

Gourmet 941

Chapter 941

[Your HP has dropped below 60%!]

[Your HP has dropped below 50%!]

[Your HP has dropped below 30%!]

[Your HP...!]

[You have lost in the Infinite Battlefield.]

[Your opponent has gained ten platinum.]

“...?”

Logan collapsed in a pool of his blood. Then, he reappeared once again. Once defeated inside the Infinite Battlefield, the player would reappear right away. This system was set so that both players, who played fairly, could greet each other and show courtesy.

The viewers watching Logan’s live broadcast went nuts.

[What...?]

[Am I dreaming? Did Logan really not get the chance to land a single hit?]

[No, wait. What...?]

[That’s MUSAT[1], right? The one used by the UDT[2]??].

Not long after, everyone turned their attention to the words one of the viewers said after seeing Captain Rice’s movements.

[MUSAT is a technique introduced by Korea’s UDT and is also the dagger technique taught and used by special forces members. You will know this even if you just type it on the internet. To be honest, I have also learned this before. But the way he uses it, I can tell that he has incredible talent.]

[Then, are you saying he’s a fantastic talent that belongs to the UDT?]

[Woah... Logan ignored him because he’s an Infinite Battlefield newb, but in the end, he’s the one that got K.Oed.]

[But what would happen if Logan did not give the player from before the first hit?]

[Didn’t you see that Logan got defeated by the Gnawing Assassination Skill?]

[You have seen how Logan was stabbed twenty-five times in a row, right?]

[Mhmm...]

And Logan, the one who was involved, felt highly ridiculous.

‘Even if I gave it my all, it would still be hard for me to win. Why is his damage so high?’

The skill was scary in its own right. Of course, assassins also have a lot of those types of skills. But the problem was that his opponent was not an assassin.

Logan wanted to try to strike up a conversation with the man.

“Thanks for the hard work!”

[Captain Rice has left the Infinite Battlefield!]

But just when he was about to try his luck, he disappeared in a flash of light. Logan, filled with a sense of helplessness, logged out after the man left. Meanwhile, his viewers said that this resulted from Logan’s conceit.

“Phew...” Logan sighed. He was actually Lee Tae-Sung, a person born and raised in Korea.

‘I have never seen a person who has reached expert level in MUSAT until today.’

As mentioned before, Lee Tae-Sung was a mixed martial arts practitioner and was versed in several martial arts. That was why he also knew about the MUSAT.

“Let’s not upload this video,” Lee Tae-Sung muttered. He also knew that it would not benefit him even if this video garnered views.

But then, his phone rang. It was a call from an unknown number. Puzzled, Tae-Sung answered the call. His face, however, gradually grew twisted as he continued talking with the person on the other end of the line.

“You want me to upload the video?” Tae-Sung asked, confusion marring his tone.

The person on the other end was making an extremely absurd request. They asked him to upload a video that could easily undermine his image.

“What did you just say? You’re going to pay a hundred platinum?” The confused Tae-Sung immediately changed his tune and said, “I’ll upload it immediately.”

Minhyuk recalled the notifications that rang in his ears after finishing his first Infinite Battlefield match.

[You have won in the Infinite Battlefield!]

[You have gained ten platinum.]

[Your opponent has a record of 17 consecutive wins.]

[Your opponent was a master of the Infinite Battlefield.]

[You have gained 1,303 Infinite Points.]

The results were quite satisfactory.

Minhyuk was the type of person who would not do anything if he could not produce the most outstanding efficiency and results. This was also why he ended up choosing the class he has now in the Infinite Battlefield. Why did Minhyuk choose the assassin class? It was a class that had a strict requirement for dagger techniques.

Minhyuk had tried a variety of things to work out and exercise his body ever since he started the treatment of his eating addiction. Among the things he tried, the best fit for him and his hands was the MUSAT, a technique used by Korea's pride, the UDT, and asked one of the organization's former instructors to teach him.

He judged that an assassin, with its quick movement and sophisticated dagger skills, would be the best fit for him. After all, he was constantly using the MUSAT, and a dagger would also be a suitable replacement for the sword.

Minhyuk saw Carron log back into the game after talking on the phone with a man named Logan. Carron immediately approached him and said, "I gave him an offer, and he agreed. He will soon upload a video with the title '*Careless! I lost to a MUSAT Expert!*' on ZTube."

Minhyuk was left in awe every time he saw Carron play with the media as if they were in his hands. Of course, he was doing this because they could maximize the effects of their advertisements.

Understanding what Carron wanted, Minhyuk said, "If I continue to win against people at Logan's level with the nickname 'Captain Rice,' then I will not have any challengers. But if Logan draws the people's attention by saying he was 'careless,' then the other players of the Infinite Battle will flock and challenge me."

"It's the only natural outcome. After all, the players of the Infinite Battlefield will only be able to see Logan's carelessness. And if they beat the guy who won against Logan easily, they could gain fame. Also, Your Majesty's MUSAT will play a huge part here."

"The MUSAT?"

"Yes. There's this long-standing controversy among players. *Who will have the upper hand? Real-life masters or PVP masters?*"

"Ah." Minhyuk nodded.

"The veteran players of Infinite Battlefield had been repeatedly told, '*You can't put whatever you know into practice.*' So, we will take this opportunity to charge forward and end the controversy."

Minhyuk nodded in understanding. If it indeed was, as Carron said, then he no longer needed to worry about having no matches in the Infinite Battlefield.

"This will also end the controversies regarding your qualifications as the Supreme."

Carron smiled wryly at Minhyuk's words.

There was one unrivaled existence in the Infinite Battlefield right now. This was none other than Alexander. After he became the first Eight Pillars class, he fought in hundreds of Infinite Battlefields and had never lost.

Because of this, plenty of people said that Minhyuk would quickly lose against Alexander if his titles—Battle God, Food God, and Beyond the Heavens' Emperor—were taken out of consideration. Although Minhyuk did not care about their words, he still could not help but be conscious.

"Is that why you hid your name and changed your class?"

Minhyuk nodded when Carron saw through his thoughts. If he played as Captain Rice and not as Minhyuk, they would have a more significant impact once it was revealed that the two were the same people.

“Ah! I’ll give you a gift after you finish the Infinite Battlefield.”

“A gift? Is it something yummy?!” Minhyuk looked at Carron with shining eyes.

Carron turned silent momentarily before saying, “Th—that’s not it.”

“Hmm...” Minhyuk hummed, obviously disappointed.

“But you’ll soon get your hands on delicious ingredients, no?”

Minhyuk nodded. It was the truth. He saw an Assorted Pork Set being sold in the Infinite Store for just 10,000 Infinite Points. And it was no less than a God-grade ingredient. It was an overpowered ingredient that could permanently increase the consumer’s stats by roasting and eating it. But the most crucial part was the part that said that it tasted divine.

“Alright. I’ll go and prepare your gift.”

“Thanks, Carron.”

Carron, who went outside, looked back to where Minhyuk was. His gift would be finished after he collected all of the videos of Minhyuk’s fights in the Infinite Battlefield. He would not make it for a publicity stunt or an advertisement.

Carron had directly experienced the heaviness of Minhyuk’s weight and the impact and influence that he had on the world. So, to show his admiration, he wanted to give back to him. And what could he give him? Of course, he could give him the thing that he was good at: a video.

Whether the video will be uploaded depends entirely on Minhyuk.

Everything was just as Carron said. When Minhyuk returned to the Infinite Battlefield, countless match requests flooded him. Among these requests, Minhyuk deliberately accepted the ones from famous individuals. Following the name of this place, an infinite number of battlefields were created as Minhyuk fought them one after another.

[You have won in the Infinite Battlefield!]

[You have gained 25 platinum.]

[Your opponent has a record of 7 consecutive wins.]

[Your opponent was a master of the Infinite Battlefield.]

[You have gained 1,213 Infinite Points.]

[You have won in the Infinite Battlefield!]

[You have gained 50 platinum.]

[Your opponent... 3 consecutive wins.]

[You have gained 603 Infinite Points.]

[You have won in the Infinite Battlefield!]

[...won in the Infinite Battlefield!]

[...won in the Infinite Battlefield!]

Minhyuk's winning streak continued.

[You have achieved ten consecutive wins!]

[You have gained 1,000 Infinite Points.]

[...achieved 20 consecutive wins!]

[...gained 2,000 Infinite Points.]

[...achieved 30 consecutive wins...]

Many came to challenge Captain Rice, who appeared like a gust of wind on these battlefields.

Those who came to challenge him after watching Logan's video were all defeated. And now, as the new rookie, he was the talk of all the ZTubers in town.

After that, Minhyuk decided to increase the number of opponents he would fight by a hundred.

Then, he continued to sweep through everything like a whirlwind. Because of that, the number of match requests that came Minhyuk's way increased significantly. Why? Because they all thought that there was no way they would lose to someone who was a hundred levels lower than them.

[...achieved 40 consecutive wins...]

[...achieved 50 consecutive wins...]

[...achieved 60 consecutive wins...]

Minhyuk began fighting more than fifty people a day in the Infinite Battlefield. At the same time, the name Captain Rice appeared and soared in the real-time search rankings of various portal sites worldwide. Those who saw him fight immediately made a lot of noise.

[Captain Rice vs. Alexander. Who do you guys think will win?]

[Alexander.]

[No one can keep up with the Weapon Master.]

[Alexander has fought and won more than 500 matches in a row. What he achieved is literally a legend, and it will not be broken in the future.]

[Then, Food God vs. Captain Rice. Who will win?]

[To be honest, the Food God is too strong because he has his class, empire, and friends.]

[He's strong. But I think it's impossible to deal with Alexander regarding PVP. Alexander alone can handle dozens of weapons.]

[No. We're talking about Food God vs. Captain Rice. So, who?]

[But don't you think the Food God will win? He's an expert in kendo.]

[Kendo can't be used in real life. MUSAT will win. Lol]

[Assuming they're on the same level, I think it will be Captain Rice. But I wonder who Captain Rice is. Is he a non-commissioned UDT officer?]

[Captain Rice is not revealing his identity because he is currently one of the active officers of the UDT. Yep, yep.]

[Where did you get that info?]

[In my head.]

[...?]

The thought of Minhyuk as Captain Rice did not even cross the people's minds. This was because they had yet to see Minhyuk use MUSAT.

Minhyuk didn't have to use a dagger since he was both the Food God and the Battle God. After all, most of his skills were geared toward a sword. But now? He was using MUSAT in the Infinite Battlefield and showed explosive prowess and skill.

It took Minhyuk only a short time to reach the milestone of 200 consecutive wins. He was delighted to see the “thick” Infinite Points he had accumulated.

‘If I can gather 10,000 Infinite Points, then I will be able to eat the Assorted Pork Set!’ Minhyuk thought as he increased his pace.

At the same time in Joy Co. Ltd.

President Kang Taehoon said, “Let’s ensure we are all fully prepared for the Infinite Battles that will start in thirty minutes.”

The events for the Infinite Battlefield, events that many viewers would enjoy, were about to begin.

Today would mark Alexander’s 600th consecutive win in the Infinite Battlefield. As of now, he had accumulated around 910,000 Infinite Points.

‘If I can collect 90,000 more, I can unlock the Weapon Master’s additional skills.’

Alexander participated in the Infinite Battlefield mainly because of the Weapon Master’s skills. After he achieved 100 consecutive wins, he acquired one strong skill. Then, the requirements for the acquisition of the second skill appeared immediately.

The requirement for acquiring the second skill was accumulating 1,000,000 Infinite Points in the Infinite Battlefield. The number was staggeringly high, and people would say it was crazy if they heard the requirement. Fighting was no problem. The problem was that the number of matches that Alexander fought in per day had significantly reduced since he started.

[You have a match! Please check your opponent for the match!]

Someone finally accepted his matching request! Alexander immediately checked the information of his opponent.

Chapter 942

Alexander did not like browsing the internet or watching TV. He had already set his goals and would rather put the time he spent on these activities into helping him reach his goal of reaching a higher place in Athenae. But even Alexander knew about Captain Rice, the hottest issue in the Infinite Battlefield.

