

## Gourmet 901

Chapter 901

Active Skill

•*A thousand swords engulfed in fierce and blazing flames carrying an additional 2,000% attack power will fall from the sky.*

•*The swords engulfed in flames will shoot out flames with an additional 1,300% attack power and devour an area with a five-meter radius. Around 30% of the thousand swords will explode in fire and tear the enemy with an additional 1,000% attack power four times in a row.*

The skill was just at Level 1, but it was already ridiculously overpowered. Not only that, it could also shoot out flames and devour an entire area within a five-meter radius.

Baaaaaaaang—!

Booooooooooom—!

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang—!

“Keuaaaaaaaaaaack!”

“A- aaaaaaaaaaack!”

Even now, the swords engulfed in flames continued to fall upon and devour the Luvien Imperial Army. The enemies that were consumed by the fire received 1,300% damage. The troops that survived the initial attack? They struggled to escape the flames. However, wind blades flew four times in a row and ripped their bodies apart.

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh—!

The Luvien Imperial Army collapsed in just a blink of an eye.

[Bastien has been forced to log out!]

[Bastien is one of the Luvien Empire’s Swords of the Gods!]

[You have gained 333,054,000 EXP!]

[You have gained 664 platinum.]

[You have acquired the Summoner’s Flute.]

[You have killed Commander Ellen!]

[Commander Ellen is a precious talent that the Luvien Empire cherishes!]

[You have gained 163,000,000 EXP.]

[You have gained 210 platinum.]

[You have killed Knight Koroin.]

[Knight Koroin is a precious talent that the Luvien Empire cherishes!]

[You have gained 64,000,013 EXP.]

[You have gained 31 platinum.]

[You have acquired the Luvien Empire's Knight's White Sword.]

The dungeon manager could obtain EXP from those who died inside the dungeon. They could also collect the drops that the dead left behind. Of course, following the rules of the dungeon, Minhyuk should also be able to take out a reward worthy of the level of the dungeon's mobs whenever they were killed.

However, they were being swept away. The troops of the Great Luvien Empire and their Swords of the Gods died either from being burned by the flames or torn apart by the blades. And in just a blink, the powerful wave of power that Duke Ruffiso sent had been completely offset, disappearing into nothingness.

*'The only thing that I find regrettable is that Calamity does not distinguish between friend or foe and will kill whatever is in its path.'*

Because of that, Minhyuk could not concentrate this attack on a specific target. However, Duke Ruffiso could not understand this. He could not return to his senses after receiving the brunt of the thousands of swords. The worst part? There was still a powerful force that tore his entire body apart and forced a groan out of his mouth.

Crackle—!

Then, at that moment, Minhyuk walked through the remnants of the flames and swung his sword with both hands as he passed by Ruffiso.

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

The Sword of Carnage, which received the effects of the Dual Swordsmanship Technique, cut up, tore apart, and made blood spurt all over the body of Duke Ruffiso, the Luvien Empire's Star.

"Keughhkh!" Duke Ruffiso groaned as he fell on the blood that spurted out of his body. He struggled to remain standing and supported his body with a sword.

*'If Brod and Elpis did not inflict such a severe injury on him, then I would have certainly lost this fight. The outcome would have been the same had Conir not become a Sword God and appeared here.'*

Several things have overlapped and allowed Minhyuk to obtain this victory.

"Do you think that you can declare that the Luvien Empire will collapse just because you killed me?!"

Duke Ruffiso was fully aware of what kind of empire the Luvien Empire was. They still had two more dukes that were far stronger than him. And Nerva Sephiroth? He was as strong as them. No, perhaps he was even stronger than them.

“Kneel and admit the mistakes that your Beyond the Heavens Empire has committed! Kghhk!”

When death was close, Duke Ruffiso became an ordinary man out there. He still had something to do.

*‘The secrets of my birth.’*

Duke Ruffiso wanted to know the truth. Was he truly a child slumbering inside a basket lowered by the angels from the sky into the Luvien Empire? Because of that, the people began to say that Duke Ruffiso was born from the ‘transcendents.’ He had never met his parents, and he wanted to meet them. Or at least hear news about them.

*‘That’s right. So I can tear them to death!’*

Frankly speaking, Ruffiso knew that he was just abandoned. He had been an orphan ever since he was a child. As for the angels bringing him down on the ground? That was just him trying to meet the expectations of others.

Ruffiso hated them, the damn bastards that abandoned him. So he could not die yet. He still had to live so he could spit on their faces and tear them apart.

*‘Just a bit more, and I could have found them...’*

He was just about to find the traces of the Transcendentals!

“The Beyond the Heavens Empire will never be able to defeat the Luvien Empire!”

“Perhaps so.” Minhyuk looked down at Ruffiso with a cold gaze. “However, sitting back and doing nothing would be more foolish. This is us taking that first step.”

Duke Ruffiso’s eyes were wide open, his gaze sharp as he looked at Minhyuk until his final minute. Swoosh—!

But Minhyuk did not show him any mercy. The number of people that Duke Ruffiso had killed was high enough to build a mountain.

Thud—

The sound of Duke Ruffiso’s head rolling on the ground signaled the end of the battle. When Minhyuk looked around, he saw everyone, with Conir’s exception, had died.

[Duke Ruffiso has died!]

[This sad news will be delivered to the Luvien Empire!]

[You have killed Duke Ruffiso!]

[You have gained 2,866,413,000 EXP.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have gained 113,310 platinum.]

[You have acquired 'Something that He was Chasing' containing Duke Ruffiso's resentment and hatred.]

[You have acquired the Seven-Colored Elixir.]

[...acquired the Star's Armor.]

[You have acquired the Sun's Salt.]

The notifications rang constantly in Minhyuk's ears. It was immediately followed by the notifications from the Right to Rule a God-Rank Dungeon Once.

[The losses incurred during the operation of the dungeon will now be listed.]

[You have dropped a total of 98,513 platinum.]

[You have lost a total of 6,545,000,001 EXP.]

[You have lost three God-rank Artifacts.]

[You have lost four God-rank skill books.]

[You have lost 42 Legendary rank Artifacts.]

[you have lost 16 Legendary rank skill books.]

[...lost...]

[...lost...]

The items, EXP and gold, that mobs would drop inside the dungeon would be shouldered by the dungeon manager, who, in this case, was Minhyuk. The notifications alone were enough to break his heart.

[The profits you have gained during the operation of the dungeon will now be listed.]

[After considering the platinum you have dropped, you have gained a total profit of 76,564 platinum.]

[After considering the EXP you have lost, you have gained a total of 55,444,000,010 EXP.]

[You have leveled up.]

[...leveled up...]

[You were able to recover two out of the three God-rank Artifacts that you have lost and were able to obtain two more God-rank Artifacts.]

[You were able to recover two... of the God-rank skill books... obtain three...]

[You have recovered all sixteen Legendary rank skill books...obtain 31...]

As it turned out, his benefits outweighed the losses. Of course, it was only natural. They were the best of the Luvien Empire. They would drop more special, valuable, and outstanding items than others. Not only that, but they recovered most, if not all, of the items they had lost, too.

Additional notifications rang.

[You have used your right to rule a God-rank dungeon once. The Transcententials' Holy Land will now disappear.]

[The Transcententials' Holy Land has started to crumble and collapse!]

Everyone bore witness when Minhyuk declared war against the Luvien Empire. Surprisingly enough, they could also witness how Minhyuk killed Duke Ruffiso and wiped out the troops sent by the Luvien Empire in the dungeon. They were all curious about what future steps the Beyond the Heavens Empire would take.

Minhyuk was warped out of the dungeon and disappeared from everyone's eyes. When he reappeared, he said, "I'm hungry..."

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The Fortress of the Transcententials' Fantasy.

The amazing man, the transcendental man who helped Conir grow into a Sword God, even though he was only a legendary class figure, was drooling himself.

*'I can't forget it.'*

He could not forget the ramyeon that the boy cooked for him. He clearly remembered how he *slurped* the noodles and drank the spicy soup until his nose turned sweaty.

*'I liked the taste of that ramyeon. A pity I can't get out of this fortress.'*

Conir was only supposed to reach a certain point. He was just deliberately allowed to enter the Second Gate. Why? Well, the reason was simple.

*'It's because he had food.'*

He could not leave this fortress. And it has been thousands of years since they had been here. What did they eat inside this place?

"Ugh... I don't want to eat any more of those shitty bugs."

The only reason the man survived for that long was because he killed and ate the mobs that lived on the first floor of the fortress. For thousands of years, he ate those mobs so that he almost felt like his taste buds were growing numb and no longer working.

But then, a boy who was good at making ramyeon appeared before him. And that was not all. The boy was studying how to make dishes from *Gimbap Heaven* and making plenty of related dishes. With every dish that the boy made, his awe and admiration grew more and more.

In the end, he could not endure. The desire that he had been reigning in exploded! At that moment, the shitty bug in front of him exploded.

"I'm sick of these bugs. I'd rather fight against High Sorceress Helenia again than eat them!"

Surprisingly enough, the man was one of the main contributors to sealing the Immortal Sorceress Helenia.

“I don’t want to eat dishes made out of these shitty bugs, the snout of the basilisk, or scorpion brains anymore. Every time I eat those dishes made from the snout of the basilisk, I feel like I’m kissing a crocodile!”

The worst part? The mobs that they could eat or the parts of the mobs that they could eat were extremely limited. The man who fought against one of the Eight Pillars was fighting against his supposed side dish of the day.

“Conir said that his ‘hyung’ makes *very* delicious dishes.”

Just thinking about an ordinary dish was enough to make the man feel really good and happy.

“I want to eat the food that he makes!”

Groooooowl—!

The unidentified transcendental hugged his grumbling stomach as he continued complaining about the dishes he was eating.

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At the same time.

Minhyuk smiled happily as he looked at Conir. This was because a table filled with dishes from *Gimbap Heaven* was spread out before him. There were servings of tteokbokki, tuna gimbap, ramyeon with eggs, jjolmyeon, tonkatsu, and even udon in front of him.

He excitedly scooped up a mouthful of the still-steaming ramyeon noodles and put it in his mouth.

Sluuuuuuuuuurp—!

The noodles were chewy and spicy. Conir was truly the best ramyeon chef in the world! Then, Minhyuk scooped up the well-cooked egg that had not dissolved into the soup and put it in his mouth. Delight overcame Minhyuk when the egg touched his taste buds.

“Kgghhk...!” Minhyuk moaned in admiration as he grabbed the tuna gimbap off the table. “Wow... Conir, you’re quite good at making gimbap!”

Minhyuk was amazed. If one went to *Gimbap Heaven*, they would see that the tuna inside their gimbap was so little to the point that they wondered if they were eating tuna gimbap or just plain gimbap. But the cheap tuna gimbap that Conir made was filled with tuna!

“Conir studied this for five years so that Conir could make it for hyung!”

That was right. Conir practiced making those *Gimbap Heaven* dishes during the five years he spent training in that fortress. Of course, he used up a lot of ingredients to make them. He even went so far as to imagine the process when he ran out of ingredients to use. And these dishes in front of Minhyuk resulted from all that hard work.

A happy and contented smile appeared on Minhyuk’s face when the rich flavor of tuna entered his mouth when he took a bite of the tuna gimbap. There was also the mild mayonnaise and the distinct taste of the perilla leaves that complemented the various ingredients that were mixed in this roll.

“Wow...”

The flavor was worthy of admiration. Minhyuk took several bites out of the gimbap in quick succession. When he grew thirsty? He would grab the bowl of ramyeon and take a sip of the refreshing and spicy soup.

*“Sluuuuuuuuuurp!”*

The spicy soup helped ease the food down his throat.

“Kghhk...!” Minhyuk burst out in admiration.

Without realizing it, Minhyuk had focused almost all of his attention on the tuna gimbap. That just went to show how delicious the tuna gimbap was. Because of that, the tuna gimbap disappeared in a blink.

*“Munch, munch... Ah, what a pity...”*

Then, notifications rang in his ears.

[You have eaten the Tuna Gimbap made by someone who has studied the art of making tuna gimbap for five years!]

[Your STR has increased by 0.7%!]

“Lucky?”

It was an incredibly amazing tuna gimbap.

Chapter 902

Conir heard Minhyuk mumbling about *Gimbap Heaven* before he left with Sword God Valen. So, as an innocent and pure boy, Conir had vowed to make those dishes for his beloved hyung once he returned.

NPCs did not have the inventory function. However, countless artifacts could play this role for them, just like the *Hefty Pocket* that was distributed to some of the vassals of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. The Hefty Pocket was an artifact that could hold around a hundred kilograms and was quite expensive. They were around a hundred platinum each.

Conir had brought a Hefty Pocket filled with cooking ingredients. For five years, whenever he finished training, he would use these ingredients to practice making the dishes from *Gimbap Heaven*. Conir only sold ramyeon because he liked ramyeon. However, he started trying to learn other dishes.

“Conir worked hard for five years to make hyung happy! Conir ran out of ingredients during the process, but I practiced in my head!” Conir happily shared his experience when he saw Minhyuk finish the tuna gimbap.

*‘Conir is a very special NPC. He has the power to create quests on his own.’*

This was all thanks to Conir’s passive skill, *Tenacity*. Minhyuk felt his eyes grow misty. He could tell that Conir had gone through dozens of quests through this passive skill so that he could make dishes from *Gimbap Heaven* that could give him something whenever it was eaten.

So, what should Minhyuk do to reciprocate Conir's care and love? Of course, it was to eat it more happily and enthusiastically.

"Maybe it's because my dear Conir is the one that made it; that's why it tastes even better?"

"Conir is happy! Conir feels very happy!"

Minhyuk smiled faintly when he saw Conir looking all happy. There was still a lot of food left.

Minhyuk quickly stretched his chopstick toward the chewy jjolmyeon covered with halved eggs and shredded cucumbers, carrots, lettuce, and bean sprouts. After mixing everything, the jjolmyeon looked quite glossy and very tasty. He quickly picked up a mouthful of noodles and vegetables covered with the red sauce.

*"Sluuuuuuuuuurp!"*

The spicy and chewy noodles immediately greeted his mouth when he took a bite.

*'Jjolmyeon should have a lot of vegetables.'*

The crunchy vegetables added a touch of flavor to the chewy noodles. Minhyuk continued to eat jjolmyeon while pouring some sauce over the tonkatsu and cutting it.

*'Kghhk. As expected of Gimbap Heaven, it's really worth every penny.'*

Wasn't it amazing? Even if he ate all these, he would only need to pay around 25,000 won. After cutting the tonkatsu, he picked up his fork, took a large piece into his mouth, and mumbled, "Kghhk..."

The tonkatsu had turned slightly soggy with the sauce, but the taste was still excellent. When Minhyuk's mouth felt dry, he gulped down the remaining soup from the ramyeon bowl he had finished earlier.

"Keuhaaaaa!"

Unfortunately, the ramyeon had no special abilities like the tuna gimbap earlier.

*'Well, Conir was originally already a master of ramyeon. He did not need to study it anymore.'*

Of course, whether those special effects were there did not matter. Minhyuk was just grateful for the chance to eat this meal. He had already finished eating the jjolmyeon before him in just a blink.

[You have eaten the Jjolmyeon made by someone who has studied the art of making jjolmyeon for five years!]

[Your attack skill's attack power has increased by 1.6%!]

And the same was true for the tonkatsu.

[You have eaten the Tonkatsu made by someone who has studied the art of making tonkatsu for five years!]

[Your HP and MP volume have increased by 0.8%!]



[You have eaten the Tteokbokki made by someone who has studied the art of making tteokbokki for five years!]

[Your skill cooldown has decreased by 2%!]

The meal was very satisfying, both the taste and the rewards.

Just then, Haze entered, saying, “Your Majesty, our migration rate has increased by around three times more than usual. We expect this rate to be maintained for the time being.”

“Is that so?” Minhyuk sounded as if he expected this to happen.

