

## Gourmet 911

### Chapter 911

Hunger. It was something that Minhyuk was very familiar with. He, out of all people, was fully aware of how painful hunger was. It was so painful to the point that he felt like he could shove anything that he could get his hands on down his throat.

*If I give up everything and die, would I be able to escape this terrible hell?* Minhyuk was just a human being. He once had a moment when he felt like dying and almost gave up on everything.

Then, he appeared in front of the Transcententials.

*‘The next few decades... perhaps a few hundreds of years...’*

He could tell that the Transcententials had been suffering from hunger for a long, *long* time. Minhyuk could also tell that they would give it their all if he gave it his all for them.

Thud—!

Thuuuuud—!

Thuuuuuuuud—!

That was why he never gave up and never backed down. Even if he was about to keel over from exhaustion, he continued to swing his pickaxe and endured, with only his indomitable will powering him through. He continued to work for one, two, three, four, five, eleven, twelve, thirteen, and fifteen days. He only worked hard for fifteen days, but all of this effort would ensure that these people would be full and satiated for a very long time.

Thuuuuuuuud—!

Moisture began to appear in the barren land’s soil.

Thuuuud—!

Tiny sprouts began to grow in the soil.

Thuuuuud—!

Finally, all of his efforts came to fruition.

[The barren land of the Fortress of the Transcendental’s Fantasy has turned into fertile land!]

[You can now grow any seed in these lands!]

[You have reminded and imprinted what ‘transcendence’ truly means in the minds of the Transcententials!]

[The transcendence you have imprinted upon them is the transcendence of ‘Will’ and ‘Effort’!]

After hearing these notifications, Minhyuk collapsed from exhaustion. He fainted after murmuring, “I did it!”

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Nekk was extremely against Minhyuk’s entrance to the Fortress of the Transcendental’s Fantasy. However, despite his negative perception, Minhyuk remained steadfast and strong. He even served

them some warm and delicious chicken porridge. When Minhyuk was left startled, and in a daze after using his pickaxe for an hour or so, Nekk advised him to give up and return.

But Minhyuk told them that he would do it. He would do it, so he asked Nekk to make armor for him with as much effort as he used for them. And Nekk, who denied his qualifications when he first saw him and advised him to give up when they finally met, agreed.

Nekk watched Minhyuk work for one day, two days, three days, four days, and thought, *‘I did not know a thing about him, but I said that he did not have any qualifications and did not deserve to enter this place.’*

*‘I told him that he would never be able to turn the barren land into fertile land.’*

*‘I have been watching you.’*

He made two mistakes, but he also made a promise to him after that. At this moment, Nekk felt his heart grow warm. He watched him, who never gave up, and cheered him on.

After looking at him for a long time, Nekk moved forward and picked up Minhyuk, who had fallen asleep on the ground. Then, he said, “I promise you. I will do my best and work as much as you have worked for us.”

Nekk was a man of his word. It was one of his strongest points.

At that moment, he heard Minhyuk mutter, “Hmm. Mountain Ore doenjang jjigae. Yummy...”

“...”

Nekk decided to pretend that he did not hear that.

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Minhyuk woke up on Transcendental Bender’s bed. Bender, who sat before him, said, “As promised, I will tell you the story about the child named Ruffiso.”

[You can now watch the video of the story of the Leader’s Child.]

[If you do not wish to watch it, you can just say ‘Decline.’]

Minhyuk did not even hesitate. He said, “Accept.”

Immediately after that, the scene in front of him changed. It showed a village as Bender’s voice started the narration of the story about Ruffiso’s birth.

[There were no rules in the first Transcendentals’ Village. Most of the people who lived there were extremely arrogant. No man could ever compare with them. Among the people who lived in the Transcendentals’ Village was a woman named Blaine.]

[Blaine was the most beautiful and the wisest woman in the village. She insisted on making rules. However, even after countless arguments, many still denied and refused her proposal. Then, one day, he appeared.]

[He was the strongest Transcendental in the village. And he was in favor of Blaine’s suggestion to make rules. The two immediately began to make rules.]

[The fights slowly started to dwindle, and the village regained its peace and tranquility. If someone tried to cause trouble and break the rules, Gerram, the strongest, would stop them.]

The village that was once filled with fighting every single day slowly disappeared. It was replaced with a peaceful and tranquil village.

[But one day, she descended upon the earth.]

It was Immortal Sorceress Helenia.

[She started killing the humans and even the gods who tried to stop her non-stop. Her existence threatened the survival of the entire world. And our leaders? They looked for ways to stop her.]

[At that moment, a very reckless Transcendental suddenly made a move.]

That Transcendental's name was Bender.

[Yes, that was me. Gerram created law and order in the village, but as time went by, I grew stronger. I grew to the point that I surpassed Gerram in his heyday. And I have done something reckless and stupid that affected all gods, humans, and Transcententials.]

The scene in front of Minhyuk changed. It showed Bender running away with two of Helenia's ores in his hands.

[But because of my reckless act, Helenia grew weaker, and her tyrannical acts slowly died down. The next thing that we did was exactly as you know it. We sealed the Mountain Ore using a sealing stone and turned the Sun's Ore into the Sun's Salt. I thought everything would be over after that.]

The scene now showed Blaine holding her newborn child and looking at him with love and adoration. Gerram stood beside her, carefully caressing the child's head with a loving smile.

"He's the only child born among the Transcententials."

Gerram laughed when he heard Blaine's words: "This child will grow to become a wise and strong man who will lead the Transcententials as their leader. I've already thought of a name for this child."

"What is it?"

"Ruffiso."

"...It's a good name."

The two smiled at each other.

[Their happiness was short-lived. Helenia came after me and followed me, the one who stole her ores, to the Transcententials Village.]

The scene changed once again. Although Helenia had lost two of her ores and had considerably weakened, she still possessed a power that no Transcendental could resist. However, Blaine, Gerram, and the rest of the Transcententials confronted her.

[We fought for days on end.]

Rumbleeeeeee—

A thick bolt of lightning fell from the sky. The Transcendentals immediately fought back and blocked the bolts of lightning that fell one after another. Then, at that moment, Helenia waved her staff and released a bright light as she unleashed hundreds of magical attacks upon them.

However, the Transcendentals were no pushover. They were also strong. They would lift a gigantic shield to prevent her magic or use a spear to stab Helenia. They would also sometimes unleash powerful spells to confront Helenia's own.

[However, as time went by, we realized that we were going to 'lose.']

But at the moment before they sealed Helenia, her powers seemed to have gone beyond their imaginations.

[She was the epitome of the word disaster. I felt frustrated. This was the consequence of my reckless and stupid actions.]

Bender's voice sounded bitter. But the humans and gods could survive thanks to his reckless and stupid actions.

[In the end, they made a decision.]

The Transcendentals continued to die one after another as they continued to fight against Helenia. The scene changed once again. This time, it showed Gerram and Blaine with blood dripping all over their bodies. The two were rushing into the house where their child was.

"Uwaa! Uwaa! Uwaa! Uwaa!"

They looked at the crying child. Gerram forced a smile on his face and told his crying child, "Don't cry, Ruffiso."

Blaine reached out and held Ruffiso tightly. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Ruffiso... I'm sorry."

They knew that there was only one way for them to save Ruffiso. But this method made the two feel heartbroken. Blaine gently caressed Ruffiso's small head as tears started to drip down her cheeks.

"Ruffiso... Mommy loves you very, very much."

"We don't have any more time."

Blaine lowered her trembling lips and gently kissed Ruffiso's forehead while Gerram hung the small glass bottle containing the Sun's Salt on his son's neck.

"The angels will take you to a safe place where Helenia cannot find you. Time will stop for you in that world. Ruffiso, I hope you can become a good leader." Gerram stroked his son's head sadly.

A basket appeared and carried Ruffiso immediately after the couple gave their order.

Crack—

The basket slowly ascended until it passed the ceiling that Gerram had pierced and broken earlier. The couple could not take their eyes off Ruffiso as the child slowly disappeared.

Baaaaaaaang—

At the same time, a huge explosion erupted and blew the cabin and the couple away.

[The two Transcendentals knew that they would die soon. They had to send their beloved child, Ruffiso, away.]

“Bastards! Is that your child?! Will you only tell me the location where the ores are if I tear that child apart, huh?!”

Helenia was cruel and vicious. She went so far as to go after the child ascending to the sky. However, Gerram and Blaine would not let her. They held onto her and stopped her from moving.

“Go, Ruffiso.”

The video continued to show the battle where the two Transcendentals fought desperately so that Helenia could not touch the child. Even if their heads got smashed to the ground, they stood back up and held onto Helenia. They even went so far as to hug her ankles to stop her. Even when their arms were broken, and their entire bodies were torn and ripped apart, they continued to fight to protect their child from Helenia.

[Back then, they told us to run away.]

Bender took the other Transcendentals and fled from the village at the sacrifice of their leaders. Once the two Transcendentals confirmed that Ruffiso had safely disappeared from the village, they allowed the flames to burn through them. Even until the moment of their deaths, their eyes looked bitterly at the place where Ruffiso had disappeared.

Then, the notifications rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[The secret of the birth of Duke Ruffiso has been revealed!]

Crackle—!

Minhyuk, who had been watching the video from the third person’s point of view, appeared on the video with the ‘Something that He was Chasing’ in his arms. The old book flew away from his hold and burned. Then, the entire world turned white. In that world, Duke Ruffiso, wearing an all-white ensemble, appeared before Minhyuk.

*‘Ruffiso hated and resented his parents for abandoning him even until his death.’*

But Ruffiso’s parents fought desperately to protect him. They only succumbed to their deaths after confirming that Ruffiso had disappeared safely. It was clear that they loved Ruffiso dearly. And Ruffiso? He was already a dead man. Minhyuk could see that there was no longer any resentment or regret in his eyes.

Ruffiso smiled softly and turned around. There, where he was headed, was Blaine, his mother. She smiled warmly at him as she held the hands of his father, Gerram. Then, Gerram raised his free hand and waved at Ruffiso. Ruffiso smiled brightly as he ran towards his parents.

Minhyuk triggered the Battle God’s Voice as he watched Ruffiso’s back.

[The brightest and most brilliant star finally returns to heaven.]

Just like how Ruffiso did not hold any grudge towards him, he did not have any grudge or resentment.

Ruffiso, finally back in his parents' arms, turned to look back at Minhyuk with a bright smile. Then, with a flash of light, their family slowly disappeared.

[You have received Duke Ruffiso's acknowledgment and recognition.]

[The restriction on the Star's Armor has disappeared!]

[The Star's Armor can only be disassembled and assembled by someone you have chosen and designated!]

Thus, Minhyuk possessed two outstanding components: the Star's Armor Set, which could now be disassembled and assembled, and 'Nekk,' who would try his best.

## Chapter 912

Nekk was the most outstanding blacksmith among the three Albraim blacksmiths and the best among all of the Transcenturals. His special powers were the main reason why he was viewed favorably.

"Are you going to summon the Forge's Hellfire?"

Nekk nodded, his face remaining nonchalant toward the concerns of the other Transcenturals.

"Nekk, wouldn't it be hard for you?"

"I can do it. After all, I also carry '*Transcendence*' in my name."

Nekk was the only blacksmith who could summon the Forge's Hellfire. Whenever the forge's hellfire was summoned, the surrounding area's temperature increased to ninety degrees. Not only did he have to endure that heat, but he also had to endure the blazing flames, which were as hot as lava and erupted every once in a while.

Nekk was the only one who could melt iron and forge using the Hellfire from the Forge's Hellfire. As the maker, he would have to endure extreme pain and be extremely hard to move. However, the results would be outstanding.

The Transcenturals looked at Nekk as he held the hammer in his hands. None of them asked him, '*Why are you willing to go that far?*'

He was Nekk. They also knew how hard Minhyuk had worked for them.

While the other Transcenturals were talking, Bender and Minhyuk came out of one of the cabins together. Nekk immediately went to Minhyuk and tried to get the man's armor so he could start working. But Minhyuk stopped him and handed over another set of armor. The armor was none other than the Star's Armor Set, a set that was complete with armor, pauldrons, a helmet, and a pair of boots.

"If you dismantle this armor set, can you use the materials from here and make an armor that is better than the armor that I'm wearing?"

This was Nekk's most significant concern. He wanted to give Minhyuk a good present, but the fortress had a severe shortage of good materials.

A master craftsman would never depend on or blame the materials he used. However, no matter how outstanding they were, they would not be able to produce high-quality equipment with just

normal materials. However, it was also true that the Transcendental Nekk could make God-rank artifacts from legendary-rank materials.

Nekk quickly checked the details of the armor that Minhyuk handed over to him.

- All of your stats will increase by +26%*
- Your Magical Defensive Power will double*
- Your Skill Attack Power will increase by 1.2x*
- Upon equipment, the armor will only feel as if you're wearing 500g light armor.*
- Passive Skill: The Unapproachable One*
- Active Skill: Rising Star*

“...?!”

Nekk's eyes grew wide when he saw the description written under the Star's Plate Armor. Even someone like Nekk, who had seen many outstanding armor, could tell that it was amazing.

*'The materials are ridiculously amazing.'*

One of the materials used on this armor was the 'Wind's Feather.' The Wind's Feather was extremely hard to forge and integrate into an artifact. However, if applied successfully, the weight of a full-plate armor, which usually exceeds six kilograms, would be reduced by a significant amount.

Although a full-plate armor could provide high defensive power and protect all of the artifact user's vital points, it was cumbersome, which made it more of a burden and a penalty to the one that equipped it.

However, this armor only weighed 500 grams. From what Nekk could tell, it had the highest defensive power among all the armor he had seen before. Nekk was even rendered speechless after checking the boots and the helmet.

*'This armor is truly made with excellent materials.'*

To be honest, Nekk also wanted to praise the “human” who created a set artifact using materials like that. But that was all there was to it.

*'Because he was a human, he could only use the materials to this level,'* Nekk concluded.

There was also one thing to note: the set artifact effects that would be triggered when wearing all of the artifacts together.

**Set Effects:**

- Your CHA will increase by 2,000.
- Your Defensive Power will increase by 700.
- All of your stats will increase by 10%.
- Active Skill: The One that Walks the Path of the Stars.
- The weight of the entire armor set will only be at 100 grams.

Nekk was quite impressed. After checking the Slaughterer's Armor, he quickly began to imagine a design.

*'I can use this material to supplement this part. This part can be discarded.'*

However, there was one problem.

*'The requirements are already set. Even if I make a new armor out of the Slaughterer's Armor and the Star's Armor Set, I don't think he will be able to equip it immediately.'*

This was the thing that Nekk was stuck on. But Nekk smiled not long after.

*'As long as I work hard, my efforts will definitely bear fruit, just like they did with yours.'*

Nekk looked at Minhyuk and said, "I will do my best."

"Thank you."

Nekk, who received everything he needed, slowly walked toward the smithy.

Baaaaaaaang—

Then, a blazing hellfire rose from the depths of the forge and lit up the entire smithy. The flames flew out and surrounded Nekk, who was approaching the smithy's doors.

[The Forge's Hellfire has been triggered!]

[Only if you successfully produce an artifact or die will you be able to escape the flames of the Forge's Hellfire and leave this smithy!]

[The blazing and intense flames of the Forge's Hellfire will not affect your vitality and life. However, you will feel a burning heat that will bother you while working!]

[Once you enter the smithy, you can control all the flames of the Forge's Hellfire and start making the artifacts!]

[Artifacts made with the Forge's Hellfire will have effects that are 10% stronger than usual!]

Claaaaaang—!

