Nerva right now. However, Luo also saw that Minhyuk and Nerva were completely different people.

When Luo finally reached his home, his eyes could not help but grow wide at the sight in front of him. Even his remaining arm was shaking. As an assassin, Luo could manage his expression and the changes in his emotions better than anybody else. But he failed in doing so right at this very moment. Because Legion Commander Park was standing with the two people that he wanted to see so much. They were none other than his wife and son.

"His Majesty had ordered Sir Abel to fetch them from the empire. He had quite a hard time bringing them over."

"..."

Luo stared at the two people in front of him. After he had become one of the Swords of the Gods, Luo no longer aged. But his wife had grown old and turned into an old lady. Even his son had already become a dashing man in his mid-thirties.

Luo's wife slowly approached him and stroked his cheek. "Can you put down the burden that you have been carrying on your shoulder now?"

"..."

Luo had always been carrying such a huge burden, the guilt of allowing the massacre of the knights that fought alongside him in the past. He also carried the burden of helping Nerva become the Battle God's Sword. However, Luo was forced to carry that burden because the life of his wife and son were being threatened.

"From this point on, there will be no watchmen and observers attached to you," Park said.

His wife went to his side and held his only hand. Even his dashing son reached out to him and hugged him while calling him 'Father'. Luo just stood there and let his son hug him tightly while he held his wife's warm hand.

When they entered the house, an enticing and mouth-watering aroma wafted through their noses. Park immediately led Luo to the kitchen where he found a round grilling pan filled with spicy stir-fried chicken.

"It's His Majesty's orders."

"..."

“Every citizen should be able to eat the delicious meal that he made.”

“...”

After Park left, Luo and his family started eating.

“Oh my... This is the wonderful meal that I have tasted in my life.”

“It’s spicy enough that you can feel the sting in your mouth but it’s a very pleasant kind of spicy. Try dipping it in cheese, father.”

Luo scooped a lot of cheese with his spicy stir-fried chicken before placing everything in his mouth.

“No, father. You took too much cheese. Leave some for me...”

“Hahahahaha!”

Laughter resounded in their home. Somehow, life here was more comfortable than his life in the Luvien Empire. After he finished eating, Luo came out of the house to savor the fresh air around him. He actually knew the reason why he felt more comfortable here in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, even though it was a much weaker nation than the Luvien Empire.

*‘Is this your charm and power?’*

For some reason, Luo could see why the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom was a nation that was filled with laughter unlike the Luvien Empire.

“...”

Luo held his breath. He detected some unidentified people heading towards the Beyond the Heavens’ castle. Luo looked at their general direction before secretly following behind them.

\*\*\*

The Divine Assassin Corps was the best assassination group raised by Luo. Their missions were mostly eliminating the members of the royal family, the imperial family, or strong individuals of their enemy nations. Once they made a move, their targets, whether they were royals or imperials, would die without a trace. The one that taught them all of this was Luo.

Luo said to the fourteen members of the Divine Assassin Corps that came here, “I am Beyond the Heavens’ dog.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Whatever happened in front of them, the assassins could maintain a straight face and unmoving heart. After all, once their emotions change, their heart would beat irregularly and their breathing would change. All of this would create a sound.

Assassins had to hide even the smallest of breaths so their emotions should never change. But at this moment, they could not restrain their emotions.

“Are you perhaps under the influence of dark magic?”

“Commander Luo, did you get brainwashed...?”

However, all of them knew that Luo was not brainwashed. They could easily tell through the other’s eyes and expression if they were brainwashed. That was something that they had learned from their expression. Luo’s eyes were clear.

Luo said coldly, “Do not be swayed by anything. Did you forget that?”

“...”

“...”

“...”

It was true. He was still the Commander Luo that they knew of. They had received reports that Luo had died during the war with the Masserati Kingdom.

Gulp—

“Commander, why...”

Luo’s gaze underneath his mask was cold and piercing, the sleeve covering his left arm fluttered with the wind as he stretched out his hand holding the dagger.

“Come.”

“...”

“...”

Now, they discovered that Luo was alive in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. They just could not understand the reason why. However, the lessons he taught them would never be forgotten.

*‘We must complete our task no matter the circumstance.’*

So, Levone and the members of the Divine Assassin Corps prepared to attack.

*‘He only has one arm.’*

Luo was originally someone that used two daggers.

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh—

Immediately after that, the assassins, whether they were males or females, appeared in the air and shot towards Luo.

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang—

Luo easily deflected the assassins with skillful movements. His movements were neat and precise. Some of the members charged at him while using the 1st Chapter of the ‘Assassin’s Dance’, a skill that Luo taught them.

*‘Chapter 1. Quick Death.’*

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaa—

In just an instant, three assassins narrowed the distance between them and Luo, their daggers aiming for his neck, the pit of the stomach, and other vital parts.

However, the real owner of the Assassin's Dance was Luo. He quickly used the 2nd Chapter of the Assassin's Dance.

*'Chapter 2. Rampant Slaughter.'*

Rampant Slaughter could create thirteen clones of his hands that could both attack and defend. It was the perfect skill to defend the incoming strikes. Each of these thirteen hands could complete a strike in just 0.5 seconds.

Slash, slash, slash—!

Some of the hands blocked the daggers that were aiming for Luo's vital points, while the rest of the hands countered and tore their bodies apart.

“Keuaaaaaaaaack!”

Luo thrust his dagger into the throat of the assassin that tried to stab him in the pit of his stomach, causing blood to gurgle out of his mouth as he slowly collapsed on the ground.

“Keheok—”

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaa—

Luo looked at the members of the assassin corps sadly, his hands pulling out the dagger that he stabbed through their necks without any hesitation. Of course, Luo did not stop there. He immediately cut through the neck of the assassin that had been aiming for his neck, before piercing through the throat of the one that aimed for his back.

Thud, thud, thud—

“...!”

Although he only had one arm left, he was still the commander of the Divine Assassin Corps and was one of the Swords of the Gods. It was a display of his overwhelming power.

Someone gulped loudly amidst the deafening silence that suddenly fell upon them.

Creaaaaaaaaak—

“What is happening...”

Luo frowned when he saw Haze opening her door and coming out. Haze's eyes grew wide when she realized the situation in front of her.

Levone smiled slightly. “I have not forgotten the commander's teachings. Make sure to assassinate all of the enemies and the targets using any and all means.”

“...”



Luo knew the meaning of those words all too well. Even if they died, their target would be assassinated. Those that were on the side of defense and protecting someone were subjected to plenty of restrictions and limitations.

Several daggers flashed towards Haze.

“Kyaaaaaaaack!” Haze screamed when she saw the daggers of the masked assassins appear in front of her.

Claaaaang—

At that moment, Luo moved his dagger skillfully and blocked several of their weapons away before pushing Haze away forcefully. Haze, who was forced to step back, looked at Luo with a stunned expression. She had been the one that strongly opposed the addition of Luo to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

*‘Your Majesty, he’s very dangerous because he’s only bound by the subservient relationship between you two. Also, the clause where he would die if he defied and betrayed you is not that big of a threat for an assassin. What would you do if he took the life of someone from the Kingdom by risking his own life?’*

Haze kept on urging Minhyuk, saying how dangerous such a person who was not truly loyal to him, could be.

*‘You’ll know it when you see it.’* This was Minhyuk’s only answer to her words.

Haze did not have any trust in Luo and had judged him to be a very dangerous person.

Ping—

“...”

Despite that, Luo actually threw himself in front of Haze to stop the daggers that were coming for her. The injuries that appeared on his body increased by the second.

*‘...Amazing.’*

Haze was in awe. Luo was protecting her alone against more than ten assassins, who must have inherited some of the power of the gods. However, it would become dangerous if things continued at this rate.

While that thought flashed in Haze’s head, Luo used the final chapter of the Assassin’s Dance. None of the assassins that he taught had learned this yet. It was not that Luo did not teach them, but because it was a skill that none of them could even imitate. It enabled the user to swing a dagger thirty times per second while the skill user’s movement speed would increase by five times for five seconds.

Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping—

Blood spurted all over all around Luo and Haze. He moved like a leopard, charging swiftly to bite the neck of his enemies!

Thud—

Thud—

Thud—

Thud—

The enemies that stood tall in front of them started to fall one after the other.

“...Ah.”

At this moment, Haze realized that Luo would become a great asset if they won his loyalty. When it came to protecting someone, no one from the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom would be able to even touch his feet. The moment the thought flashed in her head, the Divine Assassin Corps’ deputy leader, Levone, stretched his hand out and thrust his dagger towards Haze.

Piiiiiiiiiiiiing—

However, the dagger did not reach Haze, instead, it stabbed Luo’s flanks.

Staaaaab—!

However, not a single sound came out of Luo’s mouth.

“...”

“...Commander.”

Levone looked at Luo bitterly.

Luo seemed to be more cold-hearted than anybody else. However, out of all the Swords of the Gods that Levone had seen, Luo was the most humanitarian.

“You should have remembered all of the teachings I taught you.”

Stab—

Luo’s dagger pierced through Levone’s neck. Deputy Leader Levone’s eyes were still filled with respect for him as he breathed his last.

This was one of Luo’s teachings, *‘An assassin is someone that will either kill or protect someone. The moment you decide which path you will take, you have to be prepared to throw everything away for that goal.’* Indeed, Luo had thrown everything away at that moment.

Luo stood tall as he watched Levone fall to the ground. Not showing what was deep inside them was an assassin’s pride. Right now, Luo’s insides were literally burning. He felt pain yet he still stood tall.

Haze, who watched everything, behind Luo was very shocked. *‘How is he still standing?’*

Urk—

Blood constantly poured out of Luo’s abdomen and stained his black clothes. Looking at him right now, one would not even find it strange if he died at any moment. However, Luo still stood firm.

Then, he looked back at Haze and said, “Call the knights.”

After saying those words, Luo slowly left the place.

“Y, you... you need to get treated right away! Stop right there!”

However, Luo did not stop. Then, he saw a man walking hurriedly from the other end of the hallway. It was none other than Minhyuk.

Just one glance and Minhyuk could tell what had happened. However, despite the hellish scene in front of them, there was not a single scratch on Haze’s body.

“...”

Minhyuk bowed slightly at Luo. He did not know what to say to the man so he opted to shut his mouth.

Then, Luo said to him, perhaps to assure him, “I’m nothing but Beyond the Heavens’ dog.”

Luo was someone that had come from the Luvien Empire. He had killed a lot of innocent people while he stayed by Nerva’s side. The lives that he had reaped were far too numerous to count. Among those that he killed, there were many that were far more sincere or far better than others.

*‘Right now, I’m just Beyond the Heavens’ dog. Nothing more, nothing less.’*

There was nothing more that he wanted. He then moved to walk past Minhyuk.

“Luo.”

Luo turned his head slowly and saw the bitter look on Minhyuk’s face.

“You’re not Beyond the Heavens’ dog.”

“...”

“Let me ask you this.”

“...”

Minhyuk looked at him, and put on a bright smile before asking, “Would you like to become Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s Shadow?”

A shadow was the strongest guard that would stick to their liege and protect them. Luo’s pupils shook, this was the first time that this had happened.