‘They have been talking all about this in the whispers.’

As one of Athenae’s top figures, Alexander often talked with the other rankers, who told him about Captain Rice.

‘He has never lost once, just like you. And he has won a hundred consecutive matches in a row.’

‘He’s going to reach 200 consecutive wins soon.’

‘Because he became famous on Ztube, the match requests that came his way are never ending even though he had hidden his character name under a nickname.’

Alexander fully understood how a never-ending stream of match requests came the man’s way.

From what he had heard, Captain Rice matches were set at Level 300~400 on average. This was probably because the average level of Athenae players was around Level 320. Finding a game would be easy since there were so many players at that level. Based on what the others told him, Captain Rice would increase the levels of his matches by 50~150 immediately if he could not find a match.

‘If I defeat a player who has won 200 consecutive matches in a row, then I will be able to obtain at least 150,000 Infinite Points.’

Alexander was the only person who achieved 200 consecutive victories in the Infinite Battlefield. And right now, it seemed like his opponent had broken that record.

The moment Alexander approved of the match, a bright light flashed, and Captain Rice appeared in front of him. The man was as tall as Alexander, and his eyes were only visible through the black mask that covered his face.

Everything was a coincidence. Minhyuk had been spinning for a random match when the notification that he could fight a match with Alexander popped up.

[Alexander holds a record in the Infinite Battlefield!]

[If you win the battle against Alexander, you will obtain 500,000 Infinite Points, a +20 increase in all stats, and 1,000,000,000 EXP.]

[If you win the battle against Alexander, you can obtain a title.]

[If you win the battle against Alexander, you will earn an additional 1,000,000 platinum on top of the bet amount that you have placed.]

When Minhyuk appeared, he saw Alexander with a crossbow fastened on his forearm, a spear hanging on his back, a sword in his hand, and a dagger tied to his waist.

‘This is why I need to try even though I’m unsure if I can win.’

For Alexander, who had won 500 consecutive matches, there should have been no more challengers coming to find him. But the rewards were highly ridiculous. If Minhyuk won this battle against Alexander, he could quickly obtain God-grade ingredients for himself.

Minhyuk’s heart trembled in nervousness. But there was also a tiny bit of delight present there.

‘We’re equals.’

Right now, Alexander and Minhyuk were standing on equal ground.

Of course, Alexander’s Weapon Master’s skills were extremely overpowered. But Minhyuk’s Food God skills, which were transformed into assassin skills, were also highly overpowered. To put it simply, the two would fight a battle of abilities.

[The Infinite Battlefield begins!]

Minhyuk looked at Alexander calmly as he listened to the notification. Everything was currently being recorded. Why? Because Carron had told him to make it a habit to record everything whenever he connected to Athenae.

–Because I will definitely have a use for it one way or another.

Even though Minhyuk fought in countless battlefields here as Captain Rice, he still had not revealed the entirety of his powers. As mentioned before, many of his skills had been transformed into the skills of an assassin, which was also why no one had guessed it was him.

While he stared at Alexander, the man immediately made a move.

Fwoosh– Fwoosh, fwoosh– Fwoosh–

Alexander waved his hands, and small bolts shot out from the crossbow fastened to one of his arms toward Minhyuk.

‘This is crazy...!’ Minhyuk was left in shock.

There were two decisive reasons players ignored the crossbow even though it could continuously shoot bolts. The first reason was because it had low accuracy, and the second was that it could only deal 60%~70% damage compared to the bow and arrow.

But Alexander’s crossbow was different. Its bolts flew precisely toward Minhyuk’s neck.

Clang–!

The worst part? It continuously fired bolts that attacked Minhyuk’s vital points.

Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang–!

‘Did he reach mastery in the crossbow? No. Is it higher?’

The Weapon Master was the master of all weapons. He could handle any weapon. This time, a rope stretched out of Alexander's hands and shot toward Minhyuk. But Minhyuk moved fast. He quickly avoided the ropes aiming for his ankles.

“Shadow Steps.”

Flash—!

Minhyuk, who used the assassin version of Like the Wind, left only an afterimage as he disappeared in a flash. But just like a ghost, Alexander appeared falling in the sky above him.

“Weapon Attack.”

Minhyuk's eyes widened when he saw a gigantic axe with several daggers swinging down at his head. That was not all. There were also several bolts flying alongside them.

‘What? Isn't this too overpowered...?’

Minhyuk had heard of Alexander's reputation as the Weapon Master. But this was his first time actually fighting him.

‘I can't avoid this,’ Minhyuk thought, moving to block the axe, which would cause him the greatest damage.

Claaaaaaaaang—!

A loud sound rang loudly as Minhyuk deflected the axe away. He let a sword attack his flanks, which allowed him to roll to the side and avoid most of the attacks that came his way.

Alexander watched the man in awe. *‘That's amazing.’*

This was the first time he had seen a player reduce the damage caused by Weapon Explosion to such a low level.

‘What if I was in his position?’

Alexander thought. However, he was unsure if he could do it as easily as the man before him.

‘He's counter-attacking.’

The Food God's biggest advantage was his cooking buffs. After being transformed into an assassin's skill, its power was reduced by half. In exchange, it could be activated right away without using any ingredients or cooking.

[Assassin's Blessings.]

[All of your stats have increased by 16%.]

[All of your attack powers have increased by 19%.]

[All of your defensive powers have increased by 20%.]

[Your speed has increased by 25%.]

Immediately after that, Minhyuk used his greatest secret skill.

‘Dual Sword Technique.’

[Quick Dagger Technique.]

[Your dagger's speed has doubled.]

[If you cast a skill, its effects would double.]

The Dual Sword Technique was modified to fit an assassin. Now, he did not need to wield two daggers. Minhyuk only needed to swing one dagger, and it would display twice its speed and effects. The fact that the dagger's speed could double for an assassin, who could already move and swing his dagger at a breakneck pace, was already unusual. And it was not only that. Even Minhyuk's speed had significantly increased.

Boooooom—!

Minhyuk kicked the ground and shot forward.

Vwoooooooooong—!

At the same time, a huge cannon appeared right in front of Alexander and fired at him. However, Minhyuk simply twisted his body to avoid the attack. Of course, he would not let the opportunity slip by. Hundreds of daggers appeared around his body.

'Sword of Tempest.'

The Sword of Tempest changed into daggers, which moved to protect Minhyuk and attack his opponents. Seeing this scene, Alexander tried to raise his crossbow and shoot.

"Shadow Steps."

With a whisper, Minhyuk quickly arrived in front of Alexander.

"..."

The two made eye contact. The hundreds of daggers surrounding Minhyuk pointed at Alexander while he displayed a short and straightforward dagger technique.

Swoooooosh—

Minhyuk caught the dagger he threw in the air and held it in reverse, the sharp side of its blade aiming for Alexander's neck.

Flash—!

He immediately swung his dagger and targeted Alexander's bottom half, abdomen, and flanks. Alexander tried to escape quickly, but Minhyuk held on to his wrists.

"...!"

Minhyuk dragged Alexander back with all his might as he cast the *Sword of Carnage*.

"Gnawing Assassination."

The dagger in Minhyuk's hands moved in a flash of light and stabbed Alexander's body more than sixty times in a row.

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

Stab, stab! Stab!

Alexander was dumbfounded when he realized he could not avoid or stop the attack. However, Alexander stood at the top, too. He raised his other hand and grabbed Minhyuk's wrist.

"...?"

"Weapon Explosion."

Dididididi—

The spear on Alexander's back pulled itself out and shot toward Minhyuk.

Baaaaaaaaaaaang—!

Of course, that was just the beginning. Dozens of weapons, like daggers, spears, maces, swords, dragon cannon artillery shells, arrows, and many more, jumped out of Alexander's body and shot toward Minhyuk.

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

Like the spear, everything blew up and exploded in just one second.

If Minhyuk had the Sword of Carnage, then Alexander had the Weapon Explosion. The best part about Alexander's skill was that it did not cause damage to the skill user.

Alexander took advantage of the opportunity presented to him right after the explosions ended. He swiftly summoned a sword while calculating the situation swiftly. He thought, '*His dagger will not be able to reach me at this range.*'

Then, he swung his sword at Minhyuk's neck.

'*I won...*'

When Alexander was confident of his victory, the dagger in Minhyuk's hand changed into a sword.

As mentioned before, players could freely change the weapon they wielded inside the Infinite Battlefield. However, if they chose to change their weapon into something other than the weapon they used, its effects would not increase. This is why most players viewed this negatively and would opt not to change their weapons.

Claaaaaaaaang—!

Alexander's sword was blocked.

"...!"

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

Captain Rice's sword, which did not even lag behind his dagger, moved swiftly and clashed repeatedly with Alexander's sword.

Alexander's eyes grew wider and wider as they continued to fight. In the end, he said, "You...!"

"...Sorry."

Alexander was no fool. There was only one player in Athenae capable of displaying this level of swordsmanship. Some might say that Minhyuk was only strong because he was the Food God, the

Battle God, and the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor. However, the true rankers knew full well that he was truly the best of the best.

Alexander and Minhyuk quickly pulled away from each other.

After realizing who his opponent was, Alexander quickly checked his condition.

'My HP has decreased by almost 50%...?'

Each of the attacks that Alexander had landed could be considered fatal. However, between the two, the one who received more damage was Alexander. Why? Because the amount of damage that Minhyuk could deal was beyond anyone's imagination.

'MUSAT, huh? I have to keep a constant eye out.'

Alexander had also practiced various martial arts in reality. From what he had heard, Korea's MUSAT was a close combat technique that applied Krav Maga's core. This meant that it was highly murderous and lethal, even more so because the one using the technique was Minhyuk.

After realizing that his opponent was Minhyuk, Alexander decided to go all out. He knew he would never win against this opponent if he tried to hide and save something.

'Transcending Limits.'

[The Weapon Master's Transcending Limits has been activated!]

[Your Sword Mastery has gone beyond Level 9!]

[Your Sword Mastery's skill level has reached MAX!]

[Your Sword Mastery has transcended its limits and reached Level 10!]

[Your Sword Mastery has transcended its limits and reached Level 11!]

[Your Sword Mastery...]

[Your Sword Mastery...]

[Your Sword Mastery has reached Level 27!]

In one breath, Alexander's Sword Mastery reached Level 27. Now, his sword could deal huge damage and have a speed that would put pressure on Minhyuk. But even so, his odds were still unknown.

'All of Minhyuk's attack skills are superb.'

And the most troublesome part? He did not know when or how the skills would strike him since they had been transformed into an assassin's skill.

The two flashed a smile as they looked at each other. Alexander said, "This is fun."

"Yeah. You're right, Alexander. You're powerful."

The two were of the same mind, thinking it was fun to fight a battle filled with nerve-wracking tension. Indeed, there would always be this inexplicable thrill whenever two unrivaled beings in Athenae fought and clashed.

While the two kept each other in check, a series of notifications rang in their ears.

[In the Infinite Battles, you will compete with two opponents after competing and winning against one opponent!]

[In the Infinite Battles, after competing and winning against two opponents, you will then proceed to compete with four opponents!]

[In the Infinite Battles, after competing and winning against four opponents, you will then compete with eight opponents...!]

[In the Infinite Battles...]

[In the Infinite Battles...]

[In the Infinite Battles...]

[In the Infinite Battles...]

[The Defender will earn 50 Infinite Points with every challenger they defeat.]

[This is an Infinite Battlefield Event; the broadcast will begin immediately after you approve and consent.]

Alexander and Minhyuk looked at each other. They both understood the rules of the event. 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128. The number of their challengers would increase in this manner.

[The Infinite Battlefield's MVP will receive 500,000 Infinite Points!]

[The Infinite Battlefield's MVP will receive 100,000 platinum!]

[The Infinite Battlefield's MVP will receive a title!]

The two looked at each other once again before giving their approval. And just like the notification said, the broadcast immediately started.

Joy Co. Ltd. was not stupid. They knew how to attract most viewers to their broadcast. When the Infinite Battles' broadcast started, they transmitted the video of Alexander and Captain Rice, the rapidly emerging powerhouse of the Infinite Battlefield, side by side. Because of that, their viewership ratings soared to the skies.