They not only meant to weaken the Luvien Empire by killing all of the Luvien Imperial Army with this dungeon attack but also to make the Beyond the Heavens Empire grow stronger. Before Minhyuk had triggered the episode related to the dungeon, he had already met several empires and kingdoms. They had already promised to confront the Luvien Empire with the *Beyond the Heavens Empire* standing at the forefront and acting as their main pillar.

“The Luvien Empire is currently in the process of Duke Ruffiso’s funeral. The nations that have declared war against the Beyond the Heavens Empire are still silent.”

They expected that this situation would remain for quite some time. Now that many people had joined hands with the Beyond the Heavens Empire, the other nations that had declared war against them would not be able to take any reckless and hasty actions against them. The Luvien Empire had lost Duke Ruffiso and many elite troops. They desperately needed reorganization.

Meanwhile, the nations that were hostile to the Luvien Empire were all prepared for war and were ready for combat. Of course, the same was true for the Beyond the Heavens Empire. If the Luvien Empire gathered their troops immediately and launched an attack, they might win but suffer huge damages.

“I also found the whereabouts of the person that you told me to find.”

“Well done, Haze.”

“Will you be going in person?”

“I have to go in person and show our gratitude.”

“Also, Your Majesty.” Haze smiled faintly at Minhyuk. “I think Your Majesty can eat something delicious just like usual.”

“Mhm...” Minhyuk groaned.

The probability of the Luvien Empire attacking them was very low, even if the Beyond the Heavens Empire was obviously at war. But Haze was thinking differently.

“Your Majesty always brings something back whenever you come back, right?”

Every time Minhyuk left to eat something delicious, he would come back stronger or perhaps bring something special back, just like the right to rule the God-rank dungeon they used this time.

Haze and the executives had talked about this matter before.

*–Minyuk should go out and look for delicious food rather than stay here and do his job as an emperor.*

*–Yes. Even if he only eats delicious food, he will still be able to help the Beyond the Heavens Empire.*

*–Haze. I have checked the accounts. Strangely enough, when Minhyuk leaves his throne and returns, our Beyond the Heavens' funds will always experience a significant jump. Not only that, the number of migrants would also increase.*

That was certainly the case. Whenever Minhyuk went out, he would attract migrants or bring huge funds back. It would be a waste of time for them to keep Minhyuk back here to run the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

“I believe in you, Your Majesty. Fufufufufu.” Haze left the office, a crafty smile on her face.

“Conir! It's been a while since Conir greeted the people!” Conir shouted as he stepped out of the office with her.

Minhyuk leaned back on his chair as he watched the two leave. He ate the *Gimbap Heaven* dishes that Conir made for him when he returned from the Transcendentals' Holy Land. Because of that, he could not check the rewards he received earlier.

*‘We were able to secure additional God-rank artifacts and several legendary ones and skill books.’*

Many legendary rank artifacts and skill books they obtained would be sold. As for the God-rank artifacts and skill books, they would try to distribute them, but it was likely they would need help to meet the conditions to use them. One of the God-rank artifacts that he had obtained was the Summoner's Flute.

*‘This is an artifact that Bastien dropped.’*

It was even one of the excellent ones among the God-rank items. But even if Minhyuk gave this to someone, they would be unable to use it because of the requirements and restrictions.

*‘I think we can use it in a different way later.’*

The next best thing to the artifacts were the Star's Armor and the Seven-colored Elixir. Minhyuk was left speechless when he saw the Star's Armor Set.

*‘This is amazing...’*

However, he shook his head. In the first place, it was a set artifact that Minhyuk could not equip. However, one thing was for sure. The Star's Armor exceeded the Slaughterer's Armor. And the description written in the armor?

*‘This is a set of armor gifted by the God of Blacksmiths to the Stars.’*

In the first place, the craftsman was already ridiculous enough. The requirements written in the description were on another level.

*‘This Set Armor for the Stars can only be equipped by those that received Duke Ruffiso’s recognition. Dismantling and reassembling this equipment is only possible if you receive Duke Ruffiso’s explicit permission.’*

It was ridiculous, especially since Duke Ruffiso had already died.

*‘In the first place, it’s nigh impossible to disassemble and reassemble this artifact, right?’*

The armor that far surpassed the Slaughterer’s Armor had become something he could not devour or use. Since that was the case, Minhyuk quickly threw this to the back of his head and left behind the regret to check something else.

The next thing that he checked was the *Seven-colored Elixir*. A liquid flashing with seven colors sloshed inside the potion bottle.

“...?”

Minhyuk was left in shock when he saw the potion bottle.

“Are you telling me that the Luvien Empire’s Stars only drink things like this?”

*So that’s why they were so strong.* This thought crossed Minhyuk’s mind as he popped the bottle open and drank the contents.

[You have consumed the Seven-colored Elixir.]

[You have gained 2 STR.]

[You have gained 2 STM.]

[You have gained 2 AGI.]

[You have gained 2 INT.]

[You have gained 2 WIS.]

[Two random stats will be chosen.]

[You have gained 2 DEX.]

[You have gained 2 CHA.]

The elixir was a precious item that could increase seven stats in total by two. Then, Minhyuk checked the remaining two— *Something that He was Chasing* and *Sun’s Salt*. Minhyuk opened *Something that He was Chasing*, in the form of a book. The information immediately flashed in his head when he opened the first page.

Below were the words, letters, and records that Duke Ruffiso had written.

[The Transcententials exist. The world has hidden them. However, I found some clues and traces that the transcendentals have stopped High Sorceress Helenia in the past.]

*[From what I have gathered, they seemed to have hidden themselves somewhere that no one could find them.]*

[Not too long ago, I was able to find an artifact. According to the artifact, it was produced by ‘Transcendental Runevur.’ The artifact was thousands of years old and had lost its function. However, I estimate that this artifact could easily exceed God-rank artifacts.]

[I estimate that there are around twenty transcendentals.]

[I don’t know how many transcendentals are currently left in existence.]

[Perhaps my parents are among these transcendentals.]

[I can’t find any more traces. If I find them alive, I will make sure to twist their necks with my bare hands. If there’s a tomb, I will crush it into powder.]

[Transcendentals... Transcendentals. Transcendentals. Someday, I will find them all, wring their necks, tie them up with a rope, and hang them to dry out in the open air.]

The item was in the form of a diary. Minhyuk knew about Duke Ruffiso’s story. And from his words, he had assumed that the *transcendentals had abandoned him* and bred resentment and anger toward them. However, in the end, he was already a dead man.

Minhyuk closed the book and thought, *‘Transcendentals. Those who have gone beyond even the gods. So, they exist.’*

This was more than enough information. Then, Minhyuk looked at the red salt inside a tiny bottle. Duke Ruffiso had made it into a necklace and hung it around his neck. When Minhyuk lifted it toward the sun, the salt would glow a bright red.

*‘Slurp...’* Minhyuk gulped his saliva down.

Sometimes, a good seasoning could determine the overall flavor of the dish. Minhyuk quickly checked the salt’s information.

- You can trade one gram of this salt for 10,000 platinum at the Event’s Merch Store.*
- The Sun’s Salt tastes the most delicious when used as a dip for meat.*
- Even if you eat some of it, you can still sell it.*

“???”

Minhyuk was shocked.

*‘It’s worth 10,000 platinum per gram?!’*

The total weight of the salt was thirty grams, and it could be sold at the Event’s Merch Store, where people could trade like they were in an event. If he sold them all, then he would be able to get 300,000 platinum. If ordinary players acquire this, then they will be able to receive money that could allow them to cruise freely for the rest of their lives. However, that was not what made Minhyuk so shocked.

“It tastes best when used as a dip for meat?!”

This item arrived at just the right time. Minhyuk was just about to go to a place that was selling beef. He stood up and followed the directions written on the information that Haze had found out about the man he was looking for.

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Bard Erwell was an old man. However, he was once and still is the most influential bard in Athenae. Around fifteen years ago, he felt skeptical about how his life was going, so he hid his identity and opened a store. The store was none other than a beef restaurant.

Alas, this store also closed. Erwell recently sang a song that criticized the Luvien Empire. He had grown a lot older, unable to look silently as the Luvien's tyrannical acts ran rampant; he decided to sing his *Final Song* despite knowing that the Luvien Empire would come to find him.

*'I'm going to die soon anyway.'*

Erwell knew that he was going to die soon. He was suffering from a severe illness. Didn't they say that people knew how long they would live? Erwell could tell that he only had around three days left. Because of that, he did not intend to avoid them or even run away.

*'On the other hand, my death will further drag down the Luvien Empire.'*

Many would blame the Luvien Empire for his death. And that was more than enough. However, it was pretty strange. Although his mind was at ease, his entire body was shaking. Then, he saw a young man sitting down in front of him.

"You can have this for free. This is the last meal that I will serve."

"Wow! Really? Thank you!" The young man spoke politely to Erwell. He sounded grateful.

According to him, he came here from afar because he heard rumors about how delicious the beef was in this beef restaurant. The young man was around 178 centimeters tall and dressed in a shabby outfit, his stomach rumbling as if famished.

"That's one kilogram. Are you sure that you can eat it all?" Erwell asked, showing the meat on the plate. The plate had a lot of sirloin, chuck flap tail, flat iron steak, and ribs with a bright red color.

"Of course!"

"Hoho. I've given you a lot since you're my last customer. So, eat a lot."

Then, Erwell thought, *'The Beyond the Heavens' Emperor.'*

Erwell gained courage because of him. Wasn't he the one who declared war against the Luvien Empire and risked his everything?

*'I hope you don't give up.'*

Erwell smiled faintly as he finally snapped out of his thoughts. He watched the man put a large piece of sirloin on the hot grill.

Sizzle—!

Erwell watched the steam rise from the grill as the meat sizzled. Then, he saw the young man take something out and place it in front of his plate.

“A red salt?”

Chapter 903

Special Players Management Team.

Team Leader Park Minggyu and Lee Minhwa looked at the monitor with grave expressions.

“Player Minhyuk was the one that obtained the Sun’s Salt.”

And just like they expected, Minhyuk would eat the Sun’s Salt. At this point, they no longer found it surprising that Minhyuk was willing to eat an item that could fetch 300,000 platinum, easily allowing someone to eat and play for the rest of their lives.

However, upon closer inspection, Minhyuk was the heir of the Ilhwa Group. It was not only that. The wealth that he had accumulated in Athenae was more than enough to catapult him into the top 20 of Korea’s business rankings. Furthermore, Minhyuk played Athenae for eating and treating his eating addiction. Something worth 300,000 platinum would not be able to shake this desire.

Ordinary players that obtained the Sun’s Salt would most likely suspect an easter egg or a hidden quest would be hidden in the item.

*‘However, even if they suspected something hidden in it, they would still choose to sell the Sun’s Salt decisively.’*

The reason was simple. Few could resist the allure of 300,000 platinum. It was too much of a reward for them to gamble on something they only suspected.

“This is a problem,” Team Leader Park said, with Lee Minhwa nodding.

“Yeah. This is a huge problem...” Lee Minhwa rubbed her chin in thought, a serious expression still plastered as she continued, “The beef will taste good if you dip it in the Sun’s Salt... this is truly a problem.”

*‘Huh? Something is weird.’*

Team Leader Park turned to look at Lee Minhwa, who was looking back at him with a puzzled expression on her face.

“???”

“???”

*‘I see. She has completely been Minhyuk-ified.’*

That was right. Lee Minhwa had completely become Minhyuk-ified. However, she would still pay attention to her job.

Team Leader Park asked, “What would happen if you eat the Salt’s Sun?”

Employee Lee Minhwa straightened up and answered, “You will probably be able to find the traces of the transcendents.” Her eyes grew wider as she opened her mouth again and said with some hesitation, “And... it would taste very, very delicious.”

“...”

Team Leader Park could only sigh as he looked at the two “Food Gods” before him.

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“A red salt?” Erwell mumbled, looking confused at the salt the man placed before his plate. The salt’s color looked quite intense like it contained the flames of the blazing sun.

“I specifically brought this here to eat beef. Fufu.”

Erwell turned to look at the sirloin placed on the heated grill.

Sizzle—

When the young man flipped it again, a loud sizzle rang as steam rose again. Erwell could not help but look at the young man in confusion as the young man smiled happily while grilling the meat that the bard had cut smaller to make it easier to eat.

*‘What the hell? Why do I feel like I want to eat it?’*

That was right. Erwell craved the beef when he looked at the young man before him. Why was this the case? Wasn’t he the owner of this beef restaurant?! He had long grown sick from the smell of meat! Erwell shook his head and focused his attention on the man.

The young man picked up a thick piece of sirloin. The outside was grilled perfectly, while the inside was still filled with juices and a bit of blood.

*‘Yes. Beef doesn’t taste good if cooked fully.’*

The young man did not dip the beef in any seasoning and just put it plainly in his mouth. The juices instantly burst and coated his mouth as he gently chewed the meat.

“Kgghhk! Amazing! This is unbelievable!”

Erwell felt like he was going crazy when he saw the man gulp down the meat in his mouth. He wanted to eat the meat that the man was eating, too! A smile flashed on his face as saliva started to pool in his mouth.

This time, the man dipped the thick slice of beef sirloin in the red salt, some of the salt dissolving and seeping deep into the thick portion of beef. Then, the young man pushed the slice into his mouth.

Chew, chew—

The taste of the salt balanced out the greasy aftertaste of the meat, his mouth chewing faster as he finished eating the sirloin right away. The young man continued to grill the beef under Erwell’s dazzled gaze. He grilled the flat iron steak and the ribs right away.

Sizzle—

The flat iron steak turned golden brown. When the young man put it in his mouth, its savory flavor exploded as he took a bite of the chewy meat. Then, the young man placed a piece of lettuce on the palm of his hands, placing two pieces of flat iron steak, garlic dipped in ssamjang, and some Cheongyang red pepper on top of it.

“...S- scallions! Add some seasoned scallions, too!”

“Of course.”

The young man gently added some scallions covered in red pepper powder and sesame oil when he heard Erwell’s passionate cries. Then, he wrapped everything up and put it in his mouth. Erwell could already imagine the fantastic combination of flavors that would explode in one’s mouth from the combination of ingredients!

This time, the young man spread some wild garlic on his palms and placed two pieces of ribs on top of it. After placing a small dollop of wasabi, he rolled the wild garlic and put everything in his mouth. The slight sweetness of the wild garlic, the intense spiciness of the wasabi, and the savory juices of the meat met and created a beautiful harmony of flavors!

“...”

Slurp—

Erwell unknowingly started to wipe away the drool dripping down his chin.

Then, the young man turned and grabbed a thick piece of chuck flap tail, which he gently placed down on the grill.

Sizzle—

Chuck flap tail had a soft texture, making it a favorite for grilling. After cooking the slice, the young man cut it into smaller pieces, grabbed one, and dipped it in the red salt.

“Wow. This salt is really amazing!” The young man shouted in awe as he scooped a huge spoonful of white rice and put it in his mouth.

After that, he began to eat and sip the spicy soup of the doenjangjjigae, his spoon scooping out the various ingredients inside, like the tofu and zucchini that garnished it. Then, he quickly grabbed his rice bowl and began mixing it with the doenjangjjigae.

*‘He really knows how to eat.’* Erwell admired the young man.

The young man scooped a huge mouthful of the mixed doenjangjjigae and white rice and pushed it into his mouth. Erwell watched as the eyes of the young man grew the size of saucers when he finished his meal. He looked at the young man in confusion and thought, *‘What’s the matter with him?’*

Erwell looked at the man for a moment. However, he knew that it was time for the man to go. He had to let the man leave right away.

*‘If they’re quick, they might arrive here by tomorrow.’*

Erwell would have to greet them by himself. Of course, it was still uncertain if they would come for him. Bards would sing whatever they felt or heard. They were free to sing whatever songs they



wanted, and it would usually be hard for nations to take away that right from them. However, after hearing what the Luvien Empire had done so far, Erwell expected they would come for him soon.