Thud—

Despite bleeding all over his body, Luo knelt down on both knees. He then looked up at Minhyuk and said, “I am willing to become your shadow.”

[Luo has sworn his eternal loyalty to you!]

Chapter 715: Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s Shadows

Nero, one of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom’s soldiers, was once a prisoner of war of the Luvien Empire. Despite experiencing gruesome acts of torture, he remained steadfast in his loyalty and affection toward his own kingdom.

His passion and efforts to become strong for the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom burned hotter than anybody else. However, he was naturally born with a weak body. No matter how hard he tried, his body just could not get any stronger.

But after eating a dish using the ingredient ‘Seed of Growth’ that Minhyuk cooked for him, Nero’s potential burst forth. His growth became faster than the other soldiers, even rivaling some of the knights.

As he grew further, these notifications rang in Minhyuk’s ears:

[You have used the ingredient ‘Seed of Growth’ to feed Soldier Nero!]

[Nero. His greed, passion, and efforts to grow stronger is greater than anybody else!]

[His potential has grown significantly!]

[His potential has increased to 158!]

[He was born with the talent to become an assassin!]

“...!”

Nero’s increase in potential to 158 was shocking to Minhyuk.

*‘It’s even higher than Grandpa Ben’s potential...?’*

When Minhyuk first met Ben, he was hailed as a legendary existence and was one of the Strong Men of the past. Back then, Ben’s potential was only at 137. Of course, Ben had grown far beyond his potential and even became the Spear God. However, the thing to take note was the fact that Ben had developed on his own.

On the other hand, Nero had several masters and teachers by his side. His first teacher could be said to be Luo, who was currently standing in front of Nero. He learned the art of killing the enemy in a single strike and the complexities of assassination from Luo. He also learned from Ben on how to use the spear, and from Elpis on how to wield the sword.

Nevertheless, no one could deny how fast Nero was growing. He was only a low-ranking soldier but in just a few days he became as strong as a centurion.

*‘For His Majesty Minhyuk, I will work even harder to become stronger.’*

Nero had always been very grateful to Minhyuk. And the same was true for Luo.

After pledging his eternal loyalty to Minhyuk the night before, Luo began to give his all in teaching Nero. At the same time, he thought, *‘How can I fit in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom?’*

Becoming a citizen of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom did not mean that he belonged. To truly belong, was to blend and assimilate with the people of the kingdom.

“Ugh... it’s cold.”

“It’s so cold today, no?”

“Ughhhh...”

As he was pondering over the matter, he heard the voices of the assassins that he was training. That was when he saw how red the hands of the assassins were from the cold. It was true that the weather was very cold, to the point that one’s breath would turn white with every exhale. Of course, the cold sensation brought about by the weapons in their hands made them feel even colder.

“Let’s take a break.” Luo announced their break. As they stood in front of the fire to warm themselves up he saw the assassins looking in one direction.

*‘That stall is called a snack bar... right?’*

Several tents were set up on one side of the training grounds, housing several street food vendors. On top of those tents were the words ‘Minhyuk’s Snack Bars’, written in a gentle and affectionate script. Luo had seen them ever since he came here but he had never tried them.

“You’re finally showing interest in it.” Nero smiled slightly. “His Majesty Minhyuk set this up in consideration for the soldiers, such that on a cold winter day, the struggling soldiers would not go hungry.”

“...”

The empire also had something similar. They always prepared ‘hard bread’ or ‘soup’ so that the soldiers would not go hungry.

*‘As expected of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, they’re very generous when it comes to food, right?’*

The truth was, Luo was not really that much interested in food and eating. After all, it would not be funny if an assassin grew fat and heavy.

But then, Nero continued, “Though, according to rumors, His Majesty Minhyuk actually ordered those snack bars to be set up because he’s the one that actually wants to eat.”

“Hmm?” Luo looked puzzled.

*‘No way, the king of a nation enjoys such dishes??’*

Luo was born a noble and the number of times that he had tasted those kinds of dishes could be counted with one hand.

At that moment, Minhyuk appeared.

“Salute!”

“Salute!”

“Salute!”

The soldiers and knights that were enjoying the food in the snack bar showed courtesy toward Minhyuk, who greeted them while rubbing his frozen hands. Actually, the real reason why Minhyuk came here was to see Luo. However, his nose guided him to where the snack bar was.

“Whenever His Majesty comes, the snack bar would always run out of ingredients.”

Minhyuk did not have the opportunity to have a proper meal today because he was very busy with his work. On top of that, the weather was very cold, cold enough to give him a runny nose. On such a cold day, he caught sight of a snack bar. Well, what else could Minhyuk’s heart do except for thump excitedly? He had been the one that asked somebody to set up the snack bar. After trying it once, he was hooked.

He stood in front of the snack bar and looked at the steaming dishes. “Hiyaaaaah...”

There, in front of him, were several chewy sundaes that were kept warm on a steamer. There was also the shining red tteokbokki that could make anyone’s mouth water just by looking at it. As for the fish cakes, the soup was bubbling as steam rose out of its pot.

The first dish that Minhyuk tried was the fish cakes. He grabbed some warm fish cakes and immediately took a bite. As he exhaled after the fish cake entered his mouth, the warm breath could be seen swirling in the cold air. Smiling happily, he grabbed the soy sauce and added it to the fish cake. In just a moment, he ended up eating thirty fish cakes in a row.

Of course, he was not done yet. This time, he scooped some of the warm fish cake soup and poured it into a paper cup.

“Hoo... Hoo...” Minhyuk gently blew on the cup before taking a sip. The warmth of the soup instantly spread in his body and melted away the coldness that settled in his bones.

Next, Minhyuk grabbed some tteokbokki, dipped it deeper into the sauce and placed it in his mouth. The chewiness and the spiciness of the tteokbokki caused Minhyuk’s shoulders to dance in happiness. Then, he tried the fishcake.

“Kghhk...” Minhyuk let out a small burst of admiration as he picked up a piece of sundae to dip in salt.

The salt complemented the sundae perfectly, bringing out its savory flavor. Then, he picked up some of the dry liver, dipped it in the tteokbokki sauce and placed it in his mouth. The tteokbokki sauce somewhat took away the dryness of the liver and made it easier for him to gulp down.

“Hmm...”

Minhyuk rubbed his chin in thought for a while. After a brief thought, his chopstick headed straight for the gimmari.

Crunch—

Innread.com ].

A very lively sound rang loudly in Minhyuk’s ears the moment he took a bite of the gimmari, as a wide and bright smile appeared on his face. Then, he immediately clamped some of the long fried squid and placed them in his mouth.

After finishing his meal in that first snack bar, he moved on to the next. The chef in charge of ‘Minhyuk’s Snack Bars’ could not help but groan lightly.

*‘He ate 142 pieces of fish cakes, 53 servings of tteokbokki, 65 servings of sundae and 36 servings of fried fritters all by himself...’*

But Minhyuk did not stop there. There was still the snack bar next door that sold bungeo-ppang[1].

Just when Minhyuk was about to dig in, Haze appeared.

“Your Majesty, you have to leave food for your soldiers to eat.”

“H, Haze. I’m just going to eat this one and leave. Can’t I do that?”

“No. I have something urgent to report to you. If you come here every day, then will the soldiers still be able to eat something?”

“I don’t even come here everyday...”

“I heard that you went this morning, as well as last night.”

“...”

Minhyuk was the king of a nation and one of the most influential players in the world, yet he was being dragged away with a sad look on his face. The scene made Luo’s heart feel hot.

*‘The commoners’ king...’*

At this moment, Luo’s eyes were filled with adoration. He could no longer wait to properly blend in with the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Because of that, he had to take on an untimely challenge. So, he stood in front of the snack bar and took a bite of the fishcake.

“...!”

Luo’s eyes grew wide the moment he put the fishcake in his mouth.

*‘Is, is this really a commoner’s food? I feel like I’m eating a dish made from the ingredients of the God of Farming...!’*

*‘Isn’t this like some kind of course meal?’*

There were several dishes spread out on the table, causing Luo to be in awe. After drinking some of the fish cake soup, warmth bloomed in his chest.

“How can this be...?”

The flavor was deep, and the soup tasted as good as those that he had tasted before, which had been made with legendary-grade ingredients.

“...”

Luo bit his lips tightly. This new realization moved him deeply. Then, his steps stopped in front of the place where the ‘bungeo-ppang’ that Minhyuk tried to eat was being served.

*‘It looks like a fish... it doesn’t make me feel good.’*

He wondered if his mouth would be filled with a fishy smell once he ate it. Luo hesitantly took a bite out the head of the fish-shaped bun.

Crunch—

“...”

The warm and crispy texture of the bungeo-ppang greeted Luo’s mouth. It was a flavor and a texture that he had never felt before in his life. There was also the soft texture of the bread and the deep flavor of the sweet red beans.

*'This is the best...'*

Luo felt that this was the best dish among all of the dishes that he tasted today. In fact, he even brought a huge paper bag carrying around thirty bungeo-ppang in his hands as he walked on the way home.

Munch, munch—

*'How can I blend in and assimilate in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom?'*

Crunch—

Luo pondered deeply while eating. That was when an old man called out to him. He was none other than Spear God Ben.

"Hey, you asked me why my hair was so thick last time, right?"

"Yes."

"Would you care to follow me?"

Luo held his bag of bungeo-ppang tightly as he followed behind Spear God Ben. The place they went to was a dark basement.

Standing on a podium, a man raised his arms high and shouted, "Talmor Fati! *Fweet,?fweet~!? Fweet, fweet~!*"

*"Fweet,?fweet~!?Fweet, fweet~!"*

"Aaaaaaaaah! For Talmor!!!"

Then, at that moment, Luo felt a heat bloom on his bald head. Within minutes, he was already joining in and shouting loudly with emotion, "Uwaaaaaaaaaaaah! For Talmoooooooooooooor!!!"

Soon, the time came for them to leave the place.

"I'll see you soon."

"Of course, I'll come by again."

After going separate ways with Spear God Ben, Luo went on his merry way home. There was a deep smile of satisfaction in his face as he continued to eat his bungeo-ppang. He felt that his hair had grown quite a bit.

Then, he pondered once more, *'How on earth can I fit in with the people of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom?'*

This time, a demon approached him. The demon was called Great Sage Aruvel and he handed Luo a very mysterious book and said, "I came here to bewitch the Beyond the Heavens' newcomer... No, no. I'm giving you a present."

"...?"

The title of the book was 'The Prince and the Maid Behind the Mill.'

"It's my new work. Fufufu," the demon said as he turned around with a flair.



“...?”

Luo could not help but frown at the demon’s antics. Then, that night, Luo sat on his bed and decided to read the book before falling asleep.

*‘G, goodness. He’s definitely a genius...’*

This was a text that Luo never encountered before, even having lived as a noble all his life!

The story revolved around the blazing and hot love that unfolded behind the mill! And that was not all, the second prince, who was also vying for the throne, sent his troops to the mill to kill the first prince! The man, who was going to become a king, fought tooth and nail against the enemies to protect the maid!

As he read the story, Luo’s remaining hand unknowingly crept to his pants.

