

Gourmet 741

Chapter 741: God of Birth Gaerna

He was none other than Food God Minhyuk, a player of Athenae. Athenae was an amazing virtual reality game that embodied the complete taste and flavor of the dishes and ingredients.

Those that had tasted Minhyuk's dishes in Athenae had said this: *'I felt like I heard a divine and heavenly voice in my ears.'*

It was a testament to how good it tasted. They even mentioned how the flavor was completely unforgettable. People had different tastes and palates. For the same dish, some might find it disgusting while others thought it to be delicious. However, with regards to Minhyuk's dishes, it was widely recognized to be delicious.

According to an announcement made by Joy Co. Ltd., Food God Minhyuk's 'Flavor Increase' helped the people feel like the dish was more delicious and more in line with their palates. Of course, it was possible inside the dream-like virtual reality world. Because of that, the public always wondered if Minhyuk's cooking was truly that great in reality.

Right now, Minhyuk, the one who had received the highest votes in the I Really, *Really* Want to Try this Person's Cooking Before I Die survey, spoke up inside Ilhwa Tower's 135th floor's special restaurant, "Would it be alright if I cook?"

Choego Group's Chairman and Michael both stopped in their tracks when they heard the question.

Minhyuk spoke very carefully. After all, just because this tower was built by the Ilhwa Group did not mean that he owned it. On top of that, it would also be very rude to offer to cook in a restaurant with its very own chef. However, Minhyuk really wanted to treat Genie to a very special meal today. Thankfully, the chef in this restaurant was one of Artheon's executives.

"Oh, if it's Minhyuk's cooking then I would like to taste it." Chairman Kim Tae-Seong, who was already moving to stand up from his seat with disappointment, expressed his delight.

The same was true for Kim Hae-Ri. "I'm looking forward to it."

However, it was different for Michael. Working as Aepel's agent had made him very busy. Because of that, he did not know much about Athenae. However, he knew that Minhyuk was a famous chef inside the game.

'Things are different in fantasy and reality.'

However, unlike Michael, Amy was very happy. "Wow, Daddy! I can eat the dishes made by the Food God today?"

This was the brightest expression that he had seen on Amy in the last few days, which made it very hard for Michael to leave this place. So, he sat down once again.

After everyone was seated, the manager, who had gone inside the kitchen and returned, said, "The chef had said that if Mr. Minhyuk is willing to do it, then he could trust his kitchen to Mr. Minhyuk and leave for the hospital. I'm really sorry but we will leave it to you. Of course, we wouldn't charge our guests here for their meal."

After receiving the approval of the chef, Minhyuk smiled softly and looked at the people around him. "I know that I'm lacking but I hope that you will enjoy it."

"I would be able to see Minhyuk cook up close. That's good, no?"

This restaurant's special feature was that the chef would be cooking right in front of the customer's table, whether it was stir-fried dishes or stew. However, Minhyuk could not really do that.

"If you don't mind, would you please gather around here?"

They moved their chairs and tables accordingly after hearing Minhyuk's words. Although it was Michael himself that moved the table in this fancy restaurant, his daughter Amy was very, very happy.

"Wow. I'll be able to see the Food God up close like this. I'm so happy, Daddy."

Michael smiled faintly as he stroked his daughter's head. He had investigated Minhyuk's eating addiction before he went to Ilhwa Group to talk about the contract. Eating addiction was a disease that already existed for a very long time. Among the three most recent patients with this disease, one had died. So far, most of the patients with this disease had died from the complications brought about by hyper-obesity. None of them lived past the age of 22.

'It's a disease where one cannot suppress their appetite.'

Yet someone with that disease would cook? Michael shook his head. After all, he knew how terrible the disease was.

'I'll never know unless I experienced it myself.'

This place was a fancy restaurant. It had a clean and tidy ambience, as well as fantastic dishes and breath-taking views. Of course, the ingredients that they used were all top-notch. For most Koreans, there were no rare or special Korean dish that they had not heard of or tried. This particular restaurant always made clean and neat dishes that both Koreans and foreigners liked. That was why there were plenty of customers that came to this restaurant.

'What shall I cook?'

The chef that would be working in this restaurant today was Minhyuk. After pondering deeply, Minhyuk began to cook.

Tak, tak, tak, tak, tak, tak—

The rhythmic and regular sound of chopping rang in the small restaurant. All of the vegetables that passed by Minhyuk's hands were quickly chopped and sliced.

"Wooaaaaah." Amy smiled brightly and innocently at the scene.

Minhyuk decided to just go with an ordinary menu. He planned to serve some japchae, kimchi stew, and braised short ribs, along with various vegetable side dishes and a freshly made kimchi salad.

Anyway, the food would feel more luxurious depending on how one plated it. In fact, there was even a saying about how one is actually paying for the ambience and not the food when dining in a restaurant.

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaa—

Minhyuk poured cooking oil in his sizzling pan and a blazing hot flame rose from the pan.

“Woooooah!” Amy smiled brightly, enjoying the view in front of her.

“Little lady, where are you from?”

“America.”

“Then, today I’ll let you taste the true flavor of Korean dishes.”

“Okay!”

Michael felt an unknown emotion rush into him as he watched his daughter converse comfortably with Minhyuk.

‘How...’

There was a question that he wanted to ask. What kind of an expression would people with rare diseases make, knowing that they would die soon? People like them often sank into despair, fearing each and every single day and blaming themselves even though it was not their fault. Of course, that was not the case for Amy. She was just a little girl and she did not know much about something like that.

However, Michael had researched everything that he could with regards to rare diseases and found out that most patients that suffered from such diseases would often be diagnosed with severe depression.

‘How could he smile like that?’

Michael understood that Minhyuk was still working on his recovery. However, he knew that those with rare diseases rarely improved. Either they get completely cured, or they would walk forever with this ticking time bomb.

‘How can you be cooking?’

He also questioned why Minhyuk could cook. After all, Michael knew that people with eating addiction would always lose their reason when presented with food. So, how could the man in front of him cook?

Michael, who had been watching Minhyuk, noticed that Minhyuk’s mouth or hands would flinch and twitch every once in a while.

‘He’s actually enduring...?’

That was very, very shocking. The only thing that Michael could do was stare wide-eyed at Minhyuk along with the others, who were admiring his flamboyant hand movements, as he cooked.

Then, there was the delicious scent of food being stir-fried that whetted their appetites. Not long after, the dishes were served. Although the selection was ordinary, they have been plated as nicely as they could be.

Fresh kimchi, bean sprouts salad, shredded radish, kimchi salad with oysters, and steamed eggs were plated neatly and nicely on each plate and served to each person.

Amy tasted the soft steamed eggs that were served in front of her. “Wow. So delicious...”

The perfectly seasoned steamed eggs, gently passed by her throat the moment she placed a spoonful in her mouth. Even Michael was somewhat surprised by the flavor of the steamed eggs when he tasted it.

‘It’s soft and tasty.’

The flavor could truly stimulate one’s appetite.

It did not take that long for the main dishes to be served in front of each person. Once the braised ribs and kimchi stew were served, each of the guests began to eat.

“Thanks, Minhyuk. You didn’t have to go through all that trouble.”

“Jihye, it’s fine. I haven’t done anything for you, you know?” Minhyuk smiled faintly.

Meanwhile, Michael hurriedly took care of Amy, who had been eating in a hurry, and started to eat together with her. Despite being sloppy, he used his chopsticks to pick up a mouthful of japchae and place it in his mouth. The japchae was savory and warm, but the Korean’s unique saltiness and spiciness were not there.

‘It’s delicious.’

Then, he scooped some soft steamed eggs and ate it with a mouthful of the well-cooked rice. Next, he tried some of the kimchi stew. The moment he placed a spoonful in his mouth, he felt the spiciness hit instantly. But even though it was spicy, he could not help himself from scooping and eating more.

This time, Michael went for the braised ribs. He remembered eating the same dish in Myeong-dong a long time ago. From what he could remember, it had been extremely expensive and was not even palatable. Michael was not aware, but the restaurant that he went to was actually one that ripped off foreigners through promotions in SNS. In fact, it was a restaurant that none of the Koreans go to.

Recalling the nightmare that he experienced back then, Michael carefully took a bite of the braised ribs. The meat gently separated from the bone, its tender and soft texture gliding smoothly in his mouth as he chewed.

“Ah...?” Michael unknowingly released a gasp of admiration as he picked up another piece of braised ribs.

‘It’s really delicious.’

Michael could only admire the flavor, one that was completely different from the flavor of the dish that he tasted back then.

Then, he turned back to look at Minhyuk, who was serving Amy with some braised ribs.

“Did you like it, little lady?”

“Yeeees.” Amy, who had been eating in a hurry, truly looked satisfied. Then, she said, “I also have a rare disease.”

“Is that so?”

Of course, Minhyuk could tell. For patients with progeria, their appearance would look old, along with their rapidly aging body and their body would be much smaller than their peers.

“People say that I’m going to die before I reach 13 years old,” Amy said innocently. The only reason why she could say those words with a smile was because she was still far too young to understand the gravity of her situation.

“Uncle, aren’t you afraid?”

Amy was a huge fan of the Food God. Especially because she knew he had a rare disease too.

Minhyuk chuckled softly. “I’m beating it. And just like how I’m getting better, the little lady will also be able to beat and win her own battle. When I turn 31 years old and the little lady turns 18 years old, come find me. I’ll make sure to cook something for you again.”

“Really? Can I really live?”

“Of course.”

It might sound like a wild and impossible dream, but Minhyuk had spoken those words with sincerity. Children believed in what was placed in front of them. And right now, the only man that had improved and showed signs of recovery from his rare disease was sitting in front of her and giving Amy a ray of hope.

“Then, when I turn eighteen, please cook something delicious for me!”

“Sure. It’s a promise, Amy.”

“Yeeeeees!”

Amy’s face grew brighter. Michael could tell that his little girl had also started to believe that she would be able to survive and live. The man in front of her had given Amy a small ray of hope even though the countless doctors that they hired for billions had shaken their heads in regret.

Once they finished the meal, Michael sent Amy out with his assistant and asked, “By any chance, do you know of me?”

Minhyuk looked at Michael in doubt and confusion at his question. “I’m sorry, but this should be the first time that we have met.”

Michael nodded. He also knew how ridiculous his question was.

“Young man... how can you laugh and smile like that? Aren’t you afraid?”

Despite the doubt on his face, Minhyuk still answered his question, “I might be afraid but that doesn’t mean that I should give up.”

“...”

“Even when I had lost hope and was left wallowing in my frustration, my father stayed and never gave up on me. He trusted me and supported me, even when I reached the point where I wanted to die. Back then, I had asked myself, *‘Should I*

die?’ Afterward, I thought, *‘I should live.’* And since then, I worked hard and reached this point.”

“...”

“I am not going to die. Amy’s not going to die either. I fully believe that to be the case. I will cheer you on.”

Those words brought a huge shock to Michael.

‘I am a realistic person.’

If they were talking about being realistic, then there was truly no way that Amy would be cured. That was why he thought that he should let the child do all of the things that she wanted to do before she died.

But this man in front of him and his father were different. They trusted and relied on each other and finally made progress. Because of them, Michael found new hope.

“The future of Ilhwa, with you as its successor, seems bright.”

Minhyuk smiled faintly and looked out of the window. “It’s snowing.”

It usually snowed during the Christmas season. Amy was looking at the fluttering white snow with a bright and hopeful smile. Michael picked up his phone and called someone the moment he entered his car.

“Munsoo? It’s Michael,” Michael said as he looked at the white snow outside. “I’ll sign the contract with Ilhwa Group. Huh? Why did I suddenly change my mind?”

A gentle smile flashed on his face as he answered the question. “Because I saw that Ilhwa Group’s future will be much brighter than any other company.”

The car sped up toward the airport.

During this white Christmas, a miracle happened to Amy.

Chapter 742: God of Birth Gaerna

Im Jihye, one of the famous beauties of Korea, had been a fat and chubby girl when she was younger. She was called nicknames like ‘Flower Piggy’ and ‘Flying Fatty’ and did not have many friends.

One day, when she entered middle school, she was partnered with a boy.

“Hello. Let’s get along well.”

Even though the boy was still a first-grade middle schooler, he was incredibly tall and handsome. It was as if the features of his face were sculpted. From the rumors that Jihye heard, he was often referred to as the ideal son.

Everyone was biased toward those that looked good. Jihye, who had always been bullied and teased a lot in elementary school, felt scared.

‘I’m supposed to partner with a boy like this...?’

She was hesitant back then.

“Shall we have *Pikachu* tonkatsu after school?”

“Y, yeah...”

“Want to go to a PC room after class?”

.

“Y, yeah.”

The boy was friendlier than anybody else. He approached Jihye warmly and was the first person to look at who she was inside, and not judge her for her outward appearance. But one day, the boy disappeared without a word. When that happened, all Jihye could do was grit her teeth.

‘Until we meet again.’

Jihye thought that they would meet again someday. And if they did, then they were meant to be. She went on a difficult diet and ended up hearing that she was the best and most good looking person when she entered high school. She became famous not only in her school but even in the schools in the vicinity.

A lot of boys rushed to declare their love for her, but she only waited for one person. After many years and plenty of difficulties, she was finally able to meet with him once again.

Jihye had become very pretty, whereas she heard that he had become very fat and was suffering from a disease. Nevertheless, her feelings did not change. She did not like him for his outward appearance. It was just like how he looked at her back then.

Right now, he was having a meal with her on Christmas day, her birthday. It was even a meal that he made with his own hands too.

Jihye waited for Minhyuk to finish cooking everything. She and Minhyuk were finally able to have a late meal after the white-haired foreigner gentleman and his daughter finished their own and left the restaurant.

“It’s really yummy.”

“Is that so? What a relief, then.” Minhyuk smiled softly, bringing a soft blush to Jihye’s face.

She quickly turned to look at the window to watch the snow falling outside, hoping that he did not notice the flush that appeared on her face.

‘Today’s my chance.’

There was no better time for her to confess to him. So, Jihye opened her mouth with great difficulty, “You know...”

“Minhyuk?” At that moment, Kim Hae-Ri, who had finished eating her meal, approached them.

Even Im Jihye could not deny Kim Hae-Ri's beauty. On top of that, her background was overwhelming. After all, she was the only daughter of the Choego Group. She was also said to be talented enough to lead Choego Group herself.

Of course, Im Jihye was not lacking in terms of looks herself. However, in front of Kim Hae-Ri's overwhelming background, she could only shrink back.

"Thank you very much for today's meal."

"Don't mention it," Minhyuk replied politely to her. The Choego Group and the Ilhwa Group were on close terms with each other.

"I was thinking of buying you a drink in gratitude. Do you have any other plans with Miss Jihye today?"