Chapter 943

Most of the Athenae players have participated in or encountered the Infinite Battlefield at least once in their entire gameplay. There were even times when some of them would disappear for a few days so that they could play in the Infinite Battlefield.

Why was the players' interest in the Infinite Battlefield so high? This was mainly because of the thrill they could get from it. Fighting against someone at the same level would be thrilling and allow them to know and learn how good they were compared to others. There was also the fact that they could gain wealth the more they participated in matches in the Infinite Battlefield. After all, they could obtain double the amount they betted if they won. These were also a part of why Captain Rice's videos uploaded on ZTube became such a huge hit.

The one bearing the name of the strongest in the Infinite Battlefield was Alexander. No one did not know about Alexander, the one who had never been defeated. He participated in 500 matches and won all 500 of them. Although Alexander did not own an empire like Minhyuk, some people claimed that he alone could devour and lay several small kingdoms to waste.

All the players were curious: ‘Will we be able to see Alexander’s winning streak be broken?’ The one with the highest probability of making this happen was Captain Rice. After all, he had won 200 matches in a row, just like Alexander.

Many waited and hoped Alexander and Captain Rice would fight on the battlefield once. However, even if the two matched and fought, they had the right to decide whether to publish their match.

The people found it a pity that they would not be able to see the battle between the two, even if they fought. They lamented that they would only be able to see the results.

When the notification rang, several broadcasting stations had signed a contract with Joy Co. Ltd. before ZTube began broadcasting. On their screens, they saw Alexander and Captain Rice, the two people that they longed to see fighting, appear facing each other. There were even apparent signs of a fierce battle before the broadcast started.

[Wow, shit! Look over there! Alexander and Captain Rice must have fought against each other!]

[Is it over? Did they determine who won and who lost?!]

[Nope. It looks like they’re going to participate in the Infinite Battles?]

[OMG! This is going to be freaking amazing!]

[Yep, yep! I wonder how many Alexander and Captain Rice can defeat by themselves?]

For players, the Infinite Battles was like a fresh take on fighting. As they continued to fight and win against their opponents, the number of players they had to deal with would double. Since it depended on how many one defeated, they could fight against 10,000 or even 1,000,000 opponents. Of course, everyone was aware that it was an impossible number. Even so, there was no harm in dreaming.

Just like that, word of mouth spread, and viewers began to flock to watch the broadcast of the Infinite Battles, in which Alexander and Captain Rice duke it out and fight nonstop.

Alexander and Minhyuk both looked quite disappointed.

Although they had yet to start and were yet to determine who the winner or the loser was, they could tell that the rewards from the event that Joy Co. Ltd. had prepared were too unconventional. They would obtain fifty Infinite Points for every Infinite Battle challenger they defeated. Not only that, if they became the MVP, they would also be able to get 500,000 Infinite Points and 100,000 platinum.

Then, Minhyuk said, “Alexander, shall we see who could defeat more?”

“...Interesting.”

They did not need to finish their battle to determine the winner or the loser. All they needed to do was defeat more enemies.

The two disappeared in a flash of light and appeared in a new place.

[You will now be transferred to the Infinite Battles' Combat Zone!]

Minhyuk quickly looked around. The combat zone was a barren and desolate field surrounded by large, transparent walls in all directions. On the other side of the transparent walls were Alexander and the other players, who had won ten consecutive matches in the Infinite Battlefield and were now participating as the *defenders* in the Infinite Battles.

“Were they aiming for this?”

“They are. 100%.”

They were talking about the fact that Minhyuk and Alexander appeared in the same place and were standing right next to each other. They were sure that this was what Joy Co. Ltd. aimed for. The company held events to entice players who had left the game to come back and recruit new players. Putting Minhyuk and Alexander side by side was an intentional move since they would create the hottest issue.

[Alexander and Captain Rice are in the same area!]

[This is going to be interesting...]

[OMG...]

[Joy Co. Ltd. I love you!!!]

And just like they expected, the viewers' response to their arrangements was hot!

[The Infinite Battles are starting!]

Immediately after that, a light flashed in front of Minhyuk, revealing the presence of a player. The same happened for Alexander and the other players who appeared earlier. The moment the opponents appeared, Alexander and Minhyuk moved.

After circling the opposing player, Minhyuk swiftly knocked their Achilles' heel.

“Urk!”

Minhyuk pulled him by the ankle, effectively knocking him to the ground. Then, he stabbed the opponent in the chest once before slashing their throat.

“Urk! Ack! Ugh! Y- You're too much—”

It only took a second for the first player to disappear. When Minhyuk turned around, he saw that the player who had appeared before Alexander had also been forced to log out and disappear.

[You have defeated one opponent!]

[Summoning two opponents!]

At the same time, two people—one mage and one swordsman—appeared in front of Minhyuk.

Minhyuk leaped forward and slammed his knee on the mage's chest, stopping him from finishing his casting.

"Ugh!" The mage groaned as Minhyuk's dagger stabbed him swiftly and quickly all over his body.

He easily dodged the swordsman, who attacked him on the side. Then, he raised his hand and stabbed the man on his flanks.

Stab—!

The power of *Destruction*, a passive that could strike the enemy with sixteen thick and bloody lightning bolts in a row, appeared as an assassin's skill. One stab turned to sixteen slashes that mutilated and forced the swordsman to log out.

[...2 opponents!]

[Summoning 4...]

This time, four people appeared in front of Minhyuk. However, neither Minhyuk nor Alexander used any active skill to deal with them. Was it because they felt like their opponents were beneath them? Of course not.

Even if Minhyuk and Alexander won against their opponents, their HP, MP, and skill cooldown would not reset. In other words, the defenders would get increasingly exhausted the more they won. And it was not only that. The number of their enemies would also continue to increase. This meant that they would have to reveal their skills sooner or later.

Baaaaaaaaaang—!

"Heup...!" Minhyuk groaned as his body was sent flying by a mage's Explosion.

Seeing this, the mage's face immediately lit up. "Quick! Beat him up!"

It seemed difficult to deal with four players all at once without using any skills. Of course, this was only on the general audience's standards.

Minhyuk, who was flying in the air, triggered Shadow Steps. Although Minhyuk suffered some damage, it was not serious, thanks to the afterimage left behind by his movement skill. He also created another variable after he stabbed the mage with his dagger. This variable was none other than the Slaughterer's Absorption. Transformed into an assassin's skill, it now could absorb the blood of the opponent that his dagger had stabbed into and use it to treat his injuries.

Baaaaaaaaaang—!

His passive skill Explosion, which was also transformed, gained a new form. The body of the mage that Minhyuk stabbed exploded, sweeping the surrounding area.

Now, eight enemies were standing in front of both Alexander and Captain Rice. The speed at which they summoned enemies was almost neck to neck.

[This is nuts. They're all on the same level, but... How can there be such a huge difference?]

[They might be on the same level, but rankers are in an entirely different realm. Even though their levels were lowered, rankers generally have higher stats, greater titles, and better skills than others.]

[Above, then you're saying that they can deal with that much because they are rankers?]

[Sry.]

As the viewers continued to watch the broadcast, they slowly realized that a truly skilled powerhouse might be able to deal with ten opponents at once.

[You have defeated 32 opponents!]

[Summoning 64 opponents!]

After winning against sixteen and thirty-two opponents, they have now reached sixty-four opponents. Minhyuk pulled his mask up higher. He was not fighting without using any skills at all. He was fighting by mixing skills with quick cooldowns and basic attacks. Minhyuk took a deep breath after dealing with sixty-four opponents with just two of his skills.

[You have defeated 64 opponents!]

[Summoning 128 opponents!]

“...”

Minhyuk could tell that he had used the fewest skills to deal with his opponents up until this point.

Meanwhile, the viewers from all over the world felt a shudder run down their spines.

[So cool...]

That was the only word that came to them to describe what they were feeling when they saw one lone assassin raise his mask while being surrounded by 128 opponents.

Minhyuk charged toward his enemies.

Stab—!

Boooooooooom—!

Explosion's power triggered and devoured the area just as several arrows shot through Minhyuk's back. Minhyuk hurriedly cut the arrows, pulling one in the process and using it to stab the neck of one of the knights next to him. Then, he continued to move around them like the embodiment of the assassin, focusing only on the *necks* of his enemies.

Clang— Clang, clang, clang— Slash, slash— Slash, slash, slash—!

The world went wild at the sight of an assassin moving at lightning speed and slashing the necks of his opponents one after another.

What about the damage he was incurring and the skills attacking him? The others only saw Minhyuk wearing light, thin black clothes and a mask. But the truth was different. Minhyuk had the Transcendental's Armor equipped now. Although its defensive power had been lowered to match its current level, it still had more than twice the defensive power that ordinary players had.

Stab—!

Of course, Minhyuk would also refill his declining HP using the Slaughterer's Absorption from time to time as he stabbed his dagger into the hearts of his enemies.

“Aaaaaaaaack!”

“K- Keuaaaaaaaaack!”

“Aaaaaarghhh!”

Minhyuk’s enemies continued to drop to the ground while grabbing their necks. It did not take too long for the comments, which had turned speechless, to become noisy again.

Alexander also displayed a pattern similar to Minhyuk's. But between the two, it was the newly emerging Captain Rice who the people deemed as the strongest both in control and skills in reality. Everyone gulped dryly as they watched Captain Rice cut the throats of his enemies as he passed by them. It was just like the scene in the movies.

After 128 people fell, Minhyuk said, “Next.”

Immediately after his word fell, 256 people were summoned. Like the previous opponents, they bombarded Minhyuk with attacks to eat away at his HP. However, the moment he came near them, it was clear that they were no match for Minhyuk.

What were the strengths and advantages of Minhyuk’s original class? Cooking buffs. And these cooking buffs had been converted and transformed into a variety of assassin buffs. Even though his level was lowered to Level 400, his strength was on par with Level 500 players, thanks to his buffs alone. There were also the artifacts he had equipped and the stats, which were much higher than ordinary Level 400 players, that he had built early on in the game, contributing to his power.

“Next,” Minhyuk said after knocking down and eliminating 256 enemies.

[Crazy...]

One of the viewers who heard him could not help but voice out.

Minhyuk charged at the 512 enemies and went on a rampage. He looked like a lion left amidst a flock of sheep as he cut their throats and forced them to log out. And Alexander? He was also moving at a pace similar to his own.

Minhyuk looked coldly at the last of the 512 enemies and stabbed him in the heart with his dagger.

Many people were clamoring and saying that between him and Alexander, it was Alexander who would have the upper hand when it came to individual skills. This was partly because he had the enthusiastic support of the Americans and partly because he was a combat-class player.

This was a considerable pressure and burden to Minhyuk, the first emperor and player to build an empire. There was even a time when he thought that he wanted to have a proper competition with the man every time he watched Alexander’s videos. He wanted to break the man and receive everyone’s attention.

“Next.”

One thousand and twenty-four. This was the overwhelming number of enemies that appeared and stared at Minhyuk.

Swooooooosh—!

Minhyuk threw his dagger toward the 1,024 enemies that appeared in front of him. The dagger, which shone a dark light, carried the skill Supreme Overlord’s Technique. The AOE attack skill

Supreme Overlord's Technique transformed and turned into tens of thousands of daggers, rotating fiercely and tearing through the 1,024 enemies like frail papers.

'There is only one sky encompassing the world. And that sky will be me.'

Minhyuk looked coldly at his fallen enemies and said, "Next."

Chapter 944

Joy Co. Ltd.

The executives did not exchange words for a long time as they focused on the massive screen before them.

Gulp—

The only sound in the room was someone gulping their saliva. That was just how eye-catching the scene being displayed on their screen was.

[Next.]

It was just one skill. But with that single AOE attack skill that sent thousands of daggers spinning fiercely, all 1,024 enemies died and disappeared.

Meanwhile, Team Leader Park Minggyu, who had an earphone plugged into one of his ears, picked up his phone and checked the viewers' reaction to the broadcast.