The next day, Luo pocketed 3,000 gold and decided to buy and eat bungeo-ppang before going to work.

And just like yesterday, he was still plagued with the same concern, *‘How can I fit in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom?’*

The old man, Spear God Ben, chuckled as he watched Luo walk about his daily life. *‘Hohoho. He has blended in quite quickly in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.’*

Luo, one of the Swords of the Gods and Minhyuk’s shadow, smiled happily as he touched the 3,000 gold in his pocket that he planned to use to buy and eat bungeo-ppang.

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Minhyuk, who was dragged by Haze, finally heard the report.

“From what we have gathered, the Luvien Empire is trying to kill Mercenary King Venteio.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes. Although he’s a Mercenary King that integrated four continents with his own power, there were still countless continents in the world. In other words, there were still plenty of candidates for becoming the Mercenary King who are also hailed as such. To become the true Mercenary King, one has to receive the recognition of the God of Mercenaries and all of the mercenaries present in the inauguration ceremony. Venteio was the one that originally sat in that position.”

That was right. That was how it should have been originally. However, this was the notification that popped in Minhyuk’s ears when Venteio lent them a helping hand.

[The story of The Man that Will Become the Greatest Mercenary King in History might change.]

[You are greatly involved in this story.]

The man’s story changed because he chose to help Minhyuk.

“We expect the candidates for Mercenary King to target and kill Venteio.”

Minhyuk nodded. “What would happen if we turned against the mercenaries?”

“It will be like charging toward multiple empires.”

That had got to be the case. The number of mercenaries all over the world could rival, perhaps even far surpass, the number of people in all of the empires combined.

“But what if the one that will become the Mercenary King will join our side?”

“...”

Haze’s pupils dilated. She could not really calculate the results in her head so quickly. However, there was one thing that she could be sure of. “We will be able to take a step further into turning our kingdom into an empire.”

## Chapter 716: Venteio

A few world messages rang in Minhyuk’s ears just a few days later.

[Qingdao Kingdom has been established.]

[The king of Qingdao Kingdom is Xu Jiaqi.]

[The Rothsilde Kingdom has been established.]

[The king of the Rothsilde Kingdom is Calauhel.]

Finally, after some time of Minhyuk becoming the first king in Athenae, two other kingdoms had been established, in just a span of a week at that. But that was not all. The game experts and commentators expected the establishment of at least five more kingdoms this year.

*‘There’s a high chance that the Qingdao Kingdom and the Rothsilde Kingdom already had the power and the funds to create a kingdom long ago.’*

From what they had gathered these two kingdoms had their eyes on the Luvien Empire. However, Minhyuk had swept away the Luvien Empire’s Black Knights not too long ago. So, Xu Jiaqi and Calauhel both struck while the iron was hot.

Since several more kingdoms would be established in the near future, the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom needed to start their own preparations, for none other than the establishment of their empire.

*‘It will probably take a long time.’*

What were the most necessary things for the establishment of an empire? A large territory, enough people, plenty of soldiers and many more. None of these had been met by the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom yet.

Although the strength of the Beyond the Heavens’ troops was high and they could tear down several enemies, their numbers were not even close enough to rival the number of soldiers that an empire should have. The reason for that was very simple.

*'No matter how many immigrants we receive, we're still being limited by our territory's small land mass.'*

There was a limit to the number of people that the current Beyond the Heavens Kingdom could accommodate. What would be a good alternative then?

*'We can also build strong alliances.'*

What if they formed an alliance with the Mercenary King that united the whole world?

*'It's amazing just to think about it, right?'*

However, that was nothing but a thought.

"To be honest, I don't think it's possible to make an ally out of Sir Venteio, the one who will become the Mercenary King, Your Majesty." Haze began to explain calmly. "The Luvien Empire is currently putting pressure on the Mercenary Elders and the Mercenary King Candidates by saying that they would start another Mercenary Hunt. Even if Venteio becomes the Mercenary King at this time, do you think there's still anybody that will want to follow him?"

Haze's words were the truth. Even if Mercenary King Venteio united the entire continent, there would still be a lot of people that would harbor great distrust toward him. Sooner or later, he would be dismissed from his post and the mercenaries, under the pressure of the empire, would turn on him. He would be nothing but a king in name alone.

"It would take a miracle to unite all the people that have lost trust in Venteio. He might be someone that have united and integrated four continents but there are still many candidates that can replace him as the Mercenary King."

"In other words, Venteio has to be made into someone that cannot be easily replaced."

That was impossible even for someone like Minhyuk. He had to ponder deeply and recall what Haze reported to him to think of ways to approach Venteio.

Brod had asked Venteio to help Minhyuk. However, what Minhyuk needed to know here was who Venteio really was like as a person. What if Venteio was a strange person that thought about the other mercenaries as nothing more than bugs?

*'Everything will be a mess, then.'*

Minhyuk actually did not possess much information about him. After organizing his thoughts, he said, "In that case, I should go with the thought of winning over Venteio as the individual and not winning over the entire group of mercenaries."

"Indeed."

That was wise thinking. It would be a big boost to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom if Venteio could move to their kingdom, even if he failed to become the Mercenary King.

*'But if that does not work out, then, there's nothing I can do.'*

This was Minhyuk's first time helping Brod after receiving help from Brod so many times. It was fine even if Minhyuk would not be able to get anything from it.

*'I heard that once someone becomes the Mercenary King, the God of Mercenaries will drop God-grade ingredients. I'm really curious about them.'*

However, it seemed like it would be very hard for him to get those in his hands. Minhyuk rubbed his chin in thought and said, "Right now, they are catching and killing the mercenaries that call themselves the Wolf Mercenaries, no?"

"That's right, Your Majesty."

This was one of the things that Haze had reported to him. Minhyuk could roughly predict how the situation would unfold for them. Nodding in answer, he stood up from his seat while changing his appearance with Great Demon Verus' Mask and said, "I'll be on my way then."

Haze sighed bitterly as she looked at Minhyuk. As the Beyond the Heavens' prime minister, she did not want her king to do anything that would be of no help to their kingdom. After all, she could tell that it would be very difficult to bring Venteio over to their side and have him settle down in Beyond the Heavens Kingdom.

*'I look forward to whatever results you bring back, Your Majesty. After all, you always exceed my expectations.'*

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The mercenaries from all over the world were all shocked and confused. Just a few days ago, the Luvien Empire led their army and massacred all of the mercenaries stationed in the small village of Edith. They did so under the pretext that the mercenaries were the first to attack the soldiers of the Luvien Imperial Army. 413 mercenaries died that day.

This sudden event brought fear and terror to the mercenaries all over the world. All of them were afraid that the Mercenary Hunt, an event that various empires and kingdoms had carried out in the past, would be reenacted once again.

There were four Mercenary Elders and three Mercenary King Candidates sitting around a table. A diplomat and representative from the Luvien Empire had sat with them just a few moments prior.

*'This contract states that you will earn 3% of the mercenaries' profits as long as you sign it...'*

The Luvien Empire had told them that they would create laws that would ensure that they gain profits through the mercenaries' earnings and make sure that they would enforce it to be adopted. By "enforce", they literally mean that they would double down on all of the mercenaries from all over the world to sign contracts and fulfill them.

For them, this was a very happy and welcome thing.

*'Even if we sit still, we will still gain money? Only the people below us have to complete the missions?'*

*'This is like sitting on a pile of gold.'*

*'I can play and eat for the rest of my life.'*

*'And if we so want it, the Luvien Empire will provide us with a home and a citizenship. There is no other better opportunity than this...!'*

Their eyes were stained with greed, except for one elder.

Elder Sven shook his head. "This is a ridiculous clause. How can we just sit here and take the money that the mercenaries risk their lives to earn? If we accept this offer now, we will all be reduced to nothing but the empire's tools. You must have completely thrown away the Mercenary's Pride that the former Mercenary King Brod had instilled upon us!!!"

"Ahem..."

"Keuheum..."

The others coughed and groaned. They could not forget the Mercenary's Pride.

*'Do not be treated as tools but as comrades and warriors. Stand tall and never yield to any kingdom or empire.'*

The greatest Mercenary King had instilled this pledge of pride in all of the mercenaries. Accepting this clause proposed by the empire would be stamping on the pride of the mercenaries, effectively turning them into tools once again. In other words, they would return to being their meat shields.

"Then, are you suggesting that we go against the Luvien Empire?"

"You want to get beaten like this without even being able to resist?! True, Venteio made a mistake by betraying the empire! However, he is the only talent and candidate to become the Mercenary King!"

"..."

"...The only talent and candidate to become the Mercenary King."

The Mercenary King Candidates all looked at Sven coldly. In fact, they admitted that fact too. Venteio was the only one with the qualities and the power to become the Mercenary King. That was actually the reason why they were here, to weed him out. The Mercenary King Candidates had already verbally agreed that the new Mercenary King would not be Venteio, but Avak.

Avak had always been second to Venteio, hidden by the tremendous shadow cast by Venteio. Avak had a strange and eccentric personality but his skills were undeniable. He was also a shrewd and clever person that aimed to make peace with the empire at all times.

"Elder Sven," Avak called out in a low voice.

Sven was startled to see the coldness in Avak's gaze. However, he still glared at the man, his gaze firm and unrelenting.

"Madam Jeronie is quite healthy and well, no?"

“...!”

Sven’s eyes opened wide.

“You know, I’m just saying that the madam is in good health.”

“You, you...!”

Indeed. Avak had expected that Elder Sven would oppose this. Right now, Avak’s men were with Madam Jeronie, Elder Sven’s wife, and were ready to kill her at any given moment.

“Elder Sven, Venteio is a guilty man. He had killed the soldiers of the Luvien Empire and caused the death of several innocent mercenaries.”

“...Do you really not know? The reason why Venteio had to act as one of the empire's Black Knights is for the sake of all of the mercenaries?”

Venteio was a firm believer and follower of the Mercenary’s Pride. However, at that moment, Venteio realized that he did not have the strength nor the power to follow that pride. That was why he became the empire’s dog.

Venteio intended to make contributions there, become the Mercenary King and build a friendly relationship with Nerva. Afterward, he would use his voice to speak about the Mercenary’s Pride.

It was somewhat similar to what Avak intended to do, yet also different. Venteio was willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of the mercenaries, while Avak wanted to sacrifice and sell the mercenaries to build a friendly relationship with Luvien and satisfy his own personal greed.

“But in the end, what was the result? He went against the will of the empire and now everyone else has to pay for it.”

“...”

Sven’s body shook and trembled. He still firmly believed that Avak should not be the Mercenary King. If Avak became the Mercenary King, then the only future that awaited the mercenaries were to become dogs.

Avak stood up from his seat and patted Sven heavily on the shoulder. “All you have to do is join everyone here in choosing me as the next Mercenary King.”

“...”

Indeed. Once that happened, Avak would become the Mercenary King and he could then devour the entire continent.

“...What are you going to do to Venteio?”

“He deserves to be punished for the crime that he committed, right?”

“...”

That was right. Venteio would die today.

“It seems like the mercenaries are arriving one after the other,” Avak said, blocking whatever words would come out of Sven’s mouth. Then, he walked outside.