The truth was, Minhyuk and Jihye did not have any other appointment except for this meal. As the conversation progressed, Jihye felt herself shrink smaller and smaller. Perhaps, Minhyuk would choose to join hands with the Choego Group in the future. The best course of action was to take in Kim Hae-Ri as his wife. Besides, Kim Hae-Ri was perfect in everybody's eyes.

"We don't have plans, but I would still like to spend time with my friend."

"What?"

"I'm pretty sure that you know that what you're doing is rude. You can see that I'm with a woman but you came and talked to me so abruptly like this, no?"

"Aren't the two of you just friends?" Kim Hae-Ri asked, her eyes shifting and glinting sharply like that of a sly fox.

That was right. The two of them were nothing but friends that had known each other for many years.

But then, Minhyuk spoke, "We might be just friends, but..." he grabbed a glass of water and continued, "...I like her a lot?"

"...Ah." Kim Hae-Ri's face turned bright red with those words. Even Jihye, who heard his words, looked at Minhyuk in surprise.

Minhyuk took a sip of water as he looked at Hae-Ri and said firmly, "Can you please leave us alone, now?"

Kim Hae-Ri, whose face had turned a bright shade of red from embarrassment, quickly turned around and left the place.

Both Minhyuk and Jihye were just twenty-one years old. They both went out of the restaurant and decided to walk around the streets and take in the Christmas atmosphere after the meals. There were carols ringing all over the place, with snow falling and turning the streets white.

This time, Jihye gathered her courage and held Minhyuk's big warm hands. Minhyuk just looked back at her and smiled lightly as they both traversed the snowy streets of Seoul.

Elpis was the one hailed as the Lesser Demon and the shield of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. The gigantic man with black skin akin to that of a demon looked back at Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, while carrying a huge luggage on his back.

—*Elpis, here. I thought you might need it.*

Just a few days ago, His Majesty Minhyuk had visited him to hand over some items. They were none other than the ‘Map to Overcome One’s Limitations’ and a bottle of ‘Mandala’s Elixir’.

The Map to Overcome One’s Limitations would guide the person to find a way to overcome and break through their limits. Of course, the process would definitely be accompanied by huge risks, but it did not matter.

‘There’s Spear God Ben, Emperor Brod, One of the Six Monster God’s Elizabeth, Shadow Luo...’

Lately, Elpis was overcome with a sense of inferiority. All of these great and strong people were working for His Majesty. On the other hand, he had not experienced much growth. But he promised His Majesty that he would protect him and the kingdom many times over.

So, for Elpis, this map, which came to his hands at the perfect time, was very valuable. Although it would be dangerous, he still wanted to go. Of course, the map had the answer to his query.

[The map will show you the path to Great Demon Gorac’s Shelter.]

Elpis realized that perhaps he would become a ‘Great Demon’ once he pushed past his limits. He looked at Beyond the Heavens one last time as he placed his earphones to his ears and turned to leave.

“Yeah! One swallowtail butterfly~” Elpis expressed both his sadness and determination with a song.

In the Luvien Empire, Nerva was called the *sun*, while the two princes were called the *moons*. They also had three Luvien’s Stars, a title that corresponded to the three dukes of the empire. The power of the dukes was said to be above and beyond the powers of the Swords of the Gods.

One of the dukes, Duke Ruffiso, was said to be the one that cared the most about the Luvien Empire. The Luvien Empire used to exist in the Land of the Gods, and Duke Ruffiso, who was born and raised in that place, hoped that the Luvien Empire would unify the continents as soon as possible.

Duke Ruffiso approached Don, the Knight Commander of the Swords of the Gods, and said, “Mandala’s Prison. You must bring back Mandala and all of his legacies from that place.”

Who was Mandala?

According to the legends, Mandala, an eccentric and ill-tempered person, was a very talented alchemist to the point where the gods greatly coveted his talents. It was also said that he was imprisoned by the gods when he created a potion that could go beyond the principles of causality of the world. According to those records, his escape was prevented by a Great Spirit and he still remained in that prison.

The Luvien Empire had finally discovered the whereabouts of that prison.

“I understand.”

Those that were sent to Mandala’s Prison were Don, the Knight Commander, and several other Swords of the Gods. Duke Ruffiso wanted to personally go and retrieve Mandala and his legacies, but he was too busy to do so.

Ruffiso could only watch as Don turned around after giving a firm and determined answer.

‘I have no idea what’s going on in his mind.’

Knight Commander Don was a pure-blooded knight. He grew up in a family of knights, became a knight himself and swore to follow and serve a man as his master. However, his master was deposed and he was now serving Nerva.

That was right. Knight Commander Don was one of the few surviving members of the Red Sword Knights. Nerva had placed several mind-controlling black magic on him and forced him to stay by his side. Why did Nerva have to go so far to keep this man by his side? This was because Knight Commander Don was a very powerful man. He was so powerful that even the dukes had to tread carefully when dealing with him.

‘Knight Commander Don is capable of killing that Great Spirit. He will be able to bring back Mandala and his legacies.’

The Great Spirit was a very powerful monster that even the dukes could not easily fight against. However, its power should have waned as time went by.

Duke Ruffiso watched Knight Commander Don’s back for a very long time.

Twitch—

Minhyuk’s mouth broke into a small smile constantly as he worked in his office. This was the end of his twenty one years of being single! Truth was, his heart had already been set on Genie for a very long time. The very first reason was her good and kind heart. Of course, her appearance that was completely different from the past was also lovely. However, Minhyuk would love her even if she still looked the same in the past.

Meanwhile, he could not help but worry as he continued to deal with his work. There was something that he had not been able to check because he went on a date with Genie. That was none other than Mandala’s Treasure Hunting Map.

‘I can’t believe myself! I didn’t even try to use a way to get to eat delicious food...!’

It was good that he confirmed his feelings with Genie, but this was also important! Mandala’s Treasure Hunting Map was an item that would help him find whatever he wanted. Of course, there was a high chance that whatever item they wanted or hoped for was among the items in Mandala’s possession.

Minhyuk immediately used Mandala’s Treasure Hunting Map.

[You have used Mandala’s Treasure Hunting Map.]

[Mandala's Treasure Hunting Map will find the item that you want.]

[However, a thought for consideration! If the item does not exist among the items that Mandala has hidden or possessed, the treasure hunting map will disappear on its own.]

Minhyuk was very curious about Mandala. Even the legendary informant Abel could not find anything about him. However, there was one thing that he was sure of. Mandala was a very special alchemist. After all, he was the genius behind the Life Elixir, an elixir that could save even the dead.

Immediately after, a very shocking notification rang in Minhyuk's ears.

[The map is starting to draw the path to the Illusory Blue Liquid Salt.]

Accurate routes and drawings that represented the continents and the kingdoms and empires located in them started to get drawn on the otherwise empty parchment. Minhyuk could tell that the path was located in the American Server.

While the map was slowly being drawn, a special notification rang in Minhyuk's ears.

[You can now check the item(s) on Mandala's Treasure Hunting Map.]

Ring!

?The buff effects will increase by 10% upon the addition of the Illusory Blue Liquid Salt to the buffed dish.

?An additional +1 in skill level will be added if the skill level increase effect is present upon the addition of the Illusory Blue Liquid Salt to the buffed dish.

?The buff duration will increase by 20% upon the addition of the Illusory Blue Liquid Salt to the buffed dish.

?The Blue Liquid Salt is in liquid form and is contained in a 2?-bottle. However, it can be transformed into powdered form according to the user's wishes.

"...Unbelievable!" Minhyuk mouthed in shock.

Not long after, the map finished drawing and the notification rang in his ears.

Ring—!

[The map to Mandala's Prison has been completed.]

Minhyuk looked at the map as he stood up from his seat. This was a crazy ingredient, something that he had never heard before in his life. But the most surprising thing about this item was the fact that it could be used many times. Most importantly, what if the man named Mandala was still in Mandala's Prison?

"I shall depart immediately."

Minhyuk moved to go to Mandala's Prison.

Chapter 743: God of Birth Gaerna

A lot of unofficial rankers had decided to go public. However, even after taking that into consideration, Fabian was still the global official number one ranker. At Level 595, many expected

him to become the first player to reach Level 600. While he was not as famous as Alexander, Food God Minhyuk or the other leading rankers, Fabian was still the talk of the town.

[Fabian is considered to be the first person to break through Level 600! The God of Growth and Development that has the highest level in Athenae!]

In a press conference, he declared, "That's correct. I am confident that I will be the first person to break through Level 600."

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

"Recently, plenty of players have been closing in on you, Fabian. One such example is Player Minhyuk. Still, are you confident that you will be the first person to break through Level 600?"

In fact, the reason why Fabian held this press conference was because of the Food God. After finishing Gaerna's hunt just recently, the Food God bombed his way through the levels and quickly moved up to the top eight in terms of ranking. He was still two levels away from Fabian but he was already receiving a significant amount of attention because of the explosive increase in his levels.

"I am sure. I am the God of Growth and Development. I will be the one to take the title of the first to reach Level 600."

"But what will you do if the Food God takes the title first?"

The reporters and journalists did not actually care who was the best. All they wanted was to get provocative lines that they could use as their article's title.

Even though he did not have any talent in gaming, Fabian was fortunate to become the God of Growth and Development and reach a high level. Yet, as high as his level was, he was in a situation where plenty of players had trumped him and showed how superior they were to him with their abilities and qualifications. Thus, someone like Fabian was easy to annoy and irritate, as long as one knew which buttons to push.

"That's absolutely impossible. If he breaks through Level 600 first then I will acknowledge him and kowtow to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom."

It was a very careless and rash remark from someone that was hailed as the global official number one ranker.

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

After finishing the press conference, Fabian moved to the waiting room. His manager asked out of worry, "Fabian, are you really confident that you will be able to do it?"

"Of course, I'm confident."

Fabian had his reasons. It was because the 'God of Growth and Development' had recently bestowed upon him a Divine Heritage Record.

The God of Growth and Development wanted Fabian to grow faster than anybody else so he gave a lot of suggestions and proposals for him to be able to bomb his levels up.

The God had mentioned about 'Ankanni's Dungeon', a dungeon that had no artifact or gold drops, instead, it offered a 5x increase in EXP acquisition rate. He also mentioned the hidden quest: 'Volaka Kingdom's Salvation', which could increase one's EXP level to a ridiculous degree. There was also the 'Great Spirit Hunt', a hunt for the being that was once the god of all monsters. Among the three, Fabian had put aside the 'Great Spirit Hunt' since he could not find out about its location.

'If I can kill him, my level will definitely increase at an explosive rate.'

From what he heard, the Great Spirit would not drop any artifact or gold. However, it would give an outrageous amount of EXP. The Great Spirit was estimated to be at least at Great Demon Verus' level.

From what Fabian had gathered, there was a hell-like chasm that divided Level 599 from Level 600. It would be very difficult to cross that gap. He presumed that the EXP needed would at least be ten times higher than the EXP he needed to reach Level 598.

'Food God. You absolutely don't stand a chance. I will be the first to reach Level 600.'

Fabian was completely immersed in a sense of superiority. At the very least, he was better than Minhyuk in this one thing.

Meanwhile, Team Leader Park Minggyu was also at the press conference. It was an event held by Joy Co. Ltd. where they invited the hottest players. Since he was already here for an overseas business trip, he decided to stop by and check on things.

At that moment, Team Leader Park's phone rang. The caller was Employee Lee Minhwa.

[Team Leader, there's a problem.]

"..." Team Leader Park sighed. Things like this no longer surprised him. "What is it?"

[Player Minhyuk is heading to Mandala's Prison.]

"...!" Team Leader Park's eyes grew wide. It seemed like the news surprised him this time.

'Player Minhyuk has Mandala's Growth Potion.'

What were the effects of Mandala's Growth Potion? The most notable effect was the 30x increase in the user's acquired EXP for an entire hour after the potion was consumed.

The Great Luvien Empire's First Knight Commander Don was someone that the Battle God had sent to Nerva.

His memories were a bit hazy and vague, but he knew that he had once been poisoned by an unknown concoction that made his body bleed all over, while he slowly withered and die.

From what he could remember the Battle God had restored his condition back then and appointed him as Nerva's knight. Don had recovered most of his memories except one thing, the memories of the man that he served in the past.

‘Why did I die? Why was I poisoned with that unknown drug? Perhaps it's alright not to remember? After all, I now belong to His Majesty Nerva. I am loyal to him and him alone.’

These were the thoughts that plagued Don's head. But one day, a name rang in his ears.

‘Your Majesty Brod!’

‘Brod.’

‘Brod!’

‘Brooooooooood!’

Don knew of a person that had a similar name to the one that the mysterious voice in his head was calling out. The man was none other than Brod, the vassal of the man they called Food God Minhyuk. Were they the same person? Don was not sure of that. However, there was one thing that he was certain of.

‘His Majesty Nerva is very wary of him.’

Indeed. Nerva Sephiroth was very wary of Brod. Perhaps that was the reason why Nerva came to him with a kind and gentle smile and gave Don a task.

—Don, I want you to personally go to Mandala's Prison and bring him back together with his legacies.

Nerva treasured and believed in Don immensely. As someone that came from a pure knight lineage, Don lived by his sword.

‘He's amazing.’

Don had actually seen the Food God. The Food God was a man that could hide his identity from Don's all seeing eyes. He was also a man that could command Brod, a man that even His Majesty Nerva was wary of, as his loyal vassal and subject.

‘He must obviously be an amazing man.’

Although he tried to keep it under wraps, Don could tell that Nerva was conscious of the man.

‘Perhaps he will soon establish an empire of his own.’

That should be a testament to how great a man the Food God was. Besides, he was not only a king, but also a god. Don could already tell that he must be a charismatic figure in their kingdom. That charisma must be something that he used to gather and lead Brod and his other vassals.

“...?”

“...?”

“...?”

When Knight Commander Don, along with three Swords of the Gods and 500 Black Knights, arrived in front of Mandala's Prison, a place supposedly filled with a considerable number of traps and monsters, they could not help but be puzzled and confused.

"Hot... hot..."

They saw someone crouching in front of the prison and eating some fish cake soup. There were hundreds of fish cake skewers scattered around them, evidence of how much the man had eaten. There was also the baby piggy, Beanie, sitting in front of the man and eating together with him. The two ladled some soup in their paper cups and slurped everything up.

"Kihyaaaa!!!"

"Oiiiink!!!"

"As expected, fish cake soup is the best dish for winter."

"Oiiiink!"

Beanie and Minhyuk smiled brightly, their eyes filled with awe and admiration. Then, the final fish cake skewers went into their bellies.

"..."

"...Oiiiink."

Tears began to well up in Minhyuk's and Beanie's eyes.

"Oink, oink oink oink, oink oink. *(Bastard owner! I told you so! You should have listened to me when I told you to bring 800 fish cake skewers! Oink!)*"

"*Sniffle.* I really should have listened to you. Five hundred is far from enough..."