[Guys! You can breathe now!]

[Fwaaaaaa! Wow. I forgot to breathe while I was watching.]

[+2222]

[+3333]

[He fought against as many opponents as he could without using much skill, and then he made more than 1,000 people disappear all at once.]

[What's even more surprising is that Captain Rice and Alexander moved at almost the same speed. They only have around a 10 to 30-second difference.]

[This is interesting! This is really freaking amazing!]

[Who in the world is Captain Rice?]

[He's definitely an unofficial ranker. Wow, there's another ranker that's on par with Alexander!]

[This is wild! I'm so glad I was born at this age. I can't believe we can watch Alexander and Captain Rice's battles on video!]

Team Leader Park pulled out the earphones and said, "The responses are great. ATV Broadcasting Station's current viewership rating has exceeded 45%. Even the video we uploaded of Alexander and Captain Rice—no, of Minhyuk—on ZTube is recording a ridiculously high number of views."

Joy Co. Ltd.'s move was brilliant. They broadcasted the videos of all players participating in the Infinite Battles together on one massive screen on game channels on TV. As time passed by, the number of Infinite Battle Defenders would decrease.

Once the number of defenders had decreased to ten, they immediately broadcast their videos on ZTube. This allowed the viewers to watch the battle of the player they wanted to see among the remaining ten participants.

Meanwhile, Alexander and Minhyuk's videos were broadcast on the same screen. But the most surprising part was that Alexander and Captain Rice's Infinite Battles live video received almost 97.4% of the views while the rest watched the other videos.

That was right. Almost everyone had tuned in to watch how the two fought and battled against countless opponents.

"I did not expect it to be this huge." President Kang Taehoon was genuinely surprised and impressed.

But the most crucial takeaway was that the event Joy Co. Ltd. prepared this time was still ongoing. The ten defenders with the most defeated opponents would immediately be sent to participate in the Battle of the Stars. Unlike the Infinite Battles, the Battle of the Stars would have all ten players together.

"The ten remaining players would face all the challengers on the same battlefield."

The thought alone was thrilling.

Then, President Kang Taehoon chuckled. "Everyone would pass out once they learned that Captain Rice is Minhyuk."

After forcing to log out 1,024 people all at once, Minhyuk said, "Next." before glancing at Alexander by the side.

Alexander seemed to share Minhyuk's thoughts that dealing with more than 1,000 people with little to no skill use was impossible. Like Minhyuk, he had also used a single skill to wipe out the 1,024 enemies before him.

Then, 2,048 people appeared. If it were someone else, they would have already felt numb just by facing 2,048 enemies. Most of these challengers had also tuned in on their broadcast to monitor the current situation on the battlefield. They knew they should not hesitate to give their all when faced with Captain Rice or Alexander.

It took only a short time for Minhyuk to be bombarded by attack skills. He used Shadow Steps to narrow the distance between himself and his enemies and to avoid the attacks coming his way. Everyone was shocked to see Minhyuk still able to narrow the distance between them despite the barrage of skills coming his way.

Minhyuk finally stood in front of his enemies and used the Intangible Sword. At that moment, a dagger flew toward the 2,048 enemies. The players snickered when they saw a single dagger flying their way.

Slash, slash, slash, slash, slash—!

The players standing in the places that the dagger passed by were either stabbed or cut down so suddenly. Everyone looked confused by this unidentified and mysterious power that began to take them down.

The Intangible Sword unleashed hundreds of invisible sword lights and ignored the enemies' defenses. This same Intangible Sword was transformed into an assassin's skill and took down over 1,000 players who had gathered together in one go.

Minhyuk once again picked up his pace and continued to log out the players in front of him. He dealt with the players surrounding him solely with the power of Explosion. He believed it was better to deal with as many enemies as possible using a single skill at the beginning and deal with the rest with his strength and passive skills.

"Haa... Haa..." Minhyuk started to gasp as time continued to pass by. He, who had slaughtered countless enemies alone, almost stumbled on his feet when he finally stabbed the final player in the chest with his dagger. But he still said, "Next."

As soon as his word fell, 4,096 players appeared. Now, he had to deal with almost 5,000 enemies. Minhyuk flew to the skies, swapping his dagger and throwing it at the center of the group of players.

Crack—

An unknown golden dagger stabbed straight into the ground. This dagger was none other than the Continent Destroyer Sword. Why was it in the form of a dagger? Because once a weapon was transformed, it would remain in that form whenever its owner was inside the Infinite Battlefield.

Then, with the Continent Destroyer Sword at the center, a violent earthquake spread and wreaked havoc. The Continent Destroyer was the AOE attack skill attached to the Continent Destroyer Sword, and it released hot molten lava to devour a considerable area.

Baaaaaaaang—!

The power of the Continent Destroyer, in the form of flowing hot lava, transformed into lava explosions that erupted from deep within the ground and devoured Minhyuk's enemies. The Continent Destroyer's power alone forced all 4,096 enemies to log out.

"Next."

[You have defeated 4,096 opponents!]

[Summoning 8,192 opponents!]

Minhyuk slumped down as he tried to catch his breath. The new players who have appeared on the battlefield gained hope when they saw the sight.

"He's exhausted!"

"We can win against him!"

"Let's goooooooo!!!"

But then, at that moment, they saw a black dagger flying toward them.

Swoooooooooosh—

Everyone could still remember this skill clearly. This was the very same skill that sent thousands of fiercely spinning daggers that tore apart and made 1,024 people disappear without a trace.

“...This is impossible!”

They could not believe this power was activated again, even though only less than twenty minutes had passed.

Rip, rip, rip, rip, rip, rip—!

All 8,192 players were forced to log out without a trace.

“Next.”

[You have defeated 8,192 opponents!]

[Summoning 16,384 opponents!]

Minhyuk, with renewed vigor, charged toward the new enemies who appeared before him.

Alexander also had to deal with 16,834 opponents alone. Based on his estimates, several high-level players should also be among the enemies.

Turning to look at his side, he saw Minhyuk leaping to the skies and falling in the middle of the enemy ranks while unleashing his skill. The skill sent daggers engulfed with blazing flames toward the ground and unleashed explosions that swept away the area around him. The number of daggers covered with fire and explosions that were enough to devour and slaughter tens of thousands of people was too much.

‘Is that the Sword of Absolute Death?’

That was Minhyuk’s representative skill. Initially, it involved countless lightning bolts falling from the sky and simultaneously killing all the enemies around him.

At this moment, Alexander realized: *‘He’s reaching his limits.’*

Minhyuk’s taking out of his Sword of Absolute Death was a testament to this. However, Alexander also had few AOE attack skills left. Even so, he had a faint smile on his face.

‘This should be the first time, no?’

He still had a power that he had not revealed to anyone. His showing this power while competing with Minhyuk proved that he was also giving it his all. He wanted to use the skill to recognize Minhyuk’s strength. That was just how outstanding and powerful his competitor was.

“Weapon Corps,” Alexander said, exhaustion evident in his voice.

At that moment, a sword was summoned and appeared right in front of him. The appearance of a gigantic greatsword and a pair of katanas followed it. Various weapons—including crossbows, bows, iron maces, multiple types of spears, and many others—appeared in front of Alexander with a flash of light. The weapons floated in the air and lined up neatly. This was the skill that Alexander had acquired after he had won 100 consecutive matches in the Infinite Battlefield.

[Please give us your orders.]

The enemy players immediately grew cautious when they saw the weapons, which surprisingly possessed basic ego, pop out.

Alexander looked at the weapons before him and said, “Slaughter them.”

Fwooooooosh—!

One of the swords floating in front of him turned around and flew straight toward the heart of one of the players. The bows nocked arrows, pulled their strings on their own, and eventually shot the hearts of the players. The various types of spears also jumped to the sky and flew fiercely toward the other players.

Just like the troops of an army, the hundreds of weapons with egos of their own charged forward and slaughtered the enemies.

‘Now, it’s only a matter of who will last longer.’

It was no longer a competition of who hunted the enemies faster. Their situation had changed. They now needed to last as long as possible and kill as many players as possible. The one with the most kills would win the competition.

Alexander’s Weapon Corps was considered an overpowered and cheat-like skill because each weapon possessed the same attack and defensive power as a player. The best part was that it lasted one hour.

Alexander smiled. Of course, he knew that Minhyuk was the Battle God’s Descendant, and as such, he undoubtedly possessed several summoning skills.

‘It will only last for a few minutes.’

During the recent Succession Ceremony, Minhyuk had summoned five unidentified soldiers. The soldiers were powerful and had enough power to pressure the gods. But from what Alexander could see, Minhyuk could only summon them for five minutes at most. And in these Infinite Battles, a short summoning time of five minutes would be of little help.

‘If he genuinely has a summoning skill, it would be a different story. But as far as I know, Minhyuk doesn’t have a skill like that.’

Minhyuk had the advantage of being the emperor of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. However, that was not his class. If Minhyuk could use his advantages as an emperor and summon his vassals, things would unfold in a different direction.

Alexander was also very conscious of Minhyuk and had studied a lot of information and data about him. From what he recalled, Minhyuk could only summon his vassals using the Almonds of Subordinates. And they could only use consumables in the Infinite Battles if it was a particular case. So he would not be able to summon any of his vassals. In other words, the only advantage that Minhyuk had over everyone here was his advantage as the Food God.

Alexander's weapons took only a short time to force the more than 16,000 enemies to log out. Of course, Minhyuk had also moved on to the next level.

[You have defeated 16,384 opponents!]

[Summoning 32,768 opponents!]

Over 30,000 opponents appeared before Alexander, who had already predicted his victory.

Minhyuk continuously fought against more than 30,000 enemies. Although he was exhausted, he still had enough AOE attack skills left. However, he judged that there was a better time to use them.

Baaaaaaaang—!

“Keuaaaaack!” Minhyuk screamed, his body flying away from the players’ overwhelming attacks.

There were just too many enemies. Even though Minhyuk had the Slaughterer’s Absorption with him, its recovery could not keep up with the damage he received.

“Haaa... Haaa...” Minhyuk’s breathing gradually grew labored.

The players immediately charged forward when they saw him staggering on his feet. The scene was enough to make cold sweat drip down anyone’s back.

[Good job Captain Rice.]

[We acknowledge your strength and power, Captain Rice.]

[Wow. To think that he can fight against that many. The best. You have my recognition.]

[He’s reached his limits. Look. His body is shaking and trembling.]

[He’s someone who’s on par with Alexander. I can’t wait for what’s next!]

Everyone praised Captain Rice. From what they could see, no one except Captain Rice could fight on equal grounds with Alexander.

Then, at that moment, the player who was hailed as the world-renowned skill analyst appeared in the comments. He had declared before that he would analyze the skills of Captain Rice, who was on the rise these days.

[Hello, everyone. I am Skill Analyst Ekkan.]

[Oh! Did you find out who Captain Rice is?]

[Are you done analyzing Captain Rice’s skills?]

[As you guys know, when someone chooses a class other than their own in the Infinite Battlefield, their skills are modified and transformed according to that class. Following that principle, we have selected hundreds of players with skill sets similar to those displayed by Captain Rice.]

Everyone held their breath. Was Captain Rice a famous ranker? Or was he a reclusive master whom Ekkan did not even know about?

[We further narrowed our selection by finding players with many AOE attack skills. After comparing various conditions and numbers, the results showed that only one player fits the conditions.]

The entire world focused on Ekkan's words. The fact that only one player met the conditions meant that Captain Rice was a well-known player.

[This player is none other than the Beyond the Heavens' Emperor, Minhyuk.]

[Eh? That's impossible.]

[Minhyuk? Why did you suddenly mention Minhyuk?]

[I call bullshit. Nope. Nope.]

[We request a reasonable analysis. The Food God doesn't use daggers.]

Baaaaaaaang—!

At that moment, Minhyuk was sent flying away by the bombardment of the players' pinnacle skills. The players had surrounded him, ready to send another bombardment of their most lethal pinnacle skills. Cornered, Minhyuk gasped heavily. His path of survival was no longer accessible. In other words, he was in a situation where his Slaughterer's Absorption could no longer be used.