The mercenaries, who wanted to witness the selection of the Mercenary King, would cross the continents and gather in one place. However, all of them were required to wear robes up until the Mercenary King was chosen. Only the candidates to become the Mercenary King were allowed to not wear robes.

The mercenaries from all over the world marched toward Aeopia, the land of the mercenaries. Avak smiled widely as he watched this scene.

Thud— thud— thud— thud—

The sound of the advance of hundreds of thousands of mercenaries made Avak’s heart pound. He was filled with excitement at the thought of becoming the king of these people.

At that moment, he caught sight of a man of huge build and without any robe on his body walking silently among these people. Avak could not help the slight groan that escaped his mouth at the overwhelming charisma that the man exuded.

However, Avak had already secretly told the other mercenaries, *‘Those that protect and defend? Venteio? will all die.’*

The mercenaries also felt fear when they heard the name of the Luvien Empire. On top of that, Venteio had been labeled by the empire as a criminal charged with high treason. In other words, none of the mercenaries here would side with Venteio. Instead, all of the people present here were on Avak’s side.

Avak raised his sword and pointed it at Venteio in front of him. “Sinner Venteio, pay for your crimes!!!”

At that moment, hundreds of thousands of mercenaries stopped and looked at Venteio before pulling their swords and pointing it at the man.

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Venteio stared at the hundreds of thousands of sword blades pointed at him. He already knew that he would die today. In fact, Venteio could have run away. He could have chosen to live in seclusion in a place where no one could find him.

*‘I will never back down, master.’*

He knew that he had no power to protect the Mercenary’s Pride so he chose to become the dog of the Luvien Empire. However, he did it for the sake of all of the mercenaries.

Today would mark the day in history when he, a candidate for the Mercenary King, would die a miserable death. However, he knew that there were people that fought hard to protect the mercenaries’ pride. And those that would remember him would definitely carry on this pride.

“You have broken and betrayed the Mercenary’s Pride!!!” Venteio shouted at the top of his lungs as he pointed his sword back at the hundreds of thousands of mercenaries that were aiming their blades at him.

*Shiiiiing—*

Avak laughed. “Pride? Can that be turned into money, Venteio?”

“So you chose to become the empire’s dog! A mercenary whose descendants will forever be ashamed to admit that he was their ancestor!!!”

Venteio slowly took a step toward the mercenaries that blocked his path. The mercenaries all faltered at the sight of Venteio walking slowly with his sword hanging loosely in his hands.

“It seems like you are willing to let our descendants live in a world where they are persecuted and used!!!” Venteio shouted, his slow steps turning into a full run.

Avak just laughed louder, “Bwahahahahahahaha!”

The man was alone. No one would come to his aid and help him defend his pride. However, Venteio, who scolded them and reminded them once again about the pride of the mercenaries, swung his sword that was overflowing with power.

“Mercenary’s Pinnacle Swordsmanship. Chapter 4.”

Venteio also knew that he would be all alone here. However, he fought bravely and without any fear at the thought of *him*.

*‘What’s wrong with being alone? Isn’t it an honor for someone to fight for their pride?’*

So, he would continue to fight, even if he was alone.

“Keuhahahahahahahahaha!” Avak’s laughter grew louder and louder as he continued to watch Venteio.

Shwaaaaa—

Fwoooooooooosh—

Swoooooooooosh—

At that moment, tens of thousands mercenaries threw their robes to the sky, revealing the symbol of a roaring wolf on their backs. Their swords, which were originally pointing at Venteio, immediately switched to the other mercenaries beside them. The history and the pride that *he* left behind was none other than them, the Wolf Mercenaries.

“Wh, what...?”

“Mercenary’s Pinnacle Swordsmanship. Chapter 4.”

They also swung their swords and cast the same skill that Venteio used. At the same time, the running Venteio leapt to the sky with his sword creating a seven-meter-long red sword light behind him.

The powerful force from the sword light struck down on the other mercenaries, along with the same Mercenary’s Pinnacle Swordsmanship Chapter 4 that the other mercenaries cast.

“Wolf’s Death.”



“Wolf’s Death.”

Baaaaaaaaaaaang—

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

The sword of the ones that carried on *his* ‘pride’ connected, and carried out judgment upon those foolish and ignorant mercenaries.

Chapter 717: Venteio

Avak had informed all of the mercenaries from all over the world, ‘*Those that protect and defend? Venteio? will all die too.*’

That was the truth. Once Avak ascended and became the Mercenary King, he would purge all of the mercenaries that tried to protect Venteio. He would also use the help of the empire to chase them to the ends of the world and make sure that there was none of them left.

Venteio was also aware of what Avak did. The only reason why he went willingly into certain death was so he could inform the world about the Mercenary’s Pride, before dying in a glorious manner. He thought he was alone, but the mercenaries that he thought had left him behind suddenly appeared and used the ‘Mercenary’s Pinnacle Swordsmanship.’

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

Sword light shot out from the swords of those mercenaries and trampled those that were around them.

“Venteio! Venteio! Venteio!”

“Venteio! Venteio! Venteio!”

Tens of thousands of mercenaries shouted his name as they surrounded him. That was when Venteio realized that these men chose to stay by his side, even if it meant their deaths.

“...Master.”

The figure of that ‘man’, who told them to never betray the pride of the mercenaries, suddenly flashed in Venteio’s head. At that moment, Venteio vowed firmly, ‘*I have to repay the people that came here to protect our Mercenary’s Pride.*’

A stronger power flowed out of Venteio’s sword.

“Mercenary’s Pinnacle Swordsmanship. Final Chapter.”

Like a lone wolf, he glared sharply at his opponents as a howl resounded across the battlefield.

Awooooooooooooo—!

“Howling Wolf.”

Hundreds of sword lights shot out from Venteio’s sword, turning into black wolves that tore and shredded his enemies apart.

Slash, slash, slash, slash, slash, slash—!

Avak, two other Mercenary King Candidates, as well as the elders, all groaned at the sight of the mercenaries being swept away by Venteio's sword.

*'This is the man that united the mercenaries from four continents of the world...'*

*'A mercenary that only appears once every thousand of years...'*

If Venteio did not betray the empire, then he would have easily become the Mercenary King and made a name for himself for a very long time to come.

Crack—

However, Avak firmly believed that Venteio's fate had already been changed. The mercenaries behind Avak pulled out their crossbows and began to shoot at the 30,000 Wolf Mercenaries that fought alongside Venteio.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

“Keuaaaaaaack!

“A, aaaaaaaaack!”

“Ughhhhhh!”

“We, We will never forget the pride of mercenaries. Uwaaaaaaaack!”

There was nothing they could do in front of an overwhelming amount of enemies. The mercenaries that came to fight by Venteio's side were struck down one by one.

Grip—!

Venteio, who instantly cut off the heads of three mercenaries in one go, felt sorry to see his comrades die so helplessly like that.

Avak yelled, “Venteio. Are you trying to make others pay for your sin?!!!”

“...”

Venteio knew that he was going to die. Still, his heart ached for these people. He felt sorry that they had to be killed along with him.

“Put your sword in your scabbard and come here! Face judgment in front of the God of Mercenaries! Only then will they, at the very least, be spared!”

“...No!”

“No! Our Mercenary King! You are the only Mercenary King that we will recognize!!!”

“Venteio...!”

“Mercenary King!!!”

“No!!!”

Shiiiiiiiiing—

Venteio sheathed his sword. At the same time, the mercenaries went to tie up the remaining members of the Wolf Mercenaries instead of killing them. Just like that, Venteio walked silently among the hundreds of thousands of mercenaries until he entered Fortress Babylon.

Waiting for him inside were the Mercenary Elders and the three other Mercenary King Candidates, who led him toward the huge statue of the God of Mercenaries.

God of Mercenary Dawn was worshiped by all of the mercenaries in existence. Venteio stared at Dawn's imposing statue, with its arms crossed tightly across its chest and a sword hanging on its waist as its eyes glared at whatever battlefield that it was looking at.

"On your knees! Apologize before the God of Mercenaries, Venteio."

Thud—

The mercenaries standing behind Venteio kicked him on his leg and forced him to kneel.

"To satisfy your own personal greed, you chose to betray the Luvien Empire and caused the death and injuries of many mercenaries."

"..."

Perhaps it was truly because of Venteio's personal greed. However, he did not regret it.

Not long after, the bound Wolf Mercenaries were brought in. Avak had actually sent a separate order to capture them from all over the world. But it seemed like it was not needed. Who knew that they would walk into the tiger's den on their own two feet?

"Venteio, we will now begin the Mercenary King's inauguration."

"..."

Venteio remained silent. The Mercenary King's inauguration was an event that required the votes of the elders and the other mercenary kings. The person that would receive the most votes would then present his name to the God of Mercenaries and wait for his recognition and approval.

Just like that, they all circled around the statue of the God of Mercenaries.

"I, Laika, who carry the will of the mercenaries from all over the world, will choose an honorable and brave Mercenary King that will lead us all into a brighter future. His name is..."

In that circle was the kneeling Venteio and Avak, who was standing in front of him and looking down on him with a face filled with arrogance.

"Avak."

"..."

Venteio remained silent as the elders began to speak one after the other.

"I, Ethon, who carry the will of the mercenaries from all over the world...will lead us all into a brighter future..."

"His name is Avak."

“I, Coru...all over the world...”

“His name is Avak.”

The voices of the Mercenary Elders resonated in the building. Finally, Sven’s turn came. He looked sadly at Venteio and said, “I, Sven...all over the world...”

Each of their words stabbed deeply into Venteio’s heart. At the same time, Avak spoke in a low voice, “You have to give your recognition to me too, Venteio. If you don’t do it, then I will kill all of the Wolf Mercenaries in this place.”

“...”

Venteio looked up at Avak. That must have been the reason why he captured the Wolf Mercenaries instead of killing them on the spot. Venteio was obviously one of the candidates for the Mercenary King. He knew that one could lose their qualifications as a candidate for becoming the Mercenary King by either fighting against each other or by giving up their right and pointing out another.

Avak was truly a shrewd and manipulative man. He knew full well that the mercenaries, who had the slightest bit of distrust in him, would only follow him if Venteio acknowledged him as the next Mercenary King.

Venteio looked at the Wolf Mercenaries, whose eyes were covered with black blindfolds and their hands were tied tightly with a rope, shaking and trembling.

“I, Mercenary King Candidate Ars, give up my qualifications and choose Avak as the next Mercenary King.”

One of the candidates spoke up and named Avak as the next Mercenary King.

“I, Mercenary King Candidate Ferell, give up my qualifications and choose Avak as the next Mercenary King.”

Now, two had already given up their qualifications. There was no elder nor candidate here that chose to recognize Venteio.

“Venteio, are you really willing to kill those poor and pitiful people?” Avak’s vicious, evil voice that was stained with pure greed slammed into Venteio’s ears.

“I, Mercenary King Candidate Venteio...” Venteio uttered very, *very* slowly. “Give up my qualifications...”