The most outstanding blacksmith among the Transcendentals, Nekk, raised his hammer and hit the materials as hard as he could as he tried to create a new armor set using the Star's Armor Set and the Slaughterer's Armor.

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The Joy Co. Ltd.'s conference room was almost turned upside down with the commotion.



President Kang Taehoon stared at Nekk through the monitor. He thought, *‘It’s already been four days. He has been working non-stop to dismantle those artifacts. He’s even forgoing sleep.’*

He could not help but be in awe of his mental strength. Finally, he finished dismantling the artifact.

[The Star’s Armor Set has been successfully dismantled!]

[With the Transcendental’s tenacity, passion, skill, and meticulousness, the material’s damage rate is only 8%!]

When dismantling an artifact, most blacksmith players had a 50% or more damage rate. This just shows how great a blacksmith Nekk was.

Meanwhile, the executives clamored to voice their opinions.

“Please look at this! Nekk has dismantled this artifact and extracted outstanding materials with minimal damage rates!”

“The materials are extremely outstanding! Even the guy who handles the materials is also outstanding! Whatever armor is produced will definitely upset the balance of the game!”

The conference room was in such a messy state because everyone was concerned about the balance break that Minhyuk was about to make.

One of the key figures, Manager Kim Dae-Il, said, “There are more than 2,400 articles and over 3,000 phone calls about how Player Minhyuk could cause a balance break in just one day. We need to restrict the production of that artifact right away.”

The discussions about how Minhyuk always caused a balance break never stopped. This was a never-ending problem for them, too. Why? The more outstanding the artifacts that Minhyuk acquired, the more high-quality artifacts they had to release in the market to ensure that the balance would be maintained to some extent.

Because of that, the difference between the rankers and the ordinary players also became more prominent. This was mainly because the items that they originally expected to appear only a year or two later had already been released.

“Athenae is the players’ world. We cannot intervene,” Team Leader Park Minggyu said.

Manager Kim Dae-Il and Team Leader Park Minggyu’s opinions were clashing since earlier. And President Kang Taehoon? He fully understood everyone’s opinion.

*‘This is a scenario we only expected to happen a year later.’*

[Crackleeeeeee—!]

Nekk worked on the bellows as he controlled the whirling flames of the Forge’s Hellfire and sent them straight to the furnace.

[Claaaang—!]

[Claaaang—!]

[Claaaang—!]

[The Transcendental's Crazy Tenacity has been triggered!]

[His tenacity will help him create a more outstanding artifact than any other!]

[Right now, a Transcendental is transcending his limits!]

“...”

“...”

Everyone was rendered speechless, but they soon began another round of bickering and arguing. After the meeting ended, they all left work. But when they came back the next day, they continued to argue over the same matter. And just like yesterday, the same notifications rang in their ears.

[The Transcendental's Crazy Tenacity has been triggered!]

[His tenacity will help him create a more outstanding artifact than any other!]

[Right now, a Transcendental is transcending his limits!]

Manager Kim Dae-Il said, “Please look at this. If things continue at this rate, an extremely outstanding armor set that no one could beat or steal will appear. We must put a Level 800 requirement at least before he can equip it!”

Manager Kim Dae-Il firmly believed that the balance in Athenae needed to be adjusted so that all players could love the game for a very long time. However, President Kang Taehoon, who was watching the monitor in a daze, was of a different mind.

“How many days has it been? How many days has Nekk been working inside that smithy and controlling the Forge's Hellfire?”

“He has been working for around eight days in-game time.”

“Is that so? Then, what do you think about this blacksmith named Nekk?”

[Claaaaaaaang—!]

[Crackleeeeeeee—!]

[Claaaaaaaang—!]

[Crackleeeeeeee—!]

Nekk's HP would not decrease even if he were inside the flames of the Forge's Hellfire. However, he had to suffer from the heat of the fire, around eighty degrees in temperature, which continued to burn and lick his skin. But that was not all.

“I think it's amazing that he can continue to swing his hammer and do blacksmithing work for eight straight days without a wink of sleep.”

“Transcendental. He deserves that name.”

“That's right. No sane man will swing his hammer and do blacksmithing work for eight straight days, no?”

“From what I know, the Transcendental’s Tenacity that Nekk has triggered several times in a row has the power to clear his mind. This allowed him to work without sleeping. However, I think he is still amazing for persevering for that long.”

For now, the executives stopped throwing their opinions around to sing praises for Nekk.

“...I see. As expected.” Kang Taehoon smiled.

He was also conflicted after watching the men under him argue and clash in this meeting room. But now, he was sure of the decision that he had to make.

“Athenae is a world created by players.”

[Claaaaaaang—!]

Nekk continued to swing his hammer, and the artifacts that he was making finally started to take shape.

“So, there will be no balance adjustment on this artifact. I want to respect his efforts as much as possible.”

[Crackleeeeeee—!]

One by one, the artifacts appeared from within the blazing flames.

Drip, drip—

Sweat started to drip down Nekk’s forehead.

“Didn’t you say that Nekk is amazing?” President Kang Taehoon asked as he made eye contact with the executives, who were clamoring for balance adjustment.

All of them nodded.

Unless they had permission, none of the people present here, including President Kang Taehoon, could check the footage of the players that the Special Players Management Team was monitoring. One reason the executives needed explicit permission to check it was that a player’s playing time was a private matter that no one should be able to check at any given moment.

“Is there anyone here who can achieve what Nekk is currently doing?”

“...”

“...”

“...”

The executives were all successful people. They spent several days and nights, with only naps powering them, just to make Athenae. However, none of them could reach that level.

[Claaaaaaang—!]

[Claaaaaaaaaaaang—!]

The clang of the hammer rang in the conference room and made their hearts beat wildly.

President Kang Taehoon continued to stare at the monitor and said, "Player Minhyuk swung his pickaxe for fifteen straight days to turn the fortress' barren land into fertile land."

"...?"

"...?"

The executives looked at Kang Taehoon in confusion. They knew that Minhyuk was a master of diligence and could work non-stop even though it was just repetitive labor. However, wasn't that just some kind of rumor? An unfounded myth?

"President. It's still a bit too much, don't you think so...?" Manager Kim Dae-Il said. He was thinking that it was still a bit too much.

"Team Leader Park, show them the video. I'll take responsibility."

Team Leader Park Minggyu took out a USB and connected it to the screen. Then, the screen split in two. One half showed Nekk, while the other showed what Minhyuk had done recently. Team Leader Park clicked on something and set the video speed on the video showing Minhyuk at 128x.

Like that, they watched as one day, two days, three days, four days, five days, six days, and eleven days passed. Minhyuk would only occasionally leave his pickaxe to the baby piggy or the Great Spirit of the Earth Rend. He would use that time to take an hour-long nap before getting up and working on the field once again.

The executives were speechless as they watched the sweat soak Minhyuk's body. Their lips turned dry as they continued to watch him with admiration.

"Are you telling me this will cause the balance to collapse?"

Everyone continued to stare at the videos side by side on the gigantic screen when they heard Kang Taehoon's words. The other side showed Nekk, now on the verge of completing the artifact.

"Is there anyone who can do what Player Minhyuk has done?"

"..."

"..."

"Or is anyone among the jealous players who keep clamoring about balance collapse capable of doing something like that?"

None of them could answer.

"What should we do if the balance collapsed because a player did his best and gave it his all?"

At that moment, the screen showed Nekk and the flames that licked the artifacts he was working on.

[Vwoooooooooooooooooong—!]

The flames shot up to the sky. And with the touch of Nekk's hands, the fire that rose to the sky slowly seeped into the artifacts. And when the fire cleared, the artifacts he had made from the materials he disassembled from the Star's Armor Set and the Slaughterer's Armor revealed itself.

“It’s simple.”

Warning notifications blinked non-stop, turning the screen in front of them red.

[Transcendental Nekk has successfully created a masterpiece that surpasses all the masterpieces he had made with his hands before!]

“He’s cool. He deserves it. We have to acknowledge that fact.”

President Kang Taehoon smiled as he looked at the executives who had been left in a daze while watching Nekk’s video.

“That’s the only thing we can do for Player Minhyuk.”

## Chapter 913

Manager Kim Dae-Il was one of the pioneer members of Joy Co. Ltd., who made Athenae what it was. He was one of the few people who could insist on and push his opinion regarding Athenae to his boss, President Kang Taehoon. He often clashed and argued with the man. But Dae-Il knew that President Kang Taehoon was also just a human being. There were also times when he agreed with the man’s opinion.

Although Dae-Il often argued with the president, this did not mean he hated him. For the first time in a long while, Manager Kim Dae-Il felt warmth gushing in his chest.

“He’s cool. He deserves it. We have to acknowledge that fact.”

Bathump, bathump, bathump—

“That’s the only thing we can do for Player Minhyuk.”

The remodeled armor set appeared on the monitor in front of them while Player Minhyuk, who had worked hard for fifteen days, continued to play on the side. Manager Kim Dae-Il, who clamored for a quick patch because of a suspected balance break, could no longer insist on it.

*‘Is there someone that can still curse and mock a player like that?’*

Many were already aware of how hardworking Player Minhyuk was. However, his effort and willingness to work were so great that everyone here could only stare at the screen in admiration.

*‘I’m a bit jealous. Is there any other young man out there that has this much passion and could work this hard?’*

At this moment, Manager Kim Dae-Il realized that they genuinely could not put a heavier restriction on Player Minhyuk’s artifacts. Even so, they still had a huge problem to deal with.

“When it comes to high rankers, especially in Player Minhyuk’s case, everything becomes a big deal. Even a haircut that chops off two centimeters of their hair could also become a huge issue when it comes to them.”

This was the truth. So, if the armor set that Player Minhyuk was wearing changed, then players and netizens would continuously talk about his armor and artifacts. And it would grow worse once Minhyuk displayed a fantastic performance using that armor.

“Because of that, the other players will point fingers again. They will criticize both Player Minhyuk and us for another balance break because Player Minhyuk obtained a set of outstanding armor.”

Manager Kim Dae-Il had now switched positions. He now wanted to protect Minhyuk from malicious comments. That was why he brought these words to the table.

“Once he displayed the amazing power of his armor, the malicious rumors about Ilhwa Group and Joy Co. Ltd. striking a deal to give him artifacts would spread once again—and they would definitely spread fiercer than ever.”

Everyone should put their heads together and think of a way to deal with this matter.

Then, President Kang Taehoon said, “Is anyone here unhappy about Player Minhyuk obtaining that artifact?”

Kang Taehoon looked at the people, who had been shouting with veins popping on their necks just an hour earlier. These people immediately shut their mouths, which prompted a small smile on his face.

After watching the video, most people here thought it was only ‘reasonable.’ In fact, some even thought Minhyuk was ‘qualified’ to receive better rewards for his work.

“Let’s make a Ztube video after discussing this with Player Minhyuk.”

“...!”

Manager Kim Dae-Il’s eyes grew wide. Even the other executives looked at Kang Taehoon in shock.

“If we’re doing it like that, let’s use the title ‘The Burden an Emperor Carries.’ Then, edit a shortened version of Minhyuk swinging the pickaxe for fifteen days and add it to the video.”

Kim Dae-Il was in awe.

“The emperor standing at the highest position... and why the emperor has reached that point...”

The executives looked at President Kang Taehoon in awe, who devised such a plan quickly.

Then, Manager Kim Dae-Il said, “The impact this video will bring will be huge.”

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Minhyuk stayed by Nekk’s side for a few days.

‘*Amazing.*’ This was Minhyuk’s honest impression of the man.

He had also cooked several dishes using unique God-grade ingredients accompanied by danger. He had cooked in blistering heat and had been stabbed by hundreds of blades while cooking. However, he could only endure because he was taking advantage of a loophole of some sort. Yes, Minhyuk was mainly able to endure because he was a ‘player.’ Minhyuk felt strange, but there was not much

pain during the process. But Nekk's situation was different. He knew that Nekk must be feeling intense pain right here and now.

One day, two days, three days, four days had passed. But Nekk, whose sweat covered his entire body, continued to swing the hammer in his hands—the fifth day, sixth, seventh, then eighth day passed. From how Nekk's muscles spasmed and strained, anyone could see that he was nearing his limit.

Crackle—!

Not long after, a huge pillar of blazing flame, a testament to Nekk's passion, effort, and tenacity, shot to the sky before retreating and seeping into the artifacts he was working on. When the flames gradually disappeared, a set of armor appeared, reflecting the color of the black flames that had erupted earlier.

[Nekk has gone beyond his limits and successfully created a masterpiece among all of the masterpieces he has created before!]

[Only the owner of the new armor set can bestow a name upon it!]

[The armor is of Transcendental Rank!]

[The boots are of Transcendental Rank!]

[The leg gaiters are of Transcendental Rank!]

Minhyuk smiled when he saw the armor set that Nekk created.

Not long after, the Forge's Hellfire disappeared into nothingness—it was as if it had never appeared in the first place. Once the flames completely disappeared, Nekk beckoned Minhyuk. Minhyuk entered the smithy and looked at the newly born silver armor set.

*'It's amazing.'*

This was Minhyuk's first impression. Minhyuk turned to look at Nekk. When he saw the man nod along, he went ahead and named the armor and the other artifacts that belonged to the set. Only after he finished naming the set would he check the details.

[You have named the armor 'Transcendental's Armor'!]

[You have named the boots 'Transcendental's Boots'!]

[You have named the leg gaiters 'Transcendental's Leg Gaiters'!]

These artifacts contained the power of Transcendental Nekk. Furthermore, none of the players had a transcendental rank artifact yet, so Minhyuk thought it was only right to name this set 'Transcendental's Armor Set.'

[You can now check the details and information of the Transcendental's Armor Set.]

But there was one thing that caught Minhyuk's attention.

*'The Star's Armor Set can only be equipped at Level 700.'*

The Slaughterer's Armor was also excellent. This meant that this problem could not be easily dealt with.

*‘From what I heard, lowering an artifact’s requirements and restrictions is almost impossible even among the best and the greatest blacksmiths.’*

Of course, it was possible. However, the artifact's ability would also be significantly lowered. Most of the time, low-rank artifacts would be produced using suitable materials. So, blacksmiths could often create artifacts without even touching the restrictions and requirements.

“I know what you’re worried about,” Nekk said, crossing his arms and smiling smugly.

“Alright, I’ll go and check it first.” Minhyuk excitedly checked the artifacts’ details.

### **Rank**

: Transcendental

- All of your stats will increase by +25%.*
- Your magical defensive power will triple.*
- Your skill attack power will increase by 1.3x.*
- Your armor’s recovery rate will quadruple.*
- The armor is as light as a cloth that weighs 50 grams.*
- Transforms to Black Dragon Armor*
- Passive Skill: Slaughterer’s Absorption*
- Passive Skill: Asura’s Shield*

The Transcendental’s Armor’s defensive power was slightly lower than that of the Slaughterer’s Armor. However, this armor carried all of the advantages of the Slaughterer’s Armor and the Star’s Armor Set and discarded all unnecessary parts.

Its level requirement had dropped to Level 600. Did that mean that Nekk sacrificed some of the artifact’s performance so he could lower the level requirement and allow him to equip it right away?

*‘But I’m already delighted with it.’*

Not to mention how heavy the armor set was, the boots, leg gaiters, and armor that comprised it would also restrict the movements of the one who equipped it. Minhyuk had not expected to see any particular changes to the Transcendental’s Armor.

*‘There’s also the artifact’s set effects.’*

At that moment, Minhyuk saw something that piqued his curiosity.

“Black Dragon Armor?”



“You haven’t checked it yet?”

“Eh?” Minhyuk looked at Nekk in confusion.

“There’s no way that those excellent materials will weaken just by lowering the restrictions and requirements, you know?”