A scene where a king was getting scolded by a baby piggy because he brought less fish cake skewers, and the more shocking part was that the king was kicking himself down for not listening!

At that moment, Minhyuk's gaze met with Knight Commander Don.

Normally, Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods would find this situation to be an opportunity to kill a king that posed a threat to the Great Luvien Empire. However, it was different in Athenae.

'He's a foreigner. So, even if we kill him here, he will just come back to life.'

If they gave in to their impulses and made a move on Minhyuk, then he would use this as a reason to hold the Luvien Empire guilty. Also, the Luvien Empire and the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom were not enemies on the surface.

"Hello."

"Ah, Commander Don."

Minhyuk's momentum changed in an instant. The stupid and foolish-looking king from earlier was now nowhere to be found. He looked at Don and the knights behind him with eyes that were filled with both confidence and charisma.

‘Our goals are...’

‘The same...’

Both sides noticed that their goals were the same. Both sides were here because they wanted to get something from inside Mandala’s Prison.

Minhyuk turned and grabbed the doors of Mandala’s Prison strongly.

“You will be in danger if you go in alone. I don’t know the reason for Your Majesty being here, but Mandala’s Prison is not as easy as you think it might be.”

Mandala was a very unique existence. Jealous of his talents, the gods imprisoned Mandala and erased the memories of most of the people that knew him back then. This was the reason why only a few people knew about Mandala. One of those few people was Nerva.

Clench—

Minhyuk tightened his grip on the rusty metal doors, exerting force and opening it fiercely.

“Dangerous or not, we’ll only know if we get inside, yea?”

Creaaaaaaaak—

The huge iron doors creaked open. In fact, even Don and the Swords of the Gods did not know what exactly was inside the prison. The only thing that they knew about was the ‘Great Spirit’ that was guarding it.

[You have entered Mandala’s Prison]

[The Great Spirit lurking inside Mandala’s Prison is dragging you inside.]

At the same time, a powerful force that they could not resist, wrapped around them. The force not only sucked Minhyuk, but also Knight Commander Don, the Swords of the Gods and even the 500 Black Knights.

Ten seconds later, no one could be seen in front of the prison.

Inside Mandala’s Prison.

Mandala watched the people, who knocked on the doors of the prison.

“How did they find this place?” Mandala murmured as he nibbled on his nails.

He was trapped here, cursed to live alone forever. He could not die even if he wanted to. The gods were all watching each and every single move that Mandala made. The stigma on his body was proof of it.

There was only one way for Mandala to get away from them and that was to die. However, Mandala was someone that feared death. He feared the thought of dying more than anybody else.

Hence, he did something that was completely contrary to what Nerva and Knight Commander Don expected.

Trapped in this place for a long time, Mandala had no other entertainment except for making potions. During his time here, he was able to make a 'Berserker Potion'. If this Berserker Potion was consumed by the Great Spirit, the Great Spirit would be able to regain the power that he had lost and become even stronger.

'I want to live.'

Just one step away from this prison and Mandala would die. This was the restriction placed upon him through the stigma branded on his body. So, he had to stop them.

"You guys must not come inside this place."

Notifications rang in Minhyuk's ears the moment he got sucked inside Mandala's Prison.

[You have entered Mandala's Prison.]

[Your EXP acquisition rate and artifact drop rate will be doubled.]

[Mandala's Prison is being guarded by the Great Spirit.]

[You will receive the wrath of the furious Great Spirit.]

"...?"

"...!"

Minhyuk and Don made eye contact as they slowly got their bearings.

"Kyahahahahahahahahack!"

At that moment, a loud and grating scream rang loudly as a powerful force from an unknown being wrapped around the two men's bodies.

"Keuaaaaaaack!"

"Uwaaaaaaaack!"

[You are continuously receiving damage!]

[Your HP has dropped below 70%!]

[Your HP has dropped below 60%!]

[Your HP has dropped below 50%...!]

Minhyuk, Don and the Swords of the Gods found that they could not move their bodies according to their will. It seemed like the irresistible, unknown force was preventing them from doing so. The worst part was when the 500 Black Knights began to drop dead one after the other.

Thud, thud, thud, thud—

These falling Black Knights were the best of the best in the Great Luvien Empire.

[The Great Spirit's Roar.]

[The flames of destruction will burn everything that the Great Spirit set his sights upon.]

Blazing flames sprang in the depths of the dark and gloomy prison.

“Aaaaaaaack!”

“For the Great Luvien Empireeeee!”

“Long live His Majesty Nerva!!!”

Knowing that their time was almost up, the surviving Black Knights threw themselves at the blazing flames so that they could weaken its momentum and power with their bodies.

Crackle!!!

Don and the Swords of the Gods stared in horror as the Black Knights instantly turned into ashes the moment the flames licked their bodies. However, the notifications were not yet over.

[The Great Spirit has gone berserk!]

[The Berserk Great Spirit has become stronger than he originally was!]

“...”

Knight Commander Don was told that the Great Spirit had grown weak. That was why he personally came here and led this expedition. To their horror and dismay, the Great Spirit had somehow gone berserk.

‘I might not be able to deal with him...’

The flames continued to show off an incredible lethality as they licked the ground and stretched even further forward. Don and the Swords of the Gods had sustained considerable physical damage. If they got caught in that attack, there was no way for them to survive.

“Get behind me.”

At that moment, a man stepped forward and pulled something out in a handsome and cool manner.

“A cauldron lid...?”

Minhyuk placed his cauldron lid in front of him to block the incoming attack. Don and the Swords of the Gods quickly gathered behind him as the blazing flames made contact with the thick cauldron lid.

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaa—

‘Keok...’

‘What the hell is that cauldron lid...’

‘Are you telling me that it’s a cauldron lid made by a god?’

All of them knew that the flames, which easily killed the Black Knights, could deal damage that was on par with a dragon’s breath. That was why they could not help the disbelief that flashed on their faces when they saw the cauldron lid stop the flames’ momentum.

Fwiiiiiiish—

Minhyuk looked back at them once the flames had calmed down. At the same time, Don and the Swords of the Gods made eye contact. All of them could tell one thing.

‘Join hands with our enemy?’

‘We can only hunt the Great Spirit if we join forces with him.’

At this moment, the two sides joined hands and fought together.

Chapter 744: God of Birth Gaerna

There was a clear difference between NPCs and players. For players, Athenae was still a game at the end of the day. Even if they died, they would only be forced to log out and receive huge penalties.

But what about the NPCs? If they died, it was real death. Since NPCS faced the threat of real death, fear would often grip them tightly when it came to perilous situations. The same was true for Don and the Swords of the Gods. No matter how proud and arrogant they were, it would be a lie if they said that they did not fear death.

However, having sworn loyalty to His Majesty Nerva, Knight Commander Don had a heavy sense of duty. As long as it was ordered, he would give his all to complete his duties.

They had initially estimated the level of the weakened Great Spirit to be at Level 720. Now that it had gone berserk, all their estimations had been thrown out of the window.

‘I’m sure the Beyond the Heavens’ King can make excellent buffed dishes.’

‘He also has a variety of artifacts.’

However, the problem lay elsewhere. The Beyond the Heavens’ King had just used a cauldron lid to stop the Great Spirit’s Roar. They had to join hands with him. But the Luvien Empire was practically the entire continent’s enemy. On the other hand, the Beyond the Heavens’ King was a foreigner. He was different from them, who had to fight to survive. Even if he died, he would just come back to life.

The Swords of the Gods looked at each other. Even Knight Commander Don found it hard to bring the matter up. But for Knight Commander Don, his sense of duty was higher than his desire to live. He wanted to complete the mission more than anybody else.

Then, Minhyuk, who put his now-heated cauldron lid back into his inventory, turned to them and said, “It seems like we have to cooperate, yea? What do you guys think?”

“...”

“...”

They wondered if the Luvien Empire was truly the enemy of the entire continent after seeing Minhyuk ask them for cooperation without any hesitation. They just could not believe that Minhyuk would ask something like that of them so easily.

“You don’t like my suggestion? But, I think I really need your help.”

Knight Commander Don thought for a moment before asking, “Will that be really alright with you?”

“What’s there to consider? I already knew that this place might turn out to be far more dangerous than what I originally thought. Based on your reactions, I can tell that you already knew about this place and it has somehow become much harder to deal with than what you expected, no?”

“Then, it’s fine.”

Although they agreed, the Swords of the Gods felt like their pride had taken a huge hit. Somehow, it was as if they had been led by the nose by the man in front of them.

Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods knew that Minhyuk was strong. However, the Swords of the Gods that participated here were at the 1st~5th ranks and were known to be the best of the best. Basically, they were leagues beyond the Swords of the Gods that Minhyuk had dealt with so far.

The 1st-ranked Swords of the God Beloch said, “Your Majesty Minhyuk, please stay at the rear. We’ll do the hunting. I think it’s better for Your Majesty to assist us with your dishes and support us with your cauldron lid at the appropriate time, or when you think that we’re in danger. After all, we’ll be in huge trouble if something happens to Your Majesty.”

To put it simply: *Don’t disturb us and stay behind.*

Basically, Minhyuk’s strength did not leave any lasting impression on the 1st~5th ranked Swords of the Gods. However, they knew that they would be able to receive support from him with his cooking skills and excellent supplies.

“Then, I’ll do that.”

Minhyuk was also curious about the Swords of the Gods and how they would act comfortably. After all, he had only heard about them before. Besides, he also really wanted to reach Level 600 as fast as possible.

Not long after, a set of notifications rang in his ears.

[A fragment of the Great Spirit that guards Mandala’s Prison has appeared!]

[The Great Spirit, including his fragments, is a special being that does not drop any artifact or gold. Instead, he gives enormous amounts of EXP.]

‘Ho?’

Then, at that moment, the Great Spirit’s fragment appeared in front of Knight Commander Don.

[Great Spirit’s Fragment. Level 674.]

“...?”

Minhyuk felt himself choke on his breath for a moment when he saw the Great Spirit’s Fragment’s level.

The Great Spirit’s Fragment was walking on two feet and looked quite similar to a man. However, his body, which was equipped with rusty armor and a sword, looked like it had melted down.

‘*Shit, this is crazy. An ordinary mob’s level is around Level 670?!*’

However, the shock did not end there.

[Because of the Great Spirit turning berserk, all of the Great Spirit's Fragments will have a 10% increase in power.]

“...”

In other words, the fragment in front of them could now wield a force that was almost on par with a Level 730 being. Fortunately, there was only one in front of them.

“Bastard!” Accompanied by a loud warcry, the Great Spirit's Fragment made a move.

“...!”

“...!”

The Swords of the Gods were startled by the fragment's surprisingly fast speed. In just an instant, the Great Spirit's Fragment closed the gap and appeared in front of Knight Commander Don, his rusty sword already swinging down on Don's chest.

Knight Commander Don easily avoided the attack, his sword moving skillfully as he aimed an attack of his own back at the fragment.

Creak, creak, creak, creak—

“...?”

The sound that rang when his sword met with the melted flesh was not the sound of flesh being cut off, but the sound of metal being grated. There was not even a hint of scratch left on the bastard's neck when they separated.

Beloch, the first ranked Sword of the Gods, immediately moved and swung his sword down, slashing down on the fragment's back.

Baaaaaaang—

Unfortunately, only a loud bang could be heard. From what they could see, the fragment did not even sustain any damage from the attack. Even though that was the case, the Swords of the Gods were seasoned veterans. The five of them immediately surrounded the fragment, restraining him and stopping him from releasing another attack.

The second ranked Sword of the Gods, Luma, was the Sword of the Gods that used a katana. Swinging his katana five times per second, he moved to cut down his opponent.

Clang, clang, clang, clang! Fwoooooosh—!

At long last, rotting blood spurted out from the fragment's body. But at the same time, the speed at which the blood poured out of the Great Spirit's Fragment's body began to speed up.

[Great Spirit's Fragment's Madness.]

[The Great Spirit's Fragment saw blood. His movement speed will increase by 20% and he will launch consecutive indiscriminate attacks.]

[The amount of damage that the Great Spirit's Fragment will incur will double.]

Slash, slash, slash, slash!

The fragment literally fell into madness as he started pressuring and attacking the fifth ranked Sword of the Gods Revor. He did not even care about the attacks that fell on him. Even if his body got torn apart and got cuts all over, he just continued to charge at Revor. Just when his sword was about to finally cut Revor down, a man appeared in front of Revor and cut off the fragment's head.

Shiiiiiiing—

Thump—

Roll, roll—

[You have gained 93,315,461 EXP.]

[You have acquired Great Spirit's Fragment(1).]

“That was a close one.”

“Ah, Your Majesty.”

The man was none other than Minhyuk. In fact, he could not help but be shocked deep inside after he beheaded the Great Spirit's Fragment.

‘Crazy! It's giving this much EXP?’

The amount of EXP was insane.

“It's dangerous, Your Majesty,” Don voiced his concerns.

Minhyuk immediately got to using his glib tongue to wrap things up properly. “Well, the Great Spirit's Fragment seemed like it's about to die and this friend seems like he's in danger. Didn't you say that before? To help when appropriate?”

In fact, what he was saying was only half correct. Minhyuk had stepped in because he was curious about the EXP that the Great Spirit's Fragment would give. In any case, that amount of EXP would not help the growth of the Swords of the Gods so it would be better if he could just devour all the EXP himself. Basically, what Minhyuk did was to reap all of the EXP with just one sword strike.

‘In just a single blow...?’

‘Ah, it's because we have brought the fragment to the brink of death.’

That was what the Swords of the Gods judged. Anyway, they pushed the thought aside and began to dive deeper into the prison and faced a steady stream of Great Spirit's Fragments. Every time they triggered the ‘Great Spirit's Fragment's Madness’, someone would get pushed back.

‘The amount of damage that he would receive would double once his madness is activated. After around 13~16 attacks, I can kill him with a single blow.’

Minhyuk did some calculations, and stepped in whenever the Swords of the Gods would almost finish the fragment's hunt.

Stab—

[You have gained 93,315,461 EXP.]

[You have acquired Great Spirit's Fragment(1).]

Slash—

[You have gained 93,315,461 EXP.]

[You have acquired Great Spirit's Fragment(1).]

Minhyuk took advantage of the situation by stepping forward at an appropriate time, taking the last hit and devouring the EXP. It was only possible with his thorough calculations.

But after this happened dozens of times, Beloch finally voiced his assumption. "Perhaps the Beyond the Heavens' King can check the enemy's status?"

"If that's the case, then are you saying that he's killing the enemy with just one strike because he can accurately tell when they're about to die?"

That was a plausible reasoning. Otherwise, it could only be explained by the fact that he could deal a tremendous amount of damage that he could cut down his enemies in one strike. That was less likely.

"That's very narrow-minded and cowardly."

"From what I heard, foreigners can grow stronger by acquiring EXP."