But when the players were about to send their skills, Minhyuk muttered a single word.

“Friend.”

At the same time, a white-haired old man appeared from above in a burst of white light.

[Everything that Vassal Ben possesses will lower to match your level!]

As the old man fell from the sky, he said, “Absolute Pinnacle Spear.”

Chapter 945

Inside the Infinite Battlefield, the rising rookie, Captain Rice, did a spectacular job of fending off his opponents. However, his performance significantly dropped when Alexander summoned his Weapon Corps.

But then, at that moment, Captain Rice murmured, ‘*Friend*,’ and someone with long hair fluttering behind him fell from the sky.

This man was a very famous NPC that everyone in Athenae knew of. Some even people declared that this NPC was much stronger than the players they called Supremes. And this NPC was the vassal of a player, which in turn made that player the envy of the masses.

“Absolute Pinnacle Spear.”

Hundreds of spears appeared to punish and slaughter those who tried the NPC's master.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang—!

A massive explosion erupted and wiped out almost 20,000 of the players gathered in one place as Vassal Ben appeared in front of Captain Rice, or to be more exact, Minhyuk.

Meanwhile, comments began to pour out from the viewers tuned in on the broadcast.

[Minhyuk is really Captain Rice?!]

[OMG... Then, the shocking MUSAT expert is Supreme Minhyuk? Scary.]

[That's freaking awesome.]

[Minhyuk participated in the Infinite Battlefield at the same level as the other players. There's no other choice. We have to admit that he is the Supreme.]

[Supreme Minhyuk's skills are really superb and outstanding.]

[He won 200 consecutive matches in a row just with his control... He can even deal with more than 20,000 players at the same level independently. That's freaking crazy.]

The people were impressed. Many players believed that they could not deal with rankers because they were at a different level from them. But Minhyuk completely broke their preconceived thoughts and broke through the mold. He showed them that the Supreme's skills were beyond their imaginations.

On the other side, Alexander, who was also engaged in an infinite battle, gulped dryly.

'He has a summoning skill...?'

That was right. Minhyuk possessed a skill that allowed him to summon his vassal, Ben.

Passive Skill

Minhyuk received this skill after the bond between him and Ben reached the extreme. But that was not all.

[The Assassin God's Blessings.]

[All of your stats have increased by 17%.]

[All of your attack powers have increased by 28%.]

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

Food God Minhyuk's cooking buffs, akin to assassin's buffs, gave Ben a boost in power. Spear God Ben's level might have been lowered to match Minhyuk and Alexander's, but his skills and abilities easily overwhelmed the two.

Ben had wielded his spear since he was young to survive. He had always held and trained in his spear for a few hours daily, without fail. Just because Minhyuk was a genius in kendo and had learned MUSAT or just because Alexander ventured and learned various martial arts did not mean they could win against Ben.

And now, with the most outstanding skills and abilities in Athenae, Ben jumped among the enemies. His addition caused the players to fall rapidly.

'Crazy.' This was Alexander's honest evaluation.

Alexander had summoned hundreds of weapons with the same power level as Ben. However, none of his weapons could catch up with Ben. Why? Because their ego was only at the most basic level.

Minhyuk, whose pace increased once again, quickly caught up with Alexander. Within a five-minute difference, the notifications rang in his ears again.

[You have defeated 32,768 opponents!]

[Summoning 65,536 opponents!]

Now, the number of their opponents has exceeded 60,000. Even so, they did not back down. Alexander's Weapon Corps had attack and defensive power on par with the enemies. And Minhyuk? He overcame more than 60,000 opponents just by having Ben by his side.

"Next."

[You have defeated 65,536 opponents!]

[Summoning 131,072 opponents!]

The entire battlefield was crowded, and all players were speechless. The performance of the two was proof.

[Even if our level reaches a higher level, there will still be a massive gap between us and the high rankers.]

[Wow. So it's really possible to deal with 100,000 enemies alone.]

[Of course, if their artifacts, titles, and skills are the same as ours, then it would be impossible for them to deal with 100,000 enemies alone.]

[But their artifacts, titles, and skills are the result of their hard work. So, in the end, we have to admit that there is such a huge gap between them and us.]

It was just as the comments said. Minhyuk and Alexander could deal with more than 100,000 enemies by themselves because of the artifacts they had equipped, their skills, and the various title effects that boosted their power. Compared to the general population, they have many more skills. Also, most of the artifacts that they have equipped were God-rank artifacts.

Still, the more than 130,000 enemies were too much for Minhyuk and Alexander. Even though Ben was by Minhyuk's side, he was already fatigued.

Minhyuk was saving one skill for this very moment. He stared at the 130,000 enemies before charging toward them. Minhyuk had a skill that resulted in the worst penalty. Using the skill would immediately force his level to drop by one and destroy 1% of his HP and MP. It was indeed a ridiculously horrible penalty.

'There will be no penalty incurred during the Infinite Battles.'

That was right. This was because the Infinite Battles was an event.

Although the skill had the worst penalty, its power was on par with the overwhelming power of the Eight Pillars and could easily surpass the Absolute Gods' Secrets. Of course, Minhyuk still could not fully display the true extent of the power since his level was still low, but just as its rank—Ninth Disaster—suggested, its power was the epitome of the word "disaster." This skill was none other than Calamity.

'Calamity.'

"Assassin's Massacre."

Although triggered under a different name, the effects remained the same. Its power could cover an entire area within a four-kilometer radius.

Countless throwing daggers covered with blazing flames flew over the heads of the more than 130,000 players.

Baaaaaaaaang—!

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

The moment one of the throwing daggers stabbed one of the players, a massive explosion of flames erupted and devoured an area within a five-meter radius. It was immediately followed by the other throwing daggers engulfed in fire that fell from the sky and slaughtered the more than 130,000 players standing before Minhyuk.

Minhyuk was delighted. He thought, *‘I am the Supreme.’*

He had conquered everything, even Alexander. However, it was not just him. Alexander also hid at least one of his powers.

“Corps Charge.”

The hundreds of weapons of the Weapon Corps might only have the most basic level of ego, but they could unleash one powerful skill, including his own. They could also use AOE attack skills!

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

The power pouring out of the weapons slaughtered the players at a speed on par with Calamity.

[You have defeated 131,072 opponents!]

[Summoning 262,144 opponents!]

An exhausted breath escaped the mouths of both Minhyuk and Alexander simultaneously.

“Haaaaa...”

“Hoo...”

Minhyuk and Alexander slowly reduced the more than 260,000 opponents standing before them. They either used the skills they could still trigger or fought head-on to eliminate the players before them. However, the fact that the two of them had reached their limits remained the same.

Comparing the two sides, Minhyuk and Ben were exhausted. This was because Alexander’s Weapon Corps did not grow tired—they weren’t humans in the first place. On the other hand, Minhyuk and Ben, dealing with the enemies nonstop, were bound to grow increasingly exhausted.

Thankfully, the number of players they defeated was similar to Alexander.

[The Skill: Assassin’s Tenacity has been triggered.]

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

[All of your stats will increase by 8%.]

[Your attack power and defensive power will increase by 6%.]

The Divine Will skill's name was changed to the Assassin's Tenacity. But even though the skill was triggered, Minhyuk was still left struggling. Minhyuk was even left facing a crisis when the players continued to send their pinnacle skills flying toward him.

'Just a bit longer..

'Just a tad bit longer...!'

Minhyuk wanted to be the sky. He wanted to be everyone's icon, not only because he was the ruler of an empire. This was natural, innate.

The players watched Minhyuk in awe as he continued to stand and move forward even though he had stumbled and collapsed several times.

[Is it really possible for someone to have this much mental power?]

[He's really amazing...]

However, Minhyuk did not know that the players and the viewers watching the broadcast had already recognized him as the *Sky*.

Baaaaaaaang—!

Then, Minhyuk collapsed on the ground after being hit by one of the players' pinnacle skills. Ben also collapsed on his knee right next to him.

"Haa... Haa... Haa... Haa..."

Minhyuk's loud and harsh breathing resounded in the area. Even though he fell a hundred times, he continued to stand up. But when his staggering body was about to stand up, hundreds of pinnacle skills rained upon him and Ben.

Baaaaaaaang—!

Not long after that, Alexander, who was right next to Minhyuk, succeeded in killing around 110,000 players before being forced to log out.

[All Defenders of the Infinite Battles have been forced to log out!]

[The Infinite Battles have ended!]

[The rankings will be determined by adding up the scores you have racked up during the Infinite Battles! It will soon be determined.]

As the viewers watched the two figures disappear from their screens, they felt this lingering feeling digging into the corners of their hearts.

At the same time, Minhyuk and Alexander reappeared in the same place where they were fighting their match in the Infinite Battlefield. Of course, the challengers disappeared at that moment, too.

The two looked at each other silently. Even though they did not speak, Minhyuk already knew who would be the MVP of the Infinite Battles.

"Congratulations."

“Thanks,” Alexander answered. But he knew he had only a slight advantage over Minhyuk when it came to lasting longer on the field.

Just when the two thought that everything was over, notifications rang.

[All players who applied as challengers would participate in the Battle of the Stars!]

[The ten players with the highest score in the Infinite Battles will face all the challengers. The one with the highest number of challengers forced to log out will receive a special reward.]

Alexander sighed when he listened to the notifications.

‘They’re not going to give us any rest, huh?’

Their surroundings changed once again. Ten people with the highest score stood on a long, wide bridge this time.

[The challengers of the Battle of the Stars have entered!]

Almost 600,000 challengers appeared before them and flooded the bridge with a flash of light. The already exhausted defenders sighed. Thankfully, there was a silver lining for them.

[The HP, MP, and skill cooldowns of all the defenders who participated in the Infinite Battles will be restored and recovered!]

Their conditions were restored, and they recovered back to their peak. However, Alexander, who was standing among them, was left speechless when he saw that the enemies that they had to face were still not yet done being summoned.

Alexander turned to look back at Minhyuk and tried to say, “They did not even give us any time to res...” But Minhyuk was no longer behind him.

“Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

One player charged alone, daggers in hand, and ran toward the millions of players charging on the long and wide bridge. It looked like a scene from the movies.

Minhyuk's face was painted with a faint smile as he thought, *‘I haven’t lost yet.’*

Joy Co. Ltd.’s conference room.

President Kang Taehoon remained silent as he looked at the monitor before him. He had watched how the ten defenders fought against the millions of players, who charged like crazy and moved like a machine.

Surprisingly enough, Player Minhyuk achieved the highest score after the battle, which lasted more than an hour. Since the events had ended, the players were all warped to the awards ceremony hall.

Taehoon looked at Minhyuk and Alexander standing together and said honestly, “It was really...”

The entire conference room turned their attention to him.

“...fun.”

They had all watched the thrilling battle and competition between the two individuals and could only nod in agreement with Taehoon’s words. After all, it was the truth.

At the same time.

Carron watched the footage of the Battle of the Stars and smiled as he looked at the video that would become the highlight of his gift for Minhyuk. The highlight of his gift was the video of Minhyuk running on the long and wide bridge and charging alone toward the millions of enemy players.

Chapter 946

Awards ceremony hall.

Alexander and Minhyuk had indeed won against many challengers. This was especially the case in the Infinite Battles, where the two only had the slightest differences in the number of opponents they dealt with.

Of course, the same was true for the Battle of the Stars. Minhyuk took the lead initially by firing all his skills at the challengers who flocked to the bridge. He even summoned his Immortal Knight Order to deal with more enemies than Alexander.

However, as mentioned before, the two still slightly differed in the number of opponents they dealt with. These were the notifications that rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[You have won 2nd place in the Infinite Battles!]

[You will earn 50 Infinite Points for every player you defeat, calculated as the amount you have accumulated.]

[Unable to calculate the total amount of Infinite Points!]

“??” Minhyuk looked at the notification window in front of him in doubt. He kept receiving notifications about how his Infinite Points could not be calculated.

Alexander was also standing right next to him with a similar expression. The two were experiencing similar situations. Joy Co. Ltd. thought a player could only fight and win against 100,000 enemies. But the two of them dealt with over 300,000 players by themselves.