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud—

Then, at that moment, several footsteps rang from outside the restaurant.

*‘They’re truly acting within expectations.’* Erwell smiled bitterly. Then, he hurriedly said to the young man in front of him, “Go to the kitchen; there’s a backdoor there.”

However, there were still some things that went beyond Erwell’s expectations. He expected them to come for him tomorrow. But now that they were here, he assumed Nerva sent them here when he learned he sang for the Beyond the Heavens Empire. After all, this was quite far from the Luvien Empire.

Even so, nothing would change. Erwell was already prepared to die and no longer held fear for whatever was coming his way.

Baaaaaaaang—!

“Sinner Erwell! Get on your knees and surrender!”

Knights carrying the symbol of the Luvien Empire broke down the doors of Erwell’s restaurant and stormed inside. Erwell glanced at the young man sitting at the table not too far away from him.

*‘No matter how much of a bastard the dogs of the Luvien Empire are, they wouldn’t kill someone that is not involved, right?’*

Erwell smiled bitterly. “I’m glad that I was able to bring happiness to my last customer.”

He slowly stepped forward.

“Sinner Erwell. You are charged with the sin of singing a song that tarnished the name of the Great Luvien Empire!”

“Get out.”

Erwell had already let go of everything. After all, he was now just a weaker version of himself, plagued by an illness that was slowly killing him. Whether he died at their hands or because of his illness, it would still be death all the same.

No. If he died under the hands of these knights, then the Luvien Empire would be condemned by the masses. Erwell knew that his songs had already reached the ears of many people. This knowledge was more than enough for him.

However, the Luvien Empire exceeded Erwell’s low views of them. They were complete and absolute scum.

“His Majesty Nerva has ordered us to punish and kill Sinner Erwell and his family!”

“...?!?”

Erwell felt like he had been hit on the head. Executing the criminal and his family was a punishment that was given only to the traitors of the nation. However, Erwell did not belong to the Luvien Empire at all.

Sebastian, the commander of the Sixteenth Knight Order that convicted Erwell, laughed deeply. "This is the greatest punishment for an old man with little time to live. You should be grateful and humbly accept it."

Erwell had a son who hoped to become a part of the royal knights and worked hard until he became one. He saw his son tied tightly by a rope behind the laughing Sebastian.

"Why? Whyyyyy?!!!!"

His fury reached the skies. He could tell that the Luvien Empire demanded this kingdom's cooperation, and this kingdom willingly handed over his son. Hatred rose in Erwell when he realized this kingdom could not protect a single knight. There was also resentment toward the Luvien Empire for doing tyrannical acts and crossing all the bottom lines they should never have crossed.

"Father..."

Erwell's child was only twenty years old. The child worked harder than anybody else and finally became a knight at a young age. Even though he would be the reason for this child's death, his son said, "Father. I am very proud of you."

"...Evan. Evaaaaaaan!!!"

Sebastian felt like it was a pity, especially when he saw Evan telling his father that he was proud of him, knowing his father would be the cause of his death.

"Like father, like son. Both are rotten to the core." Sebastian snickered.

"Keheok!" Erwell gasped, his breathing turning ragged. His body was already in a terrible condition. It could not bear any more agitation, which he had just been subjected to.

"Urk!" Bright red blood dripped down Erwell's chin. He could hear the voice of the knight named Sebastian ringing above him as he fell to his knees.

"In the name of the Great Luvien Empire, allow me to tell you this. Sinner Erwell, you should never forget this, even if you die. Your sin killed your son. You are the reason for his death."

"Stop...!" Erwell clutched his chest, crawling forward with his hand stretched out as they forced his son, Evan, to kneel on the ground. He watched as the knight's cold blade hung over his beloved son's neck.

If not for his limited time, the Luvien Empire would also go to recruit Erwell. They coveted his talents. That was how amazing Erwell was.

"Go on, let us hear you praise the Beyond the Heavens Empire, old man."

However, this was where Sebastian was wrong. Erwell did not praise the Beyond the Heavens Empire. He praised their bravery.

The sword aiming for Evan's neck slowly rose in the air. Erwell, with his dying voice, rasped, "Please... please. Someone- anyone... please...!"

At that moment, a warm hand held Erwell's outstretched one. With a gentle smile, the man looked at Erwell and said, "This is the payment for the beef you gave me."

Minhyuk knew that Erwell did not praise the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Perhaps Erwell sang that song because he was just trying to give hope to those tired and in pain from the Luvien Empire's persecution. Or perhaps because he wanted to enlighten those blinded by their greed and self-interest, they could not see the truth behind his songs.

Minhyuk came here precisely because he expected that this would happen. Also, he wanted to show his *gratitude* to the man even if the song he sang was not for the sake of the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

"Please...!" Erwell cried, his voice hoarse as he grasped the hands of his last customer. Roll—

A head then fell and rolled away.

"..."

Erwell's eyes grew wide. The head that was on the floor, the neck that was spurting blood, the body that collapsed on the ground; it was not Evan. Instead, it was the knight who raised the sword on his son.

"You guys... you just act like I expected, huh?"

It seemed like this was done by the young man who smiled gently at Erwell. The same young man ate the beef he served with a pure and bright smile.

Sebastian led a total of thirty knights. Only after recalling this fact did Erwell come back to his senses. He knew that Evan and this young man had to run away. However, the young man's appearance slowly changed as he took one step forward after another.

"Grandpa, I will remain the same as I am today."

"..."

A bright light engulfed the young man's body as he walked forward. One glance and Erwell could tell that the young man had grown taller. With the light slowly disappearing, the young man turned to Erwell and said, "Whatever Luvien tries to take away and plunder, I will stand there to stop them and protect them. Like the song you sang, I will bet everything on the line, Grandpa."

Erwell could not take his eyes off of the man. When the light finally completely disappeared, he saw a white cape carrying the symbol of a fork and knife crossed together, fluttering behind the handsome young man holding a sword. Erwell had heard a lot about what the man looked like. He knew that the man before him was none other than the Beyond the Heavens' emperor, Minhyuk.

“Why- why is the emperor here..?!” Sebastian shouted in a fluster. However, he could no longer finish his sentence, as his head was already flying away. Did the emperor who ruled the empire come here personally to save a trivial old man?! Who would believe that?!

Erwell, staring at Minhyuk, murmured, “Perhaps it’s because he cherishes every single life that he encounters.”

A faint smile appeared on Erwell’s face. When he sang the song praising the bravery and courage of the Beyond the Heavens’ emperor, he hoped he was a good man.

“An emperor that cares and cherishes even the life of a lone and ordinary man must be a good man.”

Shwaaaaaaa—!

Stab, stab, stab, stab, stab, stab—!

The heads of the Luvien Imperial Army knights fell one after the other. Erwell, who watched the emperor’s back, suddenly received enlightenment.

*The last light of a setting sun.* This phenomenon was when the sky would turn bright just before the sunset.

Erwell could tell, *‘I will die in less than an hour.’*

However, before his death, he wanted to make his final artwork. His masterpiece. Erwell was the greatest bard of the continent. Although he did not become a god, he received the love and care of many.

Erwell stretched his wrinkled hand in the air, a music sheet accompanied by notes appearing above him. He stared at the sheet and notes and slowly waved his hand. And just like a conductor leading his orchestra, the notes followed the movements of his arms and slowly filled the music sheet until it created a score.

At the same time, notifications rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[Erwell, the Greatest Bard of the current era, has begun writing and composing the Beyond the Heavens Empire’s National Anthem!]

[Erwell, nearing his death, is showing extreme concentration!]

[Erwell was ‘inspired’ by the Beyond the Heavens’ Emperor’s love and care for everyone he encounters!]

[Erwell thinks of you and your Beyond the Heavens Empire. His speed of composing the national anthem increases significantly!]

[The God of Bards has bestowed Erwell more power to allow him to finish this score at his final moment!]

[Erwell, with his final burst of talent, created a beautiful melody that shocked even the God of Bards!]

[Erwell...!]

[Erwell...!]

[Erwell...!]

[Erwell...!]

The beautiful melody slowly escaped Erwell's lips as he hummed while he continued to compose his music. The God of Bards, listening to the old man's final burst of talent, turned Erwell's hums into a beautiful performance performed by musical instruments and relayed it to Minhyuk's ears.

“...”

Thump—

Minhyuk stopped in his tracks.

Meanwhile, Erwell smiled happily as he drew the final note of his score.

[Bard Erwell has created a ‘masterpiece’ that exceeded his limits!]

#### Chapter 904

Every empire and kingdom had a national anthem. It was like the symbol of that nation. Usually, kingdoms and empires would not change once they had designated a national anthem. That was why the national anthem was deemed much more important than it seemed.

Many nations had tried to create an outstanding national anthem. Often, dozens of famous bards, even the best of the current era, would sit together and create a national anthem. However, no nation had produced a jaw-dropping and outstanding national anthem for decades.

Among the production classes, the bard was a class that was greatly influenced by their emotions and inspirations. Because of that, the kingdoms and empires realized that making an outstanding national anthem was not in their hands. They knew that they would only be able to get an empty shell of a national anthem with a beautiful and colorful melody if they forced it. So, in the end, everyone gave up on it.

Likewise, Minhyuk had always understood the importance of having one. However, he also knew that it was impossible to force it. So, the national anthem was left empty until now.

Minhyuk nodded his head.

[The masterpiece Valiant Warriors was born from what Bard Erwell had heard, seen, and felt!]

[This song contains Bard Erwell's soul, his anticipation for the Beyond the Heavens' future, and his praise for the Beyond the Heavens Empire!]

[A ‘Legendary’ grade song has been born, the first in decades!]

[The Beyond the Heavens Empire's National Anthem, Valiant Warriors, resonates in the empire!]

[Everyone from the Beyond the Heavens Empire who heard the Valiant Warriors will receive double EXP Acquisition and Artifact Drop rates for one week!]

[The ordinary citizens of the empires that heard the song will not be tired. Their vitality would remain at an all-time high for one week!]

After killing all of the knights of the Luvien Empire, Minhyuk turned to look at the dying Erwell, who was leaning on his son, Evan. Erwell had turned everything he saw and felt and his expectations into a national anthem for the Beyond the Heavens Empire. A magnificent melody escaped from the lips of the dying man.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

A song slowly came into existence from Erwell's lips.

[Aah~ Advance. Advance. Let us advance.]

Erwell saw the Beyond the Heavens Empire's emperor, who would lead his empire to stand up against hardships and adversities.

[Strong winds and typhoons might try to stop them.]

But they would survive these storms and winds.

[But we're brave and valiant warriors. We will go through the fierce winds and raging typhoons. We will go over high hills and march under the blazing sun.]

They would march over a high hill and brave the heat of the blazing sun. But it would be fine. Erwell had seen that the Beyond the Heavens' emperor would become their *shade*.

[Even if we fall in battle, we will continue to stand back up!]

They would be able to get back up. The Beyond the Heavens' Emperor would hold their hands with his warm and gentle hands and help them stand.

Erwell's voice continued to slip out of his dry and cracked lips.

[Aaah~ We~ are valiant warriors!!!]

And finally, the song ended. Erwell raised his hands, hugging and patting his crying son.

"Evan."

"Yes, Father."

"Go and live a new life, serve a new person."

At the moment of his death, Erwell felt extremely happy and relieved. This was because he could entrust his son to the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor, someone who would come running even for the sake of one person, and not to a kingdom that abandoned them for profits.

Erwell did not have any regrets. He did not regret the fact that he sang praise for the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Erwell, who left his final masterpiece, closed his eyes in the comfort of his son's arms.

Minhyuk paid Erwell his final courtesy with a slight nod of his head.

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Minhyuk returned to the Beyond the Heavens Empire with Evan, who was carrying Erwell on his back. The moment they returned, Minhyuk ordered Erwell's funeral and held it with great sincerity. After doing that, Minhyuk checked the song Erwell made for them.

- Effects only apply to those from the Beyond the Heavens Empire who have heard or sung this song.*
- Can only be applied once a week.*
- You will receive a 3.5% increase in your physical and magical attack power.*
- You will receive a 4% increase in your physical and magical defensive power.*
- You will receive a 5% increase in resistance to abnormal statuses.*
- Your fear will disappear, and courage will resonate with you.*
- The song duration is two hours.*

Minhyuk was left shocked.

*'The effects apply to everyone from Beyond the Heavens that sing or hear the song?'*

In other words, they could obtain these buff effects permanently. Any citizen from the Beyond the Heavens could receive this buff effect by simply humming the tune of the national anthem. If the Beyond the Heavens Empire soldiers marched to battle and sang this song together, then all of them would receive the buff effects.

*'This level is beyond Legendary, no...?'*

Minhyuk was highly grateful to Erwell. However, there were still quite a lot of things that Minhyuk had to check. He had dipped the beef set that Erwell gave him in the Sun's Salt. Because he was so into the food, he failed to check the notifications that rang in his ears. So, now, he was scrolling back to the notifications he did not hear. But after checking everything, he sat frozen in his spot for a long time.

[You have eaten the Sun's Salt.]

[The ability hidden within the Sun's Salt is being revealed!]

[You ate more than one gram of Sun's Salt.]

[Your Fire Attribute has increased by 2%.]

[Your Fire Attribute will increase by 2% if you eat one gram of Sun's Salt for a week.]

Minhyuk was very shocked when he heard the first set of notifications. Did just eating a gram of the Sun's Salt increase his Fire Attribute by 2%? A 2% increase in fire attribute would typically increase Minhyuk's attack power by 1% when using a fire-attributed skill.

The surprise did not end there.

[You can now hear the story about the birth of the Sun's Salt. Would you like to listen to it?]

Earlier, before he could confirm this, Sebastian and his knights had stormed into the restaurant.

"Let's listen to the explanation."

[The Sun's Salt was originally one of Helenia's Ores, far surpassing God's Ores.]

"...!"

Minhyuk was extremely shocked.

*'This is one of Helenia's Ores?!'*

Minhyuk had met Immortal Sorceress Helenia once before. She was one of the Eight Pillars, a monster that not even the Luvien Empire and the current players could not go against.

[Helenia's ores each correspond to the four attributes. When put together, these ores allow her to express far greater magic.]

Mages put great attention into increasing all four typical attributes—fire, water, earth, and wind—in their stats. Some of the mages would end up focusing on increasing only one attribute. However, that did not necessarily mean they were on the wrong path. Why? Because when mages that focused on their fire attribute use fire-related magic, the damage they could deal would be much higher.

[High Sorceress Helenia used the power of the four-attributed ores to threaten the earth and the Land of the Gods.]

Helenia's Ores were believed to have the power to increase the power of the four attributes significantly. The worst part? It was not just one. She had all four of the attributes.

*'What the hell? How strong was she in the past?!'*

[Then, someone took away and ran away with two of her ores. One was the Sun Ore, and the other was the Mountain Ore.]

[With two of her ores lost, the power of Helenia's fire-attributed and earth-attributed magic had also weakened.]

[And the one that stole the two ores? He realized that the heat from the Sun's Ore was enough to burn almost everything around it. While the Mountain Ore frequently caused earthquakes.]

[The man succeeded in sealing the Mountain Ore using the sealing stones in his hand.]

[However, he had no way to seal the Sun's Ore. He tried to put the Sun's Ore, the ore with the heat that could burn through anything, into the Eres River that could freeze anything and everything.]

[However, the Sun's Ore began to melt the river, which could freeze anything. Worse still, he only had one week left.]

[So, he ran to the village where he lived.]



“...?”

Minhyuk was confused at the incomprehensible description.

*‘Why did he go to his village?’*

A village was a place where people lived together. Was there a way for him to seal the Sun’s Ore in the village that he used to live in? Was that why he went back there?