"What a weak king. He can only resort to such underhand methods."

The Luvien Empire only acknowledged the strength of the Beyond the Heavens' NPCs like Brod, Spear God Ben, God of Snakes Elizabeth, Evil God Obren and the likes. As for Minhyuk, who was in front of them, they thought that he was nothing but a weak and shabby king.

"Enough," Knight Commander Don spoke coldly upon hearing the insults and curses they uttered toward Minhyuk. "We will also be receiving help from his dishes soon. Anyway, we aren't able to get that EXP, so it should not matter to us what he does."

The Swords of the Gods shut their mouths at his words. At the same time, this thought flashed in their heads: If the Beyond the Heavens King was as useless as they thought he was, then distrust in him would grow.

As they ventured deeper into the prison, the surroundings became darker and darker. One of the Swords of the Gods tried to use a lamp in the pitch black darkness that surrounded them.

[You cannot use a lamp.]

"...We have to be careful."

Everyone held their breaths. Everything around them was pitch black. They could not see an inch ahead of them and could only rely on their hearing to move forward. At that moment, a set of notifications rang in their ears.

[You have entered the Tomb of the Fragments.]

[Dozens of Great Spirit's Fragments have moved to attack the intruders!]

[Most potions will only have ? effectiveness inside the Tomb of Fragments.]

"...?"

Minhyuk was the first to realize something was wrong after hearing the notifications in his ears. The next was Knight Commander Don. He saw around eighty eye balls blink in the darkness.

“...Dodge!!!”

At Don's cry, several lights flashed and lit up the area as dozens of Great Spirit's Fragments appeared in front of them. It was a complete, utter disaster. No matter how strong Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods were, it would still be too difficult for them to deal with almost forty Great Spirit's Fragments at once.

“We've been lured to a narrow place to be killed off one by one! Damn it!” Don's face turned ugly. He could see that the narrow pathways had already been filled with several Great Spirit's Fragments.

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

Just like that, they were besieged by countless attacks. All they could do was move constantly while trying to find a way to break out of the situation. However, the constant attacks had given them cuts, stabs and scratches all over their bodies. Someone was stabbed in the arm, someone in their thighs, while some had their abdomens pierced through.

“Keuaaaaaaack!”

“Aaaaaaaaack!”

“Heuuuup!”

“Don't lose concentration! Gather here!”

Everyone gathered in one place at the cry of Knight Commander Don.

“Release your sword energies,” Don commanded as he released sword lights and attacked the enemies that surrounded them.

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

Hundreds of sword lights flew all over the narrow space that they were trapped in. However, that was a complete error in judgment. While their attacks did reach their opponents, the problem was that they could only restrain them for a moment. Everyone, including Knight Commander Don, had consumed their mana yet their opponents did not die at all.

The worst part was when the opponent saw blood, they would be consumed by bloodlust, losing their reason all the while increasing their speed by 20% as they charged forward.

Knight Commander Don stepped forward to defend against their attacks, his body spurting blood as he received severe injuries from the indiscriminate attacks that the opponents sent his way.

“Does anyone have any mana left?!”

“We don't have anymore left.”

“I'm sorry. Haa... haa...”

Everyone could tell that there would be at least two Swords of the Gods that would fall in this place if things continued at this rate.

“Me.”

At that moment, a man wearing a white cape that bore the symbol of a fork and knife crossed together stepped in front of Knight Commander Don. At the same time, black flames appeared and licked the blade of Minhyuk’s sword.

Minhyuk had received several Memorize Parchments from Golden Mage Ali. What was Memorize? It was a parchment created by high-ranking mages that contained their magic. And one of them was a useful skill for such a situation.

“Compress.”

Shwaaaaaaaaa—

The men that had been running crazily all over the place to avoid the attacks were instantly gathered in one place. But that was not the end.

“Summon Beanie.”

“Oiiiiiiiink!”

Minhyuk also summoned Beanie in front of him.

Crackleeee—

Of course, black flames were also crackling on the blade of Beanie’s kitchen knife.

Minhyuk attacked first, his sword engulfed in black flames slashing whatever was in front of him.

Baaaaaaaaaaaaang—

Blazing flames shot forward and swept away the enemies in front of Minhyuk. Then, Beanie immediately stood in front of Minhyuk and unleashed a similar attack.

“Oiiiiiiiink!”

Two seas of blazing flames devoured the nearly forty Great Spirit’s Fragments that surrounded them.

[You have gained 93,315,461 EXP.]

[You have acquired Great Spirit’s Fragment(1).]

[You have gained 83,450,100 EXP.]

[You have acquired Great Spirit’s Fragment(1).]

[You have gained 89,644,689 EXP.]

[You have acquired Great Spirit’s Fragment(1).]

[...EXP.]

[...EXP.]

[You have leveled up.]

The black flames devoured the Great Spirit's Fragments, turning them into dust that disappeared in the wind. When the black flames were finally extinguished, Minhyuk turned to look back at them with a bright smile on his face and said, "At this rate, it's not me that should stay behind and send support but you, right?"

His sharp words and smiling demeanor made them speechless.

Chapter 745: God of Birth Gaerna

Minhyuk was able to hunt almost forty Great Spirit's Fragments by himself because their HP was almost gone. It was also because of the difference between NPCs and players.

In most cases, NPCs would either use their inherent skills or the skills that they have created themselves. On the other hand, players acquired skills in various ways. Some could be acquired through special skill books, while others through a class change. Because of that, skills had been considered a part of a player's power. After all, they could just use another skill if one of their skills were in a cooldown.

Overlord's Technique was a skill that Overlord Raldo possessed. Even the Sword of the Gods could not recklessly go against it. It just went to show how powerful it was.

"At this rate, it's not me that should stay behind and send support but you, right?"

"..."

"..."

"..."

All of them were left speechless.

Why did the Swords of the Gods tell Minhyuk to stay at the rear? It was because they thought they only needed his buffed dishes. Besides, there was little need for him since they already had skills that were excellent enough to be called the best on the continent. To them, Minhyuk, someone that they had to protect and shield, was nothing but a deadweight. To put it simply, they were secretly ignoring Minhyuk.

Minhyuk was aware of this too. However, he did not feel the need to express his discontent.

'He could have expressed his anger toward us.'

'As a king of a nation, our actions must have hurt his pride. However, he did not even express his anger before. Perhaps it is because of his magnanimity.'

'Perhaps he has judged that it is faster to show us through his actions.'

They are people who had sworn by the chivalry code. As knights, they could admit their faults and apologize, especially if they treated another rudely. They also knew how to treat those that they were indebted to properly.

[You have gained Beloch's favor.]

[You have gained Revor's favor.]

[...Gratt's favor.]

Their favor toward Minhyuk increased dramatically. He might be the king of an enemy nation but they were still people that knew how to show respect and repay the grace that was given to them.

“Let me tell you this: do not judge others by their appearance.”

Everyone agreed with those words.

“We are very grateful for your help.”

“We will not forget this grace.”

Minhyuk nodded at their words. He knew that there was no need to make them feel embarrassed in a place like this. Also, there was one thing that he knew that he could get from them.

‘I have the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book.’

That was right. Minhyuk had a skill creation book in his possession, and he only had one chance to create a skill. According to the description, he could run up to twenty simulations during the skill creation process.

‘The Swords of the Gods.’

They were born geniuses who had grown up and dominated the entire continent.

‘What if they help me create a new skill?’

Perhaps something that would exceed someone’s wildest imagination would appear. Unfortunately, his thoughts were cut short.

“Uggghhh!” Knight Commander Don collapsed on one knee, his hands clutching his abdomen tightly. “Urk!”

Knight Commander Don, who took on the attacks of forty of the Great Spirit’s Fragments by himself, vomited a mouthful of blood. He was very confident that he could stop the enemies as much as he could by himself. However, everyone knew that he did so just so he could protect the other Swords of the Gods.

“Commander.”

“Commander Don!”

Knight Commander Don was sent down by the Battle God as a reward when Nerva conquered a portion of the continent. As such, he was just recently appointed as the knight commander.

However, even though he was in position only for a short period of time, the Swords of the Gods had already trusted and followed him more than anybody else. This was the result of how worthy Knight Commander Don was and how he treated his comrades.

The light in Don’s eyes dimmed as he collapsed on the ground.

“Hurry and get your potions out!”

They quickly opened the potion and poured it into Don’s bloody mouth. However, Knight Commander Don’s complexion was turning paler and paler by the second.

At that moment, Minhyuk realized, *‘Did his HP fall below 2%?’*

At this point, players would have heard the notification saying, *‘You will die from excessive bleeding.’* Most of the potions had cooldown times, and Minhyuk had clearly seen Don take a potion a few minutes ago.

“Urkl!” Knight Commander Don vomited another mouthful of blood. As his vision started to blur, he began to entertain the thought of getting eternal rest. He looked at the Swords of the Gods that appeared in front of his gradually dimming eyes.

“Commander!”

“C, Commander! Please wake up!”

[The black magic that has bound you has loosened as you fall into eternal rest.]

Then, Don’s memories returned to him as he slowly and gradually approached his death.

‘Your Majesty Brod...’

The events of the past flashed before his eyes. Brod appeared in front of Don, who was dying by himself, and stood against tens of thousands of enemy troops.

—You can’t die yet. You said that you’ll become the Sword God.

‘Why? Why did he risk his precious life and throw himself amidst tens of thousands of enemy troops, just to save a mere member of his troops?’

After cutting everyone down, he walked back with his hands supporting his shoulders and his entire body covered in blood.

—Your Majesty. I will live for Your Majesty for as long as I’m alive.

Don had promised to live for his sake just like that.

“Haa... haa...”

Don reached his hand toward the sky.

‘I remember now. I remember the face of my true master, the one that I truly serve. However, I’m afraid I won’t be able to keep that promise.’

At that moment, Minhyuk spoke up.

“I have a very precious potion with me. It’s the only potion of its kind that I got from hunting Gaerna.”

The knights looked at Minhyuk as he stepped forward with desperate eyes. However, they all knew that in the end, he was the king of an enemy kingdom. The death of Knight Commander Don was something that he should take joy in and greatly welcome.

On top of that, it was the only bottle of potion that he had acquired from hunting Gaerna. Its preciousness was something that was beyond anyone’s imagination.

Minhyuk looked down at the bottle of potion for a while. *‘I actually have five of these.’*

That was right. Minhyuk had obtained five Mandala's Elixir. He gave Elpis one, which left him with four. Minhyuk looked down and caressed the bottle for a long time. He sported an expression that made it look as if he was very conflicted.

Of course, Minhyuk did not forget to emphasize, "I intended to use this potion for my vassals. I've reserved this in case they ever meet with danger."

"..."

"..."

"However..." Minhyuk looked at the Swords of the Gods with deep sadness in his eyes. "I can tell that he is a very precious person to you."

Minhyuk nodded his head slowly as he showed the most nostalgic and the saddest look in his eyes, while putting on the faintest smile on his face.

Pop—

Then, he popped the potion bottle open and poured the contents into Don's mouth.

Gulp, gulp, gulp—

Mandala's Elixir was a very special potion. First, it did not have any cooldown time at all. Second, it could recover 100% of both HP and MP. And third, it could temporarily increase one's defense by 20% upon consumption.

Of course, Minhyuk was not using Mandala's Elixir, such a precious potion, just because he did not want these people to lose a precious person.

Don was related to Minhyuk in some way. He was not sure how they were related, but at the very least, he was sure that Don would be of great help to him if he survived this ordeal.

"Get up. Your men are very worried about you!" Minhyuk shouted heatedly, his voice touching the hearts of the members of the knight order around him.

'Ah, aaaaaaaah... He is a true and genuine king. He's a man that can understand the hearts of the people, even if they are from an enemy nation!'

‘How can this be? He actually used a very precious potion, a potion that he only has a bottle of, to save our Commander Don?’

‘My god. He’s truly a man with great generosity!’

[Your favor with Beloch has dramatically increased.]

[Your favor with Revor has dramatically increased.]

[Your favor with Cratt has dramatically increased...]

Minhyuk received a huge increase in favor amongst the people present. It was like hitting two birds with one stone! He saved Knight Commander Don, and won the hearts of the Swords of the Gods in one go.

Knight Commander Don, whose consciousness had started to blur and turn dark earlier, gradually regained his senses. Seeing this, Minhyuk, with eyes blazing with passion, clasped the man's hands with his own and said, “I was very worried. I might have used a very, very precious potion that I only have one bottle of, but I’m very glad that it can save you. It’s definitely not a waste at all!!!”

Knight Commander Don felt an unknown emotion surge within him when he saw the relieved expression on Minhyuk’s face. *‘You’re saying that you used a very precious potion, that you only have one bottle of, on me? You? The king of an enemy kingdom...?’*

Having survived the ordeal thanks to Minhyuk’s help, Don began to recall the memories that he had lost. Brod, the only emperor that he had served and the Beyond the Heavens’ King, the person who had Don’s emperor under his command.

“I did not waste the potion at all.”

[The God Who is Good at Lying is looking at you in admiration. ‘Wow, you’re really...’]

Minhyuk wrapped Don’s hands with his warm hands once again and smiled kindly at him. “Look, your men are very glad that you’re safe and alive.”

“...”

Don finally looked back at his men. He could clearly see the look of relief that flashed on their faces.

Then, Minhyuk gently let go of his hands and said, “I’m very glad that you survived, Sir Don.”

The Great Luvien Empire’s Knight Commander Don, the current number one Swords of the Gods and a very promising talent under Nerva’s command, knelt down on one knee in front of Minhyuk.

“Beyond the Heavens’ King.”

The other Swords of the Gods immediately knelt down on one knee and followed his example.

[You have reached MAX favor with Don.]

Knight Commander Don looked up at Minhyuk with a very faithful and loyal gaze.

“This... Knight Commander Don is His Majesty Nerva’s subordinate...”

‘I was originally serving His Majesty Brod. Why am I serving Nerva now?’

His memories about what happened at that time were still incomplete.

“To repay the grace that you have bestowed upon me, I will risk and sacrifice my life for you. At the very least, I will risk it for as long as we are inside Mandala’s Prison.”

“Sir, yes, sir!”

“Sir, yes, sir!”

“Sir, yes, sir!”

“Sir, yes, sir!”

The commander’s words were the knights’ law. Seeing their commander show his loyalty to Minhyuk, the Swords of the Gods also showed their loyalty to him. After all, Minhyuk was someone who deserved such treatment.

Minhyuk looked very moved with the display. He slowly approached them, his knees bending slightly as he pulled them up with him. “Don’t kneel down. It’s for you and for Your Majesty’s sake too.”

“Ah...”

If Nerva saw what happened here, they would all be charged with treason. Even if they got beheaded and executed right away, they would have no say in the matter.

“I don’t want your loyalty if that means that you will have to sacrifice your life for me.”