A wide, evil grin appeared on Avak’s face. He felt quite pleased. He believed that he would sit on that throne and leave Venteio behind. He could finally enjoy all kinds of pleasures and riches. When all of this was over, Venteio would long become a cold, hard corpse.

“...the next Mercenary King...”

Everyone held their breath. Even the Wolf Mercenaries kept quiet, their disappointment in Venteio clear. Where was the Mercenary’s Pride that he spoke of? Did he abandon it because he felt sorry for them? Because they would get killed? That was very disappointing.

But then, someone opened his mouth amidst the heavy silence that fell inside the hall, “I choose Venteio as the Mercenary King.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Furious, Avak looked at the direction where the voice came from. However, he could not find who it was because the person was mixed in among the Wolf Mercenaries.

At the same time, Venteio, who was forced to kneel down, slowly stood up and glared at Avak.

“I do not recognize Avak as the next Mercenary King.”

“Bastaaaaaaaaaard!!!”

Shiiiiiiiiing—

Venteio quickly pulled out his sword. Although he felt his heart ache at the thought of the Wolf Mercenaries dying, he still did not let his pride fall apart. However, he would make sure that they would all become legends and go down in history together.

Baaaaaaaaang—

Avak was sent flying back as Venteio’s sword struck his body. The two other Mercenary King Candidates immediately jumped toward Venteio. No matter how strong Venteio was, there was no way that he could deal with three Mercenary King Candidates all on his own.

Nevertheless, Venteio still shouted at the top of his lungs, “Shame on all of you!!! Shame on the ones that called themselves the mercenary kings yet chose to abandon their pride and honor to become the Luvien Empire’s dogs!!!”

Baaaaaaaaang—

Venteio swung his sword, effectively stopping Mercenary King Candidate Ars from moving forward.

“History will remember us! I will fight until my last breath to protect the pride of the mercenaries. Wolf Mercenaries, remember this fact well!!!” Venteio continued to shout, his eyes turning bloodshot. “Our deaths will not be in vain! Many of our descendants and the future generation will definitely inherit our pride!!!”

“We believe you!!!”

“We are not afraid of death!!!”

“We are very honored to fight with you and die today!!!”

“Hiiiiiiik! Mercenary Elders! Quickly inform the God of Mercenaries the result of the Mercenary King’s inauguration!” Avak shouted hurriedly.

Venteio was a monster. The three of them might have the power to kill him but the damage that they would receive in return would be huge. However, the moment he becomes the Mercenary King, he would receive and awaken a portion of the power of the God of Mercenaries. That would make it much easier for him to kill Venteio.

The Mercenary Elders hurriedly prayed to their god.

“O’ Father of Mercenaries, the Mercenary King that is recognized by all...”

“O’ Father of Mercenaries...recognized by all...”

Venteio’s heart ached even further. Once he died his honorable death, Avak would become the Mercenary King. And once that happened, all of the mercenaries would be reduced to nothing but mere tools.

*‘Master. What should I do?’*

However, all he could do right now was to fight desperately. Venteio gritted his teeth and parried the attacks of the other Mercenary King Candidates.

Ping—

“Keuk!”

Like a dam breaking, several attacks landed on his body the moment one attack pierced through Venteio’s defenses.

Ping, ping, ping, ping—

“Ugh!” A groan escaped Venteio’s mouth. At the same time, the prayers of the Mercenary Elders came to an end, staining his face with despair.

“Please give recognition to Mercenary King Avak.”

“Please give recognition to Mercenary King Avak.”

“...Mercenary King...”

The statue of God of Mercenaries Dawn resonated with their words.

Vwooooooooooong—

Hearing the resonance, Avak raised his arms and rejoiced. “Keuhahahahahahahahaha!”

Whenever the God of Mercenaries chooses his Mercenary King, he would bestow upon them a sword made of light. Once Avak grabbed a hold of it, all of the mercenaries would kneel at his feet and sing him praises! And he would become the true Mercenary King.

However, something very unusual happened. A very beautiful sword that was emitting a black light appeared in front of God of Mercenaries Dawn’s statue. There were no records in the history of mercenaries of a sword made of black light ever appearing.

Then, the sword made of black light flew in search of its owner. It went past Avak and many more people until it reached Venteio. At the same time, a voice rang from deep within the statue of God of Mercenaries Dawn.

[The Father of all mercenaries and the God of Mercenaries, Dawn, has sent an envoy for the sake of the descendant that will succeed his 'name'.]

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Everyone froze. The word descendant did not mean the next Mercenary King. It meant that whoever that was would become the new God of Mercenaries. The sword made of black light stopped in front of an unidentified man that was standing among the Wolf Mercenaries.

Swoosh—

However, what was more surprising was the fact that the man released the ropes that bound him tightly and the blindfold that covered his eyes with ease.

The man, whose face was suddenly covered with a black smoke, grabbed the sword made of black light. When the smoke dissipated, the man's face had already changed. The man had fair skin, a straight nose and big shining eyes. The shabby cape on his back also changed and turned into a white cape that carried the symbol of a fork and knife crossed together.

He walked forward and stopped in front of Venteio. An unknown force slowly forced him to once again kneel down. In fact, it was not only him. No one could move. They were all equal in front of the power of god.

‘Y, you...’

Venteio had seen the man on the battlefield just recently. The man smiled kindly at Venteio.

[The God of Mercenaries has been watching those that were willing to sacrifice their lives for the pride of mercenaries for a very long time.]

[The God of Mercenaries' envoy uses his voice to deliver his message!]

“Child,” the man said with a soft and clear voice. Venteio could only stare at his eyes that carried a warmth that was similar to a mother's touch. “Grab your sword.”

“...”

Venteio's hand moved slowly until he grabbed the hilt of the sword that was radiating with a beautiful black light.

Grab—!

Crackle—!

Black flames burst out from the sword and engulfed Venteio.

At that moment, those that could not move were finally able to move once again. In front of everyone present, the man, Food God Minhyuk, looked at Venteio and said softly, “Didn't I say it before? You're the only one that can become the Mercenary King.”

“...”

The owner of the voice that shouted those words among Wolf Mercenaries earlier was him.

Chapter 718: Venteio

Minhyuk knew that Avak would use the Wolf Mercenaries to force Venteio to give up his qualifications during the Mercenary King's inauguration. So, he pretended to be one of the Wolf Mercenaries and knelt with them.

Minhyuk had planned to join in the fight and help Venteio once he found the perfect opportunity. However, the notification that he received made him rethink his plans.

Ring!

The God of Mercenaries' successor. In other words, if his qualifications were recognized in the future, Venteio would become the next God of Mercenaries.

*'He's much more capable than I thought.'*

It seemed like the God of Mercenaries loved and cherished Venteio, someone who fought fiercely to protect the pride and dignity of mercenaries, rather than for his talent and capabilities. However, there was a condition imposed upon him. He had to survive this place first. What would happen if Venteio survived here?

*'All mercenaries will follow him.'*

Minhyuk had stepped in this place to help and build a relationship with only one person.

Venteio had betrayed the empire and was the reason why the Luvien Empire wanted to start the Mercenary Hunt. There was no way that the mercenaries would follow Venteio even if he became their king in that situation. In fact, they would most definitely bring him down.

That was the reason why Minhyuk chose to reach out to the individual named Venteio, instead of all of them. But what would happen if Venteio became the successor of the God of Mercenaries?

*'The mercenaries will worship Venteio and will have the courage to stand up against the empire.'*



That would most definitely become a reality. Their current Mercenary King was about to change and become the God of Mercenaries? That was something that had never happened in their long history of thousands of years. That was how much influence and power Venteio would have once he became the successor and the king of all of the mercenaries. Perhaps he would even far surpass the influence and power that Brod had when he became the Mercenary King.

“Didn’t I say it before? You’re the only one that can become the Mercenary King,” Minhyuk said as he handed the sword made of black light to Venteio and watched the flames engulf his body.

This was what the God of Mercenaries wanted to tell all of the mercenaries: *Don’t you dare touch a single hair of my successor.*

Even if the four Mercenary Elders and the other Mercenary King Candidates voted for Avak, Venteio would still become the Mercenary King as long as the God of Mercenaries chose him.

At that moment, Venteio felt a surge of unknown emotions rush in his chest. He found it to be unbelievable. The God of Mercenaries had chosen him just because he fought so hard to protect the pride that he held onto for a very long time.

Innread.com".

*‘I have to survive and live.’*

The Mercenary Elders, the candidates, as well as Avak, must have already noticed the fact that all of the mercenaries would kneel in front of Venteio the moment he walked out of this place alive.

This thought alone brought fear to Avak. *‘The God of Mercenaries actually acknowledged that bastard...?’*

For thousands of years, their God had not changed. What was the reason why they became mercenaries? It was so that they could make money. So, why did the God of Mercenaries choose someone that believed in a useless emotion such as pride, as his successor? Nevertheless, since Venteio was named as the God of Mercenaries’ successor, he would receive the trust and worship of all of the mercenaries.

“Dieeeeeeeee!!!” Avak screamed, the veins on his neck protruding out.

In fact, Avak also had his own Black Panther Mercenaries on standby in case something happened. They numbered 30,000 and all of them were the elites of his mercenary corps.

Baaaaaaang—

Avak’s sword slammed into Venteio’s own.

*‘Standing in the ranks of Absolute Supreme NPCs does not mean that they’re just extremely strong individuals.’* Minhyuk knew this fact very well.

Although Venteio was truly the strongest among the candidates to become the Mercenary King, it was also true that if the rest discarded the name of the Mercenary King Candidate and the three of them joined forces, they would be strong enough to kill Venteio.

“Uwaaaaaaaaaah!”

“Die, Venteiooooooooo!!!”

Mercenaries wearing capes with the symbol of the Black Panther poured out from a narrow space.

Baaaaaaaaaaaang—

Ferell, one of the Mercenary King Candidates, swung his axe at Venteio’s sword. Avak followed right behind him, his sword slashing toward Venteio’s flanks.

“Ugh!”

Meanwhile, Minhyuk did his best and prevented the Black Panther Mercenaries from approaching Venteio.

Crackleeeeeee—

A black flame appeared and surrounded Minhyuk’s sword as he said, “Overlord’s Technique.”

Vwooooooooooom—

The Overlord’s Technique, a skill that could shake the heaven and the earths, shot toward the Black Panther Mercenaries.

[Mercenary’s Song.]

[The Mercenary’s Song has weakened the power of the Overlord’s Technique!]

[The Overlord’s Technique could only display 40% of its original strength!]

The Mercenary Elders gathered together and sang, effectively weakening Minhyuk’s Overlord’s Technique. The Overlord’s Technique, which should have swept away and killed the Black Panther Mercenaries, only inflicted severe injuries upon them. Even its radius of effect had been reduced, a fact that proved that even the Mercenary Elders were high-levelled Named NPCs.

[The Dead Mercenaries Curse.]

[The evil spirits of the mercenaries that died an unfair death have placed a terrible curse upon you!]

[You have an invincible body that can ignore and resist all kinds of abnormal states.]

[You have resisted an abnormal state.]

The mercenaries’ evil spirits that clung to Minhyuk’s body scattered with the effects of his invincible body. Unfortunately, that was not the case for Venteio.