Minhyuk checked the Black Dragon Armor with a curious look on his face.

- All of your stats will increase by +31%.*
- All your attack and defensive power will increase by 4%.*
- Your magical defensive power will quadruple.*
- Your skill attack power will increase by 1.3x.*
- Your armor’s recovery rate will quadruple.*
- The armor is as light as a cloth that weighs 50 grams.*
- Armor can only be equipped for five minutes.*
- Passive Skill: Slaughterer’s Absorption*
- Passive Skill: Asura’s Shield*
- Passive Skill: The Unapproachable One*
- Active Skill: Transcendence*

“Wh- what is this?”

Minhyuk was very shocked.

*‘There are two sets of detailed information in one armor?’*

In other words, the armor was divided into two. It contained both the Transcendental’s Armor and the Black Dragon Armor.

“Come on. Say, ‘Black Dragon Armor.’”

“Black Dragon Armor.”

[The Transcendental’s Armor has transformed into the Black Dragon Armor!]

Creak, creak, creak—!

Black feathers appeared, starting from the back of Minhyuk’s hands, before covering his entire body. The feathers soon changed and turned into hard plate armor that covered everything beneath Minhyuk’s neck. To be honest, Minhyuk found the ‘Black Dragon Armor’, which was completely black, to be very cool.

[You have equipped the Black Dragon Armor!]

[You can only equip the armor for five minutes!]

It looked like he was wearing a completely different set of armor. Of course, it was based on the Transcendental's Armor, but it was much superior to the main armor. The passive skill 'The Unapproachable One' was enough to put the armor on a pedestal. Although the skill only had an 8% chance of being triggered when being attacked by the enemy, it could increase one's evasion rate by nearly five times.

There was also the active skill 'Transcendence,' which allowed the Black Dragon Armor to take a bit and accumulate the damage from the enemies. Once a set amount was absorbed, it would enable the one that equipped the armor to use the buff ability, 'Transcendence.'

In addition, Black Dragon Armor could increase one's stats, attack, and defensive power.

*'Although the level requirement has been lowered, the power of the materials wasn't lowered.'*

Minhyuk realized how amazing the thinking of the blacksmith named Nekk was. After all, who would even think of combining two armors in one, right?!

He quickly checked the information on the boots and leg gaiters. Unfortunately, it seemed like the main focus was on the armor. But it did not matter. The real power of the Transcendental's Armor lay in the effects when the set was equipped. Minhyuk quickly wore the boots and gaiters.

[You have equipped the Transcendental's Armor Set!]

[You will now receive the set effects of the Transcendental's Armor Set!]

- Your CHA will increase by 5,000
- All of your defensive power will increase by 1,100.
- All of your stats will increase by 12%.
- Active Skill: The One that Walks the Path of the Stars
- All the armor, including the cape, helmet, and currently equipped accessories, will only weigh 10 grams.
- The durability of all the artifacts you equipped will be set to  $\infty$ .

"Wow..."

Minhyuk was speechless at how crazy the effects of the artifact set were.

*'It's just as heavy as an epic-rank armor?'*

One could not equip two armor pieces at once, just like one could not wear two necklaces at once. However, this armor set's artifact effect was extremely overpowered, to the point that one would feel as if they were wearing another set of armor.

*'I want to test it out right away.'*

Yes. Minhyuk wanted to test this artifact's cheat-like and overpowered effects.

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At the same time.

A player, who was carrying a bloodied man behind him, was riding desperately toward the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

*'The Louvard Kingdom, the Caino Kingdom, the Kailde Empire, and even the Eivelis Empire have all rejected my request.'*

Carron was a Level 500 player who belonged to the Roarke Kingdom. Although he might be a fairly high-level player among ordinary players, he also had another identity. He was the 'Godly Editor Jackson,' who made a name for himself in Ztube.

Although Carron was a player, he loved the Roarke Kingdom deeply. But the kingdom was now on the verge of collapse, so he was running like this for them. And the bloodied man riding behind him? He was none other than the kingdom's first prince, Beynan.

He had heard plenty of stories from the king of the Roarke Kingdom before.

*–I had lent some help to the Beyond the Heavens Empire when they had just founded their nation and were still suffering from financial difficulties. It was nothing but a small help. I don't know if he remembers it. Hoho.*

A benevolent ruler; that was who the king he had always served was.

All the kingdoms and empires had turned down the collapsing Roarke Kingdom's request for help. Carron, who was running toward the first empire built by a player, finally caught sight of the walls of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. They were Roarke Kingdom's final hope.

## Chapter 914

Minhyuk was extremely satisfied with the Transcendental's Armor Set that Nekk had made without sparing any effort.

"I'm truly grateful to you."

Nekk only smiled faintly in answer.

He had already handed over hundreds of the seeds that Rumble had created over his twenty-day stay inside the fortress. With this, the Transcententials would no longer grow hungry. It was time for Minhyuk to receive the other rewards promised to him.

[You have obtained 760,000 platinum.]

[You have acquired Transcendental Bernie's 'Transcendental's Magic Book.']

[You have received the Transcendental's Blessing!]

[All of your stats have increased by 2%.]

[All of your attack and defensive power will increase by 2%.]

[Your resistance against abnormal statuses will increase by 5%.]

Then, there was his final reward, the ‘Mountain Ore.’ Bender brought over an old wooden box wrapped several times with a thick chain. Before handing it over to him, Bender said, “Before I give you this, can you tell me about your relationship with Ruffiso?”

The Transcenturals did not know much about Ruffiso. All they knew was that their leaders tried their hardest to keep him safe even until their deaths and that he was the man who would probably lead them in place of their leaders in the future.

Minhyuk slowly told them Ruffiso’s story. As they listened, the Transcenturals could not help but lament. They also expressed a bitter expression when they heard that Minhyuk had killed Ruffiso.

Ruffiso had grown out of their reach, becoming the duke of an empire, and killed countless people. He was killed in the fierce battle against the Beyond the Heavens Empire. They weren’t stupid. The human world was like a jungle. It was a place filled with war, where only the strongest would survive. Even if Minhyuk killed Ruffiso in that world, there was no way for them to blame and resent him for that.

“Don’t be surprised,” Bender told Minhyuk, who was preparing the Transcenturals’ Grinder.

Clang—!

Not long after, the chains fell and clattered from Bender’s hands. At the same time, Bernie cast a barrier that trapped Minhyuk and Bender inside.

Rumbleeeeeeee—!

The moment Bender opened the box, the ground beneath his feet began to twist and break rapidly. It quickly extended and devoured an area with a 200-meter radius.

*‘In just a second?’*

The worst part? The earthquake’s intensity was so strong that Minhyuk felt it could break apart everything in its path in just a short amount of time.

“You are seeing this, right? This is what you have to grind.”

Who wouldn’t be disappointed, right? It carried such enormous power, yet he had to change its form so Helenia could not find it.

*‘But I don’t feel disappointed at all.’*

Indeed, Minhyuk did not even feel a shred of disappointment. Just like that, the Mountain Ore, which was covered with a shining bright light and felt like a living and breathing heart, slowly entered the grinder.

Thud—

Once the lid was closed, the Transcenturals’ Grinder started to run.

•*It can grind any ore or minerals.*

•*The ground ore can change into whatever condiments or sauce you want. It will all depend on the artifact owner.*

•*The better the ore, the better the flavor and the more special its power.*

### **Description**

: This is one of Transcendental Nekk's masterpieces. You obtained it as a reward from an Easter egg.

Grind, grind, grind—!

Then, a notification rang in Minhyuk's ears as he watched the Transcendental's Grinder ground the Mountain Ore at a crazy speed.

[Please choose the condiment, seasoning, or sauce you wish to obtain from the Transcendental's Grinder.]

*“Doenjang. (Soybean Paste)”*

Bernie looked at Minhyuk sadly when she heard his words. *‘Did he just say damn[1]? Well, it’s completely understandable.’*

Bernie looked extremely sad. She felt unfortunate for Minhyuk, who seemed to have cursed while grinding the Mountain Ore. Since the ore was being ground, Bernie released the barrier and approached Minhyuk. She gently placed her hand on his shoulders. With a sad smile, she said, “...It’s alright. I understand.”

“???” Minhyuk looked at her in confusion. Not long after, the grinder stopped vibrating.

[You have acquired 2 kilograms of Mountain Doenjang!]

Minhyuk smiled happily when he saw the doenjang sitting snugly in his inventory.

“Thank you! Thank you! I’ll get going now!” Minhyuk shouted, quickly running away. This was so no one would ask him to share some of the doenjang with them.

Bender watched Minhyuk disappear after bidding them goodbye, and said, “Ruffiso is already dead. And the man who killed him has the leader’s treasure chest with him.”

“Perhaps that child will be the one to lead us, just like the leader wanted.”

Their eyes lingered at the place where he disappeared for a very long time.

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When he lifted the lid of the earthen pot, Minhyuk was greeted by boiling doenjangjjigae. Right next to the pot were several side dishes, such as grilled hairtail, unseasoned laver, kimchi, and others.

“Kgghhk...” Minhyuk sighed in admiration as he held a bowl of steaming white rice.

The first thing that Minhyuk tasted was a spoonful of clams and the refreshing doenjangjjigae’s soup.

“Keuhaa!”

The doenjang jjigae, filled with the spicy flavor of the Cheongyang red pepper, stimulated his appetite. Minhyuk quickly blew on a considerable spoonful of rice and pushed it into his mouth.

“Yes! Doenjang jjigae is a complete rice thief!”

Minhyuk scooped another spoonful of rice and pushed it into his mouth. Then, he scooped a spoonful of stew with various ingredients like tofu, zucchini, and onions.

Fwoo! Fwoo!

After blowing on it, he opened his mouth and ate the spoon's contents. The jiggly tofu, soft zucchini, and onions danced along with the deliciously spicy and refreshing soup in his mouth.

Next, he turned his attention towards the grilled hairtail. Using his divine hands, Minhyuk removed the bones of the grilled hairtail. Then, he clamped a piece of the chubby meat and put it in his mouth. The salty and savory grilled hairtail met with the sweet and soft white rice, creating a pleasant flavor in his mouth.

“Wow...”

It was unbelievable. It was so delicious that Minhyuk felt like his mouth was filled with ecstasy. With a happy smile, Minhyuk wrapped some rice with the unseasoned laver. Then, he dipped it in a sauce made with chives, garlic, soy sauce, sesame oil, and the like. The crunchy laver, sauce and the rice met, bringing a harmony of flavors that brought even more delight to Minhyuk's mouth.

This time, he scooped out the clams from the soup of the doenjang jjigae and added their meat to the rice. Then, he scooped some tofu, zucchini, and a bit of the soup. After that, he mixed them all and ate a huge mouthful.

Minhyuk finished three bowls of rice in an instant and smiled with satisfaction.

[You have consumed more than 200 grams of Mountain Doenjang.]

[Your Earth Attribute increased by 2%. Your EXP Acquisition Rate will increase by 20% for one week.]

[Your Earth Attribute will increase by 2% if you eat 200 grams of Mountain Doenjang for a week. You will also obtain a 10% EXP buff.]

It was a very satisfying meal. Because he had two kilograms of the Mountain Doenjang, Minhyuk could increase his Earth Attribute by around 20% and have a 20% increase in EXP Acquisition Rate for 70 days.

*‘I'm tired.’*

He had been staying in the Fortress of the Transcendental's Fantasy for quite a long time and had accumulated quite a lot of tension in his body. He was pretty exhausted. So, he logged out and rested.

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Minhyuk, who woke up after a very refreshing sleep, checked the phone calls he had received before exercising. The call was from Joy Co. Ltd.'s President Kang Taehoon. President Kang Taehoon immediately discussed with him the moment he answered the call.

*'Yes. It's completely understandable.'*

Minhyuk also knew that the Transcendental's Armor he obtained this time would create another ruckus about how he forced the balance to collapse.

[That's why our Joy Co. Ltd. hopes for your cooperation, Minhyuk. We want to collaborate with you and release a video on Ztube.]

Minhyuk needed clarification. They wanted to upload a video about him on Ztube? Minhyuk had uploaded quite a lot of videos to Ztube. Most were mukbangs, but each of his videos easily exceeded forty million views.

*'But will they find my daily life interesting? Will the world's people understand this balance collapse just because they watched how my daily life goes?'*

Surprisingly enough, Minhyuk, who tried and worked harder than anybody else, did not think he was working harder than the others.

[We will split the videos about your daily life into a few. Then, we will edit them and post them. Of course, Joy Co. Ltd. will try to bring the best editor to edit them.]

Ztube editor. This was an emerging occupation. Depending on the editor's skills, the viewers who watched their videos would either feel the thrill or sadness from the video. These editors worked similarly to the authors. They created a completely different image and vision while using the same material as others. They needed a brilliant and outstanding editor to make it work.

*'Not bad.'*

To be honest, Minhyuk thought that it was also necessary for them to help them improve the image of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Only by doing that would they be able to increase their migration rate.

"Will the profits for the Ztube video be 9:1?"

[...]

"It's going to be a video about me, no?"

President Kang Taehoon grew silent for a moment. Then, he said...

[You can only get what we can give, you know?]

"I'm sure you have quite a lot, no?"

[That's not what I mean... Fine. I get it.]

After discussing the temporary division of profits with Taehoon over the phone, the president ended the call by saying, *'I will stop by with a contract soon.'*

Just when he was about to exercise, Genie or Jihye, Minhyuk's girlfriend, called him.

[Minhyuk, are you free? Can you come to the empire? If you're busy, we'll deal with it alone.]

"No. It's fine. I'm coming back to the Empire today either way. Alright."

After hanging up, Minhyuk quickly went and accessed Athenae. He returned to the Beyond the Heavens Empire and walked to their conference room. While walking to his destination, Minhyuk saw a bloody player restlessly pacing around in front of the door.

One of the guards told the man, "You should go and get some rest. Wait for a minute. We'll notify you of the results."

"Please go back now."

"You won't be able to hear what they're discussing in the meeting here anyway."

"I understand." The player sighed and turned away. That was when he saw Minhyuk.

The player was none other than Carron, who rode his horse and carried Roarke Kingdom's First Prince Beynan here. In reality, Carron might only be a player from a small kingdom in Athenae, but in reality, he was the Godly Editor Jackson.

He quickly rushed towards Minhyuk and said, "Please. I beg you, do not ignore the Roarke Kingdom's plight! Please!"

"..."

Minhyuk, still completely unaware of the situation, bent down, gently placed his hand on Carron's shoulder, and said, "I don't know the situation yet. I'll go inside the conference room first, so please return and get some rest first."

"..."

Carron stared blankly at Minhyuk's back. Minhyuk had been warm and gentle toward him, an ordinary player.

Minhyuk finally entered the conference room, sat on his seat, and heard the report.

"The Peiro Allied Nations?"

The Peiro Allied Nations was an alliance created by several small kingdoms. They have also declared war against the Beyond the Heavens Empire to flatter and curry favor with the Luvien Empire.

"They're attacking a kingdom because the kingdom refused to join their allied nations?"

Minhyuk rubbed his chin in thought. Then, he recalled something. Minhyuk was one of the few people with an excellent memory.

"Wasn't the Roarke Kingdom the kingdom that sent us some small gifts when we first established our Beyond the Heavens?"



Haze nodded. "Their late king, who died from this war, was very kind and benevolent. He was a pacifist who tried to maintain a good relationship with the other kingdoms and empires around him. That is also why they did not want to join the Peiro Allied Nations."

"..."

As Minhyuk continued to listen, he realized that Haze wanted to avoid helping the Roarke Kingdom.