Even though Minhyuk said that, he was still laughing happily deep inside.

‘Fufufufufu. Instead of sacrificing your lives. Just help me with the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book!’

However, what he displayed on the outside was completely different from what he thought inside.

“This...”

“What is this?”

“It is a symbol that we have become comrades, at the very least, in this place.”

“Ah. It has such a deep meaning...”

“Ah, aaaaaaaaah...!”

“Frieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeend!!!”

“Frieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeend!!!”

If Ali saw this scene where they raised their hands and shouted together, he would definitely be moved to tears.

Chapter 746: God of Birth Gaerna

Minhyuk and the Swords of the Gods had a hunch that they would be able to reach Mandala and the Great Spirit after passing through the Fragment's Tomb.

"So, what you're saying is that the Great Spirit is much stronger than what you expected?"

"That's correct, although I don't understand why Mandala would turn the Great Spirit berserk."

Mandala had incurred the jealousy of the gods with his talents. Because of that, he was imprisoned here and rendered unable to escape the eyes of the gods. It was logical for him to blame and resent the gods, as well as the Great Spirit keeping him captive.

So, why did he choose to turn the Great Spirit berserk?

"It would be dangerous for us to go in as we are."

Minhyuk thought that it was finally time for him to show off his true worth. At this point, everyone was devastated and in despair after suffering from the battle against the Great Spirit's Fragments. On top of that, Knight Commander Don had almost died. One needed a full meal during times like this.

'I think that would be perfect.'

Minhyuk knew just the thing, and he already had the tools and utensils to prepare the dish that he had in mind.

Class-Specific Artifact

?All stats will increase by +5

?Buffed dishes' buff effects will 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

It was an artifact of the greatest Food God, and it had a special effect that could increase the buffed dish's effects by 15% when cooked using the Bizarre Cauldron.

Crackle—

Minhyuk lit a fire beneath the cauldron and began to boil the chicken that was usually used for *samgyetang*.

Fwiiiiish—

The steam that escaped the seams of the cauldron lid drew the attention of the Swords of the Gods.

‘He’s really the king of cooking.’

‘So cool.’

In fact, what Minhyuk wanted to cook was not *samgyetang*, but chicken porridge. Once the chicken was cooked perfectly, he pulled it out of the cauldron and tore it apart with his bare hands. He looked like a master chef as he sat there and tore the meat of the chicken with his hands!

After tearing the chicken apart, he placed everything back, including the minced vegetables and glutinous rice that he had prepared before. Then, he let everything boil.

Fwoooooosh—

A mouth-watering scent slowly wafted out as steam escaped the seams of the lid once again.

Usually, whenever the Swords of the Gods went on a hunt or a war, they would only bring beef jerky or other dried rations with them. Just the thought of eating a proper meal inside a hunting ground was making them shake in their seats with anticipation.

Minhyuk finished cooking the chicken porridge in no time at all. He immediately scooped the porridge into bowls and served it in front of everyone, along with some *jangjorim* and well-ripened kimchi.

At that moment, the Swords of the Gods saw the difference between the size of their bowl and Minhyuk’s bowl.

‘I don’t think you can call that a bowl. That’s already a basin.’

‘That’s more than twenty times more than our serving.’

“I’ve prepared a lot since there are many of us here.”

Hearing Minhyuk’s words, everyone turned to look at the chicken porridge that he prepared. The truth was, Don, who had just escaped the claws of death, had no appetite at all. He felt like he was going to be sick just by looking at the porridge in front of him.

‘Even so, I have to eat. If I want to fight against the Great Spirit then I must eat.’

Don grabbed his spoon and scooped a mouthful of chicken porridge into his mouth. A light yet savory flavor spread in his mouth the moment he tasted the dish.

‘Ho?’

The flavor was simply divine. On top of that, it was soft enough that he did not need to chew. Don could not help but smile when the dish went down his throat smoothly. After eating several spoonfuls of the porridge, Don turned his attention to the beef, which seemed to have been pickled with soy sauce.

‘What’s this?’

Don saw Minhyuk eating it with his porridge, so he copied him. To his surprise, the salty and savory flavor of the beef burst out in his mouth the moment he placed it in his mouth. The dish rounded up the flavor and gave a huge boost to the bland taste of the chicken porridge. This time, Don opted to eat the *jangjorim* as it was.

“Ho? What in the world is this?”

“It’s called beef *jangjorim*. It’s a very tasty side dish, no?”

“Beef *jangjorim*...”

“More importantly, it is a side dish that has been cooked and simmered for a long time in soy sauce. Because of that, it can be stored for quite a long time.”

“...What a magnificent dish.”

“That’s absolutely right. It is a magnificent dish. I can finish three bowls of rice with just this alone.”

Now that he had heard about it, Don realized that this side dish was truly amazing. As the Knight Commander, Don was no exception; he also only took beef jerky and hard bread with him whenever he went to any battlefield or hunting ground. After all, they were easy to carry and could be stored for a long time. Because of that, Knight Commander Don felt like the *jangjorim* tasted better than the chicken porridge.

“By any chance, do you have any more of this? I’m really sorry to ask this of you, but it’s truly very tasty. Ah. Of course, I would pay whatever price you set for it.”

Knight Commander Don felt deeply moved by the *jangjorim*’s flavor and advantages and wanted to get more of the dish, even if he had to pay for it.

‘I have to get it even if it is five times the price!’

“Hmm. I can tell that you must have really liked it since you’re saying that. But... This beef *jangjorim* was made in an aging jar that can only be used once and aged for two years...”

That was a lie. Minhyuk could age the *jangjorim* in Gorac’s Aging Jar in just under five minutes.

“As for the soy sauce, I used the Soy Sauce Bestowed by God.”

It was just normal dark soy sauce.

“The beef is from Rammabi’s Cow, and its value is unimaginable...”

It was just ordinary beef.

“I think it’s around 30 platinum per kilogram?”

He had actually bought it for around 15,000 gold per kilogram.

“But since it’s you, I will give it to you for only 25 platinum per kilogram.”

“...I asked you for this favor, so let me buy it at 30 platinum.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine. Just pay me 25 platinum. Take it as me being happy to have made your acquaintance.”

“I’m really grateful.”

Minhyuk lied without even flinching!

“Please let me buy it too!”

“Me too.”

“This dish is really delicious!”

[You have sold 1 kilogram of Beef Jangjorim to Don for 25 platinum.]

[You have sold 1 kilogram of Beef Jangjorim to Beloch for 25 platinum...]

“This is a special bargain for you guys. Don’t tell anyone about this at all!!!”

Minhyuk even got them to promise to keep their mouths shut and not tell the others the price later on.

“Of course.”

“Hahahahahaha! Thank you.”

“As expected of the Beyond the Heavens’ King.”

“I am deeply moved by your great generosity!!!”

Minhyuk’s mouth twitched in joy.

The God Who is Good at Lying looks at you and says...]

[Do you even have a conscience...?]

‘What is this guy? Why does he keep on talking to me lately?’

Minhyuk decided to ignore the god and just watched the men around him continue their meals.

An emotional smile flashed on Don’s face as he ate the last spoonful of his meal. Then, the notifications rang in his ears.

[You have eaten the Chicken Porridge.]

[The dish is Legendary grade.]

[Due to the effects of the Bizarre Cauldron, all buff effects have increased by 15%.]

[All of your stats have increased by 13%.]

[Your HP and MP volume has increased by 1.3x.]

[All of your skills’ levels have increased by +1.]

“...!”

Don and the rest of the knights were in awe. He had just cooked the dish in front of them, yet it had such amazing effects.

‘Perhaps this is the reason why His Majesty Nerva is wary of him?’

He was truly a man worthy of admiration.

At that moment, Minhyuk brought up his request. “I have a favor to ask you, will you listen to me?”

“Please feel free to speak.”

“We’ll do it to the best of our abilities.”

Since Minhyuk had reached MAX favor with Don and the Swords of the Gods, he readily explained about the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book. As it was, the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book would unconditionally create God-rank skills. However, just because it was a God-rank skill did not mean that it could also be very efficient. That was Minhyuk’s greatest problem. Everything would depend on the creator of the skill. Currently, who he had right in front of him were Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods.

‘They are the strongest teachers that one might not be able to see anywhere else.’

They were the ones who had treaded the furthest in each of their respective fields and had transcended the limits of a human being.

“Alright. We’ll help you.”

“We have to help.”

The truth was, the Swords of the Gods did hesitate for a moment. After all, Minhyuk was still the king of the enemy kingdom. However, they had to at least do that much to repay the favor of him saving Knight Commander Don.

At the same time at Joy Co. Ltd.’s conference room.

President Kang Taehoon and the board members all looked at the scene in shock.

“...You can use the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book like this?”

“Isn’t this considered an emergency?”

Indeed, it was an emergency. The Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book was an item that would absolutely produce a God-rank skill. However, the most important aspect here was the fact that it could create a completely different skill, depending on how high the efficiency and how far the player could push.

Even for Joy Co. Ltd., this was something that was completely unexpected. All of them focused on the screen in front of them as the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book shone brightly.

Minhyuk stared at the shining skill creation book and said, “I’m thinking of creating a new swordsmanship.”

“A new swordsmanship?”

“That’s right. I do not lack skills related to cooking at the moment. As for my Food God’s skills, they’re more than sufficient. The same goes for my one-shot kill skills and lethal moves.”

That was right. Minhyuk had the Overlord’s Technique, the Sword of Absolute Death, and the swordsmanship that Sword God Valen left behind—the Thousand Swords, the Ten Thousand Swords and the likes. What did these skills have in common? They were all one-shot lethal skills. Among these skills, the Overlord’s Technique and the Sword of Absolute Death were considered to be the most powerful, so he usually used them.

That was also the reason why he had neglected a particular swordsmanship skill. It was none other than ‘Ellie’s Swordsmanship’. When he had reached the halfway point on his road to the pinnacle, Ellie’s Swordsmanship had shown tremendous power. However, Ellie’s Swordsmanship’s efficiency and use had significantly decreased when Minhyuk became stronger or whenever he acquired new skills.

Also, in terms of swordsmanship skills, it should be able to be used according to the situation. That was not the case for lethal skills. As such, Minhyuk, someone who had a lot of powerful skills, needed to reinforce himself in this aspect.

The Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book was covered in a bright light.

[You have used the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book.]

[With the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book, you can either combine the skills that you already have or create new skills.]

[If you choose to combine your skills, those skills will disappear.]

[You can run up to twenty simulations.]

What Minhyuk intended to do here was to create a new skill based on Ellie’s Swordsmanship, in exchange for the sacrifice of Ellie’s Swordsmanship.

[You are creating a skill based on Ellie’s Swordsmanship.]

[Ellie’s Swordsmanship’s first chapter is ‘Ellie’s Swordsmanship’.]

The light emitting from the skill creation book created a hologram. The hologram showed the existing ‘Ellie’s Swordsmanship’ buff with Minhyuk’s figure. It showed a red aura wrapping around his body as he used the skill.

“Would it be fine to look at it by ourselves?”

“Yes, of course.”

The Swords of the Gods moved to check the effectiveness of the skill ‘Ellie’s Swordsmanship’ with the hologram.

[A being that has transcended the limits of a human being has added their power to the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book!]

[A being that will soon transcend the limits of a human being has added their power to the Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book!]

[A being that will soon transcend the limits of a human being...]

Minhyuk felt the greatness and majesty of the Swords of the Gods as he continued to listen to the notifications that rang in his ears. Then, an additional notification rang.

[The beings that even the gods cannot judge and evaluate begin to create the ‘Ellie’s Swordsmanship’s’ buff effect.]

They were beings that even the gods could not judge and evaluate. That was how powerful and amazing the Swords of the Gods were.

.

“It’s an excellent buff ability. However, I think it would be better if it had the effect where its power could increase based on the amount of mana that His Majesty Minhyuk has.”

“I think it would be better to increase the cutting power.”

The Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book was an item that could allow them to tweak the skill however they liked. There was no restriction as to how they could make it.

[The Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book has rejected the creation of Ellie’s Swordsmanship’s Skill for the first time.]

“If that’s the case, then let’s take this inefficient ability out and increase the amount of mana used...”

[The Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book has rejected the creation of Ellie’s Swordsmanship’s Skill for the second...]

“This power might not necessarily be useful to His Majesty Minhyuk right now. Rather than that, how about increasing this one.”

The Swords of the Gods brainstormed and discussed how to create the best and most efficient Ellie’s Swordsmanship skill. Finally, the first chapter was completed.

[The Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book has approved the creation of Ellie’s Swordsmanship!]

[You can now view the effects of the newly created swordsmanship skill!]

These were the effects of the original Ellie’s Swordsmanship:

Active Skill

?All stats will increase by 15% and skill casting time will be reduced for five minutes.

?Evasion Rate increases by +30%.

?Critical Hit Rate increases by +30%.

It was obviously an excellent skill.

And this one was the new swordsmanship skill that the Swords of the Gods created together:

[Please check the first effect of the newly created XX's Swordsmanship.]

Active Skill

?Movement and attack speed increase by 40%.

?Physical and magical defenses increase by 30%.

?Cutting Power increases by 60%.

?Sword Attack increases by 30%.

?When using sword-related skills, skill damage increases by 20%.

?Critical Hit Rate increases by 50%.

?Skill will last for eight minutes.

“...?”

Minhyuk could hardly contain the shock that he felt when he saw the skill.

Chapter 747: God of Birth Gaerna

As their levels increased, the skills that the players needed would continue to change. This was the same reason why mages, who reached a high level, would no longer use Tier 1 magic like energy bolts anymore.

Why was that the case?

‘The reason is simple. As the level of the players increases, the level of their enemies and the monsters that they face will also increase. Thus, using such skills against high-leveled enemies would not bring about any results at all.’

It would have been nice if the player's skills could also grow stronger the higher their levels. Unfortunately, skills had clear limits.

The unique rank ‘Three Consecutive Stabs’ that novice players usually received was a skill that would allow them to stab their opponents three times in a row, with an additional 35% attack. What about the normal rank ‘Veteran's Sword’ that high-leveled knight players learned? It was also a skill that would allow them to stab their opponents three times in a row. However, it had an additional 1,400% attack. As mentioned above, most of the skills that players used in the past would grow obsolete as time passed by.

Currently, under the input of the Swords of the Gods, Ellie's Swordsmanship, a skill with a buff effect, had grown better than it was before. Even the black aura that wrapped around Minhyuk's body in the hologram as his figure used Ellie's Swordsmanship showed a much more imposing momentum than before.

"Do you like it?"

'Do I like it you ask?! I really, really like it.'

"The special ability to increase all stats was set to increase even the other trivial stats. However, Ellie's Swordsmanship is a combat skill. Instead of increasing all of the stats and the evasion rate, we focused on the stats that affect combat, and also increased the mana required accordingly."

The player's total mana would increase the higher the level the player had reached. It was only natural for the mana required to increase with the increase in skill effect.