[All of your stats have decreased by 17%!]

[Your resistance to abnormal status has decreased by 50%.]

[All of your defenses have decreased by 45%!]

[You cannot use any of your skills for one minute!]

The abnormal status brought about by the curse was applied to Venteio, as his expression turned ugly and twisted. At that moment, the Mercenary Elders and the Mercenary King Candidates realized that this was the perfect opportunity to kill Venteio.

[Mercenary’s Roar.]

[The Mercenary's Roar adds power to your attacks!]

[The damage of your first attack has increased by 50%!]

Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

A loud roar shook the heavens and the earth. The ones that received the effects of the Mercenary's Roar were none other than the three Mercenary King Candidates.

Slaaaaaash—!

“Aaaaargh!” Venteio gasped, ignoring the pain that bloomed on his body as he pulled away from them.

*‘Like the Wind.’*

Minhyuk hurriedly moved, blocking their path toward Venteio. The three Mercenary King Candidates smiled darkly. This was their golden opportunity. This was the perfect moment to kill two eyesores at the same time. The three people simultaneously cast their ultimate killing move.

A black energy surrounded Avak's sword as he said, “Black Panther's Fangs.”

It was a skill that could allow his sword to move as fast as a black panther, with a power that could sweep away and tear apart more than hundreds of his enemies.

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

The ground beneath Avak sank as an overwhelming power shot out of his sword. At the same time, Ferell slammed his gigantic axe on the ground.

Crack, crack, crack!

Then, there was the remaining mercenary king, Ars. Compared to Venteio, Ferell and Avak, his build could be considered to be ordinary. The reason why he became a mercenary king was because of the destructive power of his swordsmanship.

Boom, boom, boom, boom—

Dozens of sword lights shot out of his sword, toward Minhyuk.

“Get out of the way!!!” Venteio shouted. He did not want to see the person that his master cherished die because of him.

However, Minhyuk just looked back at him and said, “I finally got the chance to try it out.”

“...?”

Not long after, Minhyuk, who was acting all cool and mysterious, pulled something out.

“...?”

“...?”

“...?”

“...?”

At that moment, the roaring mercenaries, the Mercenary Elders that were preparing to cast various curses, and the three Mercenary King Candidates, were all stunned into silence. They all had several question marks flashing on their faces. Because the thing that Minhyuk pulled out was none other than a perfectly oiled and smooth cauldron lid.

“Heuup!!!”

“Wh, what...?” Venteio felt embarrassed to see Minhyuk pull out a cauldron lid and use it as a shield.

He knew that his strength was on par, or perhaps only a tad bit stronger, than the other three mercenary kings. With the help of the Mercenary Elder’s powers and their three ultimate killing moves, they would have gained 50% more power. With that much power, why did Minhyuk not bring out the God of Shield’s shield, but a cauldron lid?

Everyone thought that the attack would remain unimpeded, breaking the cauldron lid in an instant and slamming straight into Minhyuk and Venteio.

Baaaaaaaang—

However, something shocking happened. The three people’s ultimate killing move slammed directly into the cauldron lid. However, the force behind the attack did not even make the cauldron lid budge.

“...”

“...”

“What? What kind of f\*cking bullshit is this...?”

In the end, their ultimate killing moves all disappeared into nothingness. When everything cleared out, they could see that the cauldron lid was still as spotless and as shiny as it was when it was first pulled out.

Minhyuk’s Bizarre Cauldron had a defense that reached as high as 4,513. It was more than twice the amount of the defense power that most god-rank artifacts had. However, there was a penalty in exchange for that.

[You have used the Bizarre Cauldron’s Cauldron Lid.]

[Your movement speed and attack speed have decreased by 20%.]

Then, Ferell’s axe slammed heavily on the cauldron lid.

Baaaaaaaang—

A huge shockwave spread the moment the two made contact. Ars and Avak tried to use the opportunity to strike Minhyuk. However, Venteio blocked their attacks.

Ferell, just like Venteio, specialized in using his herculean strength to fight. His strength was such that his axe could split gigantic rocks in one go. Even his basic attack damage was much higher

than others. Perhaps, he would be able to slaughter the Swords of the Gods if they only fought with their basic attacks. That was how powerful his blows were.

Bang! Boom! Baaaam!

Ferell used his axe to constantly strike the cauldron lid while shouting, “You’re already as good as dead from the moment you brought out that cauldron lid!”

The other mercenary kings did not even bother to check on Minhyuk’s condition. From the moment he took out that cauldron lid, he would need some time before he could swap it for another weapon.

Besides, they believed that he could not even attack with that cauldron lid. Although it could give him a wide range of attack, the speed at which he swung his lid would be much slower than Ferell’s speed in swinging his axe.

At that moment, Minhyuk, who had been doing nothing but use his cauldron lid as a shield against the swinging axe, finally found a gap in Ferell’s defenses. He quickly held the cauldron lid with both hands and made a gesture as if he was going to slam it down on Ferell.

Ferell just laughed at him. How painful could a cauldron lid hitting his body be? Perhaps it would hurt ordinary people, but for people like him, who had high defense and STR? It was probably nothing.

Craaaaack—

“Keheoook?!”

It hurt like hell. Ferell heard the bones in his shoulder crack the moment the cauldron lid made contact with it. The impact of the attack delivered a heavy shock through his shoulder guards that made his bones rattle. Even if Ferell wanted to shout curses in pain, he could not. The damage, something that he had never experienced in his life before, stunned him silly.

Then, he saw Minhyuk lift the cauldron lid once more and swing it horizontally, an attack that made contact with his ribs.

Craaaaack—

“Keoooooook...” Ferell groaned, his face marred with both pain and confusion. He was wearing sheet armor on his body, but the attack dented the sheet armor severely, while the shock from the blow traveled to his body.

Ferell was someone that had walked the tightrope of life and death and come out of it successfully. There was even a time when he survived after half of his body had been bitten by a gigantic lion-type monster. Back then, he used his herculean strength to rip apart the monster’s jaws and escape from the throes of death.

*‘This amount of pain is...!’*

He could endure it. To his dismay, the cauldron lid swung and slammed into his body once again.

Crack, crack, crack, crack, crack—

“Urghhhhh...”

This time, the attack was far more powerful. The moment the cauldron lid made contact with his body, the sheet armor that protected him was torn apart. It even cut through his flesh and crushed the bones in the area.

[Critical Cauldron Lid!]

[Damage incurred has been doubled!]

The damage that he received earlier was without the critical damage, hence, the difference.

Minhyuk continued to lift the cauldron lid as he watched Ferell collapse on the ground.

[Critical Cauldron Lid!]

[...doubled!]

Slaaaaaaaaash—!

“Keuaaaaaaaaaack!”

[Critical Cauldron Lid!]

[...doubled!]

Boooooooooom—!

“Keoheooooooooook...!”

[Critical Cauldron Lid!]

[...doubled!]

Craaaaaaaaaaack—

“Urkkkkkk...”

All of the mercenaries stopped what they were doing, their attention focused on what was happening between them. They watched as Minhyuk lifted the cauldron lid with both hands and hit Ferell repeatedly. Some of them even turned their heads to look away from the cruel display.

In the end, Ferell slowly felt his vision turn dark. It was the obvious result after his thick metal sheet armor was torn apart and wrecked from the scuffle.

*‘I, I can’t believe I’m dying because of a cauldron lid...’*

Ferell. A Mercenary King Candidate and a mercenary king that ruled two continents. Age? He was 43 years old. Cause of Death? Killed by a cauldron lid.

Chapter 719: Venteio

[You have killed one of the Mercenary King Candidates Ferell.]

[Ferell used an immoral and unethical method in the Mercenary King’s election.]

[You have gained 840,031,311 EXP.]

[You have gained 2,131 platinum.]

[You have acquired Ferell’s Double-Handed Axe.]

[You have acquired the Mercenary King Candidates' Elixir.]

[...rusty blade.]

[...acquired Ferell's Broken Sheet Armor.]

These were the notifications that rang in Minhyuk's ears after he killed Ferell.

Meanwhile, the mercenaries were left speechless and with blank stares, as they looked at the cauldron lid in Minhyuk's hands.

*'He killed Mercenary King Ferell with a cauldron lid?'*

*'From what I heard, Mercenary King Ferell is much stronger than Venteio and Avak when it comes to physical power...'*

*'Crazy...'*

What kind of power did that cauldron lid have? Seeing this, the elders hurriedly tried to use the 'The Restricted Mercenary's Voice' to stop Minhyuk from using his cauldron lid.

But then, Minhyuk suddenly leapt to the sky. The mercenaries hurriedly aimed their crossbows and shot their arrows to kill him.

Fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh, fwoosh—

Minhyuk pointed his cauldron lid forward and rotated it fiercely. Then, after blocking the bows, he quickly threw it using all of his strength.

[Frisbee Cauldron Lid.]

[The Cauldron Lid will fly at your target with 4x your original speed. It will have a 100% hit rate and have 4x more damage than normal.]

[Once the flying Cauldron Lid makes contact with the target, the impact of the attack will incur huge damage.]

Vwoooooooooooooong—!

It sounded like a missile was fired when he threw it out. The cauldron lid flew at the speed of light and blew away all of the mercenaries in its path.

Crack, crack, crack, crack, crack—

Boooooooooom—

Baaaaaaang—

“Keuaaaaaaack!”

“Aaaaaaaaack!”

“Urrrrrrrrrk!”

The ones that were 'lucky' enough to only get brushed by the cauldron lid incurred severe injuries. As for those that were directly hit by it? All of them were crushed on the spot. When something was

thrown, its speed would usually be reduced after it passed through something. However, that was not the case for the ‘Frisbee Cauldron Lid’ at all.

The cauldron lid continued on its merry way until it slammed into the pit of the stomach of one of the elders that were chanting a spell.

Spuuurt—

Baaaaaaaang—

The Mercenary Elder died instantly after he was sent flying back.

[You have killed Mercenary Elder Ethon.]

[Ethon used an immoral and unethical method in the Mercenary King’s election.]

[You have gained 240,031,311 EXP.]

[You have gained 1,322 platinum.]

[You have acquired the Mercenary Elder’s Diary.]

[...acquired the Mercenary Elder’s Memento.]

After killing Ethon, the cauldron lid immediately flew back to Minhyuk. At the same time, the mercenaries rushed toward him.

Venteio looked at Minhyuk worriedly. ‘*There’s just too many of them.*’

The mercenaries under Avak continued to pour in. There were already around 10,000 people crowding in this small and narrow space.

“One way or another, do not let him use that cauldron lid!!!” Avak shouted as he continued to keep Venteio in check. Indeed, he felt like they could kill Minhyuk as long as he did not have that damn cauldron lid with him.

However, the Bizarre Cauldron’s other special abilities were still yet to be displayed. Minhyuk placed the cauldron lid behind him and pulled the Continent Destroyer Sword out of its sheath. Immediately after that, another skill of the Bizarre Cauldron made its appearance.

[Obscure Snack.]

[A snack will be created in five minutes.]

[The snack’s buff effect will be randomly selected!]

Boooooooooooooom!