[They tried various ways to seal the Sun’s Ore. Also, they had to find ways to erase the energy that it emitted so that Helenia could not track it down.]

[However, it wasn’t that easy to break apart. The blacksmith that tried to smash the Sun’s Ore burned one of his arms, and it was rendered permanently crippled.]

[But finally, they found the answer.]

“...?”

Minhyuk found it more surprising that they found the solution. *In an ordinary village?*

*‘No. Wait. What kind of guy was the guy that stole the ores?’*

The question flashed in his head while the explanations continued.

[With the help of the chefs and alchemists, the village's blacksmiths began to make special artifacts.]

[The artifact could break down the Sun’s Ore and suppress the energy that flowed out of it to prevent Helenia from discovering where exactly the ore was, even if she could find them.]

[They decided to change it into a completely different type of material.]

[What they created was none other than the ‘Transcendentals’ Grinder.’]

[They put the ore into the completed Transcendentals’ Grinder and ground it from an ‘ore’ into a completely different material called ‘salt.’]

[They named it the Sun’s Salt and hid it in a small glass bottle where no one could find it.]

“...Transcendentals’ Village,” Minhyuk murmured.

In *Something that He was Chasing* Duke Ruffiso dropped when he died, there was a portion that stated that a Transcendentals’ Village existed. And from what it seemed like, they were the ones that ground the ore into salt form. So, even if Helenia found the ore, she could not see that it was the Sun’s Ore. The salt was then placed in a small bottle and turned into a necklace hung on the neck of the baby Ruffiso.

The two pieces of the puzzle, the piece that assumed that Duke Ruffiso was born from the transcendentals and the piece that stated that the Transcendentals’ Village existed, were finally put together.

Just when he was pondering the matter, he received a notification.

The smile on Minhyuk's face deepened as he thought, *'There's another one in the Transcendentals' Village.'*

The ore was none other than the earth-attributed ore, the Mountain Ore. According to the explanation, the Mountain Ore had been sealed by the one that stole the ore from Helenia. From what he could tell, the power of the Mountain Ore was enormous. However, that was not what Minhyuk was excited about.

*'The Salt's Sun is the best salt I have ever tasted.'*

It was so delicious that Minhyuk felt a thrill run down his spine. And after checking the Transcendentals' Grinder, the smile on Minhyuk's face grew wider.

*'It's called the Mountain Ore, right? I wonder what it will taste like if I make it into soybean paste?'*

Then, what would happen if he turned that soybean paste into doenjangjjigae?

*'I'm already drooling at the thought.'*

At this moment, Minhyuk's new goal was set.

*'I already have salt. So, I only need some sugar, soybean paste, and gochujang, and I will have all the best condiments in the world!'*

And from what he could tell, these condiments would have the same enormous power as the Sun's Salt.

[The secret behind the birth of the Sun's Salt has finished.]

[Fixing the reward!]

[The Transcendentals' Village has already disappeared!]

[Searching for the traces of the Transcendentals' Village!]

[Cannot find any traces of the Transcendentals' Village because of your low level!]

[Searching!]

[Cannot find any traces of the Transcendentals' Village because of your low level!]

[The Level Requirement is Level 700!]

"..."

Minhyuk's expression grew ugly. Indeed, the Transcendentals were probably at a point where no players could meet them yet. Minhyuk wondered if his dreams of making *soybean paste* using the Mountain Ore were ending right before they started.

[An unknown being gives you a hint so you can find the Transcendentals' Village!]

"...?"

Minhyuk stared at the notification in confusion. *An unknown being?*

[The hints are ‘Conir’ and ‘Sword God Valen’!]

[The secrecy and disclosure ban on Conir and Sword God Valen will now be lifted!]

Minhyuk realized, *‘Is the transcendental summoning me?’*

\*\*\*

At the same time.

Immortal Sorceress Helenia was creating her dungeons all over Athenae in preparation for her attack on Earth.

*‘I must hurry and find the Sun’s and Mountain Ore.’*

Her attribute magic could only exhibit around 70% power with only two ores.

*‘Where the hell are they?!’*

The woman was deeply troubled by this problem. However, she was unaware that the Sun’s Ore had already turned into salt that Minhyuk had used as a dip for beef, or that Minhyuk had already entertained the idea of turning the Mountain Ore into soybean paste using the *Transcendentals’ Grinder*.

Chapter 905

Conir wanted to tell Minhyuk about the strange encounters he had during his journey. However, Athenae’s power prevented Conir from revealing anything that he experienced. However, a notification suddenly rang in his ears.

[An unknown force lifts the secrecy and disclosure ban placed on you!]

[The only thing you can reveal is the location of the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy.]

The disclosure ban was being lifted, but the only thing that they were allowed to disclose was the location of the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy. Not long after, Minhyuk came to see Conir.

“Conir, can you tell me about what you know?”

Minhyuk knew that Valen and Conir had hints about where the Transcendentals’ Village was.

*‘Conir, who suddenly came back strong, followed Valen to meet with the transcendentals.’*

Minhyuk found it very shocking. It was a while ago when Conir left. However, when he returned, he was more than 100 levels stronger than before. This meant that the transcendentals helped Conir grow stronger.

Conir quickly recalled the things that he encountered before. He had a good memory and would usually always remember what he had seen once or the places where he had been. He quickly began to draw a map.

[You have acquired the Map Drawn by Conir.]

After receiving the map, Minhyuk moved without any hesitation.

\*\*\*

The man who helped Conir grow stronger and gave Minhyuk a hint was one of the few survivors of the *Albraim Race*, born from humans, but they possessed special powers.

As the members of the Albraim Race grew older, they realized that they were far more special than ordinary humans. The members of the Albraim Race possessed extraordinary powers that only those from the realm of the gods possessed. They realized they had nowhere to stand among the humans or the gods.

They tried to become gods, but the gods grew jealous and tried to kill them. When they tried to blend in with the humans, the humans refused them because they were far too strong. Because of that, the transcendentals could only seek those who were the same as them, those with transcendental powers. They gathered and created a village together, naming it Avanber Village.

There were originally around 200~300 people living in the small village of Avanber. However, most of the Albraim Races had died. Only five of them had survived up to this day. The Albraims that survived were one of the strongest and most special ones among the transcendentals.

Surprisingly enough, the man who stole the Sun's Ore and Mountain Ore from Helenia was the very same man who helped Conir grow stronger. This man told the other transcendentals, "What do you think? I did well, right? Conir said that person is the one that can make the most delicious food in the world."

"R- really?"

"Are you saying we won't have to eat centipede innards?"

These transcendentals might have the power that could go beyond the gods. But now, they would be so happy if they could just see proper food.

"Had it been hundreds... no, thousands of years? I have only eaten centipede innards ever since then. I can't believe I can eat human food again."

"Bender did a good job? Which job?"

However, it was completely understandable. They had been locked up inside this fortress for hundreds, no, thousands of years.

"Helenia will come after us once we get out of this place. So, even if we want to get out, we can't."

It was just like they said. However, some of them were exceptionally rational.

"Did a good job? Bender, you did it again. I told you not to do this, even with that boy, Conir." A tall, bald, and muscular man shook his head at Bender.

"In Conir's case, I didn't say anything because you had to do it at Sword God Valen's request. I said nothing when you allowed him to enter the Second Gate or started training him. However, didn't I give you a warning back then? I told you that you are not allowed to let someone unqualified to set foot in here. They have to be able to block the Eight Pillars on our behalf before they can set foot in here."

The man scolded the others with a serious expression. He shook his head and continued, "Pathetic. You're all blinded by the food that you're willingly bringing in a kid without qualifications to enter this place."

Bender looked at him in confusion. "But Nekk... Weren't you the one that hugged Conir and told him thank you when the boy cooked ramyeon for you?"

"You're also the one that mixed some rice in that bowl of ramyeon, right?"

"I believe you cried while eating it."

Nekk was rendered speechless. He looked embarrassed. It's not that Nekk couldn't understand what they were feeling right now. They had been eating shitty bugs, centipede innards, and basilisk mouths for thousands of years in this place. Just looking at it was enough to make them think they were going to vomit. However, they had to eat so they could live.

"Even so, you know that this isn't right."

All of the transcendentals smiled briefly when they heard Nekk's acceptance. However, they understood the reality of the matter, too. That was right. They weren't supposed to do that. They had the duty to protect both the Land of the Gods and the Earth. That was why they could not let any unqualified person enter this fortress.

"Yes, Nekk. I agree with you. I want to eat something delicious, but that doesn't mean he can come to this fortress yet," a woman said. She looked like she was a mage.

They all looked sullen. However, Bender laughed. "As expected. I really shouldn't have done that, right?"

Even though they saved the world in the past, they were left here, unable to eat anything delicious.

Then, Nekk said, "He must have already found his way here. So, I think we should use other means to send him back."

The Fortress of the Transcendentals' Fantasy had many gates. Before letting a new transcendental enter their village, they would first let them enter this fortress and undergo its trials and ordeals.

Most transcendentals that entered the fortress were inexperienced ones who did not know how to control and wield their powers. However, once they cleared one of the gates here, they would receive the teachings of the other transcendentals and grow further. Among the transcendentals here, the one with the highest record in breaking through the fortress's gates was Bender.

"Bender. What's your First Gate clearing time?"

"I think it's around six minutes."

The path that would allow one to enter the Second Gate was straightforward. All they had to do was to break through the First Gate. However, to prevent unqualified people from entering the fortress, Nekk proposed a trick, "Bender's clearing time is six minutes. So, from this moment on, only those that can clear the First Gate in seven minutes or less will be able to enter the Second Gate."

"...Are you telling them to send themselves away kindly?" Mage Bernie asked.

Bender was the last among the transcendentals to enter the fortress. However, he had the highest position among them regarding power and strength. In other words, Bender was already a strong powerhouse before he came to the fortress and became a transcendental. While he only took six minutes to clear the First Gate, others would take around ten or eleven minutes at the very least.

“That guy hasn’t even crossed the *wall* yet.”

The wall that they were talking about was the Level 700 threshold. Simply put, it was impossible for Minhyuk, who was only at Level 620, to get close to, or even break Bender’s record.

“Then, will you just let those unqualified ones enter this fortress? In the first place, he should not have been allowed to enter the First Gate yet,” Nekk spoke coldly.

However, this was the most logical and realistic take on this matter.

“I’m sorry. I brought harm to you with my reckless behavior again, just like I did in the past.” Bender smiled bitterly.

Bender was the one who stole the Sun’s Ore and the Mountain Ore, and he blamed himself for causing them trouble. However, everyone shook their heads.

“We all know that the choices you made back then and this time are for our sake.”

They all knew that Bender did this because he wanted them to eat something delicious.

Nekk soon changed the restrictions and content of the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy’s First Gate. After a while, a notification rang in everyone’s ears.

[An unknown being has entered the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy!]

Bender looked at the person who entered their fortress with a bitter smile. He thought, ‘*My mistakes have brought harm upon you. I’m sorry.*’

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Minhyuk followed the map that Conir drew for him and finally entered the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy. The moment he stepped foot inside, a series of notifications rang in his ears.

[You have entered the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy!]

[You are not qualified to enter the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy!]

[You can turn back and leave the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy!]

[If you do not leave, you must challenge a much higher difficulty level when challenging the fortress’s gates!]

[If you choose to challenge the higher-leveled Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy, then you will be able to receive greater rewards!]

Although the notifications warned Minhyuk that he would have to face a much more difficult fortress if he chose to enter, it did not stop him. Nothing could stop Minhyuk, especially after acquiring the Transcendentals’ Grinder and knowing that the one that obtained the *Mountain Ore* was inside.

*‘It’s ridiculous to judge me based on my level alone.’*

That was right. The place where the transcendentals were living had a strict requirement regarding *levels*. However, there were a few players whose powers could never be measured by their levels alone. After all, some players could easily win against a Level 599 opponent even though they were just at Level 500. A prime example of this was Minhyuk.

“I’m not leaving. I will challenge the fortress.”

Minhyuk did not hesitate at all. When he walked inside the fortress, he was greeted by a vast hall that reminded him of a colosseum.

[The trials and ordeals you will face inside the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy will vary depending on your class!]

[The system is checking you. The system will guide you to the appropriate trial!]

[You will take the most common combat class trial!]

[You will now be guided toward the First Gate.]

[In the First Gate, you must kill 150,000 Level 500 monsters!]

[You can also bring in additional monsters after killing the initial 150,000 monsters. The more monsters you hunt, the better the reward you will obtain!]

[If you wish to bring in additional monsters, all you have to do is say “Summon Monsters.” 20,000 additional monsters will be summoned.]

[Boss-class monsters will appear from time to time. Please practice caution!]

The level requirement for the fortress was originally at Level 700. However, even for a Level 700 combat class that possessed outstanding skills and significant damage, hunting 150,000 monsters at that level would still be extremely difficult. Minhyuk thought, *‘Even if one million Level 700 players challenged this gate, they would still find it hard to clear it.’* But the worst was not yet over.

[The level of difficulty has been raised! You need to hunt 150,000 Level 500 monsters within seven minutes!]

[The level of difficulty has been raised! The monsters have grown 10% stronger!]

[A ranking system exists inside the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy!]

[The ranking list for the 1st~3rd place will now be revealed!]

. Beiss. 7 minutes 29 seconds. Total Number of Monsters Hunted: 156,413.]

[You are challenging a trial with a higher level of difficulty. You will receive better rewards once you clear the gate.]

Minhyuk smiled faintly.

According to one of the Athenae experts' analysis, Minhyuk, who possessed various powerful AOE skills, was strong enough to stand among the top three strongest in the world. And this was the truth.

It had to be known that the number of players that possessed skills comparable to the power of Minhyuk's *Overlord Technique* could easily exceed a hundred. However, players with skills comparable to the Supreme Overlord's Technique, Sword of Absolute Death, and Intangible Sword were extremely few and far between. And there was also the fact that Minhyuk's skills could create great synergy.

Creaaaaaak—!

Thuuuuuuuuud—!

Creaaaaaak—!

Thuuuuuuuuud—!

Hundreds of iron cages were placed over the wide colosseum that Minhyuk entered. At that moment, the doors of the cages slowly rose on their own and released more than a hundred thousand monsters out in the open.

Minhyuk quickly made calculations. *'The more I kill and the faster I finish, the better the reward, right?'*

From what he could gather, he would be able to receive a better reward if he could break the record and create a new one. Minhyuk quickly weighed his options, taking into account the better rewards that he would receive from the transcendentals and the 150,000 monsters charging at him at a fast speed.

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The transcendentals all looked puzzled.

"Why isn't he moving?"

"Maybe he got frozen?"

Nekk shook his head. It would be strange if someone did not freeze on the spot when faced with 150,000 ferocious monsters charging at them, especially if someone had not yet crossed the wall.

"Did he give up already?"

Nekk shook his head once more. It seemed like his plans went well. "He is not qualified. And from the looks of it, he has no courage. This is good. We already know that he won't be able to carry on our pride."

A bitter expression flashed on everyone's face when they heard Nekk. However, they still nodded in agreement. A man who would freeze at such a level of fear did not have the qualifications to enter their fortress.

But then, not long after, the man that was being reflected on the crystal ball that was floating in front of them smiled. Then, he spoke.

[As expected. This would be the best course of action.]



Everyone looked confused. What was he talking about? Then, they heard the man murmur.

[Summon.]

“...?”

“...?”

“...?”

The confusion deepened on their faces. Did he just say *Summon*? The man wielded a sword. Besides, from what they heard from Conir, he had the *Food God* class and was one of the strongest of his era. Of course, they were also aware that he was an emperor. However, it was impossible to summon his vassals in this place.

“Maybe if it’s a skill...?”

They were left more confused when they heard someone’s murmur.

“What are you going on about? He’s not a summoner.”

“And he’s not a necromancer either, right?”

“And he’s also not a trainer.”

Not long after, the man finished his words.

[Immortal Knights.]