After receiving the notification about his Infinite Points, the notifications about his rewards immediately rang for Alexander.

[You are the Infinite Battles’ MVP! You will now receive 500,000 Infinite Points!]

[You are the Infinite Battles’ MVP! You will now receive 100,000 platinum!]

[You will earn 50 Infinite Points for every player you have defeated!]

[You will be rewarded with more points!]

[You have earned 700,000 Infinite Points!]

[You have met the requirements to obtain the additional skills of the first Eight Pillars' class: Weapon Master!]

Alexander had to gain 1,000,000 Infinite Points to obtain additional skills for his class. Now that he had heard the notification, he was delighted.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk stood beside him, still listening to his notifications.

[You have made a shocking feat of fighting and defeating more than 500,000 players!]

[Even though you have not won the MVP title, you have made an outstanding achievement that shocked everyone!]

[You will be rewarded with more points!]

[You have earned 800,000 Infinite Points!]

Minhyuk gained more points per person he defeated than Alexander. Alexander could take home a larger pool of rewards as the MVP, so this was nothing to him.

'Fufu... I can eat that Assorted Pork Set with this,' Minhyuk thought. This was the same Minhyuk who had difficulty dealing with many enemies just a few minutes prior. But now? He was looking forward to eating samgyeopsal. He even started to fantasize.

'Just imagine it. After a long and exhausting day, you, your friend, or maybe your co-worker go to a nearby samgyeopsal restaurant. Imagine gently placing a row of samgyeopsal on that hot grill and...'

Sizzle—!

Minhyuk gulped as he imagined the white smoke rising from the grill.

'Then, you take a sip of whatever drink—a shot of soju, a glass of beer, or a can of coke—is beside you.'

The thought alone made him shiver in excitement. This time, the notification for the rewards for the Battle of the Stars rang.

[The rewards for the Battle of the Stars have been calculated!]

[You have forced a total of 720,000 players to log out!]

[Among the ten Defenders, you are the one who forced the most number of players to log out!]

[You will be given 800,000 Infinite Points as a reward for winning first place!]

As far as Minhyuk knew, the second place would receive around 400,000 Infinite Points as a reward for the Battle of the Stars. It was a significantly lower reward than the reward received in the first place.

At that moment, an unexpected additional notification rang in his ears.

[The Infinite Store's Platinum Class has been opened!]

[This class is only open to those with more than one million points!]

Minhyuk looked at the notifications in doubt. When he looked up, he met with Alexander's similarly confused gaze.

'Platinum Class...'

A player who had reached one million points was special. Currently, only Minhyuk and Alexander have accumulated one million points. As for the future, one had to wonder if there would ever be another player who could accumulate that much.

Immediately after the awards ceremony ended, another notification went off.

[You will now be sent out of the Infinite Battlefield!]

Minhyuk disappeared with a flash of light.

After returning to the Beyond the Heavens Empire, Minhyuk rushed to the walls.

'Meat tastes even better if you eat it out in the open,' Minhyuk thought, smiling faintly as he opened the Infinite Store.

The upgraded Infinite Store was now divided into a regular and platinum-class store, which Minhyuk could change to with just a click. Minhyuk first looked through the items being sold in the platinum-class store. However, there was a slight variation in the items being sold.

50,000 to 300,000 Platinum Pouch (15,000 points)

Single Target EXP Increase Potion (20,000 points)

One-hour EXP Explosive Increase Potion (20,000 points)

One-week EXP Triple Increase Potion (150,000 points)

One-level Level Up Potion (150,000 points)

Amazing Artifact Reinforcement Parchment (300,000 points)

Any Artifact Material (200,000 points)

S-rank Quest in Your Desired Course (150,000 points)

Fantastic Cooking Spray (400,000 points)

There were around fifteen such items listed above in the platinum-class store. Minhyuk browsed through the items and clicked through every single one to check their information.

The One-hour EXP Explosive Increase Potion was an item with remarkably shocking power that could increase one's acquired EXP by as much as fifteen times during the one-hour duration that it was in effect. The Single Target EXP Increase Potion could be applied to one monster to increase its value by around fifty times when hunting.

'I can't use the Amazing Artifact Reinforcement Parchment on any of my artifacts. I also can't use the Any Artifact Material since I don't need anything immediately. As for the 50,000 to 300,000 Platinum Pouches... It will give me a random amount and is not very useful either.'

Minhyuk's attention was already drawn to the end of the list, where the words “cooking spray” appeared. He looked at the description of the item with wide eyes. Why did he not check it earlier? Well, he only had one reason.

‘Fufu. Save the best for last. It’s fun to check what you’re looking forward to the most.’

This was what he saw when he checked the content.

- One spray can increase all the effects of the ingredients sprayed on by 15%.*
- One spray and the ingredients' flavor and taste will significantly increase.*
- Can only be used ten times. Sprays cannot be overlapped.*

“Kghhk~” Minhyuk was in awe.

The Fantastic Cooking Spray was powerful and could be used ten times. Just the 15% increase in the effects of the ingredients upon spraying was powerful enough. After all, the better the ingredients were, the better the effects were, and the higher the increase.

Minhyuk bought the Fantastic Cooking Spray without any hesitation. He also made sure to purchase some items he thought he would need.

[You have purchased the Fantastic Cooking Spray.]

[You have purchased the Single Target EXP Increase Potion.]

[You have purchased the One-hour EXP Explosive Increase Potion.]

[You have purchased the One-week EXP Triple Increase Potion.]

[You have purchased the One-level Level Up Potion.]

Although Minhyuk still had many points, he quickly closed the platinum store after purchasing what he needed and moved back to the regular store.

‘I have to save some points. Some new items might be added to the platinum store in the future.’

Since he did not necessarily need them yet, Minhyuk felt there was no need to buy them immediately.

[You have purchased the Assorted Pork Set.]

Minhyuk stared at the pork set that appeared in front of him. He wanted this Sorted Pork Set because each part had different effects and attributes.

For example, if he ate the samgyeopsal, his STM would increase by 1% permanently. His total MP would increase by 0.5% if he ate the pork neck.

But Minhyuk found that each part was thick and heavy, weighing around 600 grams per part, to be highly satisfying. Of course, Minhyuk did not forget to use the cooking spray on the samgyeopsal before he ate them.

Fwish– Fwish–

The samgyeopsal was covered with tantalizing gloss as he gently lined them up on the slippery, hot cauldron lid.

Sizzle—!

White smoke and the delicious sizzling sound slowly rose to the sky.

Participating in the Infinite Battles and the Battle of the Stars was extremely fun but exhausting for Minhyuk. He poured cola into a glass filled with ice and immediately gulped it down.

“Kghhk!” Minhyuk exclaimed as he flipped the samgyeopsal on the cauldron lid.

Then, he pulled out his scissors and cut some of the well-ripened kimchi, which he placed gently on the area where the oil flowed.

Sizzle—!

The kimchi was slowly being grilled with the oil from the samgyeopsal, which looked like it had already been cooked well. Seeing this, Minhyuk grabbed a piece and put it in his mouth. The juices of the thick samgyeopsal immediately coated the inside of his mouth when he took a bite.

‘*Kghhk...*’

Minhyuk admired the flavor briefly before spreading a lettuce leaf on his palm. He added half a spoon of rice, two pieces of meat, ssamjang, some garlic, Cheongyang peppers, and some pickled green onions on top of the lettuce before wrapping everything up and putting it in his mouth.

Munch, munch—

The different ingredients brought a delightful combination of flavors to his mouth. Next, Minhyuk dipped a piece of samgyeopsal in the ssamjang and ate it as it was.

“A thick slice is truly much better.”

That was right. Minhyuk preferred eating thick slices of samgyeopsal than eating thin ones. The samgyeopsal he was eating right now was thick and filled with plenty more juices than the thin ones.

A happy smile hung around the corners of his lips as he scooped a mouthful of doenjang jjigae and put it in his mouth. He immediately followed it with a considerable spoonful of rice, its sweet flavor deepening the smile on his face.

Before Minhyuk knew it, the notifications telling him he had finished eating rang in his ears.

[You have eaten the Assorted Pork Set.]

[You have applied the Cooking Spray on the samgyeopsal.]

[Your STM has increased by 1.15%!]

Minhyuk smiled in satisfaction. At that moment, another notification rang in Minhyuk’s ears.

[The God of Magic’s Temple has been built!]

Black-robed players worldwide began to gather in dark and gloomy places regardless of class or nationality.

“Finally. He’s finally ready to lead us all.”

“Fu– fufufu– Fufu.”

“Kukuku– kuku.”

Then, one of them said, “It has been completed!”

“Ho! Oh my god!”

“We have to hurry!”

Around a thousand players of varying levels—novices, mid-levels, and even masters—began to move. The almost a thousand black-robed players running in one direction immediately took the public's attention.

Finally, they reached an empire. After they identified themselves, the guards readily let them in. The people inside the empire looked at them with fear when they saw them enter. Who wouldn't? After all, they were strangers wearing black robes.

However, they continued to move until they reached their destination. And what was their destination? It was a massive temple with a man standing on a platform right before it. There was already a crowd of more than a thousand people dressed in black robes standing in front of the temple.

“Ah- aaaaaaaah– aaaaaaaah...!”

The almost a thousand newly arrived players pulled their hoods back and looked at the man standing before the temple. They all looked very emotional as they stared at the handsome man with beautiful golden hair fluttering behind him.

“You have been waiting for so long!!!” Everyone nodded solemnly as the man continued, “This is the moment we have all been waiting for!!!”

That was right. They had all been waiting for this very moment.

Unable to contain his joy, one of the men in the crowd shouted, “A—Ali-*chan*! We have been waiting for this! We have always hoped that you would lead us!”

“A- Ali-*sama*!”

Die-hard manhwa and manga fans from all over the world had gathered together to witness this very moment, this moment that they had been waiting for for a very long time.

“On this day, I will declare the name of the religion that will worship me, Ali! My religion will be ‘*Friend Religion*!’”

“A- Aaaaaaaaah...!”

“So- So cool...”

“Your coolness is exploding!!!”

“Frieeeeeeeeeeend!!!” Ali cried loudly.

Following his cries, the crowd raised their left arms as high as possible. Then, they shouted at the top of their lungs.

“Frieeeeeeeeeeend!”

“Frieeeeeeeeeeeeeeend!”

“Frieeeeeeeeeeend!!!”

Hot tears streamed down Ali’s face as the notification rang.

[The name of the God of Magic’s religion is Friend Religion!]

Minhyuk, who went to congratulate Ali after hearing that the God of Magic’s Temple had finished building, was rendered speechless when he witnessed Ali and his religion’s glorious and greatest moment.

Chapter 947

Ali had a dream. He wanted to find precious friends, who he could leave his back to and even risk his life for. He wanted to be just like the main character from that famous anime, who ventured out to sea and gathered precious friends by his side. Ali achieved that dream with the help of Minhyuk and the people of the Beyond the Heavens Empire.

After achieving his dream, Ali had another dream. This time, he wanted to lead those who also dreamt of having friends like him. And today, Ali finally created the Friend Religion and became the leader of these people. He could not help but cry from the overwhelming emotions that he was feeling.

Meanwhile, Minhyuk heard several notifications in his ears.

[703 mages migrated to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

[307 swordsmen migrated to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

[103 assassins migrated to the Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

[...Beyond the Heavens Empire.]

Surprisingly enough, Ali’s Friend Religion included a variety of classes of players, not only mages. Well, just because he was the God of Magic did not mean that his worshippers should only be mages, did it?

The swordsmen could become the Friend Religion’s paladins, while the assassins could become Ali’s shadows. Of course, considering the steady flow of mages coming to the Beyond the Heavens

Empire before the completion of the temple's construction, the Friend Religion's worshippers' population would probably have around 75% mages.

'The gods will build their religions. And if they could lead their worshippers well, they would have power on par with a kingdom.'

Ever since the Succession Ceremony ended, players have started establishing their own religions all over the world. The gods also helped them grow by giving quests to the worshippers who came to serve them.