A cauldron suddenly appeared behind Minhyuk. There was also firewood that was clacking with fire that appeared underneath it.

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud—

The atmosphere turned strained as the cauldron shook and trembled. The charging mercenaries stopped in their tracks, not relaxing one bit. The cauldron showed tremendous power with just the lid alone. They were quite worried about what would happen next. What if lava poured out of it and devoured them?



[A snack has been created!]

The mercenaries gulped nervously as they watched Minhyuk open the lid. Then, something covered with light came out of it and slowly fell on Minhyuk's hands.

"...gulp."

Everyone turned extremely tense. Even Venteio, Avak and Ars, who were busy fighting each other, looked at the unknown item covered in unknown light and held their breaths.

Minhyuk looked sharply at the object covered with light. There was some strange sense of confidence, joy, and delight on his face.

'Th, that...'

'What the hell is it?'

What kind of thing is it? Was it amazing? How did it work?! Perhaps it was an item that could cause a disaster? Or maybe it was something that could cause the ground to break or crack the moment it hit the ground?

Amidst everyone's nervous curiosity, the light finally cleared up and revealed the item hidden within. As it turned out, the item was none other than a long and plump hot bar.

"..."

"..."

More than being surprised, the mercenaries were just speechless.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk was trembling with excitement. '*Goodness. It has the ability to make food?!*'

Was there something more amazing than this in the world? He hurriedly grabbed the hot bar and pushed everything in his mouth. The pleasant texture of the hot bar slid down his mouth and triggered a bright smile on his face. Minhyuk looked like a squirrel with his bulging cheeks that moved along with every chew that he made.

[You have eaten the Obscure Snack: Long Hot Bar.]

[Your skills' attack has increased by 10%!]

[Your attack speed has increased by 25%!]

"The hot bar was so delicious!" Minhyuk smiled happily, like a child that was given a present.

The mercenaries present could not help but doubt if he was truly the king of a nation and the very same man that wielded the destructive cauldron lid earlier. However, Minhyuk's gaze turned sharp and cold as the words engraved on the blade of his Continent Destroyer Sword changed into the word '*gather*'.

[Gather]

[Upon successful attack, you will have a 100% chance of having an additional 4,000% attack.]

[There's a 40% chance of triggering around four to eight times of bloody lightning rain with 2,000% attack that will indiscriminately attack anyone within a 30-meter radius of your target.]

[There's a 10% chance of the bloody lightning rain exploding all over the place.]

[The skill's duration is four minutes.]

The skill Gather was the Absolute God's Secret that was in Minhyuk's possession. It would always trigger lightning strikes attacking indiscriminately in a thirty-meter radius with every swing of his sword.

Flap—

Minhyuk's cape fluttered behind him as he charged toward the mercenaries.

Slaaaaash—

The moment he cut down a mercenary, Gather was triggered and lightning began to strike all over the place.

Crack, crack, crack—

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

The worst part for the enemies was that Gather had a 100% chance of getting triggered. In other words, the lightning strikes would continue to fall down with every strike of Minhyuk's sword. On top of that, Minhyuk's attack speed had increased by 25%. This meant that the synergy effect of the skill improved significantly too.

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

“Keuaaaaaaaaaack!”

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaack!”

With a single swing of Minhyuk's sword, lightning fell and swept away hundreds of mercenaries. In fact, Minhyuk deliberately waited for his enemies to crowd together. He had two reasons to do so. The first one was so that he could trigger Gather. The second reason was obvious.

*‘It's because it will be more effective if they are crowded together.’*

[You have killed Mercenary Akarr.]

[You have gained 43,133,414 EXP.]

[You have killed Mercenary Vedi.]

Innread.com].

[You have gained 31,551,411 EXP.]

Minhyuk was also able to gain a huge amount of EXP. However, there were also cons when his enemies were gathered in a crowd like this. Being surrounded by a crowd of enemies meant that Minhyuk would be under a heavy onslaught of attacks. Thankfully, he was able to recover some of his HP thanks to his ‘Slaughterer's Absorption’.

*‘This is crazy...’*

Avak was appalled after witnessing Minhyuk slaughter 4,000 mercenaries in just two minutes all by himself. Of course, there were some good things that came out of it too.

Slash—

“Ughh!”

Avak was able to punch Venteio who was exhausted by now, forcing him to roll on the ground. Of course, he also took the opportunity to slash Venteio’s thighs.

Ping—

“Keuaaaaaaack!”

Minhyuk hurriedly rushed to his aid.

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

Lightning fell wherever he went as he once again stood in front of Venteio.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

The heavy onslaught of attacks from the enemies fell upon Minhyuk and Venteio. Arrows, magic, swordlights and many other attacks rained down on them.

“Don’t let them take a breather!!!”

Avak was someone that had overcome several hardships and trials in his life. He had also survived several deadly crises. All of those experiences had made him a very shrewd and sneaky opponent.

He could tell that Minhyuk’s lightning strikes and Slaughterer’s Absorption would only be triggered if he made a successful attack. That was why he prevented him from attacking them. In fact, he even told the mercenaries to attack Minhyuk’s hand that was holding his sword. There were even some that dared to approach him and clung to his arms to stop him from swinging his sword.

Buzz—

As time went by, the area began to get overly crowded. The Black Panther Mercenaries relentlessly pressured them, attacking more fiercely with every minute passing by.

Minhyuk’s HP, which he could not recover so easily, began to plummet.

“...Run away.”

Venteio could not let Minhyuk die in this place. If he died here, then he was no way he could face his master. However, Minhyuk just shook his head. He had to make Venteio the next God of Mercenaries.

“If we survive...” Minhyuk, who was now covered with blood all over, turned to Venteio and smiled. “...then, let’s be friends?”

“...”

The Food God, the king of a nation, and the Mercenary King that would become the next God of Mercenaries, becoming friends. It would truly be an amazing story.

Minhyuk could not back down. One, he knew the value of that relationship. And two, he knew that Venteio was someone that would back down if someone showed loyalty to him.

Besides, Minhyuk still had a reason why he was waiting like this and allowing his enemies to gather.

*'I just need to hold on a bit longer.'*

Slaaaash—

At that moment, Avak's sword pierced through Minhyuk's abdomen.

"Kghhk!"

Baaaaaang—

Minhyuk, who was helpless as the attack landed on him, watched his HP fall below 10%. His vision started to blur as the strain of reaching the limits of his body and his HP washed over him at the same time. Immediately, Minhyuk took two things out and placed them in his mouth.

*'That...'*

Venteio had also seen Minhyuk chew something in his mouth during their battle against the Black Knights.

Slaaaash—

Minhyuk's HP fell below 3%.

Crunch—

Avak was delighted. It was not just him. Even the Mercenary Elders and all of the mercenaries present here were rejoicing. They were all wondering how much reward they would get from the Luvien Empire for killing the man that would become the God of Mercenaries and the king of a nation?!

They continued to gather around Minhyuk, delight evident on their faces.

"Summon."

"...?"

"...?"

The corners of Minhyuk's lips twitched. The thing that he chewed was none other than the Almond of Subordinates. The heroes of stories always appeared at the end after all.

"Spear God Ben."

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaa—

A bright light shot down from the sky as an old man with fluttering black hair fell down. The old man's white spear pointed at Minhyuk's enemies.

"Absolute Pinnacle Spear."

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

Spears rained down from the sky and swept them away. In just an instant, more than 4,000 mercenaries disappeared without a trace.

“...”

Avak’s jaw turned slack.

“Awaken.” Minhyuk opened his mouth again. “Obren.”

Vwoooooooooooooooooong—

The Puzzling Seasoning Jar floated in front of Minhyuk as a handsome black-haired man walked out along with thousands of black books behind him. Then, he looked at his enemies nonchalantly and said, “Get lost.”

Lightning strikes fell down from the thousands of books floating in the air above them.

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

Avak and the mercenaries that followed him were literally being swept away.

There was one person that a lone Mercenary King Candidate should never cross paths with, and it was none other than Minhyuk.

Crunch—

And finally, he summoned another person. “Brod.”

Flaaaaaash—

He was the man hailed as the Mercenary Emperor, someone that suddenly appeared in the world, united the mercenaries from all over the world and ended the Mercenary Hunt. Brod was the legend.

Brod’s sword, which fell from the sky, was filled with tremendous power. Venteio looked at his figure with longing, while Avak looked at him with fear.

“Final Chapter. Wolf’s Death.”

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

Hundreds of red sword lights rained down from the sky and devoured the mercenaries that gathered in the area. Then, the surviving mercenaries began to kneel down on one knee, one after the other.

They were not kneeling out of fear but because of an unknown and powerful aura that forced the mercenaries to their knees. This was none other than the ‘Mercenary King’s Aura’, a skill that would only be triggered if Brod was facing mercenaries.

Brod turned to Venteio and said, “Congratulations on becoming the continent’s new Mercenary King, Venteio.”

Weak-willed Venteio, Porter Venteio, Dimwit Venteio. He used to be all of that. But today, he became the Mercenary King that united the entire world.

“Your Majesty, if you please.”

He also became Minhyuk’s friend.

Chapter 720: Venteio

Mercenary King Candidate Avak tried his best to get up from his knees. However, he was no match against the legend among legends, the man that ended the mercenary hunt and united all of the mercenaries from all over the world. He could not even lift a single finger in front of Mercenary Emperor Brod and the 'Mercenary King's Aura' that he was exuding.

There were even those thousands of books that released lightning that the handsome black-haired man used to sweep away the mercenaries around them in an instant. What about that old man that was wielding the white spear over there? Every swing of his spear made dozens of mercenaries disappear without a trace.

Tremble, tremble, tremble—

Avak's body shook. *'That guy is a king that commands these men...?'*

Only then did he realize that the only reason why he thought he could kill Minhyuk was because he came here without any of his vassals. But the moment he had them by his side, he was like a huge, overbearing mountain that seemed impossible to overcome.

In just a few short minutes, most of the Black Panther Mercenaries were already killed. The enemy did not show them any mercy, even after they fell on their knees without being able to move.

That was especially the case for Venteio. He even took the lead in punishing them.

*'These are the men that followed Avak and wanted to sell the pride and dignity of the mercenaries to the empire.'*

Because of that, Venteio made the choice to kill them. He did not have any intention of letting anyone with such ideals live.

"Ve, Venteio... there wasn't anything I could do. Avak is holding my family hostage..."

Venteio looked at Elder Sven in pity too. He knew why the elder made such a choice. In fact, Elder Sven was the cleanest person among all of the elders. He was the one that worked hard for the basic human rights of the mercenaries. However, in the end, Sven still gave in to Avak and even participated in trying to kill him and Minhyuk.

"I will make sure to take care of your family until they grow old."

Venteio was offering him a final courtesy. Elder Sven knew this fact well. So, he smiled faintly at him and said, "...I'm forever grateful, new Mercenary King."

Slash—

Elder Sven also died by Venteio's hands. As for Mercenary King Candidate Ars, he was already in a desperate situation, his entire body filled with holes created by Spear God Ben's spear. The 30,000 Black Panther Mercenaries were now all dead. The only one that remained alive was Avak.