Flash, flash, flash, flash, flash—

At that moment, several people, accompanied by bright light flashes, appeared around the man. They were wearing shabby armor, helmets, and weapons in their hands. When the transcendentals saw this, they felt very relieved.

“I thought he had some kind of shocking summoning skills, but it’s just a skill to summon soldiers.”

“Well, there are kings and emperors with several miscellaneous skills in their possession.”

“Right. Besides, even if they’re excellent human soldiers, at most, they could only be on par with the monsters.”

They all clicked their tongues. However, the man who summoned the ordinary soldiers looked strangely relaxed as he looked at the 150,000 monsters before him. They saw him talk with the soldiers he summoned and wondered what they were whispering about. But then, the man pointed his sword at the monsters and spoke.

[Destroy.]

Chapter 906

The Battle God’s Immortal Knight Order was a skill that allowed Minhyuk to select twenty outstanding knights. Minhyuk considered this the best skill in his arsenal. However, it was also the

skill he was most reluctant to use, as it would permanently devour and decrease his EXP and CHA depending on how many people responded to his summons.

The players feared the permanent destruction and decrease of their stats in this game. This was especially true for high-rankers like Minhyuk, who had difficulty increasing their EXP by even 1%. However, just by using one skill, the EXP that Minhyuk had worked so hard for would disappear by the dozens.

Then, there was also CHA. The players have acknowledged that CHA was the trickiest stat to increase. Because it was a particular stat, simple SP could not increase it. CHA could only be acquired by exemplary leadership or making various achievements.

Hence, Minhyuk did not want to use this skill as much as possible. However, there were exceptions.

*‘I am willing to use this skill when the rewards are amazing enough to offset the permanent destruction of my CHA and EXP.’*

This situation was exactly that. The difficulty level of the Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy had been increased, and because of that, the rewards were much better than normal.

*‘If I can hunt more than 150,000 monsters, the rewards will grow even better.’*

A total of twelve people appeared around Minhyuk after the flashing lights disappeared. Minhyuk quickly averted his eyes when he saw the shabby armor, helmets, and torn and ragged cloaks on their body.

There was another reason why Minhyuk refrained from using the Battle God’s Immortal Knight Order.

*‘I’ll have to trouble my busy hyungs, noonas, and uncles...’*

He knew this and was very grateful they responded to his summons. However, all these people were arrogant, and gathering them in one place was challenging. After all, they often kept each other in check whenever they gathered. Minhyuk understood that fact perfectly. Thankfully, Minhyuk thought of a trick.

*‘Since the strong had gathered together, they must all be curious about one thing. They must be wondering who is more special and stronger, right?’*

Yes, that was right. They were all curious about that, but they were all very frustrated because they could not fight it out. But now, they were given a perfect opportunity to find out.

*‘Fufufu. And it’s also a chance for me to be able to hunt more monsters.’*

“How about we decide right here and now who the most superior is?”

And it was just right in time. Their frustration almost reached its peak, evident from their continued glancing at each other.

“Who is strong? Who is special?” Minhyuk asked, hoping someone would say something to follow up.

And just like he expected, someone opened their mouth and said, “Minhyuk. Don’t ask the obvious.”

The one that spoke was the soldier with a slight build, Sword Emperor Ellie.

“Everyone here must have already known who is the most special and strongest, no?”  
The voice sounded very confident that it was him.

Then, a powerful and deep male voice rang, “That’s right. Everyone should know who’s the most special. Fufu.”

The one who spoke was a man of great stature. He was the man who built a kingdom of his own, the Overlord Raldo.

Then, someone else said, “That’s right. Everyone here should know.”

Everyone believed they were the best, strongest, and most remarkable.

“Well, you guys don’t need to tell me. You should know that Mother Athenae loves me the most, right?” Saintess Loyna said.

After speaking their mind, they began to keep each other in check. That was right. In the end, they believed themselves to be the most special. Someone scoffed.

“Hoho...”

They asked each other how they could not know this while exchanging incredulous looks.

And this was an opportunity. And who was Minhyuk? A man who always took advantage of all the opportunities presented before him. He said, “Then let’s settle it here once and for all. Let’s decide who’s more special and who’s stronger. The one that kills the most monsters here is the strongest and most special.”

“Okay, let’s do that.”

“Well, that’s not too bad.”

“Alright, let’s try that. Wait for a bit.”

Minhyuk realized that it would be much easier than he thought. The powerful and frustrated Immortal Knights would give it their all. As the monsters got closer, Minhyuk raised his sword and said, “Destroy.”

When his words ended, a woman stepped forward and led the way.

Swish—

With a flick of her hair, the woman with the smallest stature made her move.

*‘Show ‘em, noona!’*

Minhyuk knew better than anybody else how talented Attention Seeker Emperor Ellie was.

*‘This is fun.’*

Ellie's talents were ridiculously absurd. Except for Sword God Valen, no one was more special than her among those present. After thinking about it, she was the person who refused the position of Sword God Descendant. And that was not all; she was the emperor with the power to unite the entire continent.

*'You think you're more special when I'm this type of person?'*

Thud, thud, thud, thud—

With her shabby armor and weapon, Ellie took one step after another. And right in front of her? There was a herd of Level 540 Raging Water Buffalo charging towards her.

Raging Water Buffaloes had high HP and mainly used their bodies to slam into their opponents, dealing massive damage. However, they were challenging to deal with because they attacked their opponents in herds. Each herd tended to have at least fifty. But now? The herd had around 2,000 Raging Water Buffaloes charging forward.

Ellie slowly raised her sword and swung it down at the Raging Water Buffalo which was leading the herd of water buffaloes.

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

At that moment, the leading water buffalo's body was torn and ripped all over, blood spurting all over the place. But it was not just the foremost buffalo; more than a thousand Raging Water Buffaloes fell and made blood rain.

With the herd of Raging Water Buffalo falling, the monsters charging from behind got tangled up, losing their balance and falling. Seeing this, Ellie began to run.

*'I am the most special!!!'*

Several hundreds and thousands of monsters fell wherever the running Ellie passed by.

[You have 1,725 monsters.]

[You have 543 monsters.]

[You have 15 monsters.]

Minhyuk was delighted when he heard the notifications constantly ringing in his ears. After a moment, another person stepped forward.

*—The one that hunts the most monsters will be standing at the top.*

He chuckled at the young man's childishness. Even if he found it childish, he still wanted to show off and prove that he was the superior one among them. With a slight smile on his face, blazing flames shot out from his sword.

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

The man pointed his sword and shot the raging black flames towards the enemies charging at him.

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

In the blink of an eye, more than 10,000 monsters were devoured by the black flames and disappeared. Then, one of the knights jumped over the giant man who shot the blazing flames. The

man was as huge as Overlord Raldo, and this very same man held a gigantic greatsword as he leaped to the skies. This man was none other than the king of millions of mercenaries, Venteio.

“Mercenary’s Pinnacle Swordsmanship.”

A roar resounded.

The manifestation of the sword attack differed between Brod and Mercenary King Venteio. If Brod used the attack, hundreds of wolves would appear. And if Venteio used this attack, a huge and powerful bear would appear.

“Final Chapter.”

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

The sword attack looked like the bear swung its front paw down. The thick and massive sword lights fell and destroyed the monsters.

*[You have hunted 42,313 monsters.]*

*[You have hunted a total of 60,000 monsters so far.]*

*[A total of 1 minute and 43 seconds have passed.]*

One of the soldiers smiled as he watched the monsters being swept away at a tremendous pace.

*‘The most outstanding race is the elven race.’*

The *soldier* was none other than the Elven King, Argon. He readied five arrows on his bow and released them all at once. The arrows flew straight towards the monsters. The moment they landed? The arrows exploded.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang—!

However, a gigantic eagle swooped down and tried to attack him with its beak.

“Oops.” Argon quickly escaped the eagle’s beak, grabbed its legs, and climbed on its back.

“Kihyeeeeeeeeeeek!”

Argon, who grabbed the eagle’s leg, centered himself on its back and flew to the skies. Then, he began to shoot his arrows like crazy. He could shoot three arrows per second, accurately landing on the enemies and killing them in the process.

One of the *soldiers* abandoned her sword, put her hands together, and took one graceful step forward after another.

A variety of monsters appeared in this place, and, of course, some of them released demonic energy. They were the undead and beings from the demon world, around 24,000 of them present. Seeing the defenseless soldiers, the undead and demons immediately charged at her.

Saintess Loyna looked around her and prayed, “Mother, please give me the power to protect myself from evil.”

At that moment, a bright light shot out from Loyna's gathered hands. The moment the bright light came into contact with the undead and demons, their flesh burned and turned into ashes.

Shwaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

A soft, gentle smile appeared on Loyna as the evil before her burned. It looked just like a movie scene.

[You have hunted a total of 80,000 monsters so far.]

[A total of 2 minutes and 12 seconds have passed so far.]

“Keuhaaaaaaaaaaaaaack!!!”

Then, at that moment, a loud roar rang loudly.

[An Armored Ogre has appeared!]

[Armored Ogre. Level 617.]

[The gate's level of difficulty has increased. The Armored Ogre has gotten 10% stronger!]

Ten giant ogres, with iron-like skin and not their normal green skin, appeared with axes in both hands.

Armored Ogres had tough skins and high HP. And with their axes in hand, they were also given an extreme, destructive power. They were monsters that would only occasionally appear on the continent. Usually, it would take at least ten players at Level 550 to hunt such a monster. And it would take around five to ten minutes before they could take them down.

This very same monster had become ten percent stronger. In other words, it would need at least fifteen Level 550 players to hunt it. The problem was that they were unable to do average damage.

They were huge enough to reach six meters, but two people immediately charged forward and simultaneously attacked one of the armored ogres. One of them ran towards its legs.

“So noisy.”

The one that charged at the ogre's legs was Mercenary King Venteio.

Baaaaaaaaaaaaang—

With one swing of Venteio's greatsword, he cut off the knee of the sturdy and tough Armored Ogre.

Thuuuuuuud—

“Kihyeeeeeeeeeeeeeeek!”

Sword Emperor Ellie leaped up and cut the head of the screaming ogre, which had lost its balance and fallen.

Thuuuuuuud—!

[You have killed an Armored Ogre!]

It took three seconds and two people to hunt a boss-class monster, and at least ten players at Level 550 could only take it down after five minutes or more.

Baaaaaaaaaaaang—

At that moment, hundreds of arrows fell from the sky and shot towards the Armored Ogre's neck. The arrows constantly attacked the Ogre's relatively weak neck area, eventually causing it to collapse.

Boooooooooom—

Then, Overlord Raldo moved and cut off one of the ogre's Achilles tendons, forcing it down as he removed its head.

“It only took two seconds.”

Saintess Loyna, triggered by Raldo's words, immediately gathered her hands in prayer and looked up at one of the gigantic Armored Ogres.

“Please put the sword in the heart of thy enemy.”

Then, dozens of swords covered in dazzling white light shot from her hands, stabbing the Armored Ogre and killing it.

[You have completely hunted 150,000 monsters!]

[A total of 3 minutes and 37 seconds have passed so far!]

[You have broken the record of the Combat Class Gate of the Fortress of the Transcendentals' Fantasy.]

[As a reward for breaking the record, your stats will increase by 1%, and your CHA will increase by 2%!]

[You have gained 1,000 REP.]

[You can keep on doing the trial.]

[If you continue the trial and say 'Summon Monsters,' you will summon 20,000 more monsters!]

\*\*\*

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

The transcendentals were all left speechless when they saw the scene that unfolded in the crystal ball.

“No. What's this...”

The Albraim Race was unique. They once lived among humans and stood above everybody else. However, the ones Minhyuk summoned were strong enough to match themselves when they first entered the fortress.

“Those guys... are humans, right?”

“That’s right. They aren’t born with special blood like us.”

“He broke Bender’s record way too easily.”

“This...”

It was pretty funny. They were born with a power that could rival even the gods; that was why it was amazing to see humans born with ordinary bodies fight like that.

But then, Nekk, who was dripping with cold sweat, said, “However, do you know what’s more surprising?”

Nekk’s gaze was fixed on the crystal ball, and he looked at the man standing silently amidst all the fighting.

“He hasn’t made any move yet.”

“...”

“...”

All of them let out a groan. But then, a voice suddenly rang in their ears, leaving them in shock.

[Summon Monsters.]

[Summon Monsters.]

[Summon Monsters.]

[Summon, summon, summon, summon, summon, summon, summon, summon...]

Monsters were constantly being summoned. The total number of additional monsters that showed up was around 200,000. Finally, *he* began to move.

Chapter 907

[You have summoned a total of 200,000 monsters!]

[You have already killed 150,000 monsters and can pass through the gate!]

[You can continue killing monsters until the previous record holder’s 6-minute and 46-second record has been reached!]

[The more monsters you kill, the better the reward you will receive!]

Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck—!

Graaaaaaaaaack—!

Graaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

The roar of the additional 200,000 summoned monsters resonated throughout the world. Minhyuk watched as the Immortal Knights slaughtered the 150,000 monsters themselves.

*‘I don’t think I should get caught up in that now.’*



Minhyuk said they should determine who was superior in this place. Besides, the Immortal Knights' summoning time was just four minutes.

*'The members of the Immortal Knight Order can kill all of the 150,000 monsters in just four minutes.'*

Minnyuk had confidence in them. He wanted to save his strength for those few minutes rather than kill those monsters with his basic attacks.

*'While inside the gate, I won't be able to receive cooking buffs or use parchments, potions, or special buffs.'*

If this were the usual, Minhyuk would have already eaten a dish he cooked while they were killing the monsters. But that was not the case right now. To put it simply, Minhyuk couldn't grow stronger by using *consumables*. Knowing this, Minhyuk quickly tried to use the *Food God's Swordsmanship*.

*'I can use the Food God's Swordsmanship.'*

This meant that only buff effects from consumables were restricted. Right now, someone who could cast the greatest buff in Athenae was present—Saintess Loyna.

"Miss Loyna, can you please give me a buff? Being strong does not necessarily mean that you're the best. You can also show them your greatness by displaying outstanding buffs, right?" Minhyuk tried to glib his way out.

Loyna nodded. She was not a combat class, so the impact she could make here was the least out of everyone present. But the fact that she was the saintess that Athenae bestowed upon the world remained.

*'Mother, please allow me to show your power to the world,'* Loyna prayed as she prepared to cast the best buffs she could.

A powerful wind blew and wrapped around her as she began her prayers. Then, a bright light burst out of the hands that she had clasped together. Then, a golden armor and sword slowly fell from the sky.

[Athenae's Sword and Shield has appeared!]

"...!"

"...!"

"...!"

The Immortal Knights turned to the sword and shield Athenae sent down. They could not help but groan when they realized those items had come from the greatest god in the lands. Then, Athenae's Sword and Shield stopped right above Minhyuk and slowly seeped into his pores.

[Your sword and shield will receive the effects of Athenae's Sword and Shield.]

The effects of Athenae's Sword and Shield overlapped with the buff effect that Minhyuk was already wearing.

[Athenae's Sword and Shield's duration is three minutes.]

[All of your stats have increased by 7%.]

[Your physical and magical attack power has increased by 22%!]

[Your physical and magical defensive power has increased by 17%!]

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

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

[Recall will randomly be triggered when using your skills!]

When Minhyuk checked what *Recall* was, he saw it could completely reset the skill's cooldown time when triggered. In other words, if he cast his skill and this was triggered, he could use it again. Just one look at the +1 in all skills' levels and the Recall was enough for Minhyuk to realize that Athenae's Sword and Shield was a cheat-like buff effect.

"As expected of Miss Loyna. You look like you're the best and the greatest here."

"Hoho. Of course." Loyna shrugged her shoulders. It was only natural. After all, she was everyone's role model and was the one that received the love of everyone.