For ordinary players, it felt a whole lot easier to enter the religion knowing that the gods that they would worship were players, too. Why? Gods were omnipotent. But if a god was a player, then they were far more familiar with them and at ease.

Perhaps Ali's Friend Religion might be a constant help to the Beyond the Heavens Empire in the future.

'It would be nice if my Minhyuk Religion could recruit more worshipers, too.'

The first player to ever create their religion in Athenae was Minhyuk. However, now that there were quite a lot of religions that had started to pop out one after another, the Minhyuk Religion had been left behind. Perhaps it was safe to say that the Minhyuk Religion was the most uninfluential one. The reason? Well, it was simple.

'The Food God class is not a combat class. And it's also quite hard to categorize it as a production class.'

The players were free to choose whatever religion they wanted to serve and worship. So, for chefs, it was probably a much better choice to serve the religion of the God of Cooking, one of the Absolute Gods. Then, what about the combat class players? Would they come to the Minhyuk Religion? They wouldn't either.

'Only if I take over the position and become the true Battle God will I be able to gather people under my religion and lead many more people.'

Minhyuk was looking forward to it. After all, the Battle God was the greatest god among the Absolute Gods. He was also the god who had become the subject of envy of most of the players. The day that he would sit on the throne of the Battle God would be when he would become the master of the largest and most significant religion in Athenae.

The Battle God had told them he would decide between Minhyuk and Nerva through a competition. He said he would decide who would become the true Battle God's Descendant through this.

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

[The God of Shields' Temple has been built in the Aveid Territory!]

[The God of Shields' religion bears the name 'Guardian Religion']

God of Shields Valentino also built his temple in Minhyuk's territory. Minhyuk gave Valentino money on purpose and ordered him to build his temple in the Aveid Territory.

One reason was that there were still some people in the Beyond the Heavens Empire who were not happy with Valentino. Also, he needed God of Shields Valentino in the Avid Territory, which was teeming with monsters.

Of course, establishing Valentino's religion and temple would encourage the tankers to gather in his empire. But that would be just a shot in the dark.

'It would already be nice if at least 300 tankers were moving to the Beyond the Heavens Empire or joining the Guardian Religion.'

Minhyuk believed that the public's current evaluation of Valentino was not good. There were two reasons for this: one, he was kicked out of the Luvien Empire, and two, his usual attitude and behavior weren't good.

But then, at that moment, a shocking notification rang.

[16,543 tankers migrated to the Beyond the Heavens Empire!]

"...?" Minhyuk could not help but look doubtfully at the notification.

'A huge number of tankers are migrating to the empire all at once?'

It was unbelievable. Valentino's position was falling rapidly. Even so, many tankers immediately migrated to the Beyond the Heavens Empire when the Guardian Religion was established. To join the religion of a player belonging to the Beyond the Heavens Empire, they also had to move and join the empire. They all moved to the Beyond the Heavens Empire for Valentino's sake and not because they preferred the empire.

Just when Minhyuk was sporting a confused expression and was about to go to the Avid Territory, Carron approached him and said, "Your Majesty, the gift that I was telling you about before is now finished."

Avid Territory was a barren land teeming with masters. It was in this land where Valentino built his temple under Minhyuk's orders and led subjugation troops to keep the monsters away and continue pioneering the land day after day despite there being no rewards.

Not too long ago, articles with titles like "Valentino's Fall" began to pour in. There were also many comments saying, "He grabbed his last lifeline." when he migrated to the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Seeing these articles, Valentino could tell that the reputation and fame he had protected in the past had all been lost.

Valentino also said in the Q&A interview that he would become the dog of the Beyond the Heavens Empire and be loyal to it. He also declared that he would try his best to correct the mistakes that he had committed in the past. When the people saw the video, they pointed their fingers at him.

–Did you only realize your mistakes after you fell?

–How funny! You ran to the Beyond the Heavens Empire with your tail tucked behind you.

However, Valentino had been the idol and the role model of the tankers for a very long time. The countless tankers who watched him back then saw something different.

During the Succession Ceremony, they saw how Valentino ignored Nerva's orders for him to protect his pride as a god. This action helped him protect and keep more people alive. That was the pride of a tanker. It was not Valentino who did wrong; it was Nerva. That was how the tankers saw what happened back then. Despite having a hot-tempered and weird personality, the tankers had also seen how Valentino worked hard to revive the tanker class that had always been hidden away from the spotlight.

So what if he has a hot-tempered personality? He would always be the icon and the idol of all tankers. That fact would remain unchanged.

Valentino, exhausted from stopping the monsters from coming forward, had finished the construction of his temple and established his Guardian Religion. He thought, *'Now, my dream of creating a kingdom for tankers is already impossible.'*

A bitter expression flashed on Valentino's face. Who would even follow someone like him? But, to his shock, more than ten thousand tankers came. Seeing this scene, he could not understand what was happening.

"We have always been waiting for you to build a kingdom or a temple!"

"You are the only master who will lead the tankers like us!"

"If you choose to be the shield of the Beyond the Heavens Empire, then we will also become the shield of the Beyond the Heavens Empire!"

"Now, we will become your strongest and sturdiest shield!"

Valentino looked at them and realized he was not necessarily threading on the wrong path.

"The Guardian Religion is a religion that will protect and sacrifice itself for the sake of the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Even so, will that be alright with you?" Valentino asked them.

The tankers answered in unison.

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

Valentino smiled at them in satisfaction when he saw them answer without hesitation, their will unshaken.

At that moment, the monsters appeared, again charging toward the Avid Territory. Their number was higher than usual. Usually, Valentino would stand alone in front of the subjugation troops to stop a blood bath from happening.

"Let's go."

Over ten thousand tankers stood behind Valentino, took out their gigantic square shields, and stood in formation.

Minhyuk logged out for a bit when he heard that Carron had finished the gift he had prepared and sent it to his mail. He checked his email and found an email with the subject written as “Gift~^^” and promptly clicked on it.

‘A video?’

A confused Minhyuk clicked the play button and started the video.

[Haa... Haa... Haa...]

The countless enemies charging at Minhyuk almost filled the screen. Minhyuk, with his hands on his knees and ragged breathing, looked at them.

[It’s exhausting...]

The voice that rang in Minhyuk’s ears was someone else’s, not his own. On the screen, his figure, covered in sweat, stared at the throngs of enemies charging at him.

[I want to quit.]

Along with the voice, a different screen recording showed Minhyuk breathing harshly. It was then covered with screenshots of the sarcastic remarks aimed at the Food God.

[Isn’t the Food God strong only because he has his empire, class, and vassals? Lol.]

[Agree! Agree! And agree!]

[Without his empire, class, and vassals, he’s nothing.]

Hundreds of mocking, jeering, and malice comments covered the screen.

‘Is this my gift?’ Minhyuk thought, a frown marring his face.

The truth was that Minhyuk was aware of most of the malicious comments. He believed the best way to deal with such comments was to ignore them and not look at them.

But even if Minhyuk’s mentality was strong, there were times when he could not pretend he did not care. Indeed. In the end, Minhyuk was still human. Perhaps that was also the reason why he was very conscious of Alexander.

Anyway, Minhyuk decided to continue watching.

[But I will not give up.]

As the voice rang, one screen recording broke through the hundreds of malicious comments and floated in front of the screen. The screen recording showed Minhyuk’s exhausted figure slowly recovering his strength and standing up.

Minhyuk recognized the place where the recording was showing. It was one of the recordings of his latest battle in the Infinite Battles.

In the video, Minhyuk loudly and powerfully said, “Enough!” and all of the screenshots began to crack.

Crack, crack, crack, crack, crack—!

When the screenshots broke apart, it revealed Minhyuk charging at the countless enemies before him with a sharp and piercing glare despite his ragged breathing.

[I will show you...]

Fast-paced music suddenly rang as Minhyuk, with his sharp glare, cut through his enemies. As if following the music, Minhyuk increased his pace and swung his sword against his enemies in the Infinite Battlefield.

[...what kind of person I am.]

Minhyuk felt his heart start to speed up as the beat of the music and the cool, jaw-dropping video flashed on his screen.

[I will not fall.]

He could tell that this was Carron's message and way of showing him his support.

[Even if I fall, I will stand back up again.]

At that moment, a screenshot, utterly different from the screenshots of the malicious comments earlier, appeared on the screen.

[The Food God is indeed the Supreme.]

[Even if the Food God has only his empire, his class, and his vassals, we still love him for who he is.]

[Everyone in Athenae loves him because he's the Food God. Because he's Minhyuk.]

[Thank you for showing the world what our South Korea is like, Food God!]

[Food God, you look so exhausted these days. It's okay to rest; don't tire yourself so much!]

[It's okay to put everything down for a moment and rest. Even if you're not the Supreme, we will continue to support and cheer for you!]

A smile unknowingly curled at the corner of Minhyuk's lips when he saw hundreds of screenshots like that.

[Because there are people who believe in me.]

The camera panned to the sky as if signaling that the video was about to end.

Crackle– Crackle–

The sound of static rang as a new video appeared on the screen again. The footage showed one man and one man alone charging toward the millions of enemies that were running on a long and wide bridge.

Then, the final words appeared as the video finally ended.

[I will stand at the highest position and become the Sky.]

Chapter 948

Minhyuk remained still for quite a long time after the video ended. As the video showed, many trolls and keyboard warriors were bashing him on the internet, even if he did nothing wrong. But

because Minhyuk had taken a hard stance about them, their numbers had dwindled considerably compared to the past. And because of them, Minhyuk grew obsessed with getting ahead of everybody else.

Now, he realized that more people were cheering and supporting Minhyuk than his trolls, keyboard warriors, and haters. After watching this video, Minhyuk felt the burden that the malicious comments had placed on his shoulders grow lighter.

‘Let’s keep this for myself.’

Carron also left a message on the email.

[If you want to keep it for yourself, then keep it. If you want to post it on ZTube, then post it. It’s your gift. You’re free to do whatever you want with it~]

Minhyuk had no intention of using this video to gain support or benefits. So, he would keep it for himself.

Thanks to Carron, Minhyuk went back to Athenae with a faint smile on his face.

The Maserrati Kingdom, led by Absolute Monarch Richard, was founded by a player and once stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Beyond the Heavens Empire. Even to this day, the Maserrati Kingdom remained the best and strongest kingdom among all the kingdoms established by players. It was said that if another player established an empire, the kingdom would be the Maserrati Kingdom.

At this moment, the elites of the Maserrati Kingdom had gathered together. The elites included five players, hailed as the Pillars of Maserrati, over level 600, and five legendary NPCs, with one trying to take over one of the gods’ seats. Nine hundred of the Maserrati Kingdom’s best knights, comprised of players and NPCs, stood behind them.

“There’s a high chance that this is Helenia’s dungeon...”

One of the Maserrati Kingdom’s explorers discovered this dungeon not too long ago. Although nothing was known about it, the Maserrati Kingdom came here to clear it.

Unknown and unidentified dungeons were essential. They could bring new resources, new hunting grounds, or new rewards. They could even give huge rewards that could satisfy a kingdom.

The dungeon also restricted the number of people entering. It could accommodate a thousand people at most. Although various dungeons in Athenae could accommodate multiple people, only some had restrictions like this with such a vast number of people. Because of this, Richard believed that there was a chance that this was Helenia’s dungeon.

On the day Helenia descended on Earth, she declared that her dungeons would appear worldwide in a month. She also stated that her fragments would reside in these dungeons and work to pave a path for her descent.

The players were tasked to prevent her descent as much as possible. Of course, they would be able to obtain rewards during the process. And the best part? The rewards would come from Immortal Sorceress Helenia herself.

If this were Helenia's dungeon, they could obtain tremendous rewards by being the first attackers. However, Richard was worried about one thing.

"It's near Aveid Territory."

The dungeon was located near the barren territory that the Beyond the Heavens Empire had received from the Luvien Empire not long ago. Thankfully, the dungeon was not situated within the Aveid Territory.

Richard could only chuckle wryly to himself.

'I'm too conscious of him.'