"Haze, I believe it's better to speak straightforwardly. What they gave us back then might be a small gift, but it was a huge help."

"..."

This was the truth. That gift might be too small for the current Beyond the Heavens Empire, but it was a massive help for them, who were struggling with financial difficulties back then.

"But Minhyuk... The movement of the Luvien Empire these days is very unusual."

"We'll have to deploy troops to each of our Beyond the Heavens' fortresses and watch the situation."

"I think giving back as much as we got is better. Nothing more."

Most of the executives reacted negatively. And Minhyuk, who listened to everyone, finally made a decision.

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Joy Co. Ltd.

President Kang Taehoon heaved a sigh as he ended his call with Minhyuk. "He's someone that will squeeze every benefit he can get."

But considering the high views of Minhyuk's YouTube videos and the effects on promotions that would result from them, Taehoon knew that their company would be able to reap more than tens of millions of profit from them. Of course, Minhyuk and the Beyond the Heavens Empire would also benefit greatly from this.

Kang Taehoon moved and discussed this with the Recruitment and Proposal Team.

"Of course, the best choice would be Editor Jackson. He is the most sought-after editor on Ztube, whether by Ztubers or businesses. However, his face, name, and address are completely unknown."

"He is like a god among the editors. He edited only one video for a small hamburger restaurant in America, but it helped them open dozens of franchises and chains."

"Is that so? Then, did you offer a proposal?"

"Of course, I reached out, but I can't really contact him. Editor Jackson is actually someone who cannot be moved by money. He's completely different from the other

Ztube editors, who are driven by money. He will only jump in and edit for companies and Ztubers once he sees their 'value.'

"If that's the case, we better find another editor."

"An editor is making a name for himself in Japan. He's not as good as Jackson, but he's still quite good..."

"An editor from the United Kingdom is also quite good."

"We also have a good editor from our country..."

The video that they had to produce this time was critical. This was an opportunity to quell the malicious rumors about Ilhwa Group and Joy Co. Ltd. making a deal and the controversy over the balance collapse.

After conducting this meeting, President Kang Taehoon had no choice but to sleep at Joy Co. Ltd. When he woke up the next day, he received a call from Minhyuk. What he heard from Minhyuk shocked him.

[President, I believe we have to change the contract terms. I should get all of the profits, no?]

"...?"

A 9:1 profit division was already considered to be a good contract. But Minhyuk wanted to obtain all of the profits.

[I will also ask you for an additional 10 billion won payment.]

*'This- this thief...!'*

But then, he heard what Minhyuk said next.

[And as for the editor, we want to use the editor we invited.]

"...?"

Kang Taehoon's expression was filled with confusion, doubt, and anger. But with one word from Minhyuk over the phone, his expression completely changed. A smile appeared on his face as he replied, "Alright. Let's sign a contract."

## Chapter 915

Carron's vision grew dark. *'If the Beyond the Heavens Empire chooses to turn a blind eye to us, then the Roarke Kingdom would truly collapse.'*

This was because they had nowhere else to go. But why was Carron so obsessed with the survival of the Roarke Kingdom? It was because this kingdom was his only joy. To put it in a more vulgar and coarse way, it was because he was suffering from severe social withdrawal, and the kingdom was his only salvation.

Carron lived a lonely life, devoid of any friends. Only after he joined the Roarke Kingdom did he have the chance to make many friends. When he came to that kingdom, he wondered why these people were so friendly and kind. Perhaps it was because their king itself was a man of such virtue.

Carron held the bloody key the first prince had handed him before he collapsed.

*–Our kingdom’s warrior... If, by any chance, there is a place that will accept and help our kingdom, please give this to them.*

*–What- what is this...?*

*–This is the key to the place where the power left behind by the predecessors of our Roarke Kingdom.*

*–...!*

Carron was shocked. There was a legend in the Roarke Kingdom about an item left behind by the Roarke Kingdom’s ancestors that contained an extraordinary power that could help someone grow further. Even Carron was not aware that it existed.

*–Why don’t we use this to negotiate with the other empires and kingdoms?*

The first prince smiled faintly.

*–His Majesty, the late king, was kind and merciful.*

*–...*

*–I want to give this key to someone like him. Have to...*

In the end, the first prince fainted.

However, none of the places they had gone to welcomed them with open arms. They were just like that alliance. And the worst part? The Luvien Empire stood behind that alliance.

*‘The Roarke Kingdom had given a mere hundred tons of rice, hundred tons of flour, and five tons of beef and pork as a gift to the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom in the past.’*

After hearing that the king of the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom loved food and was suffering from financial difficulties, the late king of the Roarke Kingdom sent some support with a kind smile, saying, ‘We can’t let his people grow hungry, no? Hoho.’ But now, the Beyond the Heavens had grown into an empire with tens of thousands of tons of rice and flour at hand.

*‘In the end, perhaps Beyond the Heavens Empire too...’*

Standing at the end of the hallway, Carron saw the conference room doors open.

Haze immediately went outside, saying, “But Your Majesty, compared to the help we received...”

“Back then, the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom suffered financial difficulties, and many of our people were hungry. And who helped us then? It was the Roarke Kingdom. I will go out there alone to repay them.”

The other executives rushed out and stood next to Haze.

“I know that everyone here does not like the idea, but if we can resolve this problem, we will gain a strong ally in the form of the Roarke Kingdom.”

“...”

Carron stared at Minhyuk from the end of the hall. He could ‘feel the weight’ on his shoulders with just one look.

*‘This man carries the life and death of an entire empire on his shoulders.’*

He was the idol of all of the players. Because of that, the choices that he had to make always carried heavy weight and solemnity.

Even though the rest dissuaded him, the man said, “This is how I will repay them, and this is my way. I hope everyone can understand this.”

“I understand, Your Majesty.”

“Hoo... If that’s what you think, then fine.”

“Ah. I will cooperate with Joy Co. Ltd. and make a Ztube video this time, I think?”

At this moment, Carron, who was pondering over the weight that Minhyuk carried, realized something.

*‘What?’*

It seemed like the Beyond the Heavens’ emperor would help them. But there was something far more surprising than that.

*‘He’s going alone?! Is he crazy?!’*

Even Carron knew that the Luvien Empire’s movements were highly unusual. Perhaps that was why he was going to do it like this.

*‘But, isn’t he being too reckless?!’*

“Minhyuk, we’ll fulfill our duties and missions in the Beyond the Heavens Empire.”

“I guess I’ll have to wait at the fortress and prepare for battle.”

Everyone greeted Minhyuk with a “*Fighting!*”

yet no one said, “*Let’s go together.*”

“My dear, fighting~” Even Minhyuk’s girlfriend, Genie, said the same thing.

“Alright. I’ll be back,” Minhyuk said, walking forward as if what he was about to do was no big deal. Then, he made eye contact with Carron and said, “Let’s go.”

*‘He- he’s really going to go alone?’*

When Carron turned to look at the other end of the hallway, he saw the members of the Beyond the Heavens waving their hands at them.

*‘What is this...?’*

The Beyond the Heavens’ executives were completely different from Carron. Once Minhyuk disappeared, they began to talk to each other.

“If it’s just the allied nations, then Minhyuk alone is enough.”

“I know, right? That’s what I thought, too.”

“Minhyuk going alone is better than all of us going together, no...?”

They weren't too worried about him.

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Contrary to the easygoing executives of the Beyond the Heavens Empire, Carron’s head was filled with countless thoughts.

*‘Is he really going alone?’*

On the other hand, he also felt how amazing the man in front of him was.

*‘He is this bold and ambitious...?’*

Carron was fully aware that Minhyuk was a powerful player. Even so, the troops of the allied nations easily exceeded a million.

*‘But it’s also impossible to take the talents of the Beyond the Heavens Empire just because of his reckless decision.’*

But he remembered the grace and favor that the Roarke Kingdom had given him in the past.

*‘Is he going to return the favor by himself?’*

Even though he knew that it was a reckless choice? This man was indeed a sincere person.

Minhyuk met the prince, who had recovered to some extent.

“I haven’t forgotten...” Minhyuk smiled softly. “...the help that the late king had given us back when we were still helpless, and I could not do anything as I watched my people go hungry. I will do my best to help you.”

Carron had a lot on his mind. In front of him was the prince of a collapsing kingdom and the emperor of an emerging empire. Even though they were of different statuses, Minhyuk did not belittle or ignore the prince and even showed him courtesy and respect.

“...”

An unknown feeling bloomed in Carron’s chest.

“Please rest some more. You’re not yet back to full health,” Minhyuk said as he left the room with Carron.

Once outside, Carron asked, “Is it alright for you to go alone? Minhyuk, going to the battlefield is completely incomparable to the few hundred tons of rice and food they have sent in the past, you know?”

That was right. Minhyuk’s worth was at that level now. Minhyuk just smiled faintly.

“It’s too much.”

Minhyuk did not say anything in the end. Carron just stared at Minhyuk's back as he walked ahead of him. After a few moments, Carron hurried forward and caught up with him. Then, he asked, "I can't help but overhear earlier that you're going to make a Ztube video with Joy Co. Ltd.?"

"...Eeeek! My blabbermouth is a problem."

Minhyuk had mentioned those words because he did not realize that Carron could hear what he was saying. However, it did not matter that much whether the man heard or not.

"Yep. That's right. We're going to make a video."

Carron continued to stare at Minhyuk. Then, he asked, "Do you already have an editor?"

\*\*\*

Minhyuk realized who Carron was. He might be an emperor, but because he wanted to eat a lot of delicious food, he constantly studied Athenae and the changes that happened in the game. Because of that, he knew how influential Carron was and his identity.

Carron said, "I recently received an email from Joy Co. Ltd. I haven't checked it yet with everything that has happened in the Roarke Kingdom."

Perhaps Joy Co. Ltd. had offered him a considerable amount of money so that they could hire him for the video production.

And the bigshot Carron said, "I'll edit the video for you, Minhyuk. Do you have any of your videos from when you started Athenae and those from when you started until now?"

"I believe Joy Co. Ltd. has them. But why are you suddenly offering to help me edit the video?"

Carron answered without hesitation, "Because I think it's interesting and fun."

*'Also, your worth is high.'*

That was what he wanted to say but held back.

"The emperor of an emerging empire; the only one who stepped forward to save a collapsing kingdom."

Carron was sure that this would get a ton of views.

"On top of that, the person in the video is someone who suffers from a rare disease called eating addiction. It will also send a message of hope to those suffering from rare diseases."

There were just so many things that would create a synergy. While Carron was talking with Minhyuk, he was confident of one thing.

*'This video will be my life's work. My masterpiece.'*

Also, he wanted to help Minhyuk somehow.

Minhyuk talked a lot with Carron. Then, he logged out, mailed him, and agreed on a verbal contract they would sign once they met. After that, Minhyuk immediately contacted President Kang

Taehoon. Since he now had the best editor, Joy Co. Ltd. could just sit there and do nothing. If that was the case, then the profit distribution was distributed unfairly. He had to revise it. He logged back inside the game only after he obtained Kang Taehoon's approval.

When he reconnected, Carron was already there. Carron said, "While we're on our way, will you tell me how and what you felt when you first started Athenae and what happened in between?"

Carron had told Minhyuk earlier, *'I will frame your story in a new light.'*

"I..." Minhyuk began to tell his tale.

\*\*\*

It was collapsing.

Boooooooooooooom—!

The wall that had firmly stood for countless years collapsed in the end.

Thuuuuuuuud—!

The Peiro Allied Nations was an alliance created by the union of at least five small kingdoms. Each of the kingdoms' flags fluttered in the wind as their soldiers charged toward the thick cloud of dust that bloomed from the collapse of the walls.

On the other hand, the Roarke Kingdom remained alone, with no reinforcement troops by their side.

Commander Ed shouted, "Protect the gates! Do not let them enter the kingdom!!!"

No nation had come to repay the grace and favor that the late king of the Roarke Kingdom had given them in the past. The help he had given them back then was small, but the situation was entirely different from what they had said before. Didn't they tell their king, *'It's good for us to help each other, no? Hoho.'*

Now, these greedy bastards were trying to trample on their kingdom just because they refused to be a part of the Peiro Allied Nations. They would kill their men and take their women and children as prisoners.

Rumble—

Ed, who watched the enemies flock like rabid dogs toward the broken section of their walls, could not help but resent their king.

*'Why did you have to show mercy and give them kindness?!'*

Everyone had abandoned them, yet almost two million soldiers from the allied nations were charging at them. And their forces? They only had 350,000 exhausted soldiers left to protect their families from the charging troops of the allied nations.

"Keuaaaaaaack!"

"Aaaaaaaaack!"

"A- aaaaaaaaack!"

Ed felt a numbness in his chest as he watched the Roarke Kingdom's royal army get swept away. He watched as their necks got cut, their abdomens got pierced, and the magic raining down upon them and forcing them to disappear without a trace.

All Commander Ed could do was pull his sword out and defend this place until his very last breath.

Baaaaaaaang—!

But then, a catapult shot a huge rock that slammed into the wall he was standing on. The resulting shockwave swept Ed away, and he flew toward the wall behind him.

Beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeep—

Ed's ears were ringing while his vision was spinning.

Drip, drip—

Red blood dripped down his forehead and further clouded his vision.

“Whyyyyyyy?!!!” Ed wanted to ask so badly. “Why did you have to live like that?!!!”

Why did he have to live so kindly and graciously if you would die just like this?!

“Why the hell... why the hell?! Whyyyyyyy?!!!” Ed knelt and screamed helplessly. But at that moment...

“He was an admirable person.”

“...”

Ed turned his head and followed the direction of the voice that rang in his ears. There, he saw a tall man standing beside a very familiar foreigner.

“I can never forget the warmth he has shared with me and my people.”

Ed clearly remembered this man. After all, he was the one who went to this man's kingdom under the order of his king to give them rice and flour. Before he left, Ed told his king this.

*—Your Majesty, the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom is a kingdom that might perish and collapse soon. Why would you send such precious food and resources to this kingdom?*

His king just chuckled.

*—Every favor and grace we shared would return to us.*

Back then, Ed could not understand what his king was talking about. He could not understand him even now. But...

Thump, thump, thump, thump—

The man walked in front of him with his sword raised.

“The grace and favor that I have received a long time ago... I will pay it back today.”

“...”



Ed stared at the man blankly as he jumped through the cracks of the broken walls and swept away the troops of the allied nations.

Meanwhile, Carron, who was watching everything, was thrilled to see Minhyuk charging forward despite the troops of the Allied nations surrounding him.

On their way here, Carron had heard a lot from Minhyuk. Carron thought that he should use the first words that Minhyuk told him as the opening phrase for the video that he would edit.

[I... I want to live.]

He could tell that this video would make the world tremble and shake.

Chapter 916

Peiro Allied Nations' barracks.

The commanders of the alliance nations leisurely watched the situation from the barracks. After all, the Roarke Kingdom's downfall was just around the corner, so there was no need for them to be vigilant anymore.

"I feel sorry for the people of that kingdom. They have met with a very foolish king," Commander Arken said while the rest of the commanders nodded in agreement.

The Peiro Allied Nations was an alliance made of several small kingdoms. The alliance was created to support the Luvien Empire. But that was pure bullshit. Why? Because the alliance was just a gathering of weak nations. They just held hands to flatter and curry favor with the Luvien Empire.

Their alliance extended an olive branch to the Roarke Kingdom, but the kingdom refused their offer. But they had nothing to fear since they had the Luvien Empire as their backing. They immediately moved, hoping to take down the Roarke Kingdom and split it amongst themselves.

"In two hours, the Roarke Kingdom will..."