In just a blink, the four minutes were about to end. The notifications that rang around thirty seconds ago had announced that they had killed all the 150,000 monsters before. The Immortal Knights took down 10,000 more monsters in the thirty seconds that followed. Now that their summoning time was almost up, dealing with the newly summoned 200,000 monsters was left solely to Minhyuk, who was staring at the charging mobs.

He knew it was only natural for the Immortal Knights to have some infighting, but Minhyuk greatly appreciated that they would always come when he summoned them.

Minhyuk, while feeling immensely grateful, stretched out the two swords in his hands.

[Dual Sword Technique.]

[Your attack speed has increased by 70%!]

[You can now use two swords. The swords' attack power will not be affected or decreased!]

[Your skills' power has increased by 1.4x!]

[The Dual Sword Technique's effects will be triggered upon casting a successive attack skill, and the skill's damage will be doubled.]

The Immortal Knight Order's summoning was not yet over, but Minhyuk already made a move. Blazing flames shot out from the two swords, emitting a golden hue in his hands.

*'Four seconds, three seconds, two seconds...'*

Minhyuk looked like he was about to attack everyone, including his allies. However, he only cast the skill after thorough calculations.

*'This is the most important moment. While they still have the 200,000 strong mobs' aggro.'*

This was because the mobs were still intent on killing the Immortal Knights. Then...

[The Battle God's Immortal Knight Order has ended.]

[All of the knights have returned to where they were before!]

"Thank you, everyone!" Of course, Minhyuk did not forget to thank them for making time for him.

Minhyuk briefly looked at their disappearing backs before he shot the blazing Overlord's Flames.

The Supreme Overlord's Technique could originally deal damage of 10,000~14,000 while devouring an area with a 240~260 meter radius. But now, the effects of the Dual Swordsmanship Technique and several other buffs had been added onto it.

[Athenae's Sword and Shield's buff has been applied!]

[The Supreme Overlord's Technique's power has gotten even stronger!]

A storm of fire engulfed an area with a 300-meter radius and swept away the monsters still tangled up and charging toward their targets that had disappeared.

*[You have killed a total of 200,000 monsters so far!]*

Minhyuk burned around 50,000 monsters in the blink of an eye. But the greatest charm of the Supreme Overlord's Technique laid in the embers of the flames, which continued to burn and cast neverending damage to the enemies nearby.

[You have killed a total of 210,000 monsters so far!]

Around 50,000. That was the total number of monsters that died from the flames of the Supreme Overlord's Technique. And only four minutes and ten seconds have passed.

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Nekk and the rest of the transcendentals were left in stunned silence.

"What the hell is that power?"

"How..?!"

"Ho..."

"This is impossible..."

Their reactions were completely reasonable.

"How can someone that has not even crossed the wall yet..."

Crossing the wall was a very important breakthrough point. No matter how hard someone tried, if they had not yet crossed the wall, they would not be able to stop or overcome someone who had. But now, the man shown on the crystal ball had killed around 50,000 monsters all at once, even though he had not yet crossed the wall.

What was even more shocking to them was the fact that the man still had plenty of time left.

“That’s impossible. Are you telling me that he doesn’t need the help of those soldiers from before? That he can deal with 150,000 monsters on his own?”

Bender shook his head at Nekk’s words. He said, “We have to wait and see for now. It’s too early for us to pass judgment, especially when he had only used one skill.”

Everyone turned to look at Bender when they heard his words. Then, Mage Bernie said, “Well, if we’re talking about some pinnacle power, everyone has one, right?”

That was right. Everyone here had one of those skills.

“More importantly, we have to discuss the rewards he should receive.”

“He killed 50,000 more monsters and easily broke Bender’s record.”

“We should give him the Spinning Wheel’s Ring at this rate.”

“The Spinning Wheel’s Ring?”

The Spinning Wheel’s Ring was an overpowered artifact that could permanently increase the amount of EXP acquired just by wearing it. But it was still too early for them to decide on this for the rewards.

Nekk stared at Minhyuk through the crystal ball. He could see the monsters grow angry because of the flames that almost devoured them. The monsters quickly turned around and started to charge at Minhyuk. Nekk could see the young man smiling at them as he raised his sword.

[Intangible Sword.]

At that moment, something very shocking happened.

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

The monster charging at the forefront was torn and ripped apart while the monsters behind it began to get swept away by an invisible and intangible force.

[You have killed a total of 230,000 monsters so far!]

“...”

“...”

“I think we need to change our reward. I’m sure he no longer has any power that will allow him to kill more monsters simultaneously. If he uses his basic attacks to kill those monsters, at most, he would only be able to kill around 250,000. Let’s give him the Spinning Wheel’s Ring and the Transcententials’ Reinforcement Parchment...”

But before Nekk could even finish his sentence...

[Heaven Tearing Sword.]

A huge sword light stretched out from the man’s sword and split all the enemies within a five-meter radius into half. Once again, around 2,000 monsters concentrated in that area died on the spot.

“Right. He should have run out of those skills by now. Now, as I was saying...”

[Sword of Tempest.]

“???”

“???”

“???”

“???”

This time, a sword appeared and hovered around the man. Then, hundreds of blades appeared and flew crazily around that one sword. The sword shot forward as if it had an ego, with hundreds of blades around it, killing dozens of monsters every second.

“R- right. That’s not an AOE skill. So, like I said...” Nekk said, looking at the man with doubt.

But then, flames rose once again on the swords in the man's hands. The power of the *Supreme Overlord’s Technique* they had witnessed earlier shot out again and devoured 30,000 monsters in one go.

“F\*ck.”

Nekk eventually gave up. No. Which human had this many AOE skills?! Then, the man finally stopped using his skills. He tightened his hold on both of his swords and charged towards the monsters.

Hope filled Nekk once again. ‘*Right! Finally! We can calculate and assess now!*’

So far, the man has killed a total of 250,000 monsters and there was around a minute and thirty seconds left. It was unlikely for him to kill more than 500 monsters in that time. But Nekk was left stunned once again when he swung his sword.

Baaaaaaang—!

The word *Crazy* was inscribed on the blades of both swords. And the moment the man swung his swords, an explosion erupted, tearing apart the monsters around him. But that was not all. With each swing of the two swords in the man’s hands, dozens of monsters would be torn apart. Either that or they get swept away by explosions.

[The First Gate has ended.]

[The Challenger has successfully killed 350,000 monsters in 6 minutes and 46 seconds!]

[The rewards are being gauged and measured!]

The transcendentals were all rendered speechless for a moment. The man was able to kill 350,000 monsters. Of course, the present Bender could easily kill 500,000 here and now. But the past Bender could not. He took 6 minutes and 46 seconds back then to kill a little over 150,000 monsters.

And this man? He had killed more than twice that amount. It was a feat that was both shocking and awe-inspiring. However, they did not have the time to gawk in admiration. They quickly started their discussion.

“Why not give him the Spinning Wheel’s Ring, the Transcendentals’ Reinforcement Parchment, and the Pinnacle Growth Elixir?”

“The Pinnacle Growth Elixir? That’s very precious. We only have two bottles of them left.”

“But I think we should give him at least that much, no?”

“Right. We don’t have any other choice.”

Something unusual happened while they were trying to discuss the rewards they would give.

[The Fortress of the Transcendentals’ Fantasy has judged that the rewards you have chosen are unsuitable!]

[You need to present rewards of a higher level!]

“...!”

“...!”

The rewards they had chosen were among the most valuable items the transcendentals had on hand. That was why they could not believe it when they were judged to not be enough.

“Then, how about a set of armor that Nekk made?”

Nekk was the only blacksmith remaining among the transcendentals. He was skilled enough to be on par with the God of Blacksmiths. However, the notifications that rang in their ears remained the same.

[You need to present rewards of a higher level!]

Even though they put their heads together, they still could not figure out a solution. Then, Bender, thinking for a while, said, “The leader’s treasure chest.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

Everyone’s eyes grew wide when they heard his words.

“What...?!”

“The leader’s treasure chest should only be given to *that child* once he passes through that gate!”

“The leader’s treasure chest is the final legacy that they have left behind. And not only that, some other powerful force might be hidden inside that chest.”

But at this moment, the most rational and objective of them was Bender. He said, "That child won't come back. It has been too long. Besides, I don't think there's any reward that we can give that man aside from this."

"..."

"..."

Everyone grew silent at those words. Some of them opened their mouths, but they could not say anything.

"Let's do it this way."

"There's no helping it."

"That's right. Perhaps that man can replace the leader instead of *that child*."

They finally decided on the rewards. Inside that crystal ball, the man looked excited as he waited for the rewards he would receive.

"Maybe he'll faint if he saw that huge reward?"

Soon, the notifications for the rewards they had set rang nonstop in the man's ears. Not long after, they saw the man's eyes grow wide when he saw the leader's treasure chest.

"...What kind of power did it have?"

The transcendentals had two leaders. They were a couple, and that treasure chest was the final gift they had left for their child. Perhaps there was a power in that treasure chest that the transcendentals here would be shocked with.

Then, with a sparkle in his eyes, the man cried out.

"???"

"???"

"???"

"???"

"???"

*'Is that guy crazy? Maybe that's right.'*

Chapter 908

[Your rewards are being discussed!]

[Your rewards are being discussed!]

It took Minhyuk quite a while to clear the First Gate; hence, he was pleased to rest while the discussion was ongoing. After a lengthy debate, the notifications once again rang in his ears.

[The discussion for your rewards is over!]

[You have killed a total of 350,000 in 6 minutes and 46 seconds!]

[You have broken the record inside the Fortress of the Transcententials' Fantasy!]

[You have gained 100,000 platinum.]

[You have gained 1,000 REP.]

[You have gained 500 CHA.]

[After a discussion, you will be rewarded with the Leader's Treasure Chest.]

*'The leader's treasure chest?'*

Minhyuk's attention was immediately drawn toward the *Leader's Treasure Chest* that the Fortress of the Transcententials' Fantasy had given him.

*'Is he the one who led the Transcententials?'*

Every group had a *leader* who led and managed the members. And since the leaders stood above the group, they likely possessed something special.

*'Fufu.'*

Perhaps there was something delicious inside of that treasure chest. Maybe there were dishes that the Transcententials enjoyed hidden there?

Clatter— Clatter—!

The leader's treasure chest, made from old and sturdy wood, began to shake and tremble like crazy.

Clack—!

Finally, the treasure chest's lock opened. Surprisingly enough, there were two items inside the treasure chest. When he saw the contents, Minhyuk could not help but shout happily, "Let's go!!!"

This was because one of the items inside the treasure chest was food.

[You have acquired 1 kilogram of pork ribs marinated and preserved with the Pinnacle Growth Elixir.]

[You have acquired the Note They Left for 'That Child.']

Minhyuk did not know the Pinnacle Growth Elixir, but it was okay. Everything was fine as long as it tasted good. However, before he could check the items thoroughly, something very unusual happened.

Usually, treasure boxes would disintegrate and disappear after the contents inside had been taken away. But the leader's treasure chest did not disappear at all.

[The Leader's Treasure Chest will give you additional rewards whenever your level increases!]

[You must be at Level 700 before obtaining additional rewards from the Leader's Treasure Chest!]

"...?!"



The fact that Minhyuk could obtain additional rewards every time he leveled up was enough to show how rare and precious this item was.

*‘More importantly, it might give me something delicious for the next reward too, right?’*

Minhyuk hid the treasure chest. Before he ate the pork ribs, he checked the note they left for *that child*.

[We love you, Ruffiso. More than anyone else in this world.]

“...!”

Minhyuk was shocked when he saw the note. Why? Because the child was named Ruffiso. Was it such a coincidence that he had recently taken the life of Duke Ruffiso as a punishment for his evildoings?

[And we’re sorry.]

At this moment, Minhyuk finally grew sure of one fact. Duke Ruffiso was one of the transcendentals. And from the looks of it, he was the child of whom Minhyuk presumed to be their leader. Then, at that moment, something happened.

[Duke Ruffiso’s ‘Something that He was Chasing’ is reacting to the note!]

[Duke Ruffiso might have died, but he still wonders why his parents abandoned him!]

*‘Hmm.’*

Duke Ruffiso was already dead. If it were any ordinary player, they would not expect any rewards from the dead. However, Minhyuk was different.

He had recently obtained the Star’s Armor Set, an artifact he could not equip because it was customized for Duke Ruffiso. But that was not all. It was also impossible to dismantle the armor and turn it into other artifacts unless he had completed the requirements. One requirement was to receive *Duke Ruffiso’s recognition and acknowledgment*. But how would one receive the recognition and acknowledgment of the dead? Minhyuk believed it to be impossible.

Minhyuk had asked Hepas' Descendant Hyemin'sDaddy about the Star's Armor Set; he said that it was made from artifact materials that were one of the rarest in Athenae. Minhyuk thought that he would have to throw the armor set away. But perhaps he would have the chance to obtain Duke Ruffiso's recognition with this sudden quest.

Minhyuk gently folded the note and hid it in his inventory. There were far more important things that he needed to do before that. He was very hungry after hunting all of those monsters earlier, so he quickly prepared the pork ribs he had obtained as a reward. In just a blink, he had finished preparing the table. The vegetables for the wrap, including the parsley and the pickled onions, were ready and served beside the hot grill.

Minhyuk grabbed the tongs and quickly lifted a large piece of marinated pork ribs.

Sizzle–

Smoke rose as the seasonings that covered the ribs flowed out of its sides and burned on the piping hot grill. After grilling one side for a bit, Minhyuk flipped it over and let it grill for a few more minutes. Then, he grabbed his scissors and began to cut the ribs.

Minhyuk picked up one of the pork ribs and placed it in his mouth. Then, a sweet flavor immediately burst out from the meat and coated the insides of his mouth. The more he chewed, the more flavor spread out in his mouth and the better the texture of the meat.

“Kghhk...!”

Minhyuk liked to cut the meat on the bigger side when eating meat.

*‘Eating it like this makes the texture much better and the flavor richer.’*

He clipped another piece of ribs and dipped it in the *galbi sauce* before putting it in his mouth.

“Wahahahaha!”

The *galbi sauce* added another sweetness to the meat, filling his mouth. After that, he added some pickled onions to the pork ribs before grabbing them with his chopsticks and putting them in his mouth.

Crunch, crunch–

The pickled onions' sweetness and sourness perfectly complemented the pork ribs' slightly greasy flavor. This time, he spread some pickled radish on top of a piece of ribs and wrapped everything together.

Munch, munch–

“Kghhk...” Minhyuk sighed in admiration, his hands moving to take something out of his inventory. What did he take out of his food storage inventory? It was none other than *bibim naengmyeon*.

*‘Bi-naeng is definitely the perfect side dish for ribs!’*

Minhyuk poked the yolk on top of the *bibim naengmyeon* and mixed it with the rest of the noodles.

*‘Naengmyeon tastes best when it has a lot of pears.’*

The sweet, refreshing pear added to the bibim naengmyeon could easily mellow the dish's spiciness. Minhyuk first took a huge bite of the pears, cucumbers, and noodles.

*"Sluuuuuuuuuurp!!!"*

The spicy and refreshing flavor of the bibim naengmyeon washed away the greasiness left behind by the ribs.

Crunch, crunch—

Also, the sweet and cold pears and the crunchy cucumbers added more depth to the dish's flavor. Then, Minhyuk added a piece of ribs to a mouthful of bibim naengmyeon that he immediately placed in his mouth.

*"Kihyaaa...!"*

The sweet ribs and the spicy bibim naengmyeon met and created a fantastic harmony of flavors. In just a blink, Minhyuk finished his meal, his plates and even the grill clean and without a morsel of food left behind.

Then, the notifications rang one after the other.

[You have eaten the Pork Ribs Marinated in Pinnacle Growth Elixir.]

[Three bottles of Pinnacle Growth Elixir had been used on the ribs.]

[A bottle of Pinnacle Growth Elixir can increase one's level by one.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

[You have leveled up.]