Venteio stood in front of Avak, his gaze cold and piercing. "You must have known, right? If you became the Mercenary King and signed that contract with the empire, all of the mercenaries would be nothing but tools. The empire would turn them into disposable meat shields that would take the arrow for them and die on their behalf."

Avak just laughed. "In the first place, mercenaries are people that live on the battlefield to make money, right? So what if the mercenaries died?! This was my opportunity to become the Mercenary

King and rule the continents with Emperor Nerva! Besides, if I refuse, all of the mercenaries will be killed anyway!”

That was true. If Avak and the elders rejected the empire’s proposal then they would immediately start a mercenary hunt. Once the mercenary hunt began, all of the kingdoms and empires under the rule of the Luvien Empire would put a bounty on their heads. With that, all of the mercenaries in the entire world would not have long to live.

“Even so, you should have chosen to fight.” Venteio’s will was conveyed through his eyes as he looked at Avak coldly. “You should have chosen to fight even if you’re going to die. You should have chosen to fight until you have taken your last breath.”

“...”

Minhyuk could not help but shudder when he overheard Venteio’s words. How many people could live and uphold such will with great determination? He was even prepared to sacrifice his life to continue to uphold it. But would Avak feel the same way?

“Fufufufufufu! What crazy nonsense are you spouting? You want me to fight for something like that even after knowing that I’m going to die? That’s some noble bullshit.”

Until the very end, Avak still remained a trash.

“Rather than fighting to death like that, it’s better to gain money and spend it lavishly while living a life of pleasure...”

Slaaash—

Thump—

Venteio’s sword swung without any hesitation. Just like that, Avak’s head fell and rolled on the ground.

At that moment, several notifications rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[You have gained 5,000 platinum.]

[You have gained 1,550,000,000 EXP.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You will receive the additional rewards from Venteio.]

Then a burst of red energy appeared from the God of Mercenaries’ statue and shot toward Venteio, who stood there, absorbing it as it wrapped around his body.

[Venteio, the one that received the recognition of the God of Mercenaries, has become the God of Mercenaries’ descendant!]

[In the future, he will become the God of Mercenaries!]

[Venteio has become the Mercenary King that will unite the continents.]

Then, the additional notifications rang loudly and turned into world messages.

[The God of Mercenaries' Successor has been born to the world!]

[The inauguration for the One that became the Mercenary King and the God of Mercenaries will start in an hour!]

[An anonymous player has contributed greatly to the birth of the God of Mercenaries' successor!]

Venteio felt the power that he had gained when he became the God of Mercenaries' descendant, surge through his veins. The existence that was already an Absolute Supreme NPC had gained even more strength.

*'I wonder what would happen if he sparred with Ellie noona?'*

Sword Emperor Ellie was also an Absolute Supreme NPC that had also gained power. Both of them, with one working as the emperor of the Eivelis Empire and the other working as the Mercenary King, also had quite a huge influence in the continents.

However, instead of feeling happy about becoming stronger, Venteio was looking at someone sadly. The man that he was looking at was none other than Brod.

Just like before, Brod slowly disappeared from their sight. The reason why Venteio fought so hard to protect the pride of the mercenaries, something that all of them had turned away from, was because of Brod.

Venteio had experienced many sad and lonely days. There were even times when he felt like he wanted to give up and just live a comfortable life away from the path of the mercenaries. But each time the thought flashed in his head, he would always recall the words that Brod had imparted to him, stopping him from doing so.

"...I greet the former Mercenary King." Venteio knelt down and showed courtesy.

Brod, on the other hand, looked like he was having a hard time deciding on how to express his joy and delight. He just stared at Venteio for a long time before slowly approaching him and pulling him into a tight hug.

"You, who have fought for the pride of the mercenaries without backing down and losing hope..."

"..."

"I have never forgotten you. You might have once been weaker than anybody else, but you trained alone every single night."

"Sob, sob, sob, sob..." Tears streaked down Venteio's cheeks. He had been waiting for this moment for a very long time. He had longed for the day that he could meet this man that gave him confidence. Every day he hoped that he would not disappoint him should that meeting ever happen.

"You have become the Mercenary King. You will now fight desperate battles in this new era."



Venteio knew that the empire would continue to put pressure on them.

“Never back down. Continue to grow and move forward.” Brod smiled softly when he saw Venteio nod at him.

Brod did not actually want to leave. But all he could do right now was hug Venteio more tightly than ever. Then, he said, “You are like a son to me.”

Venteio felt Brod’s body shake slightly. So, he held the arms that hugged him even tighter as he showed the man in front of him a bright and wide smile. Then, Brod slowly disappeared.

The disappearing Brod and Venteio shared a short conversation, something that Minhyuk did not hear. Minhyuk looked at them warmly. He felt like watching them talk intimately like that, albeit for a very short time, was heartwarming.

Silence fell upon the hall after Brod disappeared completely. The man that became the Mercenary King was just sobbing a few moments ago. He could not help but blush when he saw Minhyuk staring at him and seeing his poor display.

“...”

“...”

The awkward atmosphere around them was truly inevitable.

\*\*\*

The entire world was in a buzz.

[Breaking News. A new Mercenary King has been born to the world. And it is believed that a yet to be identified anonymous player was deeply involved with the episode.]

[We can expect many mercenaries to come to the inauguration ceremony that will happen in an hour.]

[Breaking News. The continents’ new Mercenary King is also named as the God of Mercenaries’ successor.]

[Who helped the man that will become both the king and the god of the mercenaries?]

[The Rothschild Kingdom’s founding ceremony will also be held at the same time.]

The emergence of the new Mercenary King, who was the new God of Mercenaries at the same time, inevitably caused a huge stir among the players of Athenae.

The Mercenary King could exert much more power and had a lot more influence than a kingdom or an empire. What more if he was set to become the God of Mercenaries too? However, there were not many broadcasting stations that chose to step in Aeopia, and there were two reasons.

First, Calauhel was holding the founding ceremony of his newly established Rothschild Kingdom at the same time. Interestingly, it was said that he would do a lottery and give out plenty of artifacts to those that attended his kingdom’s founding ceremony. He was basically gathering players and migrants rapidly through his money.

Second, many people already assumed that the new Mercenary King would be the man called Avak, who was renowned to have sold out the mercenaries’ freedom for his own self-interest and greed.

Although countless mercenaries from all over the world would have to follow him, how many of them would truly stand by his side with sincerity and loyalty? They also expected that there would only be a few mercenaries that would attend the inauguration. Simply put, Avak might have won the money but he would never win the heart of the mercenaries.

However, ATV's PD Kim Daeguk thought differently. He was currently checking the real-time situation through the lenses of the cameraman from the single team that he sent to the Rothschild Kingdom.

*'Just in case something unexpected happens there.'*

If an unexpected situation occurred, then the ATV broadcasting station would be the one that would gain high ratings.

*'Broadcasting live was originally a gamble, no?'*

The number of drones and shooting equipment that each broadcasting station could release was limited. Although he had sent a team on Rothschild Kingdom, he was more focused on the situation here.

When he saw the scene here, PD Kim felt like he had hit the jackpot. There were more than 500,000 mercenaries gathered around the fortress in Aeopia, the land of the mercenaries. It was quite a huge crowd. But that was not the end of it.

*'Mercenaries fall under the category of a sub-class. There should be a lot of players that have made money by working as mercenaries at least once while they are playing in Athenae.'*

All of these mercenaries heard the same set of notifications that reminded them to attend the Mercenary King's inauguration ceremony. Of course it was their choice whether they wanted to go or not.

"PD Kim. The player that contributed greatly to the birth of the new Mercenary King has not yet appeared?"

"Yes. He hasn't appeared yet. After all, the Mercenary King has not yet made his appearance."

The mastermind that helped the Mercenary King sit on his throne. This title was enough to guarantee the future of any high ranker!

Then, at that moment, a man, with his huge build completely covered with blood and a tattered cape carrying the symbol of a wolf fluttering behind him, walked out of the fortress and stood on top of the ramparts.

"V, Venteio?"

Murmur, murmur—

The entire broadcasting station was in a buzz. This was a completely unexpected situation. Then, one of the broadcasting team members said, "The viewership rating has increased from 4% to 6%."

They watched as Venteio took out his bloody sword and held it in front of him.

*'...There was absolutely no chance of Venteio becoming the Mercenary King before...'* That was what PD Kim Daeguk thought.

After becoming the empire's enemy, Venteio lost the power to unite all of the mercenaries. In fact, there was even a high chance of a coup happening if he sat on that throne. Because of that, the mercenaries had no choice but to shut him out and not show him any of their trust.

*'But if he is the God of Mercenaries...?'*

Then, the narrative would change. Venteio would become the hope of the mercenaries. They would be given the strength and the courage to fight against the empire with his existence alone. Based on the information that they got, something else stood out.

"These people did not rush here. They are people that have already been there since earlier..."

There were 500,000 mercenaries attending the inauguration ceremony. However, they had already been there earlier. None of them came from a long way away.

At that moment, light flashed all over the place. It was obvious that it was caused by several mass teleportation magic being activated. When the light subsided, mercenaries wearing capes that held the figure of a roaring dragon appeared.

"The Dragon Mercenary Corps...!"

The Dragon Mercenary Corps was one of the top ten strongest mercenary corps in the world.

"P, PD Kim. The viewership rating has dramatically increased. We have already reached 15%!"

The light of the mass teleportation magic flashed one after the other.

"The Crow Mercenaries, the Red Hawk Mercenaries, the Black Spear Mercenary Corps... the top ten mercenary corps are appearing one after the other!"

The light of the mass teleportation magic did not stop shining for a very long time.

Thud— thud— thud— thud—

As the flags carrying the symbols of the top ten mercenary corps rose to the skies signaling their attendance of the Mercenary King's inauguration ceremony, loud footsteps echoed loudly in the area. Various mercenaries from all over the world were marching uniformly toward the fortress.

Flash—

Flaaaaash—

Flaaaaash—

"Our viewership rating has increased to 18%!"

The appearance of the mercenaries from all over the world marching from all directions was so magnificent and awe-inspiring, to the point that it could give anyone watching them goosebumps on their skin. With a scene like this, the increase in their ratings were only natural.

“...This is incredible.” PD Kim Daeguk trembled.

Everyone that had gathered in this place held their breaths as they looked at the bloody Venteio holding his sword and stabbing it on the ground beneath him.

Stab—

At that moment, the nearly two million mercenaries that had gathered to attend the inauguration ceremony all knelt on one knee and shouted in unison...

“Congratulations on becoming the Mercenary King of the new world!”

“Congratulations on becoming the Mercenary King of the new world!”

“...Sir, our viewership ratings have surpassed 25%.”

PD Kim felt his entire body shake.

Two million? No, if they combined all of the other mercenaries that were not able to attend right away, there would be more. All of them would trust and follow this man, and this man alone, for the next era.

*‘He will be the master of the new episode.’*

Gulp—

PD Kim felt a huge tension settle on his shoulders. *‘Just who was the one that helped Venteio become the Mercenary King?’*

That person would be the star of their show, the one that would allow their ratings to sky rocket. Right now, everyone was wondering the same thing.