Baaaaaaaaaaaaang—

Just when Commander Arken was about to laugh, explosions suddenly erupted near the walls of the Roarke Kingdom, pushing out and sweeping away the alliance's soldiers.

"They still have that much power left?"

Were they the royal mages? That was what Arken wanted to ask.

"The- The Beyond the Heavens Empire! The Beyond the Heavens' emperor is here!"

Their faces grew ugly when they heard one of the soldiers cry.

"What?!"

"The Beyond the Heavens' Emperor?!"

"But if the Beyond the Heavens moves against us, the Luvien Empire will definitely not stand still."

Surprisingly, the Roarke Kingdom was not even allied with the Beyond the Heavens Empire. In other words, the Beyond the Heavens Empire did not have a justification to insert themselves in this

war and attack the Peiro Allied Nations. Was it because they declared war on the Beyond the Heavens Empire? No. That should not be right. Although they declared war on them, it was just to keep them in check.

“Bring me the *All Creation Telescope*.”

The All Creation Telescope could see through long distances and hear the voices of the chosen target. Arken was left in doubt and confusion when he saw the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor through the All Creation Telescope.

“He’s alone?”

“...Wh- what?”

“Did you say that he’s alone?!”

“...Ho.”

“That- I have never seen someone so crazy.”

Confusion flashed on the faces of all of the commanders present.

They found it more embarrassing that the Peiro Allied Nations had no ‘justification’ to attack the Roarke Kingdom. But the Beyond the Heavens’ emperor who came alone? He now had plenty of justification. After all, he was just helping the Roarke Kingdom. The world would only criticize and mock them now that the situation has come to this.

“What a shallow trick.”

Perhaps this was why the Beyond the Heavens Emperor came alone. Even so, they have more than two million troops in this place.

“If we can kill the emperor of Beyond the Heavens, then His Majesty Nerva will definitely reward us greatly.”

“That’s right. Besides, he’s alone. I think we can do it, no?”

But before they could finish what they were saying, something gigantic suddenly appeared in front of the walls of the Roarke Kingdom. This enormous being was Hanwoo.

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

Around 70,000 troops of the Peiro Allied Nations that had gathered near the gates of the Roarke Kingdom were easily trampled to death.

“...”

“...”

They had just been blabbing about killing the Beyond the Heavens’ Emperor just a few minutes prior. But now? Their mouths were all wired shut.

\*\*\*

[You are currently at war with the Peiro Allied Nations!]

[You will receive EXP and some spoils of war upon killing the enemy.]

[You will not be placed in a Chaotic State!]

[You have obtained 132,310 gold.]

[You have gained 112,310 EXP.]

[You have obtained 84,699 gold.]

[You have gained 165,300 EXP.]

[You have obtained 86,699 gold.]

[You have gained 240,000 EXP.]

[You have obtained 59,100 gold.]

[...EXP.]

[...gold.]

[...EXP.]

These notifications rang in Minhyuk's ears as Hanwoo swept away and trampled the soldiers of the Peior Allied Nations who had gathered in front of the Roarke Kingdom gates.

*'Anyway, the Luvien Empire will not be able to barge in and go to war with me with just this alone.'*

Minhyuk's thoughts were quite similar to those of the commanders earlier. That was right. The Peiro Allied Nations had no justification for attacking the Roarke Kingdom.

*'I will repay all of the grace and kindness I have received from them while taking everything I can from the enemies.'*

He would have a Ztube video and harvest a lot of funds and EXP. The more active he played here, the more the viewers will flock.

*'I will end this war in two hours.'*

Minhyuk was confident. After all, the Peiro Allied Nations was just an alliance of weak nations. The average level of their soldiers was at Level 420, while their knights were only at Level 450~500.

"Puppet Doll Viel."

Creak, creak, creak, creak—

The Level 650 Puppet Viel, whose joints creaked until they lodged into place, quickly jumped onto the battlefield and easily swept away twenty of the troops of the Peiro Allied Nations with just a simple swing of his sword.

Crackle, crackle, crackle—

Of course, Minhyuk was not to be left behind. He unleashed the Overlord's Flames and let it wreak havoc on the battlefield, killing more than 100,000 enemy troops gathered in front of the walls of the Roarke Kingdom.

Crackle, crackle—!

\*\*\*

A quick-witted netizen immediately reported on the community site when Minhyuk entered the battlefield.

[Is Minhyuk killing everyone by himself in the battle between the Peiro Allied Nations and the Roarke Kingdom?]

[Woah. For real?]

[I left because I felt that it was too boring.]

The appearance of the strongest player was more than enough to attract plenty of players and viewers. The moment the viewers entered, they witnessed Hanwoo and the Overlord's Flames sweeping away and killing more than 100,000 of the troops of the Peiro Allied Nations.

[Freaking amazing.]

[Wow...]

Then, more and more issues began to attract viewers.

[Wait. Did Minhyuk change his armor?]

[Huh? Oh, you're right. His armor really changed!]

[What? What the hell?!]

More viewers began to flock, and the journalists quickly wrote articles about the situation.

[Beyond the Heavens' Emperor: What armor did he choose?]

[Shiny and sparkling: Does Minhyuk's new armor surpass his previous one?]

The ratings were slowly starting to rise.

[Crackle—!]

At that moment, Minhyuk used his skill 'Save,' as he released the Supreme Overlord's Technique that he had saved before and once again killed more than 100,000 of the troops of the Peiro Allied Nations.

[???

???

Of course, the flames from the technique's initial explosion continued to gnaw and devour the troops nearby.

[How long has it been since Minhyuk appeared?]

[Maybe 25 minutes? Give or take.]

[But he already killed more than 300,000 troops? Isn't this a f\*cking bal-break...?]

[Well, the level of the troops of the Peiro Allied Nations is just much lower than Minhyuk's level. Yep, the soldiers and knights would also grow the more the players develop. But in this case, the Peiro Allied Nations are just freaking weak...]

[Saying it's a bal-break is too much in this case.]

[+22222]

[+333333]

[Ah. But what about that armor...]

[If that armor is really f\*cking amazing, then it proves that there's a deal between Ilhwa and Joy Co. Ltd. Agree?]

[Agreed...]

All the viewers waited for Minhyuk to jump in the middle of the battlefield.

\*\*\*

Minhyuk had killed more than 300,000 of the Peiro Allied Nations' troops in just a little under twenty-five minutes. There were two reasons why Minhyuk chose to kill the troops of this alliance at such a fast pace.

*'The Peiro Allied Nations, which lost quite a lot of their troops in just a blink, will be forced to retreat.'*

The second reason was what Carron had told him before.

*–If you want to explain the balance break through the Ztube video we will release, you should play a more active role in this battlefield and kill as many allied troops as possible.*

Minhyuk looked at the man in confusion when he heard that

*–Wouldn't the balance break issue be blown up with this?*

*–That's right. They will keep discussing it for one, two, or three days. The players that usually shout, 'Of course, he's the Supreme.' will be swayed by the instigation of the masses and change their tunes. They will shout, 'It's a balance break! The balance is collapsing.' But it will only take a moment for the public to turn around.*

Carron calmly explained.

*–Then, once the balance break has been explained, the overflowing and non-stop 'criticisms' would quickly turn into 'cheers and support.'*

Minhyuk slowly prepared to jump on the battlefield.

*'I will not reveal the Black Dragon Armor here.'*

Minhyuk might be the Supreme, but that did not mean that he would just lay all of his cards out in the open, did it? Sometimes, having something hidden up his sleeves would be of great help to him in the future. Besides, the Transcendental's Armor had an armor set effect, so it would still be leagues better than the armor that he wore before.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang–

When he entered the battlefield, Minhyuk was immediately met with an onslaught of magical attacks.

“Arrogant and impudent bastard!”

“More than 330,000 of our troops have already died!”

Before Arken knew it, he was already standing on the battlefield with the other commanders. He had gathered all of the high-tiered royal mages and ordered the rain of magical attacks that devoured Minhyuk.

No matter how strong the Beyond the Heavens emperor was, he would suffer considerable damage from this round of attacks. However, Arken and the rest of the commanders all turned slack-jawed when they saw Minhyuk’s figure appear once again.

“...”

The armor on Minhyuk’s body was littered with dents and scorch marks when he walked out of the explosion. But one look and they could tell that the man did not suffer much damage at all. Of course, Minhyuk was but a human. So, he suffered a 20% decrease in his HP. Still, there was no denying that it was not that much damage.

The Transcendental’s Armor Set could increase Minhyuk’s defenses by 1,100. On top of that, it also increased his magical defensive power by three.

Twitch, twitch, twitch—

In addition, the scorched and dented Transcendental’s Armor began to expand and contract until it returned to its original appearance. The Transcendental’s Armor’s durability was infinite. This meant it could repair itself slowly, even if destroyed. But it had to be known that the armor itself had a recovery rate, and the speed of this recovery rate was beyond imagination.

Minhyuk glared coldly at Commander Arken as he jumped into the battlefield.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang—!

The word *Explosion* appeared on the blade of Minhyuk’s sword, which triggered several massive explosions that swept away the troops around him.

Boom, boom, boom—!

The Sword of Tempest also appeared as hundreds of sword blades shot out and cut down the enemies non-stop. Minhyuk had only stood in the middle of the battlefield for eight minutes.

“He has killed around 8,000 of our troops...!”

“We can’t get any damage in! No matter how many attacks we send him, it just doesn’t work!”

“It’s that armor! I think it’s because of his armor!”

A commotion broke out amidst the Peiro Allied Nations’ army.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk unleashed his 'Intangible Sword' and sent it flying toward his enemies. Hundreds of invisible swords shot out and pierced through the hearts of the enemy troops around him.

"Fhaas Knight Order! Charge!"

A 120-strong knight order solely made up of the kingdoms' legends and elites marched forward.

"Thousand Swords."

A thousand swords made of light rose to the sky and flew toward the strongest of the enemy troops.

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

The swords pierced the hearts of the legends and the elites and forced them to disappear all at once.

"Keheok!"

Of course, the attack also included the commanders. The commanders, who fell off their horses, screamed as they clutched their injuries. Right now, Commander Arken was left in charge of the entire army. However, he also suffered from the attacks of the Thousand Swords. The soldiers, who anxiously rushed to Arken's aid, saw him crawling backward as he looked at Minhyuk in fear.

"Hiiiiiiiiik...!"

Only forty minutes had passed since Minhyuk made an appearance on this battlefield. But in that short amount of time, almost 420,000 of the troops of the Peiro Allied Nations had died. The worst part? One of the commanders instantly died, while three were suffering from grave injuries.

Fwoosh—

"Heok..."

"C- commander?"

Faced with a power he could never dream of reaching, Commander Arken felt fear, which caused him to lose control of his bladder.

Commander Arken hurriedly gave his orders, "R- retreat! Quickly, retreat!!!"

"Retreat!!!"

More than 400,000 of the two million troops of the Peiro Allied Nations had been killed in battle. The sight of Minhyuk standing with his back to the Roarke Kingdom as the enemies retreated was quite spectacular.

Carron, who witnessed this from beginning to end, did not forget to film the view. At this moment, he could tell, *'The entire world must be going crazy...'*

\*\*\*

The entire world was indeed in an uproar.

The BJs, who specialized in fabricating stories and discussing famous people's controversies, were talking nonstop about Minhyuk's performance in that battle.

[Even if the Peiro Allied Nations is an alliance of weak nations, it's definitely impossible for a single ordinary player to do that much damage.]

[I believe Joy Co. Ltd. must hurry up and give us an explanation about the armor Minhyuk got.]

[This incident proves a contractual relationship between Ilhwa Group and Joy Co. Ltd.]

And that was not all. The jealous viewers began to add more fuel to the fire.

[Who would even want to play a game like this? Yeah?]

[To be honest, I don't think this is right.]

[I reported a bug to Joy Co. Ltd. Keke.]

[Me too! I also sent a suggestion to Joy Co. Ltd.]

Two days had passed since the battle. During those two days, Godly Editor Jackson had been busy sifting through the stories that Minhyuk had told him and the videos of Minhyuk that Joy Co. Ltd. had sent him to pick the important ones and make the video.

Then, Minhyuk received a phone call from President Kang Taehoon.

[The number of messages asking about the balance collapse has increased by 154 times in just two days.]

“...?”

[The number of calls has also increased by around 250 times.]

“...?”

At that moment, Minhyuk thought, *‘Are we going to be fine like this...?’*

On the third day after the battle, Minhyuk received Jackson's call.

[I have finished the video.]

## Chapter 917

In four days, the discussions about Minhyuk and Athenae's balance collapse continued to brew and boil over. The public had only seen one side of the story. It was only interested in Minhyuk's ability to kill more than 400,000 enemy soldiers and whether his new armor was indeed a collapse in the game's balance.

The Peiro Allied Nations was an alliance of small and weak nations. And Minhyuk? He listened to what Carron said and worked at an incredibly unreasonable speed when he fought against them. Meanwhile, quite a few people took advantage of this incident and used it skillfully to benefit themselves.

The world-famous Ztuber Donald was a Westerner who had surprisingly obtained Korean nationality and was very fluent in Korean. He attracted many viewers as a foreigner who spoke the language fluently and smoothly. He often shared his criticisms regarding various topics, including celebrity controversies and Ztuber fake videos and manipulations. For Donald, Beyond the Heavens' Emperor Minhyuk was a tasty prey.

[Everyone, this definitely does not make any sense.]



Donald compiled various materials. After gathering everything, he edited it into a video and published it. The viewers found his claims extremely credible because he had compiled one of the videos that a paparazzi had caught. This video was of ‘President Kang Taehoon’ and ‘Team Leader Park Minggyu’ visiting Minhyuk’s home.

[It’s obvious that Ilhwa Group and Joy Co. Ltd. have a business deal going on here. After all, every time Minhyuk did something like build a kingdom or an empire, the stock price of Ilhwa Group skyrockets, right?]

His words might sound simple, but they fleshed out the idea that a deal was going on. And since Donald was a world-famous Ztuber, his videos easily exceeded a hundred million views. Of course, other Ztubers immediately jumped on his video and began criticizing Minhyuk. Some of the public also liked to ride the bandwagon, so they jumped in and took the lead in shouting and clamoring.

[Joy Co. Ltd. and Ilhwa Group! Explain yourselves!]

[If you were in our shoes, would it be fun to play games like this, huh?!]

[I’m so f\*cking angry... Some of us work hard to level up and get items, yet others get it from the game’s company.]

[I thought that Ilhwa Group was the best and cleanest company in our country, but in the end, it’s just a company that likes making money. I’ll boycott them.]

[+2222]

[+3333]

Just like that, the Ilhwa Group and Joy Co. Ltd. stock prices fell. On the other hand, the views on Donald’s single video continued to climb, helping him generate a considerable profit.

[Hyungs, I will come back tomorrow.]

Bow—

Donald bowed politely before ending his broadcast. He then completely changed his tune in private. He clicked his tongue and said, “*Phew...* Those f\*ckers.”

He could not help but chuckle deeply when he saw his profits from the ‘issue’ he had created.

At that moment, his girlfriend, browsing on her phone, jumped in surprise and said, “Donald. Ilhwa Group has published a statement. They said they will maintain a hard stance and respond strongly against all people posting malicious comments and baseless articles, including Ztubers.”

But Donald just guffawed. “Bwahahahahaha! A hard stance? Do they think they can put out the spark that had started to catch fire with just that?”

“Are you going to be fine? Ilhwa Group and Joy Co. Ltd. are the best companies in Korea.”

“It’s going to be fine. Celebrities, famous influencers, and business tycoons often say they will ‘maintain a hard stance and respond strongly’ against malicious comments and baseless and speculative articles. But in the end, all those things turn out to be real, no?”