The second was Sword of Frenzy. Minhyuk's figure in the hologram displayed the skill and used it against a wooden doll.

'The skill will trigger six consecutive strikes with 400% additional attack and 100% additional damage upon a successful strike on an enemy's vital point. It will also deal six consecutive strikes with 100% additional damage to everyone within a five meter radius.'

When Minhyuk had just entered the ranks of high rankers, this skill had displayed a tremendous amount of power. Right now, that was no longer the case.

"This skill is definitely excellent. However, I can feel that its focus is neither here nor there."

"It attacks the target, as well as all of the enemies within a five meter radius. I think this power would be more efficient if we can focus that damage on one target."

The Swords of the Gods began to modify the Sword of Frenzy.

"First, let's take out that unnecessary area of effect."

"Since it's a power that attacks the vital point, it would be good if it can be activated even if the attack did not directly hit the opponent."

"It would be a big deal if the attack doesn't work even if the vital point was hit, right? Then, how about adding this effect?"

"I think that's good."

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book has rejected the creation of Ellie's Swordsmanship's Skill for the fourth...]

"Hmm. Then, how about we adjust this part down a bit and limit the number of times that it can be used?"

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book...]

"I think we can increase the amount of mana required more."

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book...]

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book has approved the creation of Ellie's Swordsmanship!]

[You can now view the second effect of the newly created swordsmanship skill!]

Active Skill

Effects:

?You can hit the enemy's vital points just by stabbing within a five meter radius.

?Twelve consecutive attacks with 500% additional damage each will be triggered upon successful attack on a vital point.

?You have an 80% chance of ignoring all of your enemy's defenses.

"..."

Minhyuk was at a loss for words.

'This is completely...'

At this point, even the word 'crazy' was not enough to describe the skill. With a 500% additional damage, dealing at least eight attacks would mean that he would be able to deal a total of 4,000% additional damage to his enemies.

However, the most shocking part of the skill was the 80% chance of ignoring the enemy's defenses. Defense was a very important factor. There was nearly a 40% difference in the amount of damage between players wearing armor with a 100 defense and armor with a 1,000 defense.

Because of that, the Sword of Frenzy could be said to have an effect of more than 4,000% damage if the last effect was triggered.

[The God who Loves to Cook watches you with interest as you create a new skill.]

[The God who Rules Over All Armies watches you as you create a new skill.]

[The God who Does Not Know When to Back Down...create a new skill.]

[The God who Likes to Create and Destroy All Skills and Abilities is surprised to see the birth of a new skill.]

The God who Likes to Create and Destroy All Skills and Abilities was none other than the God of Abilities and Destruction, the same being that had created the 'Pinnacle Skills' and sent them down to earth. He was watching the creation of a new skill with bated breath.

The Swords of the Gods continued to modify and create the new skill. The next skill that they tackled was the Heaven Tearing Sword, that could cut down all the enemies within a five meter radius with attacks that had 600% additional damage.

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book has approved the creation of Ellie's Swordsmanship!]

[You can now view the third effect of the newly created swordsmanship skill!]

Active Skill

Effects:

?There is a 70% chance of enemies falling into a two-second stunned state after getting directly hit by the five meter long sword light.

?Those that are directly hit by the sword light will be pierced by the attack even if it does not initially cut them.

?If the sword light directly hits the target, an additional 3,500% damage will be inflicted.

?There is a 7% chance of the enemy falling into a six-second stunned state after getting directly hit by the sword light.

“Wow...”

[The God who Rules Over All Armies secretly casts a sidelong glance at you.]

[The God who Does Not Know When to Back Down groans.]

[The God who Likes to Create and Destroy All Skills and Abilities’ face has turned a bright shade of red.]

[The God who Loves to Cook wants to exchange it for a dish that they made.]

Plenty of gods watched and looked forward to the creation of the new swordsmanship. Each time a new chapter was finished, Minhyuk would be pleasantly surprised.

Next was the Sword of Tempest, a skill that was best suited for dealing with huge numbers of enemies. The skill would release hundreds of blades with 250% attack and indiscriminately attack all of the enemies around the skill user for six seconds. It could also increase the movement speed by 200%.

“This skill forces His Majesty Minhyuk to jump in the middle of the enemies’ ranks.”

“Is that even necessary?”

“How about fixing this part right here and making it like this?”

[The Six Monster Gods’ Skill Creation Book has approved the creation of Ellie’s Swordsmanship!]

They ran a total of twelve simulations to complete all of the chapters of the swordsmanship skill.

Active Skill

Effects:

?You can summon a typhoon-like sword that has an ego of its own.

?Hundreds of blades will appear and dance around the typhoon-like sword. The skill user's basic speed will be increased by 150% and applied to the blades that will cut down the enemies.

?Movement speed will also increase by 300% during the skill duration. The skill duration is three minutes.

“...”

Minhyuk clenched his fists tightly. The skills created by the Swords of the Gods were perfect. He could already feel his own perspiration start to pool in his hands.

Before, the Sword of Tempest would release hundreds of blades that danced around his body and create a tempest to cut down the enemies. But the Sword of Tempest now could summon a typhoon-like sword that has an ego of its own to cut down the enemies; there was no need for him to put himself in unnecessary danger.

[You have recreated and modified the skill: Ellie's Swordsmanship using the Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book.]

[You can use the previous swordsmanship skill's name for the newly created skill's name or change the skill's name to a new one.]

[The Six Monster God's Skill Creation Book has shown a response to you for creating a shocking skill!]

[The final swordsmanship that will be created will be the XX's Swordsmanship's lethal attack skill!]

[No one else can interfere in the creation of the final swordsmanship.]

[You have eight simulations left.]

This was a very welcome notification for Minhyuk. However, this time, the Swords of the Gods could no longer lend him a helping hand.

Minhyuk pondered deeply over the matter. *'How about combining all of these skills and creating a new swordsmanship that's similar to the Sword of Absolute Death?'*

This was the easiest and most basic idea. Minhyuk tried to create the skill and immediately ran a simulation.

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book has rejected the creation of Ellie's Swordsmanship's Skill for the thirteenth...]

The Swords of the Gods did not have it easy either earlier, so Minhyuk maintained his calm and tried again.

'Then, let's discard the thought about combining everything together. Let's just combine the benefits of the Heaven Tearing Sword and the Sword of Frenzy.'

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book... fourteenth time...]

'If this doesn't work, then let's increase the mana required.'

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book... fifteenth time...]

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book... seventeenth time...]

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book... eighteenth time...]

Minhyuk started to panic. He now realized how great Don and the Swords of the Gods were. After all, they were able to pinpoint all of the shortcomings of the skill and put in everything that he would need in the new one. That could only be done if they had sharp and good eyes. On the other hand, Minhyuk, who was the one that owned the skill and was well-versed in his character window, continued to fail.

'I will succeed this time.'

Minhyuk lowered his expectations and tried once again.

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book has approved the creation of Ellie's Swordsmanship.]

Minhyuk almost howled in delight. This was the birth of a new skill that could become his new lethal move, right? However, that was not the case at all.

[The Six Monster Gods' Skill Creation Book has judged that it feels lacking to be called a lethal move.]

[Would you like to continue with the creation of the skill?]

“...”

The skill creation book rejected the skill as a lethal move. With this, Minhyuk had used up all of his simulations. In other words, Minhyuk had to create a skill that was strong enough to be called a lethal move by calculating solely in his head.

Roll, roll, roll—

“...?”

While Minhyuk continued to calculate and ponder deeply, he saw a potion bottle roll and stop in front of the Swords of the Gods. The moment Don and the Swords of the Gods realized what just happened, the bottle exploded.

Baaaaaaaaaaaang—

[You have inhaled Mandala's Potion of Restriction!]

[You cannot use all of your skills and potions for five minutes.]

[Your resistance to abnormal statuses has decreased by 40%.]

[All of your defensive power has decreased by 30%.]

[All of your attack power has decreased by 30%.]

[You will experience difficulty in breathing.]

“Keheooook!”

“Ughh!”

“Urrrk?!”

Everyone inhaled the smoke, which spread at the speed of light from the potion bottle, and they could not help but be shocked. They all felt like the power in their bodies decreased all at once. They even found it difficult to breathe, as if they had been choked by smoke for a long time. The abnormal status did not allow them to get back to their senses.

“Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!”

Then, at that moment, a terrible roar resounded everywhere, as something hurtled through the walls of the prison and slammed into Knight Beloch.

“Keuaaaaaaaaaack!”

Beloch could not come to his senses in time to respond and was sent flying back.

The thing that slammed into Beloch was floating in the air. It resembled a gigantic carp with a huge fin on its head. It also had scales that looked both shiny and tough, and a tail that looked like that of a dragon’s tail.

[The one that successfully kills the Great Spirit will receive rewards!]

[The Great Spirit is a unique being that does not drop any artifact or gold!]

[However, you will be able to gain a lot of EXP upon successful hunting!]

[The Great Spirit is currently in a berserk state!]

[The Berserk Great Spirit has received the protection of Mandala.]

[Berserk Great Spirit. Level 832.]

That was when they saw a man standing on the head of the Great Spirit and holding tightly on its fin. That man was none other than Mandala.

Minhyuk’s hands instantly moved to grab a bottle of potion the moment he saw Mandala and the Great Spirit.

Pop—

He drank everything in one go.

[You have consumed Mandala’s Growth Potion.]

[You will be able to gain 30 times the amount of EXP that you will acquire in one hour!]

The opportunity to bomb his way through his levels has arrived.

‘Let’s go for Level 600 in one go!’

Chapter 748: God of Birth Gaerna

The gods, who were jealous of Mandala’s talents in making potions, had locked him up in a prison and made a ‘Great Spirit’ guard him. Forced to live forever inside the prison, Mandala might have been suffering tremendously. However, it was not just that. The gods even erased the memories related to Mandala in the people’s heads. Because of that, only a few people know of this fact. One of those few people was Nerva.

‘According to His Majesty Nerva, the Great Spirit had already weakened over time, and Mandala would be suffering after being cooped up in this place for so long.’

“Mandala!!! We’ve come here to save you!!!”

“Hero, cursed by the gods because of envy, we have come to save you!!!”

They came here to save Mandala, or so they believed. In fact, the moment they arrived, they thought that Mandala would drop to his knees, overwhelmed with gratitude and covered in tears to thank them for coming to save him. So, why was the situation like this? Why was Mandala standing over there and holding tightly on the fin of the Great Spirit?

“Shut up!!! I’m not stepping out of this place!!!”

They just could not understand.

‘Could we have gotten the legends wrong? By any chance, was Mandala not locked up by the gods?’ No, that was obviously the case.

At that moment, the Great Spirit opened its mouth. “Graaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!”

Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods turned nervous and vigilant after seeing the Great Spirit open its carp-like mouth and release a strange sound. They were still unable to use any of their abilities.

Flash—

Suddenly, hundreds of electric bolts shot out from the Great Spirit’s mouth and flew toward the Swords of the Gods. The attack was far too fast for them to avoid.

Crack, crack, crack, crack, crack—

“Keuhaaaaaaaaaack!”

“Ughhhhhh!”

“Urkkkkk!”

“Keheooook!”

[You have suffered the Great Spirit’s Lightning Attack!]

[You have fallen into a five-second stunned state!]

Not only did they receive a huge amount of damage, they were also stunned in place. At the same time, the Great Spirit’s dragon-like tail swished and the dozens of spears that were at the tip of the tail stabbed through the bodies of the stunned Swords of the Gods.

“Kghhhhhhk!”

“Keheooook!”

The Swords of the Gods could only scream as they were rendered helpless by the stun. At that moment, Mandala took out several bottles of red potion.

“M, Mandala... We... you...”

“Shut up! I never asked for help!!!”

Baaaaaaaang—

The moment the bottles made contact with the ground, a loud explosion erupted and engulfed an area of fifty meter radius. The Swords of the Gods did not die immediately, since they had high HP and defense. However, it was still a huge blow. Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods felt like their deaths were certain now that Mandala and the Great Spirit were cooperating.

Immediately after the explosion, the Great Spirit opened its mouth once again. The Swords of the Gods had to stop the Great Spirit from opening its mouth again, but there was still a second left in their stunned state.

When dealing with boss monsters, one usually needed great abilities. However, it was undeniable that one also required excellent skills. After all, it was possible to deal a fatal blow as long as the appropriate skill was used at the right time. However, all of the power of the Swords of the Gods was sealed for five whole minutes.

Meanwhile, there was one man that was avoiding all of the Great Spirit’s attacks using ‘Like the Wind’. That man was none other than Minhyuk, who had the ‘Invincible Body’.

Just when the Great Spirit opened its mouth and was about to release a burst of flames, Minhyuk said, “Like the Wind.”

Minhyuk appeared in front of the Great Spirit in an instant, stabbing it and triggering his skill.

“Sword of Absolute Death.”

Stab—!

“Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!”

The first strike successfully pierced through the head of the Great Spirit, triggering hundreds of sword lights that ravaged its body.

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang—

However, the Sword of Absolute Death did not do much damage because of the Great Spirit’s thick and shiny scales. Still, that was enough, Minhyuk had bought enough time. The Swords of the Gods had finally been released from their stunned state.

Mandala, who was standing on top of the Great Spirit’s head, lost his balance and fell down.

“Hiiiiiiik!”

After falling on the floor, Mandala immediately ran away and hid behind a huge rock.

The Swords of the Gods immediately charged forward after they were released from their stunned state. Knight Commander Don used his Veteran’s Sword and slashed the Great Spirit’s body all over the place.

Clang, clang, clang, clang—

Beloch and the other Swords of the Gods put pressure on the Great Spirit with their fantastic military might and cooperation. However, a problem still remained.

“Why is this damn skin so thick...?”

The swords and attacks used by the Swords of the Gods could cut most things like butter. However, the Great Spirit’s scales boasted a tremendous defense that made it hard for them to deal a significant amount of damage with their blows.

“Keuaaaaaaaaaack!!!”

At that moment, the Great Spirit shook its tail, causing it to split into eight that turned into spears and stabbed the bodies of the Swords of the Gods.

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—

“Kgghhhhk!” Sword of the Gods Beloch groaned as one of the tails pierced through his abdomen.

Even Knight Commander Don could not escape, and his shoulder was pierced.

All of the Swords of the Gods from rank 1 to 5 could use ‘God’s Steps’, a skill that allowed them to avoid their opponent’s attacks by moving a set distance all at once. They could avoid most of the Great Spirit’s attacks. However, the problem was that they were unable to use their skills. Despite dealing countless attacks, they still could not deal any damage at all.

On the other hand, they were being battered and bruised by a series of attacks.

‘Damn it! If only I could use my power...!’

There must be a way. Otherwise, it was certain that everyone would be wiped out.

“I’ll use my skill, so please do your best to restrain the movements of the Great Spirit in front of us.”