*"That's crazy?"*

Minhyuk was in awe. He had just eaten some pork ribs, but his level had increased by three. For players at Minhyuk's level, it would take at least three to four weeks for them to be able to increase their level by one.

*'They used three bottles of Pinnacle Growth Elixir?'*

What in the world was a *Pinnacle Growth Elixir*?

*'Consuming one bottle of that elixir can increase someone's level by one without fail?'*

If that were true, then that elixir would be extremely cheat-like. Why? For example, if someone had reached Level 699, a threshold to overcome, and taken that elixir, they would reach Level 700 in one go.

*'This is a precious potion. Money can't buy this.'*

Even though it was a precious potion, the leader of the Transcendentals used it to marinate pork ribs.

At this point, Minhyuk realized, *'The leader is a chef.'*

Minhyuk could tell that using the Pinnacle Growth Elixir in cooking was extremely difficult. That was why he knew only an outstanding chef could use it as a marinade.

*‘This is an extraordinary reward.’*

Minhyuk could eat some delicious pork ribs and increase his level by +3. Was there anything better than this? Then, there was the Leader’s Treasure Chest, which would give him additional rewards every time his level increased.

*‘And all of these were supposed to be for Ruffiso.’*

Assuming that *the leader’s child* was indeed Ruffiso, they expected and believed that Ruffiso would return to them and become their leader. In other words, these rewards were left here to allow them to help Ruffiso reach the *leader’s level*.

*‘They are the Transcententials. That’s why the rewards are...’*

[Warning!]

[Danger!]

[Warning!]

[Danger!]

[The Transcentental’s Battle Energy is suppressing you!]

“Ugh!”

A tremendous amount of pressure appeared and weighed down on Minhyuk.

*‘What the hell is this?’*

This was far more overwhelming compared to the time when he met Helenia. And when Minhyuk was left struggling hard to endure the pressure, similar notifications rang several times in a row.

[Warning!]

[Danger!]

[Warning!]

[Danger!]

This meant that several Transcententials appeared in this place. Not long after, Minhyuk caught the gaze of a bald man with a gigantic build. The man was just walking but was releasing overwhelmingly heavy pressure on Minhyuk.

[The Transcentental’s Battle Energy is suppressing you!]

Minhyuk realized, *‘Are you telling me that the Transcententials have a passive skill called Battle Energy?!’*

It was an overwhelmingly powerful force. Nerva Sephiroth’s Emperor’s Authority was like a child’s play compared to the Transcentental’s passive skill that was weighing down on him right now.

Finally, the Transcententials made their appearance.

[Transcendental Bender. Level 1,275.]

*‘This is crazy...!’*

Minhyuk was appalled. This was the first time he had encountered an NPC whose level was over Level 1,200! Even Helenia, whom he had met before, was only around Level 1,000. Of course, that was only the case because most of her powers had been sealed.

[Transcendental Nekk. Level 1,107.]

[Transcendental Bernie. Level 1,130.]

[Transcendental Cochnus. Level 1,086.]

[Transcendental Vaghan. Level 1,009.]

The rest of the Transcendentals had surpassed Level 1,000. This was very rare, even for the gods. Only a few of the gods had surpassed Level 1,000.

*‘No. I don’t think any of the gods I know have surpassed that level?’*

At this moment, Minhyuk realized what kind of existence the Transcendentals were. He could not help but grow tense when he saw them walk towards them.

*‘There’s no guarantee that they will view me favorably.’*

That was why Minhyuk was very nervous. He might be nervous, but he never intended to lose to them.

Thuuuuuuud—!

His knees, about to fold and force him to kneel, stretched out again. This was one of the effects of the Eight Pillars’ Candidate title, The Unyielding One. The Unyielding One could help him resist any forces that tried to suppress him once.

The expression on the faces of Nekk and Bender, the two Transcendentals walking upfront, changed when they saw Minhyuk remain standing.

*‘Someone with that measly strength can resist the pressure from our power?’*

*‘How...?’*

They could not understand the man at all. In just a blink, they had already arrived in front of Minhyuk.

Minhyuk looked apprehensively at the people standing before him, who were wearing serious expressions. Then, the man named Bender raised his hand and smiled awkwardly.

“Hi?”

“???”

Why was this man acting as if they were close? Minhyuk glanced at the other Transcendentals. He could see that the Transcendentals who had been looking at him with solemn expressions before were now sporting awkward smiles, just like the woman mage named Bernie. The guy named Nekk

coughed while awkwardly asking him how he had been. Even the guys named Vaghan and Cochnus were smiling softly at him.

*‘Why are they acting as if we are close?’*

That was when Minhyuk saw them glancing at one spot. What spot were they secretly taking a peek at? It was none other than the place where Minhyuk had eaten the pork ribs earlier. As someone who had been hungry most of his life, he knew the tell-tale signs and actions of someone hungry.

Although Bender was trying his hardest not to show it, he gulped dryly as he licked his lips while glancing at that exact spot. Nekk’s nose was twitching. He looked like someone who had not seen nor smelled the scent of meat in a long while.

Minhyuk, who understood the situation quickly, grinned widely. *‘This...’*

If he did this correctly, he might find himself in a situation in which both parties would benefit each other.

Chapter 909

Bender and the other Transcendentals could not stop the drool that dripped down their chins when they saw Minhyuk eat the pork ribs through the crystal ball.

It had been a long time since they had last seen proper food! Just one look, and they could already imagine the sweet flavor of the ribs that would spread and delight their taste buds the moment the well-seasoned and sizzling pork ribs entered their mouths.

Although they allowed Conir to challenge the Second Gate, they could not allow this man to do so.

First, there was a Level 700 level requirement before one could challenge the fortress's gates. They only allowed the man to challenge the First Gate because Bender made the mistake of dragging him here.

As for the Second Gate? It also had a Level 700 level requirement. Why was Conir allowed to challenge the Second Gate? It was mainly because Bender could not turn down a direct request from Sword God Valen but also because he could not overcome his desire to eat good food.

Simply put, Minhyuk could no longer challenge any of the gates of the Fortress of the Transcendental’s Fantasy.

*‘What a delicious smell.’*

*‘Kghhk... This is the smell of meat.’*

*‘Smells good.’*

Since the man in front of them had just finished eating, the smell of the pork ribs still lingered in the man’s clothes and whetted the appetites of all of the Transcendentals present.

“Hello, everyone!” The man called Food God greeted them politely. After Bender's awkward greeting, the man stared at them for quite a while before he greeted them with a small smile.

The five Transcendentals hesitated. They were Transcendentals, the proud beings that sealed the Immortal Sorceress Helenia! How could they ask someone that they had first met for something to eat, right?! But they had been hungry for far too long. It was an extremely unbearable pain that they had been carrying for a long time now.

“That... uhm, you know?” Bender chirped. After all, he was the most friendly of them all.

“Yes? Please go on ahead.” Minhyuk flashed a bright and lovely smile.

“Can you share some of your food with us?”

“Food?”

“That’s right, food. We can’t leave this place, and there’s no way for us to obtain any cooking ingredients here. It has already been thousands of years.”

“Hmm...”

Minhyuk looked worried. At that moment, Bender recalled some of Conir's stories about his hyung. He heard that Food God Minhyuk’s appetite was bigger than anybody else's. He also heard that whoever wanted to take away his food would die right away. According to Conir, he had a disease that made food very precious to him.

The Transcendentals did not intend to just ask him for food. They wanted to give him something in return for the food. Of course, this would only be possible if Minhyuk agreed to their request.

*‘I’m asking him gently,’* Bender thought.

But then, Minhyuk smiled softly and said, “Alright.”

“Huh?”

“Hmm?”

Minhyuk accepted it way too readily than they had expected. The Transcendentals were aware of Minhyuk’s story. They knew that he had a disease that made him want to eat and eat and *eat*. But a man suffering from such a disease willingly agreed to share his food with them?

“I can’t turn a blind eye to someone hungry.” Minhyuk smiled faintly.

A situation where everyone benefits. This was what Minhyuk thought as he looked at them. After all, he had experienced more deep-seated hunger than anybody else. That was why he knew better than anyone how horrible the feeling was. Of course, if he were his usual self, then he would have made sure that he squeezed them dry and got all of the benefits that he could from them.

*‘But I know how they feel better than anybody else.’*

Minhyuk knew the joy and gratitude that one would feel once someone fed them. He was confident that doing this would increase his favor with the Transcendentals.

*‘It will be very beneficial and valuable for me to build favor and intimacy with the current strongest beings in Athenae.’*

Besides, Minhyuk had reached a level where he could control his eating addiction to some extent.

“It’s been a while since you last ate a proper meal, so I’ll give it my all when cooking.”

The Transcententials stared at Minhyuk, who was smiling softly at them. At this moment, Minhyuk’s actions create a synergistic effect compared to the words that Conir had told them before.

*‘I heard he has a disease that makes him hungry all the time.’*

*‘He has a huge appetite and was shouting for food when he saw the former leader’s treasure chest earlier.’*

*‘But he’s giving us food this easily?’*

The Transcententials felt both admiration and gratitude toward Minhyuk.

[Transcendental Bender’s favor has increased!]

[Your sword’s attack power has increased by 0.2%!]

[Transcendental Nekk’s favor has increased.]

[Your DEX has increased by 0.3%.]

[Transcendental Bernie’s favor has increased.]

[Your Total MP Volume has increased by 0.4%.]

[Transcendental Cochnus’ favor has increased.]

[Your DEX has increased by 0.2%.]

[Transcendental...]

It was only their favor that increased, and quite a variety of Minhyuk’s stats also increased—and considering Minhyuk’s high stats? Well, this would be a massive boost to his power.

*‘It’s like that time with Ellie noona.’*

That was right. There were cases where some stats would increase along with the favor. The best example of this was Ellie’s case in the past. However, this was very rare. After all, for most people, increasing favor was close to impossible.

*‘The fact that I can increase my favor with them with just one meal is an excellent reward.’*

Minhyuk began to prepare a meal for them. He boiled some chicken inside the Bizarre Cauldron and began to cook chicken porridge.

*‘They’re going to eat something after such a long time. If they eat something oily, they’ll probably get a bad stomach.’*

The warm and soft chicken porridge soothed some of their hunger. Minhyuk did his best to cook the chicken porridge for these hungry Transcententials.

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Bender and the other Transcendentals looked very emotional as they stared at the still-steaming chicken porridge before them. The thinly julienned carrots, chopped green onions, and onions created the perfect harmony of colors that decorated the light color of the chicken porridge.

“Please don’t be in a rush. Here, have some kimchi,” Minhyuk said as he placed a well-ripened kimchi in front of them.

“Thanks,” Bender gave his heartfelt thanks to Minhyuk as he immediately scooped a huge spoonful of the warm chicken porridge. Steam rose from the spoon that he raised. “Hoo! Hoo!”

No matter how hungry he was, Bender knew that eating the porridge just like that would burn the roof of his mouth. So, he blew on it as much as he could before taking a huge bite.

Chew, chew—

The chicken porridge’s unique, rich, savory flavor spread in his mouth the moment he ate it. This was the result of the combination of various ingredients!

“Kghhk...!”

How long has it been since he last had a proper meal? It was just like what Conir said. His cooking skills were indeed the best.

This time, Bender grabbed a piece of kimchi on a spoonful of chicken porridge and pushed it into his mouth.

‘Wow...’

The kimchi’s sweetness and sourness complemented the chicken porridge’s bland and slightly greasy flavor.

Munch, munch, munch, munch—

The slight spiciness of the kimchi also brought delight to one’s mouth.

Chomp, chomp, chomp, chomp—!

Not only was Bender frantically devouring the chicken porridge, but the others were also doing the same thing. Minhyuk watched the Transcendentals eat, moving to fill their bowls with more chicken porridge whenever he saw their bowls empty.

Sparkle— Sparkle—

A shine appeared on his smooth head when Nekk’s bowl was filled with chicken porridge. It seemed like his body was heating up from finally being able to eat a hot meal. Minhyuk gently wiped the sweat off of his head.

‘It feels smooth...’

The sweaty Nekk’s head was glowing. No, it was flashing brightly, just like the sun.

Minhyuk cooked more chicken porridge so everyone could have enough. And everyone had their fill.

Clack—

Sweat pooled at the tip of Bender's nose as he placed his spoon down. He exhaled loudly before gulping down a few mouthfuls of cold water. When Minhyuk saw the smile on their faces, he realized that they were now full and satiated.

Then, Bender approached Minhyuk. He said, "I was finally able to eat something delicious. Here, I'll pay you back. Here's some money for your carriage."

"Ah. It's fine. Well, this..."

Bender pushed something crumpled inside Minhyuk's pocket!

[You have obtained a crumpled bunch of money from Transcendental Bender!]

[You can sell this for 30,000 platinum in the Event Merch Store!]

"...?"

A flash of doubt appeared on Minhyuk's face. Bender had just stuffed it in his pocket, saying it was money for his carriage.

*'Thirty thousand platinum is enough to run a territory with a lot still left over.'*

And that was not all. It was rare for high-rankers to have 30,000 platinum in their hands. Then, Nekk approached and put something in Minhyuk's hands.

"Here, some money for tea."

[You have obtained a crumpled bunch of money from Transcendental Nekk!]

[You can sell this for 20,000 platinum in the Event Merch Store...]

*'Are you saying he's giving me 20,000 platinum for a cup of tea?'*

Bernie shrugged her shoulders, sidled up to Minhyuk, and slipped something in his hands.

"Here you go. Food money."

[...crumpled bunch of money from Transcendental Bernie!]

[You can sell this for 20,000 platinum...]

*'If we're talking about food money, 20,000 platinum is not enough, though?'*

"Get some meat with this."

[...Transcendental Cochnus!]

[...25,000 platinum...]

"Use this to buy your baby's diapers."

[...20,000 platinum...]

Minhyuk made diaper money for a baby that he did not have. He had spent around 100,000 gold to make chicken porridge. But turning that 100,000 million gold to 100,000 platinum? That was worthwhile!

Minhyuk grinned widely. *‘Fufu.’*

However, after thinking about it, he realized that this money was a small change for them. Also, money was meaningless to them since they could not go outside. Before pondering all that, Minhyuk had one thing he was very curious about.

“But why can’t you eat? I think you can farm by yourselves, right?”

“The land is barren. We’ve tried for hundreds of years, but we realized that farming in these lands is impossible,” Nekk answered.

In the first place, this fortress was where people who realized they were Transcenturals entered. This land was filled with monsters and was utterly barren.

“You cannot use seeds from outside in this place.”

“We can’t use the seeds from the outside?”

“That’s right. This fortress does not accept anything that comes from the outside. The moment we plant the seeds, they will immediately rot. And even if we plant them, we won’t be able to eat any meat, right?”

“Hmm...”

When planting seeds, one would mostly expect vegetables and fruits to grow. But that was mostly the case for their standards, not Minhyuk’s.

*‘If it’s not possible with seeds brought from the outside, then perhaps it’s possible if they’re seeds created inside.’*

Minhyuk realized early on that he could gain significant rewards from the Transcenturals.

*‘Maybe it’s going to be easy for me?’*

A barren land? A fortress that rejects seeds from the outside? And people who give generous rewards?

“By any chance, if I can turn this barren land into fertile land and get meat to grow from seeds, what would you do?”

The Transcenturals were over the moon just by imagining those things happening. Even though they were talking with Minhyuk, they wanted to shove food down their throats even if they had to vomit it out right after. If Minhyuk had left now, there was a high chance they would have to endure hundreds of years of hunger again.

But their expressions turned dark not long after.

“It’s impossible.”

“It’s not something that could be done in the first place.”

“We are a superior race. We’re different from you. But even we can’t make it happen.”

They have *tried* thousands of times. However, even if the Transcententials were from a superior race, that did not mean they were exceptional in all fields. Minhyuk licked his lips.