“Even so, you don’t have any clear evidence that Ilhwa Group has a deal with Joy Co. Ltd. and have truly received artifacts from them...”

Donald just chuckled and ignored his girlfriend’s concern.

“That’s not the point here.” Donald wagged his index finger. “If they can’t ‘prove’ anything, then this will eventually become the ‘truth.’”

That was what the public was like. They would not believe it unless Minhyuk could provide clear and concrete evidence. However, from what Donald could tell, there was no way for them to prove and convince the public that this was not a collapse in balance. In other words, it did not matter whether his publication was true. Either way, it would bring him more money.

*‘Well then, let’s see if we’re getting more viral?’*

Whenever someone became a big hit with their posted content, most Ztubers would make similar content and hype the issue more. As the issue grew, most viewers would flock to the video with the most views. In this case, it was Donald’s video.

But then, Donald suddenly paused. “What’s this?”

A video popped up whose views were climbing up at an absolutely ridiculous rate. The uploader? It was none other than ‘Joy Co. Ltd.,’ and its title was *‘The Burden an Emperor Carries.’*

Click—

The video played the moment Donald clicked on it.

\*\*\*

To be honest, Minhyuk was growing extremely anxious.

*‘The number of players that have left the Beyond the Heavens Empire has increased.’*

And that was not all. Many players had been asking the Beyond the Heavens Empire to explain the balance break. But the most significant contributor to his anxiety was Ilhwa Group’s falling stock prices. The damage he caused himself was much more substantial than he expected, so he could not help but feel anxious.

But Minhyuk still did what he had to. He quickly instructed Ilhwa Group’s legal team and called Ilhwa Daily, a subsidiary of Ilhwa Group and one of the country’s top three newspaper publishers.

Immediately after, articles about how he would take a hard-line stance against those who posted malicious comments and baseless articles poured out. But before long, jeering and mockery began to rain down on the articles. Even another Ztuber immediately made a video mocking and belittling Minhyuk.

But at that moment, he finally received a message from Godly Editor Jackson.

[I have already uploaded the video.]

Minhyuk walked toward the computer to watch the video.

\*\*\*

Anyone could watch videos on Ztube. They could watch those videos even while they were on their phones, which made it easier for people walking on the street, riding on subways, buses, and trains, and eating lunches at schools and offices to enjoy their leisure time.

Many people quickly clicked on the video 'The Burden an Emperor Carries.' The moment they clicked on the video, the steady, low baritone of a male voice actor rang in their ears as words appeared on the black screens of their phones and monitors.

[I... wanted to live.]

The words disappeared quickly as another appeared to replace it.

[Eating Addiction. Current estimated survival rate: less than 2%.]

Another set of words appeared just as quickly as the previous one disappeared.

[I started playing Athenae because I wanted to live.]

Then, the figure of a man appeared on their screens. The man was holding a wooden sword in his hands while looking at the hard bread given to him by an instructor.

[I swung the sword because I wanted to eat and live.]

The video sped up, the scene passing by at dozens of times the original speed. Several days and nights passed, yet the man continued to swing his sword. This was because he wanted to eat bread.

[I was happy.]

The video of Minhyuk smiling widely as he ate the hard bread in his hands appeared briefly on their screens.

Then, a screenshot of the scene when the instructor handed a sword over to Minhyuk also appeared. This was immediately followed by the appearance of several other screenshots. One showed Minhyuk happily eating samgyetang for the first time, and another showed him continuously training his swordsmanship under the tutelage of Instructor Roina.

Screenshots showing how moved he was when he first grilled samgyeopsal, when he worked as a chef in the subjugation corps, when he met Sword Emperor Ellie and ate spam with her, and when he reunited with his friends and joined the Legend Guild appeared on their screens.

A screenshot showed dozens of guild members with Minhyuk standing at the center with a bright smile.

[I was delighted. And I continued walking the path I was walking on because I was thrilled that I could continue eating to my heart's content. I did not realize it, but many people were already standing by my side at one point.]

Several dozens of screenshots appeared once again. His first meeting with Ben, Brod, Elpis, Gorfido, Luna, and others appeared on the screen. These screenshots slowly disappeared as the image of a kingdom appeared on the screen. Then, Minhyuk, standing on his kingdom's walls and looking at his people, appeared.

[I wanted to protect them.]

There were dozens of videos playing simultaneously. The videos showed Minhyuk swinging his pickaxe, wielding his sword, or cooking a dish for days. The speed at which the videos were played

had been increased several times. However, everyone could tell each footage was at least four days long. Suddenly, the playback of the videos stopped. Then, one of the videos was greatly magnified.

“Haa... Haa... Haa... Haa...”

A close-up of Minhyuk’s exhausted face appeared. Sweat soaked his entire being as he staggered to his feet. He looked like he was about to collapse at any moment, but he continued to raise his arms and swing.

[I promised them that I would never collapse and fall.]

He gritted his teeth, his eyes blazing with flames as he continued to move.

[I promised to protect them.]

[I promised that I would live and survive.]

[And I will keep those promises.]

Finally, videos showing Minhyuk with a bright and lively smile as he received the rewards appeared on the screen. Finally, the last video appeared on the screen. From its looks, the video seemed to be the latest of all the videos. It showed Minhyuk swinging a pickaxe non-stop in an unknown yet barren land. Then, words appeared in the video.

[Day one.]

With the fast playback speed, the bright sky above him turned dark quickly.

[Day two.]

The video’s playback speed grew faster and faster.

[Day three.]

[Day four.]

[Day five.]

[Day six.]

The thought of continuous, intense, and hard labor was enough to make the viewers' expressions grow ugly, but Minhyuk did not stop.

[Day seven.]

[Day eight...]

[Day twelve...]

[Day fourteen.]

[And.]

The video of Minhyuk swinging his pickaxe like crazy gradually slowed as the final words appeared on the screen.

[Day fifteen.]

Minhyuk smiled a small smile. Then, his eyes fluttered close as he fainted on the spot. Everyone watching the video felt the sweat pooling in their hands.

The scene on their screen changed once again. It briefly showed the blacksmith, who stood beside Minhyuk earlier, swinging his hammer like crazy. Then, the scene where the blacksmith handed over the ‘controversial armor set’ to Minhyuk appeared on everyone’s screens. Everyone saw Minhyuk’s small smile just before the scene changed once again.

On their screen, the video that Carron took himself was being displayed. It showed the figure of a single man rushing toward an alliance of almost two million troops. Anyone who saw the man’s back could feel the weight and burden that he was carrying as an emperor and someone who suffered from eating addiction.

[I will protect my empire.]

[I will never fall.]

[I will continue to move forward on my path.]

The white cape on his back fluttered as he ran toward the enemies that flocked toward the broken walls. Then, everything turned dark as the final words appeared on everyone’s screens.

[I... am alive.]

\*\*\*

After watching the video, Donald realized that his hands were completely covered with sweat. It was not only his hands; his back was dripping with sweat, and goosebumps appeared all over his body.

“C—can a person truly do something like that? This is fabricated, right?”

No, there was no way that Joy Co. Ltd. would upload a fabricated video. After all, experts could see this and quickly determine if the video had been manipulated and manufactured.

Donald raised his trembling hands to check the current situation with his mobile phone. He could see that the most searched keyword in portal sites worldwide was ‘The Burden that an Emperor Carries.’

And along with that, the public’s opinion turned a complete 180.

[Shit, that’s crazy... I feel very disappointed and resentful of my past self, who criticized the Food God fiercely.]

[Can a person really handle all that?]

[Wow... After watching this, I must admit that the balance break is understandable. Tbh, I think it’s not enough. I think they can give him more, you know?]

[This video fully shows how the Food God, even though he is suffering from eating addiction, has reached his position. I believe this will give hope to many patients suffering from rare diseases.]

[I was very touched when I saw the phrases ‘I... wanted to live’ at the beginning and ‘I... am alive’ at the end.]

[Our Lord, the Food God... He... ?????]

[What we consider a balance break appeared because of his efforts.]

Yes, the public's opinion has turned. And Donald? He was left in a very panicked state.

Joy Co. Ltd., Ilhwa Group, and Minhyuk had proven how he had obtained those artifacts. Everything was because of his efforts and hard work, which no other player would want to replicate even if asked to do so. Among those who had watched Minhyuk's video, was there anyone who could do it like him?

Meanwhile, Donald posted a video containing the evidence and his confident remarks about an under-the-table deal that caused immeasurable damage to the image of Minhyuk and the two companies.

At that moment, Donald recalled the article that said Minhyuk and his team would take a 'hard-line stance' against those who posted malicious comments and baseless and speculative articles. He realized that he had to move quickly and fix things. Donald hurriedly filmed and uploaded an apology video. Of course, the Ztubers who joined in on the fun and muddied the waters also immediately posted apology videos.

Around three hours later.

"The- the Food God has posted a message on his SNS!" Donald's girlfriend shouted.

Donald could only hold his trembling hands together and chuckle as cold sweat started to drip down his forehead.

*'From what I heard, the Food God has quite a good personality. I apologized and even knelt on my knees. I'm sure he'll accept it.'*

However, Donald collapsed the moment he checked what Minhyuk posted.

[I will not be lenient.]

## Chapter 918

Countless articles were published in the three days since the 'The Burden an Emperor Carries' video was released.

[Joy Co. Ltd.'s stock prices have recovered.]

[Ilhwa Group's stock prices recovered and even rose slightly.]

[Minhyuk has submitted a complaint against the malicious commenters and Ztubers that targeted him.]

[He declared: I will not be lenient.]

[How much should world-famous Ztuber Donald compensate Minhyuk and the two global companies, Ilhwa Group and Joy Co. Ltd., for the damage that he had caused to their images?]

Minhyuk clearly stated in an article that he would take a 'hard-line response' against these people before the 'The Burden that an Emperor Carries' video was released. But he did not sue all of the people who joined in muddying the waters and posting malicious content against him.

There were two kinds of people who spoke against Minhyuk back then: Ztubers and malicious commenters who talked nonsense and criticized and slandered Minhyuk without any solid evidence,

and those who stopped posting or deleted their comments when he published articles that he would take a hard-line stance. Of the two, Minhyuk only filed a complaint against the former.

*‘If I don’t do this now, these people will continue to appear in the future.’*

Minhyuk was the type of person who would step on those who acted maliciously against them to make sure that they would never crawl back up again. If he had eliminated such people from the scene in advance, people would no longer create baseless and speculative articles about Ilhwa Group and Joy Co. Ltd. having under-the-table deals because of a balance break he supposedly created. And there was nobody who criticized Minhyuk for not giving in and maintaining his stance on this matter.

And now? Minhyuk was reading the public’s opinion on the matter.

[Don’t you guys think it’s too much? Why does he have to take down the Ztubers, too? Can’t he just let them go? I’m Donald’s true fan.]

[The commenter above is really f\*cking crazy, huh? Hahaha.]

[What’s wrong with going hard on them? Minhyuk was the one that held back the most, you know?]

[Didn’t you see? He only sued and filed complaints against the ones that did not delete their videos and comments and continued to post and spread rumors through their malicious content even after he sent out those articles?]

[If I were in his shoes, I would just sue and file complaints against everyone who slandered me.]

The people were quick to write and reply to the commenter, who was not aware of the seriousness of the situation. But even after all that effort, one commenter did not understand the situation.

[Is this really something that has to be taken seriously?]

[Yep. This is a grave matter. After Donald posted his video, the stock price of Ilhwa Group, a company with a market capitalization of 200 trillion won, fell by more than 3%. There’s also Athenae’s Beyond the Heavens Empire, which is already considered Minhyuk’s property. During that period, more than 2% of their people left. The damage that video alone caused could be said to be over a hundred billion. If Joy Co. Ltd. and Minhyuk did not cooperate and posted a video together, the rumors that Donald had started would be considered as the ‘truth’ and would cause more damage.]

[Hmmm. Is a hundred billion a considerable amount of money? My dad’s assets are around five hundred trillion won.]

[Hey, how old are you, btw?]

[I’m in 2nd grade.]

[...]

[...]

[Ah. My Kumon workbooks just came in. Bye!]

Even if Minhyuk did not step forward to explain, many people spoke up for him. Of course, Minhyuk and the Ilhwa Group did not lose that much money, as mentioned above. However, that would not have been the only outcome had they not clarified the situation. Thankfully, Minhyuk was able to take advantage of the situation and turn the crisis into an opportunity.

*‘But more importantly... I wonder how many views it already has? Also, what ranking is the video at now?’*

When Minhyuk went to check the video on Ztube, he deliberately avoided looking at the views and the rankings. Of course, he had a gut feeling about it.

*‘Around 2% of the players left us, but more than 5% migrated in.’*

Besides, the 2% of players who left were mostly those who did not believe in the true potential of Beyond the Heavens Empire and Minhyuk.

*‘I think the number of members of my fan club increased by 1.3 million in three days?’*

That was right. He was experiencing the video's impact firsthand. After all, his overseas fans had also increased in that short amount of time.

However, the reason why he did not check the views and the ratings was that Editor Jackson would come soon. Minhyuk was sitting in a cafe and waiting for him to arrive. After a while, a taxi stopped outside, and a very familiar foreigner got off and stepped inside the cafe.

Minhyuk smiled brightly, looking like the happiest person in the world, as he waved at Jackson.

“???”

Jackson could not help but look at him in confusion.

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In a tranquil cafe.

Minhyuk stood by the counter and quickly placed his order: “Can I please have two iced Americanos and two tiramisu?”

After paying the bill, Minhyuk happily hummed, “Hehe. You have to eat tiramisu with iced americano.”

“By any chance...” Jackson, seeing Minhyuk’s bright smile, asked, “Were you looking forward to the drinks and the dessert when I arrived?”

“Yep. That’s right! Iced americano and tiramisu is the perfect combi!”

“...”

Even though Jackson knew that Minhyuk was suffering from eating addiction, he still found the man in front of him to be very eccentric.

*‘I have never seen this expression on him even after he forced the troops of the Peiro Allied Nations to retreat by himself.’*



Jackson could tell that Minhyuk was sincerely and genuinely happy right now. However, when he looked at him, waiting nervously and excitedly by the counter, he could not help but wonder if this man was indeed the world's best player.

"Here's your drink."

Minhyuk received the drinks and the cake and quickly returned to his seat.

"Come quickly. It will not taste good once it loses its cold!"

"Ah. Yes."

Minhyuk smiled happily, looking at the iced Americano and tiramisu before him. A faint light shimmered underneath the dark Americano after the bright light from the cafe shone on the ice that clinked inside the glass. On the other hand, the tiramisu looked divine, with the dark brown cocoa powder sprinkled on top.

He quickly grabbed a fork and scooped up a mouthful of the soft, sweet tiramisu.

"Hiyaaa...." Minhyuk sighed as his smile grew even deeper.

The cake gently melted the moment it entered his mouth. The tiramisu, a dessert that properly combined the flavors of coffee and cocoa, had a slight yet soft creamy flavor. Of course, Minhyuk did not forget to take another sweet bite.

"Kghhk..."

The name of the delightful dessert, tiramisu, literally meant to "cheer you up." And it did.

Minhyuk quickly took several sips of the slightly bitter yet cold and refreshing iced americano the moment he felt the somewhat greasy sweetness from the tiramisu start to overwhelm him.

Sluuuuuuurp—

"Kghhhhhhk..."

Minhyuk felt extremely refreshed with the treat that he had just devoured.

After confirming that Minhyuk had finished enjoying his coffee, Jackson asked, "Have you checked the video's number of views? How about the number of your subscribers?"

"No. I deliberately avoided it and have been waiting for you."

Minhyuk knew he couldn't do anything but check the number of views if he looked at it.