“...Your Majesty?”

“...I understand.”

The various techniques like swordsmanship and spearmanship that the Sword of the Gods possessed were said to be powerful enough to be equal to gods. To these people, they wondered how strong Minhyuk’s best skills would truly be. Fortunately, Minhyuk’s Ellie’s Swordsmanship had just been modified.

‘The key here is how much His Majesty Minhyuk’s skills can stop the Great Spirit.’

They wondered if Minhyuk could hold the Great Spirit back at least until the restrictions on their skills had been lifted.

“Intangible Sword.”

[Intangible Sword.]

[Your enemies will be attacked by invisible swords for five minutes. Your attacks will reach everyone within your ten meter radius.]

[You can use Sword Manipulation and send hundreds of invisible swords toward your enemies.]

[Your sword's attack power will increase by 900%. The movement speed of your Sword Manipulation will also be ten times faster than your speed of wielding your sword.]

Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping—!

At that moment, blood spurted out from the cuts that appeared after the gigantic body of the Great Spirit.

The Swords of the Gods could easily cut down even the highest of rankers. However, even they could not put a scratch on the body of the Great Spirit because of its high defense.

But in just one second, the creature's body was littered with rips and tears as blood flowed out in between its scales. The shocking part was that the attack was invisible. Despite the attack being unseen, they could still hear it.

'The Hundred Swords...'

'He actually injured the Great Spirit...?'

That was right. The invisible Hundred Swords moved with sword manipulation and hacked at the Great Spirit under Minhyuk's will.

"Kihyaaaaaaaaack!"

The Great Spirit was forced to take a few steps back, struggling from the sudden pain that assaulted its body. Minhyuk took this opportunity to narrow the distance between them once again and swing his sword recklessly at the monster.

Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping— Fwoosh—!

Intangible Sword was a skill that could carry out an attack as long as the target was within a ten meter radius of Minhyuk. Thus, he swung his sword more than three times per second.

'He calculates how the bastard will struggle as he swings his sword.'

'He's pressuring the Great Spirit so that it cannot evade or run away.'

'His skill with the sword is amazing.'

Minhyuk could stand shoulder to shoulder with a gold medalist in kendo. The Great Spirit had a high amount of HP. However, with how much blood it was spurting, it was apparent that it was getting hit very hard.

"Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!"

In the end, the Great Spirit decided to go for a blitz instead of avoiding the blows. It screamed violently as it moved toward Minhyuk. The Swords of the Gods stuck together and tried to hold the Great Spirit back, but it was no use.

Seeing that, Minhyuk immediately used his new skill.

[XX's Swordsmanship.]

[Your attack speed and movement speed have increased by 40%. Your physical and magical defense have increased by 30%.]

[Your cutting power has increased by 60%, sword attack by 30%, and all sword-related skills' damage by 20%.]

[Your critical hit rate has increased by 50%.]

[The skill duration is eight minutes.]

Black aura swirled and covered Minhyuk's body, his black hair fluttering as the blade of his sword shone a bright golden light.

“Sword of Frenzy.”

The moment the skill was triggered, dozens of vital points shone brightly all over the Great Spirit's body. This was something only visible to Minhyuk.

Minhyuk looked at the charging beast's gaping mouth. With his current Sword of Frenzy, even if he stabbed from a five meter distance, he would still be able to deal damage to his opponents. That was on top of the Intangible Sword that was still working for him.

The moment the Great Spirit was three meters away from him, Minhyuk struck strongly at its gaping mouth.

Staaaaaaaaab—!

[You have successfully stabbed a vital point!]

The notification rang in Minhyuk's ears the moment he stabbed the Great Spirit's mouth.

Immediately after, eight consecutive attacks with 500% additional damage exploded throughout the Great Spirit's body.

Stab—! Stab—! Stab—! Stab—! Stab—!

“Graaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

Minhyuk immediately jumped and triggered the Heaven Tearing Sword the moment he saw the Great Spirit shriek and trash around.

Piiiiiiiing—

A five meter long sword light with an additional 3,500% attack hit the beast directly.

Piiiiiiiing—

It had to be known that the Heaven Tearing Sword was no longer a sword strike that cut, but a sword strike that pierced. In other words, the attack went through the Great Spirit's body and even broke the wall behind it.

[The 7% chance of forcing the enemy into a stunned state has been triggered!]

[The opponent will not be able to move for six seconds.]

The Great Spirit was left in a stunned state and could not move. Meanwhile, Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods thought: *‘Six seconds. That's an opportunity.’*

‘However, His Majesty Minhyuk must have already exhausted most of his skills...’

‘Are we going to lose this six second opportunity just like that?’

Thankfully, Minhyuk still had a lot of skills in his arsenal.

[Thousand Swords.]

[Upon successful attack on the vital point, the Thousand Swords will indiscriminately stab the enemy with 50% of your normal damage.]

This skill was also one that targeted vital points.

Staaaaaab—

The moment his attack connected with a vital point, thousands of swords rose from the ground around him and scattered a brilliant light. The blinding light left the Swords of the Gods in astonishment as they watched it rip the Great Spirit apart.

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—

“Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!”

At this point, they thought: *‘He really shouldn’t have any more skills, right?’*

But then, the word ‘Destruction’ appeared in golden light on the blade of Minhyuk’s sword.

[The Destruction Mode’s 35% chance of triggering sixteen bloody lightning bolts with an additional 1,600% damage for every enemy has been triggered.]

Slaaaaaaaaash—

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

Immediately after that, sixteen bloody red lightning bolts fell from the sky and devoured the Great Spirit’s body. It even triggered a three second stunned state! The Great Spirit, who was almost released from the previous stunned state, was once again forced into another stunned state.

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

With every attack that Minhyuk sent, a tremendous storm of lightning would fall down and put pressure on the Great Spirit.

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

At that moment, Mandala made a move. He threw a bottle of red potion in order to save the Great Spirit that had fallen into consecutive stunned states.

Baaaaaaang—

“Like the Wind.”

Minhyuk escaped the area at the speed of light. As quickly as he escaped, he moved to narrow the distance between him and the Great Spirit once again.

Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods all made eye contact.

“This, this time, perhaps all of his skills have been used up?”

“P, probably...?”

‘There is no way that he has any more skills, right?’

“Hundred Swords.”

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaa—

A sea of blades that contained hundreds of swords spread out and devoured the Great Spirit. The incredible power that could deal 4,000% damage per second was released! It could even inflict an abnormal status and make it difficult for the opponent to breathe!

Devastated by the tsunami of blades, the Great Spirit had no choice but to suffer 4,000% damage per second.

“This time, for sure...”

“There’s no more.”

Contrary to their expectations, Minhyuk flew up and stabbed his sword down on the head of the Great Spirit.

“Continent Destroyer.”

Baaaaaaaaaaaang—

Blazing lava spurted out as the ground exploded, inflicting continuous damage to the Great Spirit.

“This time...”

“There’s no...”

“Sword of Tempest.”

.

However, the new skill that they had helped produce was triggered. The skill immediately produced a sword.

[The typhoon-like sword with an ego has been summoned.]

[Please choose a ‘name’ for the typhoon-like sword.]

Minhyuk quickly gave a name to the sword. “Stormy.”

Swoooooooooosh—!

[Sword of Tempest.]

[Hundreds of blades will appear and dance around the typhoon-like sword that has an ego of its own. The skill user's basic speed will increase by 150% and apply to the blades that cut down the enemies.]

[Movement speed will also increase by 300% during the skill duration.]

[The skill duration is three minutes.]

The sword known as 'Stormy' shone brightly and put a huge amount of pressure on the Great Spirit by releasing hundreds of sword blades.

Swoosh—!

"...This time, for sure..."

"There should really be none anymore."

"Probably."

But then, Minhyuk took a potion out of his inventory and drank everything in one gulp.

[You have consumed Mandala's Elixir.]

[Your HP and MP have recovered to 100%.]

[All of your skills' cooldown time has been reset.]

"Sword of Absolute Death."

Stab, stab— Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—!

"Rampant Sword."

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—!

"Graaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

"Hundred Swords."

Baaaaaaaaaaaaaang—

"???"

"???"

"???"

"???"

Question marks popped up in the heads of Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods as Minyuk released another flurry of skills.

"That..." The fifth Swords of the Gods, Revor, said, "Aren't we just standing idly by and watching as His Majesty Minhyuk hunts...?"

"..."

"..."

“...”

“...”

It seemed like Revor was someone who could not f*cking read the room.

Chapter 749: The Life Elixir

Mandala was anxious. He had been cursed to die the moment he left this place. He knew this fact very well. That was why he was desperate. He was left with no choice but to kill all of the people that came to this prison.

‘I don’t want to die...!’

Of course, he carried resentment and hatred toward the gods. He even cursed them more than a hundred times in a day. In truth, Mandala had only done his best to make potions so that his weak wife could live a long and healthy life.

He never wanted any gold, silver or treasures. He did not even want to make potions to reap the lives of many on the battlefield. All he wanted was to make a potion that could save a life. However, Mandala’s talent had caught the attention and jealousy of the gods. And one day, he found himself suddenly trapped in this place.

‘I wonder what happened to my wife?’

Back then, his wife was heavily pregnant. Many had told Mandala that his wife might die giving birth. After all, there were many cases where those already with weak bodies grew even weaker after having children.

That was the reason why Mandala gave it his all and created a potion. It was called ‘Mandala’s Elixir’. However, even after he completed the potion, he was not able to give it to his wife. Because he had suddenly found himself trapped in this damn place.

Every day, he felt curious. *‘Did my wife live a long time with our child...?’*

Mandala had always been more concerned about them than he was about himself. Of course, he was aware that they would not have been very happy, especially since he had suddenly disappeared from them. However, even though he had not been there, he wondered if his wife was able to give birth safely.

‘Did she live until her hair turned white?’

He was just curious about that. He wanted to get out of this place someday and find out what happened to them.

Clang—!

Mandala threw a potion.

Fwiiiiiiiish—

[The Great Spirit’s HP and MP have recovered to 50%!]

The HP that Minhyuk had painstakingly taken off recovered quickly. Fortunately, the skill restriction placed upon Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods had been terminated.

“We can finally play an active role now...” Knight Commander Don muttered excitedly.

Just like what the 5th ranked Revor said, they were also wondering what would happen if Minhyuk, who had almost killed the Great Spirit, successfully finished the job himself.

Vwoooooooooong—

Blue energy appeared and surrounded the bodies of Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods. It was the power of divinity.

Baaaaaaaaam—

Don shot forward and used his ability to cut down the Great Spirit.

Piiiiiiiiiiing—

The Great Spirit burst into a loud scream as its scales got torn apart from the attack.

“Graaaaaaaaaaaa!”

‘As expected, they can deal a huge amount of damage.’

Slaaaaaaaaash—

Minhyuk could not help but groan at the sight. Now that their skills were not restricted, they could get into proper positions and put pressure on the Great Spirit. Even though their attack power has been limited to 30% because of Mandala’s intervention, they were still able to exert that much power. Their strength truly made one speechless.

As he watched everything unfold, Mandala felt increasingly nervous. It was getting clearer and clearer by the minute that he would die, despite the fact that the Great Spirit was in a berserk state.

“...”

Mandala quickly pulled out another bottle of potion. He held the bottle tightly, his fingers gently caressing the bottle for a long time.

“Get out of this prison right now.”

“...Mandala, what in the world is wrong with you?!”

“We came here to save you.”

“Save me?” Mandala smiled bitterly, sadness apparent in his eyes as he continued, “I will die if I take even one step out of this prison.”

“...!”

“...!”

It seemed like it was not only Minhyuk, but even Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods were unaware of this fact.

“The only way for me to get out of this place is to die and be revived. But do you think that’s even possible?”

Mandala did not want to attack them either. However, it was an inevitable choice if he wanted to live. After being stuck in this place for a long time, he had long forgotten how to communicate with people. Because of that, he had failed to inform them of this fact first to make them give up and just attacked them first. Mandala was a good person at heart. That was why he was staring at the potion in his hands for a very long time. He just wanted to live.

‘Potion of Despair.’

Why did he name this potion like so? Because it would bring despair and hopelessness to both the potion user and the enemy. The Potion of Despair would reduce one’s defense and HP, leaving only 1/5th remaining upon consumption. However, it could increase all attack power, attack speed and movement speed by 1.5x. The effect would last for ten minutes.

The potion was a double-edged sword. However, if the Great Spirit consumed it, then it would become almost twice as strong as it was originally. These people would not be able to fight against it at all.

Mandala actually did not have any intention of using the potion. He was just bringing it out to threaten them.

“Go, now. Anyway, you’ll just imprison me to make potions for you if you take me away from here!”

“...”

“...”

Don and the Swords of the Gods could not even deny his words. However, they were knights who had received the orders of their emperor. They had to carry out orders no matter what.

‘If we can’t take Mandala away, then we have to at least take his legacies away.’

So, they did not back down.

“Eeeeeek! I will really use this potion...!”

However, something unexpected happened. The Great Spirit, which had always been on the defensive, suddenly turned around and charged toward Mandala at the speed of light.

Gulp—

Crack—

It devoured the potion bottle that was in Mandala’s hands before he could even react. The colors immediately drained from Mandala’s face.

“Q, quick. Run! Run away!!!”

But it was already far too late. The potion had already flowed down the Great Spirit’s throat.

[The Great Spirit has consumed the Potion of Despair.]

[The Great Spirit's HP and defense have been reduced. Only 1/5th of the original amount remains!]

[The Great Spirit's attack speed, movement speed and all of its attacks have increased by 1.5x.]

[If you successfully kill the Great Spirit while the Potion of Despair is still in effect, you will gain double the EXP!]

“Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!” The Great Spirit released a loud shriek.

“B, bastard!!!” Mandala's face turned ugly.

As it turned out, Mandala and the Great Spirit had not been in cahoots with each other. The Great Spirit's purpose was to trap Mandala in this place, while Mandala only fed it his potions so he could survive.

Mandala hurriedly pulled out another bottle of potion.

‘Potion of Reset.’

This bottle could eliminate all of the effects of the other potions applied to the body of the opponent. The effects of this bottle would be triggered by drinking or just splashing the potion on the target's body.

Craaaaack—

The Great Spirit moved swiftly and lunged at Mandala, the spears on the tip of its tail shooting forward and piercing through Mandala's body.

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—!

“Urk...!”

Mandala, whose neck was stabbed by one of the spears, had a look of anguish as he waved his hand to Minhyuk and the Swords of the Gods. Squeezing the remaining strength in his body, he used his finger to take out more potions while saying, “Everyone... quick... run...”

“...”

Don, Minhyuk and the Swords of the Gods were shocked by his actions. Even though he was about to die, he still moved to take out more potions to ensure that they could escape safely.

“I'll buy you enough time...”