“Of course, it would be challenging for me too. I probably must sweat blood and tears to turn this barren land into a fertile one.” Minhyuk clenched his fists tightly. “I might have to vomit blood just to ensure that these seeds, which this fortress rejects, would grow and prosper. However, I know what hunger feels like more than anybody else.”

Minhyuk looked at all of them with a serious expression on his face. Everyone was aware of that. They all knew that this young man in front of them suffered from a disease.

*‘Aaaah. One look at that expression, and you can tell he understands us.’*

*‘He understands us and cares about us.’*

*‘He looks serious. He definitely will do his best.’*

“Everyone, I will give it my all so you won’t get hungry. But of course, I would need some driving force to help me do my best. So, please trust me for once.”

They all looked emotional as they stared at Minhyuk. It was as if they hadn’t seen him licking his lips earlier. Then, Nekk said, “I will make an armor for you. And if you don’t like it, I will reinforce your current armor and improve it.”

[Transcendental Nekk vows to either make an entirely new armor for you or reinforce the armor that you currently own!]

“I’ll give you a ‘magic book’ that has never been seen before.”

[Transcendental Bernie vows to give you the magic book she created, the ‘Transcendental Magic Book’!]

“I will give you all of the money that I have. Anyway, they’re just like sheets of paper to me.”

[Transcendental Cochnus vows to give you 760,000 platinum!]

“I will bestow upon you our Race’s Blessings.”

[Transcendental Vaghan vows to bestow upon you the Transcendental’s Blessing.]

Finally, Minhyuk turned to look at Bender. Bender was thinking deeply. But before he could think of anything, Minhyuk stepped forward and opened his mouth: “There’s this one thing that I really want to get. Also, there’s something that I want to know. Can I request of you?”

Bender nodded readily.

“The Mountain Ore. Also, please tell me about Ruffiso’s birth.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

The expression on the faces of all of the Transcententials grew solemn when they heard Minhyuk’s words.

*‘The Mountain Ore and Ruffiso?’*

*‘He wants the Mountain Ore?’*

The Mountain Ore was something that they vowed to keep for the rest of their lives and make sure to keep out of Helenia’s hands.

Bender looked at Minhyuk sharply and said, “What will you use it for?”

The other Transcententials also turned to look at him, their gazes demanding answers from him.

*‘I- I want to make soybean paste with... it?’*

Minhyuk opened his mouth, but he could not get the words out.

Chapter 910

The Mountain Ore was a dilemma that would not leave the Transcententials forever. Although they could seal it using a sealing stone, it would be broken in fifty years. Once the sealing stone was broken, the Mountain Ore would appear again.

*‘Back then, we had no idea what to do about the Mountain Ore.’*

And once the Mountain Ore escaped its seal, it would cause continuous earthquakes.

Bender turned to look at Minhyuk, hesitating whether to say that he would use it to make soybean paste, and said, “I don’t know why you’re asking about it, but the Mountain Ore is a hazardous item. If you take it back to your empire, your empire will most definitely collapse in a single day.”

“If only we had his Transcendental Grinder.”

“Stop that, Nekk. You sound like you’re cursing him for sacrificing himself for our sake.”

“I’m sorry.”

‘...?’

As Minhyuk continued to listen to their conversation, he realized, *‘They also want to grind the Mountain Ore.’*

This was a good sign. Besides, who was Minhyuk? His glib tongue could sway anyone to his side, right?

“The Mountain Ore can cause earthquakes! If I use the power in that ore, then I will be able to strengthen the Beyond the Heavens Empire!”

The Transcententials frowned when they heard Minhyuk's words. They knew it was an item they could not easily hand over. Then, they saw Minhyuk laugh.

"However, seeing that you're all very concerned and worried about this item coming out to the world, I know that I should not covet it just to satisfy my greed," Minhyuk said, looking up at the sky with a bitter look. He sighed deeply as he closed his eyes and clenched his fists tightly, a conflicted expression flashing.

"No, that's not it, Minhyuk. Just let go of your greed and help the Transcententials live more comfortably. No, that's not it, either. Either way, there shouldn't be any crazy lunatic wanting to grind something like that in the world, right?"

But Minhyuk's face remained conflicted. Then, as if he had finally decided, he opened his mouth and spoke tremblingly, "I—I have the Transcentental's Grinder."

"What?!"

"Did you just say you have the Transcentental's Grinder with you?!"

"Are you telling the truth?!"

The impact of his words was huge. This was mainly because the Transcententials badly needed the Transcentental's Grinder. On the day their leader died, the Transcentental's Grinder also disappeared. They firmly believed that the blacksmiths who participated in its production ran away with it and disappeared from existence.

"How in the world did it get in your hands?!"

Minhyuk promptly told them about the Sun's Salt.

*–The Transcentental's Grinder appeared after I ate the salt. It must have been hidden inside it.*

*–Even until the moment that they had died, they still tried their best to hide the Transcentental's Grinder.*

After hearing this part of Minhyuk's story, the Transcententials all made eye contact and nodded. Then, Bender said, "Okay. We will listen to your request. However, we have conditions. You can only take the Mountain Ore after it has been ground with the Transcentental's Grinder."

"..." Minhyuk nodded in agreement. "I understand."

Unbeknownst to them, he was jumping in happiness deep inside.

*'Delicious doenjang jjigae, here I come. Hihi.'*

Meanwhile, completely unaware of the truth, the Transcententials immediately comforted him.

"I'm sorry. You probably came here to find it."

"We also don't feel comfortable grinding it."

Minhyuk's lips twitched as he tried to form a smile. Then, he said, "It's alright. It's all for your sake, so there's no helping it."

"You're very kind and understanding."

"You are truly qualified to become the ruler of an empire."

[Transcendental Bender's favor has increased!]

[Your sword's attack power has increased by 0.2%!]

[Transcendental Nekk's favor has increased.]

[Your DEX has increased by 0.3%.]

[Transcendental Bernie's favor has increased.]

[Your Total MP Volume has increased by 0.4%.]

[Transcendental Cochnus' favor has increased.]

[Your DEX has increased by 0.2%.]

[Transcendental...]

As expected of Minhyuk, he got the most benefits from a few simple words.

"But we'll only give you everything that we have promised after you have done what you promised us."

"I understand. On another note, is it possible for me to bring the vassals from my empire?"

"Here. Use this to bring them here," Bender said as he handed Minhyuk a flute.

The flute that Bender handed to Minhyuk was none other than the 'Transcendental's Summoning Flute.' Minhyuk could bring any of his vassals or summons into the fortress with this flute.

The Transcendentals all looked at Minhyuk in anticipation.

*'This is something we haven't accomplished even after trying for thousands of years.'*

*'Is he going to bring in amazing people to help him do this?'*

*'I wonder what they look like?'*

Then, Minhyuk gave it his all in playing the flute.

Diriririri~

[The Transcendental's Flute can summon any of your vassals or summons and bring them into the Fortress of the Transcendental's Fantasy!]

A bright light flashed in front of the Transcendentals. When the light faded away, they were greeted by the sight of those that Minhyuk had summoned.

The first one they saw was a human stretched out and sleeping comfortably. He *looked* like a human, but countless roots were growing all over his body. This was none other than the Great Spirit of Earth, Rend.

Then, the white and fluffy wolf pup was curled up right on top of Rend's belly. The wolf pup raised its cute paws and rubbed its face as it yawned and rumbled.

"..."

"..."

The Transcenturals looked confused. However, the confusion continued. A presence caught the attention of everyone present. This being was curled up like a shrimp and lying snugly on Rend's arm.

*"Oink- oink, oink- oiiiiink..."*

His snout and mouth twitched occasionally as if he was eating something in his sleep. He even scratched his butt, his face contorting into what seemed like pain. It seemed like his stomach was feeling a tad bit uncomfortable.

Poot—!!!

After releasing a loud and resounding fart, the guy chuckled in his sleep.

*"Oiink... (He...*

*)"*

The Transcenturals were all left speechless.

*'Are these guys the ones that will turn the fortress' barren land into fertile land...?'*

*'We're doomed. We're all going to die here of hunger.'*

\*\*\*

Minhyuk brought along the talents that would pioneer the lands inside the Fortress of the Transcenturals' Fantasy with him. He toured the barren lands that they would turn into fertile lands with them.

*'They are all very reliable comrades.'*

Rumble, the Spirit of Life, possessed the skill called 'Seed Creation.' This skill would benefit them, especially since the fortress would always reject seeds from the outside world. Not only that, this skill also allowed Rumble to create a variety of seeds, including sweet potatoes, potatoes, onions, green onions, watermelons, and many more. Rumble could create seeds that would produce whatever it was that he wanted. So, if Rumble wanted it, he could make meat grow from the seed he created.

Scratch, scratch—

Then, there was the Great Spirit of the Earth Rend. Although he looked a bit stupid scratching the back of his head like that, he was most definitely the Great Spirit of the Earth.



*‘There’s no way that Rend, someone with the power to rule and govern the earth, would not be able to turn a barren land into a fertile one.’*

- The DEX stat will triple.*
- Crop yield will increase by 60%.*
- Vitality will increase by 30%.*
- Active Skill: Cry, Pickaxe.*
- Active Skill: Unconditional Harvest*
- Active Skill: The One that Rules the Earth*
- Passive Skill: Barren Land into Fertile Land*
- Passive Skill: Swift Pickaxing*
- Passive Skill: Crops with Good Flavor and Abilities*

But the most important part was this: Minhyuk was confident about turning any barren land into a fertile one because he had this God-rank pickaxe, which Rend once owned.

After clicking on the detailed explanation of the barren land, he could see the words ‘Land Recovery Rate’ among them. The land recovery rate was a stat that only existed in barren lands where no crops could ever grow. Only if they could bring the land recovery rate to 100% would they be able to transform the barren land into fertile land.

Minhyuk stood before a patch of barren land and swung the Pickaxe that Can Make Any Land Fertile with all his might.

Thuuuuuud–

[Recovery has increased by 0.3%.]

“...”

A small smile appeared on Minhyuk’s face, which also promptly disappeared.

[Recovery has returned to 0%.]

[The soil that made up the lands of the Fortress of the Transcendental’s Fantasy is an ancient cursed soil!]

[No one has successfully turned these lands into fertile lands!]

“...?”

Simply put, even if Minhyuk used the Pickaxe that Can Make Any Land Fertile and recovered some of the land, it would still return to its original state. But who was Minhyuk? He was someone that would never give up. He quickly struck the ground in front of him in quick succession.

[Recovery has increased by 0.3%.]

[Recovery has increased by 0.3%.]

[Recovery has returned to 0%.]

[Recovery has increased by 0.3%.]

[Recovery has returned to 0%.]

[Recovery...]

[...returned...]

Then, Minhyuk's pinnacle passive skill, which he created by combining Divine Will and Lightning, was triggered.

[Striking Will.]

[One strike becomes fourteen!]

[Your DEX will increase by 20%. All of your stats will increase by 6%!]

[The effect will last for seven seconds.]

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud, thud—!

[Recovery has increased by 1.3%.]

[Recovery has returned to 0.4%.]

“Rend! Come and help me!”

Rend was the Great Spirit of the Earth. Even if he used an ordinary pickaxe, he could still turn any barren land into fertile land.

Thud, thud, thud, thud—!

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud—!

The two of them began to hit the ground with their pickaxes with all their might. Even Beanie, who looked like he could not bear to watch them do it like this, grabbed a pickaxe and joined them. The three of them hit the ground like crazy for one straight hour.

[The Recovery Rate has been fixed at 0.9%!]

[If you don't hit the ground with your pickaxe within ten minutes, the Recovery Rate will return to 0%!]

This was the worst of all the trials and gates that required intense labor that Minhyuk had done so far. And to think that Minhyuk had Striking Will with him this time around, too.

“If you take a breather, the recovery rate will return to 0%...”

Minhyuk held his pickaxe and stood there for a long time without doing anything. Seeing him like that, the Transcendentals approached him one after the other.

“Do you understand now? It’s impossible. This is also why we promised to give you such huge rewards,” Nekk said.

Those who hadn’t experienced it would say that turning this barren land into fertile land was easy. Minhyuk firmly believed he could do it since he believed in the name of the Food God, the Pickaxe that Can Make Any Land Fertile, and the Great Spirit of the Earth Rend. However, the Transcendentals knew he would give up from fear once he experienced it, just like they gave up on growing and eating something delicious from these lands.

“You should go back to your land now. Let us meet once you have crossed over the wall,” Nekk said as he turned around to leave. Bender and the other Transcendentals also agreed, although they looked very bitter.

But then Minhyuk said, “If I can do this, will that make me a ‘Transcendental,’ too?”

“...?”

Nekk turned to look at Minhyuk, who was smiling faintly at them.

“If I achieve something you have given up on, then doesn’t that mean I will also become a Transcendental?”

Nekk’s pupils shook and trembled. He could see the willingness and will to do it underneath the small and faint smile on Minhyuk.

What was a Transcendental? The original Transcendentals' strength came from the blood they were born with. But, of course, they also knew the meaning of transcendence.

[A small human and god has reminded you anew of the meaning of transcendence!]

[If he can achieve what you can’t, then you will have to acknowledge his ‘transcendence’ and applaud him for his efforts!]

“I will do it. I will give it my all. That’s why I ask you with all due respect...” Minhyuk turned to look at Nekk and said, “Can you please fix my armor? So that all of my efforts will not be in vain?”

“...”

Nekk felt his heart thump wildly.

[A small human and god is suggesting a deal with you!]

The man in front of Nekk asked him to give it his all in fixing his armor, just like he would give it his all for them. So, Nekk answered, “I promise you. I will make sure to pay back your hard work and effort.”

[Transcendental Nekk puts his name on the line and promises you!]

[He will put everything on the line so your efforts will not be in vain!]

It was quite a strange feeling. One look at the man's eyes, and he felt he could trust and count on him.

Bender and the other Transcendentals turned to look at Nekk and asked, "Nekk, do you think he will be able to do it?"

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

That was right. All they could do was watch. Nekk watched as Minhyuk and his vassals gathered to eat the dish Minhyuk had prepared. After eating, they all stood up and swung their pickaxes with all their might. He stood there and watched them work.

Day one. The skin on Minhyuk's palms started to peel off. However, he slapped on a bandage and continued swinging his pickaxe.

Day two. The baby piggy, turning the land with them, fell. He could no longer endure the hard and strenuous labor that they were doing.

Day three. Even the human with roots growing all over his body fell and collapsed.

Just like that, the sun rose and set. The day turned into night, turning into day and night again. However, no matter how many times the days changed, one light did not go out. And that was the light of the will flowing out of Minhyuk's eyes.

Day four. All of the Transcendentals stood beside Nekk and watched him work.

Day five. Minhyuk almost collapsed from exhaustion. However, he was able to continue standing, staggering on his feet, but still eventually able to overcome his fatigue.

Day six.

Minhyuk might have been exhausted, but his eyes were still filled with vitality.

It was day seven. On this day, Bender told him, "You can stop now. Why are you doing this?"

Minhyuk continued to swing his pickaxe as he answered, "Because I have been there. I was hungry."

"..."

"I know how terrible it is. I know how it feels to be hungry to the point that one wants to die!"

Thud, thud, thud, thud, thud—!

Day eight.

Day nine.

The Transcendentals stood there and pondered deeply about the man's thinking.

Day eleven.

Day twelve.

Day thirteen.

Moisture slowly started to appear in the once dry and barren land.

Day fourteen.

Day fifteen.

Sprouts started to grow in the land where nothing had ever grown before.

Day sixteen.

Day seventeen.

The man who carried a '*Transcendental*' Will made the land before them bear fruit.

[A small human and god has reminded you, the 'Transcendentals,' anew of the meaning of transcendence and created a new name carrying transcendence in front of you!]

[The Transcendence that he has created is the Effort and Will to Never Back Down or Give Up!]

[His transcendence is so great and noble that no one can overlook and belittle him!]