The one in charge of editing the video was Jackson, an editor who had edited a video that ranked 243rd in the world regarding Ztube views. It had to be known that the current number one Ztube video had 7.5 billion views.

"Our total number of views in just three days has reached 380 million."

"...!"

Minhyuk was very surprised when he heard the results. The current world's population was around eight billion. In other words, almost 4% of the current population had seen the video in the three days since its release.

“Athenae also experienced a 5% increase in new subscribers during these three days. Your subscriber count has increased from the previous 610,000 to 2.02 million.”

Minhyuk, who only sometimes broadcast what he did, still had around 610,000 subscribers. But now, that number had more than tripled.

“The speed at which our number of views is increasing far exceeds Korea’s ‘Oppa, Hongdae Style.’ This video will reach the top ten in the charts and rankings within a year.”

“Oh...”

“I’m confident this video will generate hundreds of billions in profits. And as the number of views continues to grow, the migration rate of the Beyond the Heavens Empire will also grow.”

“Woaaaaah, that’s really amazing!” Minhyuk said. However, his eyes were not on Jackson but the empty plate of tiramisu in front of him. “...*Slurp*.

”

“???”

*‘No, what’s this?’*

Jackson could see that Minhyuk’s facial expression had not changed much. The only thing Jackson could see on the man’s face was regret for the tiramisu. Based on what he had seen earlier, the tiramisu seemed worth more than the hundreds of billions of profits he would gain in a year.

Jackson quickly left the thought behind. Then, he said, “Ah. I also have a favor to ask of you.” His tone grew cautious. “Please ally with the Roarke Kingdom.”

Jackson was aware that the Roarke Kingdom had nothing to offer for an alliance to be formed. If the two nations became allies, they had to provide reinforcement when the other was in danger. If they truly allied, it was no different from putting the Roarke Kingdom under the rule of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. To put it simply, they would just be a burden.

Even so Minhyuk still viewed this in a positive light. After all, if he took the Roarke Kingdom under his care, he would receive territories and migrants. But at times like this, there was one thing that Minhyuk had to do.

“The conditions?”

Godly Editor Jackson answered, “I will sign a contract with the Beyond the Heavens Empire and become your exclusive editor.”

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Editor Jackson, or Carron, was riding a taxi headed to Joy Co. Ltd.

“Haha.” Carron unknowingly chuckled when he recalled Minhyuk eating his tiramisu happily. He truly enjoyed his meeting with Minhyuk. Not only that, but he was also able to confirm something.

*‘This contract with Beyond the Heavens Empire...’*

Before he knew it, the taxi stopped before Joy Co. Ltd.

*‘...And this cooperation with Joy Co. Ltd. is very good for me.’*

That was right. Carron did not only sign a contract with Minhyuk. His contract also included Joy Co. Ltd., which he detailed to Minhyuk.

Team Leader Park Minggyu, who came from the headquarters, greeted Carron. “I will say this in advance. Thank you for accepting our offer.”

But after hearing those words, Carron, with a firm tone, said, “I did not sign a contract with Joy Co. Ltd. because of your offer. I signed it because of Minhyuk.”

He drew a firm line on this. Of course, Joy Co. Ltd.'s proposal was strict but also very generous. However, Carron would not sign an exclusive contract with anyone. He only accepted their offer because the target was ‘Minhyuk.’ This contract was quite a huge deal for all parties involved—Beyond the Heavens Empire, Joy Co. Ltd., and Carron.

Although Carron's words could be considered ungrateful and harmful to the one who offered the proposal, Team Leader Park Minggyu said, “Ah. Even so, it is still very worth it for us.”

Team Leader Park Minggyu seemed to readily agree that Carron only signed the contract with them because of Minhyuk. After walking with him for quite a while, Carron finally entered Joy Co. Ltd.'s conference room.

President Kang Taehoon and several executives were already waiting inside. The moment they entered, Team Leader Park handed over the materials for this project to everyone while Carron sat in his designated seat.

Team Leader Park then turned off the lights and began his presentation, using a laser pointer to highlight the details of the project. “Our stock prices fell by -5% while the controversy regarding the balance break was at its height. But after publishing the video ‘The Burden an Emperor Carries,’ our stock prices recovered and increased by 3%. Please look at the table over here. Thanks to ‘The Burden an Emperor Carries,’ our sales have drastically increased.”

The executives did not know the exact details of the conversation between President Kang Taehoon, Carron, and the Beyond the Heavens Empire. However, they were still amazed at Minhyuk's video's impact.

*“I want to be a player like Minhyuk. This sentiment has brought back many players to our game. And that's not all. Thanks to the well-made and edited video we published, our new subscriptions have also increased greatly.”*

Finally, Team Leader Park presented the critical point of this meeting: “Our Joy Co. Ltd. has decided to produce ‘advertisement videos’ centered on the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Mr. Jackson, over here, would be in charge of editing the videos.”

“...!”

“...!”

“...!”

The executives of Joy Co. Ltd. were very shocked when they heard that. Some even raised their hands to voice their concerns.

“But if we make ads centered on Beyond the Heavens Empire, wouldn’t it negatively impact us? This time, it’s no longer a rumor. There will truly be a transaction between Beyond the Heavens Empire and Joy Co. Ltd.”

Team Leader Park smiled. “I believe there’s nothing for us to worry about regarding that matter, no? Various celebrities often film commercials shown on TV, right? I believe it’s only natural that a game company would advertise with its best players and an emerging empire. Would we be blamed for doing something like that?”

The executive immediately realized his concern was too shallow and could only cough to hide his embarrassment.

Minggyu continued, “Many people have commented that our Joy Co. Ltd. is a company that is good at making things and gimmicks but is not good at making advertisements.”

It was the truth. Joy Co. Ltd. had always topped all viewers’ consumption ratings categories. But ironically, plenty of rumors said they were terrible at making ads.

Kim Dae-Il raised his hand and asked, “What are our next steps?”

In response to his question, Team Leader Park pointed to someone else. “Mr. Jackson will be the one to explain this part.”

Jackson stood up and explained, “In the first phase of this project, the ads that we will make will tell the stories of the people many of the players are very curious about, Minhyuk’s vassals.”

“...Oh.” Manager Kim Dae-Il sighed in awe.

That was right. All of the players were very, very curious about Minhyuk’s vassals.

Then, Jackson continued, “Once we’re done making the ads about them, we will continue with a large-scale ad that will use the entire Beyond the Heavens Empire.”

“So, we’re going to tackle it one step at a time?”

“That’s right. We will make an advertisement that will generate curiosity in our viewers. We’re going to produce ads that raise the question, ‘Wow, I wonder what the next ad will be? When will it come out?’ and not the question, ‘Ah, this ad again?’

A flash of interest appeared on all of the faces of the executives present in the conference room.

Meanwhile, Manager Kim Dae-Il raised the most important question. “Who will be the first target?”

Jackson looked at each of the executives before pointing at one of the graphs in front of them.

“Our first target is the one that has an overwhelming amount of player votes and has sat on the number one rankings for a very long time.” Jackson continued calmly, “He is an NPC that has sat on the number one in rankings in several categories, including ‘NPCs that players wanted to keep as their vassals,’ ‘NPCs that players are most afraid of,’ and ‘NPCs that can deal an attack with the greatest damage.’”

“So, who is it?” Kim Dae-Il asked in frustration.

On the other hand, Jackson remained calm as he said, “It’s Spear God Ben.”

Chapter 919

These days, Haze could be seen with a perpetual look of concern.

*‘Amacar has been helping the soldiers grow rapidly. There’s also Brod and Spear God Ben, who commands them.’*

Haze was left pondering about the report that Amacar had sent him.

“Compared to their growth and potential, the empire’s soldiers and knights cannot display much power individually. And while they possess incredible strength, they are severely lacking in skills compared to other imperial knights and soldiers.”

The Beyond the Heavens Empire was established from the rapid growth of a small kingdom. The main contributors to this were Minhyuk’s vassals. It was also thanks to them that the knights and soldiers could grow significantly.

The problem was that the only growth they experienced was in what the players called ‘stats’ and ‘levels.’ As for their ‘skills’ and ‘proficiency,’ they weren’t up to par. Why did something like this happen when Spear God Ben, Brod, Sword of the God Luo, and the others were here?

*‘It does not mean that the army will be able to exert a powerful force just because their commanders are outstanding.’*

Of course, the commander’s power and strength were vital. However, in an army, what mattered the most was ‘balance.’ Most imperial armies were divided into several corps, like the First Corps, Second Corps, Third Corps, Fourth Corps, etc. Take, for example, the First Corps. It would also have several divisions, companies, and battalions inside it.

These companies would produce outstanding individuals who might not be as good or strong as the company’s army commander. In other words, they were company commander-level individuals.

*‘Our Beyond the Heavens Empire lacks people who can lead our soldiers once divided into companies, divisions, and corps.’*

Yes, the vassals of the Beyond the Heavens Empire were known to be the strongest. However, they needed more time to train each company. They required ‘company commander-level’ individuals before they could divide their army into corps, divisions, and companies.

At that moment, the door of her office opened. The one who entered was none other than Ben.

“Hoho. What’s got you so serious today?”

“Ah. Grandpa, you’re here?” Haze said as she looked up at Ben. The older man’s entrance had stirred her up from her thoughts. “You said that you were going out to get some ingredients for coffee, right?”

“That’s right.”

Ben was Minhyuk’s strongest vassal. However, the older man also wanted to make Minhyuk the most delicious cup of coffee. Because of that, he reached a fantastic level as a barista.

*‘Perhaps I will be able to reach a new height soon,’* Ben thought excitedly. However, he was not excited because he would reach a new level. What excited him was the thought of serving his emperor the first cup of coffee he would make on that level.

“What has got you so deep in your thoughts this time?”

“That...” Haze told Spear God Ben the report that Amacar had given her.

“That’s true. However, it’s not that easy for us. The Beyond the Heavens’ Imperial Army now has over a million troops. We must divide them by at least 50,000 troops per division, and we need people to manage and lead them once we go to war.”

Haze looked down at the report in her hands. “But the spear masters, in particular, seem to grow both in their skills and proficiency as well as their strength. As expected of Grandpa, you’re amazing.”

Yes, only the spear masters showed such balanced growth. And, of course, Ben told her the answer, “Hoho. It’s because many of the spear masters who trusted and followed me back when I was still one of the Pinnacle Strong Men had followed me in the Beyond the Heavens Empire.”

“Ah!” Haze recalled that Spear God Ben was once one of the Pinnacle Strong Men.

“The Pinnacle Strong Men are the strongest men on the continent. However, they do not belong to any empire or kingdom. And to protect and defend themselves from the kingdoms and empires, they would receive disciples with outstanding abilities and train them well.”

Ben chuckled. “That’s right. I’m very grateful that they still chose to come back to me even after I left the Pinnacle Strong Men and wandered around the seas for a very long time.”

An idea flashed in Haze’s head when she heard Ben’s words. “Ah. By any chance, do you know anything about where we can find Pinnacle Strong Man Farraden?”

They clashed with the Pinnacle Strong Men in the Continental Cloud when they were still the Beyond the Heavens Kingdom. Amoure and Loki, the first and second Pinnacle Strong Men, died in the encounter. Because of that, the surviving Pinnacle Strong Men had to find a new leader who would command and lead them. They chose Farraden, who was ranked 6th at the time.

The Pinnacle Strong Men were not necessarily bad people. Most moved for the ‘money,’ but some chose not to. And Farraden was one of the latter. And with Farraden leading the Pinnacle Strong Men, they had walked a completely different path from the past.

Haze believed it would greatly benefit the Beyond the Heavens Empire if they could bring the Pinnacle Strong Men to their side. However, Ben's expression turned dark when Farraden's name was mentioned.

"I don't have contact with any of them."

"How come?" Haze asked cautiously.

However, Ben just laughed hollowly. "Haze. Before I met His Majesty, I was a horrible person."

"..."

At this moment, Haze realized she had touched on a sensitive and sore spot for Ben. She had breached a topic that should never have been discussed.

"It wasn't until the death of my son that I realized how stupid and foolish I was."

Why was Ben called Ghost Spear Ben? Was it because he swung his spear in a ghost-like manner? Well, it was true to some extent. However, it was mostly because he had killed many of the strong men of the continent and was considered an 'evil spirit.'

Ben, the eighth member of the Pinnacle Strong Men back then, wanted to climb higher. Because of his greed, he had killed many good men. The deeper Haze delved into Spear God Ben's past, the more she wondered if he was indeed the same person as the person he was in the past.

There were two turning points in Ben's life. The first was the death of his son, and the second was his meeting with Minhyuk.

"Alright. I'll be back," Ben bid his goodbye and stepped out of the office after a very bitter and sad conversation.

When he came out of the door, he could not help but stare at the sky outside the window. It had been quite a long time since he heard that familiar name.

'Farraden, I'm sorry.' Ben thought, a bitter smile on his face.

*'I must continue living for His Majesty and the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Once peace finds this land and the Luvien Empire has collapsed, then...'*

Ben sighed lightly.

*'...I will gladly pay for the crime that I have committed.'*

\*\*\*

The Pinnacle Strong Men were the eight strongest men that reigned over the continent. After Amoure's death, they chose Farraden as their new leader and took a different path from the past.

The only reason the Pinnacle Strong Men were able to change was that they had quite a lot of new people sitting on their throne. After all, most of their members had died during the battle in the Continent Cloud in the past.

The NPCs would also grow just as the players grow. And the Pinnacle Strong Men had now grown stronger. Although they could not stand on par with the Swords of the Gods' First Order, they could still easily fight against the Swords of the Gods' Second Order, an order built by players.

But right now, the Pinnacle Strong Men were being pressured and threatened. One of the Stars of the Luvien Empire, Duke Vlad, visited them. He completely overwhelmed the Pinnacle Strong Men and all of their disciples. Then, he declared.

*–Receive judgment for your evil and wicked deeds.*

Ironically, those who committed those evil deeds from the Pinnacle Strong Men had all died. All those who sat in the position of the Pinnacle Strong Men were fresh and new blood. Yet Duke Vlad still swung his sword against them because *‘they carry the same name.’* Farraden was not stupid. He knew the man did not come to them for such a reason.

*–What do you want with us?*

Farraden knew that Duke Vlad needed something from them. Vlad, who finally sheathed his sword, replied.

*–Are you going to acknowledge your mistakes and your crimes? Are you willing to live and survive?*

And finally, he revealed his true *‘goal.’*

*–Spear God Ben. I want you to kill him, then come to our Luvien Empire. If you follow His Majesty Nerva's orders, he promises to rid you of all your sins.*

Only after leaving those words did Duke Vlad leave.

Farraden stood at a distant hill and watched an old man and a foreigner walk side by side. At this point, he realized that the Luvien Empire was aware of what happened between him and Ben.

*‘Today will be the day you will pay for your crimes.’*

Farraden would kill Ben.

\*\*\*

Special Players Management Team.

Team Leader Park Minggyu was sitting in front of the monitor with a severe expression.

Lee Minhwa went on vacation today. As for the new employee, Lee Tae-Sung, he eventually failed to endure the pressure and intensity of the work and left the company. Of course, they needed someone to sub for Lee Minhwa, and this sub finally arrived.

*“Let's work hard today.”*

The sub was none other than Manager Kim Dae-Il. He subbed for Team Leader Park Minggyu when he went on vacation in the past. Back then, he vowed that he would never return, saying, *‘The Special Players Management Team is a team from hell.’*

But after learning the truth about the balance break that Minhyuk had caused, Dae-Il said that he wanted to know more about their players and even volunteered to fill in for Lee Minhwa. Simply



put, Dae-Il wanted to learn more information from the players to try to change and veer Athenae into the right path.