Fwoooooosh—

The Great Spirit tugged the spears that pierced through Mandala's body roughly. Blood spurted out from Mandala as he fell down on his knees, his body slowly collapsing on the ground.

“...Beinny,” Mandala uttered his wife's name as his eyes slowly closed. Mandala already knew that his death was imminent. After all, even his heart had been pierced through.

.

“Damn it!!!”

Don and the Swords of the Gods released their sword lights and fired it indiscriminately at the Great Spirit. The Great Spirit's current biggest weakness was its low defense and HP. The best course of action was to kill it before it could even attempt to attack.

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

Hundreds of sword lights exploded on the Great Spirit's body. With its low HP and defense, they could tell that its body was taking on a lot of damage.

"Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!" The Great Spirit shrieked, charging at the Swords of the Gods with a speed that almost made it invisible to the naked eye. At the same time, its dragon-like tail turned into hundreds of spears that pressured the Swords of the Gods.

Slaaaaaaash—

"Keuhaaaaaaaack!"

Revor, who had been stabbed in several places by the spears, collapsed to the ground.

"Kghhhhhhhk!"

Beloch, who had been directly hit by the charging Great Spirit, felt all of his bones break.

"It, it became more powerful...?!"

"I, I don't have any more mana...!"

They needed more power to push back and pressure the Great Spirit.

At that moment, Minhyuk was trying to finish the creation of his final skill. His mind was spinning fast as he recalled the force and might that Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods had displayed earlier. He also thought about what he needed for the skill to be called a one-shot lethal skill.

A swordsmanship unfolded in Minhyuk's head, and he continued to draw the shape of the final chapter.

Slaaaaaaash—

"Keuaaaaaaaack!"

The third in the rankings of the Swords of the Gods collapsed as both of his thighs got slashed and stabbed. Just like that, the Swords of the Gods were rendered helpless, unable to put up a fight any longer. Even Commander Don, who had the sturdiest and toughest body, was in a dire situation with spears stabbed through his body all over his.

"Kghhhhhhk..."

Don slowly turned his head, blood spurting all over from his body. He could see the Swords of the Gods all over the place, bleeding and most likely on the brink of death. In fact, he was aware that he was also going to die soon. After all, he had already experienced dying once, he was all too familiar with the feeling now. Back then, Minhyuk had saved him with his only bottle of potion. Even if he died, he had to at least save his benefactor. He had to at least do that much.

“Your Majesty, this servant will stop that monster. Quick...” Don turned to look at Minhyuk. He had resolved himself to give it his all to help buy Minhyuk some time to escape.

However, Don could not utter a single word anymore after seeing Minhyuk. He felt his heart thump at the sight of Minhyuk, with his eyes closed and gesturing with his fingers in the air in front of him.

Bathump—

Don’s heart continued to thump wildly as he watched Minhyuk reopen his eyes.

[You have created the final skill of the XX’s Swordsmanship using the Six Monster God’s Skill Creation Book!]

[You have completed the creation of all of your skills.]

[Please choose a name for XX’s Swordsmanship.]

Vwoooooooooong—

Minhyuk’s hair fluttered from the fierce wind that appeared around him as he looked at the Great Spirit with a calm and quiet gaze. He was around twelve meters away from the Great Spirit.

Black energy fluttered into existence and wrapped around Minhyuk’s sword.

[You have chosen the name ‘Food God’s Swordsmanship’ as the name for XX’s Swordsmanship!]

Minhyuk uttered, “Food God’s Swordsmanship.”

Don blinked. He could swear that he just blinked once. However, the next thing he saw was Minhyuk, who was covered with black energy, already standing right in front of him. Minhyuk’s sword flashed for a brief moment before returning back to its sheath. In that instant, the body of the Great Spirit had already been cut down.

Clack—

“Final Chapter.”

“Grrrrrr...?” The Great Spirit’s throat rumbled in doubt.

“Sword of Carnage.”

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

At that moment, thirty-seven consecutive attacks tore apart the body of the Great Spirit in a split second, causing blood to spurt out of each and every single wound.

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

The Great Spirit’s body, which was slashed all over, fell flat on the ground.

Thuuuuuud—

At the same time, the notifications rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[You have completed the Food God’s Swordsmanship.]

[Food God's Swordsmanship is a 'God-rank' skill!]

[You have killed the Berserk Great Spirit!]

[The Berserk Great Spirit has consumed the Potion of Despair. EXP acquired has doubled!]

[Mandala's Growth Potion is still in effect. You will obtain thirty times the amount of EXP acquired within the potion's one hour duration!]

[The Great Spirit is a monster that does not drop any artifacts or gold. However, it gives more EXP than any other monster!]

[Failed to calculate the EXP!]

[Failed to calculate the EXP!]

[...EXP!]

[Successfully calculated the EXP!]

[You have gained 98,000,000,000 EXP!]

[You have leveled up!]

[You have leveled up!]

[...leveled up!]

[...leveled up!]

[...leveled up!]

[...leveled...]

Chapter 750: The Life Elixir

The notifications rang nonstop in Food God Minhyuk's ears. There were also world messages interspersed among them. However, Minhyuk did not have the time to check those messages right now.

One look around and he could tell that most of the Swords of the Gods had received severe injuries. One was limping, and someone was holding onto their arm that was going to fall off. Even Knight Commander Don was left speechless by the disastrous turn of events that led to this. He and the Swords of the Gods would be left crippled, on top of being unable to take Mandala away.

The worst was that Mandala was on his knees and was on the brink of dying. His tears that were dripping down his chin were a testament to how afraid he was of death. Amidst the crippling despair and misery, Mandala felt his senses slowly fade away. When a person was dying, their senses would disappear one after another, with hearing the last to disappear.

For a moment, Mandala thought that he saw his wife, Beinny, appear in front of his own dying figure. He could see her standing under the clear blue sky with the green grass around them, with a beautiful smile on her face that seemed to outshine everything else.

'Mandala, what should we name this child?'

‘If it’s a girl, then let’s name them Leny. If it’s a boy, then let’s name them Ford.’

All he wanted was for his wife and daughter to live happily for a very long time. But the gods had taken that away from him. Mandala hated the gods even at this moment as he inched closer to death.

[The Lowest God’s voice is echoing in your ears.]

“Mandala.”

Someone seemed to be calling out to him, the gentle and warm voice washing away the fear in Mandala.

[The Lowest God’s name is Food God.]

[The Lowest God is showing you care.]

Mandala hated the gods. They were selfish and petty beings. However, this god was patting his head and giving him warmth.

The Lowest God spoke in a soft voice, “You are free now.”

Pop—

Something flowed down his throat, along with an unknown sound ringing in his ears. Then, his senses, which had started to disappear, came back once again.

That was when Mandala saw the lowest, yet somehow the greatest, god kneeling in front of him with a bitter and soft smile on his face.

“...”

Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods were rendered speechless. This was because they knew the meaning of the words that Minhyuk had said just now.

‘Is he saying that he won’t take him to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom?’

‘Even though he saved Mandala’s life?’

‘No way. That’s definitely not the case.’

However, Minhyuk drove it deeper with his following words.

“On behalf of the gods that persecuted you and locked you up in this place, because they were jealous of your talents, I apologize.”

Minhyuk grabbed Mandala’s hand. He had heard the man mutter to himself, even on the brink of death, about how his wife and daughter were, about how he just wanted to live a normal life.

“I will not ask you to come to our Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. And...” Minhyuk turned his head to look at Don and the Swords of the Gods. “So will they. Mandala. You are now free. Go, go and find the traces of your family. I will definitely help you.”

“...”

Mandala could not say anything.

[Some of the gods that have trapped Mandala are looking at the Lowest God in anger!]

[They may become hostile toward you for tarnishing their reputation!]

Mandala also heard how those self-centered and selfish gods would try to restrict and restrain Minhyuk. However, Minhyuk just looked at the sky above them and said, “Don’t worry. I’ll make sure to punish those damn gods that put you in this situation.”

Mandala stared at Minhyuk’s soft and gentle eyes. Then, a soft smile appeared on Minhyuk’s face as he said, “But before that, I have a favor to ask you. Please save them.”

Minhyuk turned around and looked at the Swords of the Gods, whose bodies were ripped apart and broken down by the Great Spirit. Mandala was the one who created the Mandala’s Elixir. Healing them was but an easy thing.

Mandala slowly nodded. “I understand.”

He had been locked up in this prison for a very long time. Because of that, he was able to create many potions. Mandala slowly approached Beloch. Beloch’s bones were broken. One look and one could tell that he was having a hard time moving. Mandala poured the contents of one of his potions and let Beloch drink it. At that moment, Beloch, who was struggling from the throbbing pain brought about by his broken bones, felt his bones move and rebuild themselves.

“...”

At the same time, he felt greed for Mandala. However, Beloch knew his position. Only Minhyuk could ask Mandala to go with him. Because he was the one who saved Mandala.

This time, Mandala approached the Sword, who got both of his legs pierced through by spears and poured potion directly on the gaping flesh.

Sizzle—

As the potion washed over the gaping wound, new flesh regenerated, and it was healed. Everything happened in a blink of an eye, bringing a huge shock to everyone. That was how ridiculously powerful Mandala’s potions were. Of course, those potions were not something that Mandala could make freely.

Then, Mandala moved on. This time, it was Revor. He had lost one eye during the battle with the Great Spirit. It had gone completely blind. He was taken aback to be able to see the world again just after the potion washed over his eyes. With that, Mandala had saved everyone.

Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods looked at Minhyuk and Mandala in gratitude. That was especially the case for Minhyuk. This was because Minhyuk was the one who saved Mandala with a mysterious potion, who in turn saved the rest with his own potions.

In other words, Minhyuk had indirectly become a benefactor to all of them once again.

[You have received Beloch’s favor.]

[Your favor with Beloch has already reached MAX.]

[...Revor’s favor.]

[Your favor with Revor has already...]

Meanwhile, Mandala was wondering to himself. He knew that even with the Mandala's Elixir, the elixir that he made, he would not be able to save himself. After all, he was already as good as dead earlier.

'How was he able to save me with a potion?'

"It's an item I got from the Six Monster Gods. It's Gaerna's Life Elixir."

"..."

Mandala had heard about Gaerna's Life Elixir. It was a potion that could save even the dead. It was basically a potion with a value that could not be measured. However, the man in front of Mandala had given him the potion so readily.

'You are free now.'

Mandala's preconception about the gods had started to change. To be exact, his views about Minhyuk had started to change. In response, Mandala said, "You can have everything here."

"...?!"

"...!"

"...!"

Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods were all petrified with shock. Those words meant that Minhyuk would receive all of the potions that Mandala had created himself.

[You have become the owner of all of the potions that exist inside the prison.]

[You have acquired the 'Blue Liquid Salt' through Mandala's Treasure Hunting Map.]

[You have acquired 485 Mandala's Bomb Solution.]

[You have acquired 2 Potions of Destruction.]

[You have acquired 57 Mandala's Panacea for the Developing One.]

[...Mandala's...]

[...Mandala's...]

[...Mandala's...]

As he listened to the notifications that rang in his ears, Minhyuk realized just how astronomical the value of the items in this prison was. Then, Minhyuk received a whisper.

Minhyuk had immediately asked for Informant Abel's help the moment he heard Mandala's words earlier. For Informant Abel, cases where he needed 'Ordinary Information' could be easily found within thirty minutes through a hologram.

Minhyuk wrote down the information that he received and handed it over to Mandala. "Go here. What you're looking for is here."

Mandala looked at the note for a very long time. He held onto the paper tightly and nodded while biting his trembling lips. Then, he slowly walked out of the prison.

Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods' jaws dropped open.

'He's really just going to let the man go like this?! That excellent and very talented Mandala?!'

Mandala looked back at Minhyuk as he was departing and asked, "What is the name of your kingdom?"

"It's the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom."

Mandala reflected on the name as he completely walked out and escaped the prison. Seeing him disappear, Knight Commander Don and the Swords of the Gods looked helpless.

"Is it... really alright to send him away like that?"

Minhyuk looked puzzled at Don's question. So, Don continued, "If you take Mandala to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, you will be able to gain a lot of power."

"Don. What you said is just proving what Mandala was saying earlier, no? That you're going to lock him up and force him to make potions?"

"But... Your Majesty, Gaerna's Life Elixir is a very valuable..."

"I have also received a lot. Besides..." Minhyuk looked at the place that Mandala disappeared from. "What's good in having someone by your side when you haven't won their hearts?"

"..."

"..."

"..."

Those words struck the hearts of Don and the Swords of the Gods deeply. They felt like they finally knew why there were many talented people that stayed in the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom, and why they were all willing to throw everything away for Minhyuk's sake.

As for Minhyuk, there was this indescribable feeling welling up in him, telling him that he would be able to meet Mandala again.

Mandala realized that seventy years had passed since he had been locked up. Following what was written on the piece of parchment that Minhyuk handed over to him, he was able to arrive at a quaint village.

The village was so small that it did not take too long for Mandala to find the person that he wanted to find. However, that person was not at home. So, Mandala asked the people and went to where she was.

There, he saw two tombstones. One of the two tombstones had the words ‘Dearly Beloved Mother, Beinny’. Standing in front of the tombstone was a lady with a head filled with white hair. She was standing and looking at the two tombstones silently while holding an old fairy tale book in her hands. The moment Mandala saw her, he knew that she was his daughter, Leny.

“You’re finally here, Father.”

“...”

Mandala was surprised to hear that Leny, who had now become an old lady herself, could recognize him. However, that did not stop him from hugging his daughter and crying his heart out for a very long time.

After talking with his daughter, he found out the reason why she was able to recognize him. Leny handed over the fairy tale book in her arms and said, “Mother wrote this fairy tale book. So that we won’t forget you.”

“...”

Mandala held the fairy tale book and slowly started to read it.

[A long, long time ago, there was a man living in a small village who liked to make potions.]

[One day, that man fell in love with a woman.]

[The man climbed mountains and crossed seas to make a potion for the sick and frail woman.]

[The man created a potion that shocked even the gods.]

[And one day, the man suddenly disappeared.]

[The people said that the gods were jealous of the man and took him away.]

[Time went by, and the woman gave birth to a beautiful daughter.]

[The woman believed that even if the man was not by their side, everything that she had right now was because the man loved her.]

[The daughter grew up listening to the man’s heroic story.]

[And finally, one day, the man that disappeared came back.]

[The cool and handsome father, the beautiful and kind mother, and Leny lived happily ever after.]

It was a fairy tale book that started and ended with a childish tone. However, Mandala knew that the gods had erased everything related to him in the memories of the people. It seemed like before his wife, Beinny, could forget, she made this fairy tale book to remember him by.

Mandala turned to look at the tomb that was right beside Beinny’s own. It was a tomb that was made for him. The words written on the tombstone were the same words written at the end of the fairy tale book.

[We will always remember you, Mandala.]