“What’s got you looking all serious?”

Kim Dae-Il could not help but sigh when he saw the scene on the monitor. “Ah, it’s Ben. Every operator in Joy Co. Ltd. knows that he is a very unlucky and pitiful NPC.”

It was the truth. Ben was originally an NPC that was supposed to die a tragic death.

“He was supposed to wander the Dragon King’s Seas and die under the sword of his closest friend, Farraden, and sink to the depths of the seas. But now he has become the Spear God and started living a new life.”

Manager Kim Dae-Il realized how great the players' power was. However, he was very curious about why Team Leader Park Minggyu was sporting a serious expression.

“What’s going on?”

“I was just thinking about what would happen if Farraden and Ben reunited.”

“What would happen?” Kim Dae-Il looked confused and puzzled. Farraden and the Pinnacle Strong Men were but mere human beings. “They wouldn’t be able to kill Spear God Ben, no?”

“No. They can.”

“What?”

Manager Kim Dae-Il was different from Team Leader Park Minggyu. He did not know much of the details.

“Before joining the Pinnacle Strong Men, their members would be branded with the ‘Pinnacle’s Stigma.’ A punishment will be brought down upon those carrying the stigma if they break the rules of the Pinnacle Strong Men,” Team Leader Park explained, the graveness of the matter evident in his tone. “The stigma’s power is absolute. Even if he became a god, he could not go against it. And one of their rules was ‘Do not belong to an empire.’ But now, Ben has joined the Beyond the Heavens Empire.”

“Hmmm...” Kim Dae-Il groaned. On the other hand, he found it amazing. “Did he become Minhyuk’s vassal despite knowing that he would risk his life like that?”

“That’s right. And Player Minhyuk is not even aware of this.”

“Is the reason you’re looking all serious? You’re thinking about what would happen once Ben dies.”

Team Leader Park nodded. “But more than that, I was thinking about a number of possibilities that would happen once Farraden and Ben met and clashed.”

“Then, can you tell me those possibilities?”

Team Leader Park nodded once again. “As you mentioned, one of the possibilities is Spear God Ben’s death. Or maybe a ‘special reward’ will be given because of the deep bond between Player Minhyuk and Ben.”

“A special reward? Ah, that?!” Manager Kim shouted. He seemed to recall what Minggyu was talking about.

“That’s right. It’s a reward that will only be given to one player and one player alone in Athenae.”

That reward was created with a very symbolic meaning.

“This reward will only appear once a tremendously deep bond has been created between an NPC and a player. And right now? The bond between Player Minhyuk and Ben is already close to that level.”

“Then, why did you look so serious?”

From what Manager Kim Dae-Il could gather, the situation did not seem that serious for Minggyu to look that serious.

But then, Team Leader Park said, “I mentioned before that I have been thinking about some possibilities that would happen, right?”

“Right.”

“I believe the story’s ending between Spear God Ben and the Pinnacle Strong Men is one of two.”

Team Leader Park turned toward the monitor, the serious expression on his face growing increasingly severe.

“Either the Luvien Empire gets the Pinnacle Strong Men, or the Beyond the Heavens Empire gets the Pinnacle Strong Men.”

“...!”

Manager Kim Dae-Il could not understand how Park Minggyu came to those conclusions.

Then, Team Leader Park said, “Weren’t you aware of why Ben was supposed to die at the hands of Farraden?”

Of course, Dae-Il was aware of the reason why Ben had to die a tragic death. He was also aware of the reason why Farraden hated him.

The serious expression on Team Leader Park’s face as he looked at the two monitors before him turned bitter. One of the monitors showed Ben, while the other monitor showed Farraden.

Minggyu licked his dry lips and said, “It’s because Ben killed Farraden’s daughter.”

Ben and Farraden's story was unfortunate and tragic.

Ben, who was intoxicated by power, fought and killed many powerful men on the continent. However, even if Ben was like that, many people stayed by his side, laughing and chatting. One of them was *Farraden*.

Farraden had always criticized and tried to restrain Ben's unsightly behavior. Ben found Farraden disgusting. However, he maintained his friendship because he knew Farraden was only thinking about him. When their friendship grew stronger, Ben started listening to Farraden and examining himself and his actions. But then, things happened one after another.

News about Ben's son dying in the Dragon King's Sea reached him. Ben wallowed with grief and spent his days under the influence of alcohol as he blamed and resented himself.

"He murdered Farraden's daughter, right?"

When Farraden arrived, he saw Ben holding a bloody spear while her daughter lay dead on the ground. The two immediately fought fiercely. But after dealing a severe injury to Farraden's eye, Ben ran away.

"That's the reason why he left the Pinnacle Strong Men. But why would the Pinnacle Strong Men relate the death of Farraden's daughter to the fact that Ben came to the Beyond the Heavens Empire?" Kim Dae-Il asked. If it's like that, then could this be considered a bug? Why would Minggyu think like that?

"Yes, Ben killed Farraden's daughter. However, he did not commit murder."

This was also true.

"Amoure felt that Ben's rapid growth in power threatened his position. So, he took advantage of Ben, who was left weakened and drunk, and cast an 'illusion' upon him."

This was also a fact. Ghost Spear Ben was ranked eighth among the Pinnacle Strong Men only because he had the fewest disciples. Ben's power was actually on par with, or perhaps even more significant than, Amoure's.

Team Leader Park stared at the monitor and asked, "Do you think Farraden was unaware of this?"

"..."

Kim Dae-Il remained silent. Even he, an insider, was unaware of what was happening inside the game. But what if he was in the same position?

"He might have some suspicions. His close friend, who was drunk, suddenly murdered his daughter?"

That was highly unlikely, no?

"If you look at it, there are various irregularities that can help clear the misunderstandings between the two and help guide them to a new path."

Manager Kim Dae-Il looked at the monitor and pondered about these irregularities. That was when he remembered the game's most significant irregularity.

*‘Player Minhyuk...?’*

Then, something suddenly occurred to him. Manager Kim Dae-Il always strived to make Athenae prosper and help steer it in a better direction.

“You said earlier that the bond between Player Minhyuk and Ben is almost at the level where he could receive a ‘reward,’ right?”

“That’s right.”

There was also Jackson, who was familiar with Ben’s story and was already almost at the final stage of Ben’s advertisement video production process.

*‘A way to get more players to watch our ads...’*

If they wanted more players to see their ads, broadcasting it on Ztube and the TV might still be lacking.

“...The moment Minhyuk and Ben’s bond reaches the highest level... Let’s make it so the ‘You can now view the advertisement video’ notification rings in the ears of all of the players currently playing Athenae at that time.”

“Yes...?”

“This will be amazing! The story of Ben and Minhyuk will unfold and play in front of every player inside the game!”

“???”

Team Leader Park could not understand what came over Dae-Il. But he did not have the time to question it. Manager Kim Dae-Il quickly jumped to his feet and ran out.

“I’ll have to hurry and report this to the president!” Kim Dae-Il shouted as he rushed out of the Special Players Management Team.

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[The Beyond the Heavens Empire and the Roarke Kingdom have signed an alliance.]

[The Beyond the Heavens Empire and the Roarke Kingdom will help each other with material and emotional support. You will be disadvantaged if you break the alliance at will!]

After talking with Carron and laying down their terms and conditions, Minhyuk gladly accepted their request for an alliance.

*‘They’re going to make advertisement videos about our Beyond the Heavens Empire’s vassals.’*

The Beyond the Heavens Empire’s vassals were all famous and well-known. So, there wasn’t anything that they could hide about them. Besides, he did not need to worry since the advertisement videos that they would produce would not reveal their current level or power.

After signing the alliance, Minhyuk had a moment to himself. He looked down at the bloody key that Carron had given him and thought it would be nice if the place where this key led housed something delicious.

*–It is said that this is the key that will lead you to the place mentioned in the Roarke Kingdom's legends. From what I heard, that place has the power that can help you grow further. The first prince asked me to give this to Your Majesty as a gift.*

Minhyuk then climbed the empire's walls and looked out in the distance.

*‘Thank you, Grandpa.’*

Sporting a flushed and excited face, Ben came to visit Minhyuk before leaving the empire.

*–Your Majesty. I finally found where the coffee beans blooming among ten thousand flowers. I can serve Your Majesty delicious coffee with a deeper flavor and aroma using these superior coffee beans.*

Ben looked extremely delighted, like a child who had received a gift. Minhyuk was very, very grateful to him. He knew that the old man was doing his best because he wanted to make him happy.

*–Please wait for me. In a few days, I will find you and serve you with the most delicious and aromatic coffee in the world, Your Majesty.*

Ben left after leaving those words to him. Minhyuk flashed a faint smile as he watched the older man's path.

*‘It seems like I don't have much to do now.’*

Ever since the video ‘The Burden an Emperor Carries’ was broadcast, the Beyond the Heavens’ migration rate had witnessed a steady increase. And as strange as it was, even the Luvien Empire, which was showing several signs that it was preparing to go to war, calmed down.

Since he had nothing else to do for the time being, Minhyuk, who held the bloody key tightly in his hands, left a message in the guild chat and told his guild members that he would go somewhere.

[You will now be warped to the place mentioned in the legends of the Roarke Kingdom.]

Minhyuk disappeared in a flash of bright light. Opening his eyes, he was greeted by a gushing waterfall and a sparkling, clear, and mesmerizing river.

[This is the place where the Roarke Kingdom's treasure lies.]

*[You have entered the place where the water of the River of Growth flows!]*

[All chats, including whispers, will be restricted in the River of Growth!]

[If you soak in the River of Growth for two days, your level will increase by 1% of your current level!]

“...!”

Minhyuk could not help but be shocked.

*‘What... this...’*

The reward was truly beyond anyone’s expectations. If his level would increase by 1% of Minhyuk’s current level, then that meant that his level would increase by at least six.

For rankers at Level 600 or above, it would take at least two months of clearing high-risk, high-reward quests while drinking countless bottles of EXP buff potions to increase their level by that amount. But that was only the bare minimum. Usually, it would take them more than three months to achieve such an increase.

*‘And because I’m the one who received this reward, it becomes even more special.’*

Of course, this reward would be special for all players over Level 600. But the rewards became even more special because Minhyuk received them. Why? Because Minhyuk was the current number one in the official global rankings. He was the strongest, excluding the unofficial rankers. This meant that the combination of the best reward and the strongest player would create a tremendous synergy effect. However, there was a problem.

[Once you enter the River of Growth, you cannot leave. You can only stay inside for two straight days!]

[Even if you log out, your character will remain submerged inside the River of Growth. The time that has elapsed will be applied to your character.]

His movements would be restricted to the River of Growth for two days.

*‘Hmm.’*

However, that did not mean he could not do anything while submerged in the waters of the River of Growth.

*‘I can still eat things I love, like hot bars and the like, right?’*

The only thing that made it difficult was not being able to contact the outside world. But since he left a message in the guild chat and the executives were there, he did not need to worry too much and could confidently enter the River of Growth. At the same time, he wondered if something special would happen three days later.

Then, Minhyuk slowly submerged his body in the waters of the River of Growth.

[You have started to absorb the energy from the River of Growth.]

[Your EXP will continue to increase until your total level has risen by 1% of your current level!]

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Spear God Ben looked at the dark, gloomy forest that spread before him.

*‘The coffee beans that bloom among ten thousand flowers.’* Those coffee beans were growing in that place. Ben wanted to obtain those coffee beans, not to reach a much higher realm or live a better life. He just wanted to be able to make the world’s most delicious coffee with those beans and serve a cup to Minhyuk at least once in his life.

The moment Ben stepped inside the forest, the dreary voice of a woman rang in his ears.

[An old veteran.]

Ben was aware of the story of this forest that had remained hidden for a very long time.

Hundreds of years ago, a beautiful woman was born with a strange power. The woman was said to have the power to control and rule over the forest. But because of this power, one of the kingdoms called her a 'witch' and almost burned her at the stake. This incident made the woman furious with the entire world. According to the records, the woman stabbed the neck of the king, who tried to kill her, with a branch of a tree and killed all of the people who scoffed and threw stones at her before she fled.

But even after hearing this story, the world's strongest men continued to hunt and challenge her, hoping to obtain the name: 'Witch Hunter.' And the woman? She had been forced to kill those challengers time and time again.

From what Ben had gathered, the woman grew disillusioned after witnessing the ugly and dirty side of the human race and had hidden herself in this forest. Everything that Ben knew about the woman and this forest ended here. Anyway, he only wanted the coffee beans that bloomed among ten thousand flowers from this place.

[This forest is mine.]

[Even if you possess a strong power, that power will disappear once you enter this place.]

[Go back.]

*'An ordinary human? No. He's just good at using spears?'*

Ben understood what the woman meant. However, he chuckled and said, "I have never learned how to back down."

Ben continued to march forward with a faint smile. The moment he reached the small entrance leading to the depths of the forest, vines sprung up and blocked his path.

[I told you to go back!!!]

The woman's voice turned vicious. It sounded just like the voice of a 'real' witch.

At the same time, Ben's strength left his body. Because of that, he was also restricted from using the 'God Piercing Spear' he held in his hands. At that moment, Ben became an ordinary human being—an ordinary human being who was outstanding in wielding his spear. If Ben were a player, he would have heard the notification saying, 'Your level has been set to Level 1.'

Ben hung the God-piercing Spear on his back before grabbing a long branch to use as a makeshift spear. Then, he ran swiftly through the long and winding forest with no end in sight as the trees, vines, roots, and branches grew thorns and stretched out to put pressure upon him.

Thwack— Thwack—!

Ben swung the branch in his arms and continued running deeper inside the forest. He completely ignored the thorns that were stabbed all over his body.

Creaaaaaaaak—

Then, at that moment, one of the vines wrapped around Ben's legs and restricted his movements while a colossal tree fell from the sky and smashed him down.

Thud—

Creaaaaaak—

Everything happened in an instant. Just like that, Ben, who was flattened by the tree, died with blood all over his body.

[The Witch wants to see the greedy human suffer!]

[You will suffer and die the most painful deaths a hundred times over!]

“Hoho...”

Ben, revived and reappeared by the tree that fell upon him, realized that the witch's resentment toward the humans was greater than he had expected. A bitter smile flashed on his face. However, he kept on running and dying. He died standing, hanging in the air, and being stabbed by hundreds of thorns.

[You have suffered the most painful...!]

Yet he would continue to run and move forward every time he reappeared.

*‘Your Majesty, just wait for me.’*

Tree branches that were as sharp as the blade of a sword shot out and tore Ben's body apart.

[You have suffered the most painful...]

When he appeared once again, a boulder fell from the sky and flattened him to a bloody pulp.

Thud—

[You have suffered the most painful...!]

There were even times when the vines grabbed all of his limbs and pulled them away from his body.

Creak—

[...painful...!]

There were times when the vines would grab him by his legs and drag him to the river until he choked and drowned to his death.

[...painful...!]

Ben continued to die one tragic and painful death after another.

[...painful...!]

[...painful...!]

[...painful...!]

[...painful...!]

However, there was no fear in his body. He just continued to move forward as if the deaths that he experienced were nothing. He did not even get exhausted.



*‘I wonder if a cup of the drink I will make from ‘that’ will bring a smile to His Majesty’s face?’*

He only thought about the cup of coffee that would bring joy to Minhyuk.

*‘As long as it makes him happy, even if it’s a hundred or a thousand times, I will still be fine.’*

Ben was not aware that the reward created specially under President Kang Taehoon’s instructions, which could only be obtained when the bond between a player and an NPC reached its peak, was showing signs of being triggered.