He believed it would not harm the Beyond the Heavens Empire even if they failed to attack the dungeon. After all, there were no cases where monsters ran out of the dungeons because someone failed to clear them.

Richard led the elites of his kingdom to try and enter the dungeon.

[Helenia's Dungeons have started to appear all over the world!]

"...?"

They had yet to enter the dungeon. To be exact, only one person had entered the dungeon before, and that person was none other than the Maserrati Kingdom's dungeon explorer. The dungeon explorer had only visited this place yesterday. He even returned right away when he saw that it was possible to use a Return Scroll.

"Impossible...!" Richard hoped against hope that his conjectures were wrong.

Right in front of the dungeon, the statue symbolizing Helenia swiftly emerged. The newly made statue depicting Helenia's figure seemed to be holding a staff with her arm right in front of her. Then, Richard saw the staff slowly begin to squirm and wriggle.

[The dungeon's timer has reached 0!]

[The monsters inside Helenia's Dungeon will now begin to rush out!]

At this moment, Richard's conjectures had become a reality. An unknown and hidden timer had begun to tick the moment their dungeon explorer entered the dungeon yesterday.

*'What a f*cked up situation, huh?'*

Richard guessed this timer had also triggered the other timers worldwide to start ticking. And the worst part? The monsters would pour out of the dungeon if they failed to clear it before the timer ran out.

Of course, this conjecture might not be accurate. There was a chance that the timer would only begin ticking if someone pushed the first button, which in this case was the entry of their dungeon explorer. But what if the timers worldwide had already started ticking now?

'Shit. This is crazy.'

However, Richard knew he did not have the time to care about those things. The wriggling and squirming staff in front of them had now become the shape of a snake, which was getting bigger and bigger.

The once small snake had grown so massive that its shadow had completely engulfed Richard and his kingdom's elites. Richard, who could check the opponent's level right away, groaned.

[Helenia's Fragment. Level 711.]

"Crazy shit...!" Richard's face grew ugly.

It was a fragment, but the bastard's level was far too high. There was even an unpleasant hissing sound coming from deep within the dungeon, which signaled the arrival of the monsters rushing out of the dungeon.

Hiss—

The gigantic snake flicked its tongue as it looked at them. One look and Richard decided that they should avoid this situation for now.

'It will be hard for us to deal with the dungeon monsters if they rush out from the dungeon all at once.'

The dungeon was initially built to allow those who challenged it to gradually eliminate the monsters in their path as they moved forward. If what they were going to face was still set to follow a dungeon's original structure, then the troops that Richard brought here would probably be enough to clear it. After all, they needed to cut down and chop the monsters step by step before killing Helenia's fragment, the boss mob, at the end.

But now? It was too dangerous. Especially since the monsters were all charging out of the dungeon in one go.

At that moment, a bright light flashed from the tip of the gigantic snake's tail.

[You cannot use the Return Scroll for 20 minutes!]

Richard's face grew even uglier. The players might be able to revive if they were forced to log out here, but that was not the case at all for the NPCs. The problem was that there were quite a lot of NPCs among the elites that he brought here. If all of the NPCs here died, there would be a significant decrease in the number of people leading the Maserrati Kingdom.

"Retreat! Run as fast as you can!" Richard ordered. He had no other choice.

But just when they were about to run away, the snake overtook them with one swift move.

Slaaaaap—!

"Keuaaaaaaack!"

The snake spat out the elite knight as fast as it devoured it. The elite knight's armor corroded, and his flesh melted away. In just one breath, one of the precious talents of the Maserrati Kingdom disappeared.

Baaaaaang—!

Boooooooooom—!

The knights tried to attack the snake, but its scales were too harsh. They could not even land a nick on it. What was even crazier was that every swing of the snake's tail, the bones of the knights, who were beyond Level 570, broke. As if things weren't bad enough, more than 3,000 anacondas appeared from the dungeon.

[Venomous Anaconda. Level 597.]

Anacondas were originally non-venomous snakes that reached six to ten meters long and weighed a tremendous amount. Thanks to their powerful muscles, they could wrap around their prey firmly and break their bones. But the anacondas that appeared here were venomous.

Richard decided they had to escape as fast as they could, even if they had to give up protecting their backs.

“Hurry up!”

The elites of Maserrati Kingdom immediately ran after Richard without looking behind them.

“Hiss—”

As they ran, one of the anacondas grabbed a hold of one of the knights. It immediately clung and wrapped around the knight's body until it broke the knight's bones with its weight. And finally, it bit the man's neck.

Swoooooosh—

The knight, bitten on the neck, became dry like a mummy and eventually crumbled away like dirt.

‘Are you telling me countless dungeons like this are being created worldwide?’

The thought alone brought chills down Richard's spine. However, he shook his head. This was a different case. This was the first dungeon discovered, so there was a high chance that its level would be higher than usual. However, it was still enough of a headache for Richard to think that the other dungeons appearing later would only be slightly weaker than this.

Richard, who was running away just like that, felt his heart constrict after knowing he had already lost nearly 200 elite knights.

Even though the pride of his kingdom bombarded the anacondas with their AOE attack skills, they still failed to break through the monsters' defenses. This meant the anacondas' defensive power was too high for their attacks to work. It seemed like their AOE attack skills were only strong enough to deal with Level 500 monsters.

Richard, who was running away like crazy, suddenly felt weightless.

“???”

He looked around in confusion and soon understood the reason. Helenia's fragment followed him and climbed a tree before stretching its tail and pulling him out. Then, it began to tighten its hold around Richard.

Crack, crack, crack, crack—!

“K- keuaaaaaaaaaaack!!!” a scream was ripped out of Richard’s mouth.

At the same time.

After thanking Carron in person, Minhyuk went to visit the Aveid Territory. Why was he visiting the Aveid Territory at this moment? The increase in the number of tankers in their kingdom after the appearance of the newly established Guardian Religion. After hearing Valentino’s words, Minhyuk was fully convinced about his addition to the empire.

‘Valentino is the idol of all of the tankers. His position in the hearts of all tankers here is solid. It will be alright even if I leave him be.’

Minhyuk looked at them in satisfaction. Since he had already visited the Aveid Territory, he decided to help them in their subjugation. Just as he stepped forward and took the lead with Valentino, there was a notification.

Ring!

Chapter 949

“Keuaaaaaaaaaaack!!!” Richard screamed. He felt like every inch of his bones was breaking and turning into dust as Helenia’s Fragment wrapped around him tightly like a snake.

Richard, the king of the Maserrati Kingdom, had also reached Level 600 over time. As the players often said, he had gone beyond the wall once. However, Helenia’s Fragment was just far too high. Simply put, she was far too strong compared to him.

Crack, crack, crack, crack—!

“Ugh!”

[Your HP has dropped below 60%!]

[Your HP has dropped below 50%!]

[Your HP has dropped below 40%!]

As the notifications rang constantly in his ears, Richard hurriedly issued his order, “G... o...”

Richard was a player. Even if he were forced to log out here, he would only receive a bit of damage, so he thought it would be better for him to be left behind like this.

[The Absolute Monarch’s Battle Intent forces the enemies down to their knees!]

[Your MP will be consumed to suppress the enemies during the skill’s activation time!]

The Absolute Monarch’s Battle Intent was a skill that opened for Richard when he reached Level 600. It forced one’s MP to drop constantly for as long as it was activated. However, Richard could force his enemies to their knees.

Rumbleeeeeeeee—!

Black energy exploded from Richard's bound body and released a pressure that weighed down upon the thousands of Venomous Anacondas chasing after the troops of the Maserrati Kingdom.

Hiiiiiiiiss—

Hiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiss—

Even the strong force Helenia's Fragment used to tie and press Richard down loosened slightly.

"Hurry...!" Richard urged them once again.

Unfortunately, Richard was a king who was greatly loved and respected by the people of the Maserrati Kingdom.

"Your Majesty, forgive us. For the first time, we will not follow your orders."

The Maserrati Kingdom housed a legendary NPC who walked a path infinitely close to god. When this man was branded with Absolute Monarch Richard's Absolute Monarch's Stigma, he could deal with two of the Swords of the Gods. This man's name was Rhode, and he spoke about disobeying orders. It was not just him. Even the other elites of the Maserrati Kingdom stopped when their king was caught.

"These idiots...!" Richard shouted. He felt happy knowing they respected him to the point that they would willingly risk their lives for his sake. And he felt sad knowing there was a high chance he would lose them all here today.

"You already know that we will not listen. That's how much of a good king you are, Your Majesty Richard," Disaster Specialist Ricor said as he stepped forward. And as one of the main pillars of the Maserrati Kingdom, he took it upon himself to give orders on behalf of Richard. He said, "Rescue His Majesty and slaughter all the enemies!"

Rumbleeeee—!

Ricor, who could send various disasters just by raising a finger, sent dozens of lightning bolts.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang—!

The lightning bolts struck the Venomous Anacondas trapped by Richard's Absolute Monarch's Battle Intent while the elite knights charged forward and slaughtered them. Meanwhile, Rhode and the other legendary NPCs leaped forward and began attacking Helenia's Fragment.

Rhode was currently at Level 620. Since he had received the Absolute Monarch's Stigma, he could exert a power close to or maybe surpassing Level 700. But even if he had that much power, everyone believed it was still lacking.

The difference between an ordinary mob and a boss mob was still huge. A boss mob at Level 700 could easily overwhelm ten regular mobs of the same level. This was the typical example of being on the same level but having different powers. First, once a monster was classified as a boss mob, one should expect them to possess various attributes and characteristics, such as high HP and almost infinite MP.

Slaaaaaaaaaash—!

However, Rhode's cutting power, which had reached the extreme, could rip off one of the scales of Helenia's Fragments, making her drip blood all over the place.

"Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!" Helenia's Fragment shrieked.

Seeing this, Rhode immediately moved and stabbed her body with all his might.

Stab—!

While Helenia's Fragment twisted, turned, and struggled fiercely against Rhode's blade, someone hurriedly rushed in and saved Richard. Immediately after that, the pride of the Maserrati Kingdom, who could produce power comparable to those at Level 640-660 thanks to the Absolute Monarch's Stigma, jumped in and put pressure on Helenia's Fragment.

Slaaaaaaash—!

Boom, boom, boom, boom—!

Rumbleeeeeee—!

Ricor created several gigantic rocks in the air and sent them flying down on Helenia's Fragment. Rhode also took this opportunity to slash at the snake's body once more and inflict more lasting damage upon the monster.

Richard finally returned to his senses and looked around him hurriedly. Even though his MP was dropping quickly, his Absolute Monarch's Battle Intent had kept the Venomous Anacondas suppressed and allowed the troops to take them down and gradually reduce their numbers easily.

'If things continued at this rate, then...' Richard saw a glimmer of hope as he gulped down a potion.

Perhaps he and his allies, fighting actively against the enemies, would be the first to hunt Helenia's Fragment and clear the first of Helenia's dungeons. Even a fool would know they could obtain rewards far higher than those from an ordinary boss mob if they could hunt Helenia's Fragment here.

'Given the enemies' speed, we would have a higher chance of dying if we ran away again.'

Fighting amidst the enemies' ranks and getting out of their way were two entirely different things.

"Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!"

It did not take too long for them to decrease the number of Venomous Anacondas by 1,300. Now, there were only around 1,500 of them left. It was not that difficult for the elite knights, who were seasoned with the sword of the Maserrati Kingdom, to hunt down the Venomous Anacondas since they were rendered immobile by the Absolute Monarch's Battle Intent.

If things continued at this rate, then everything would be okay.

But then, at that moment, Rhode saw a small light shining from the tip of the tail of the wounded and injured Helenia's Fragment.

[Sprint.]

[Helenia's Fragment can sprint at a speed that is three times higher than its original speed!]

Helenia's Fragment suddenly raised its body and sprinted until it collided with Rhode. It did not stop and continued to run forward, its body slamming against the elite knights dealing with the Venomous Anacondas.

Crack—

Crack, crack, crack, crack—!

“Uwaaaaaaaaack!”

“Keuaaaaaaaaaaack!”

The attack made by Helenia's Fragment quickly swept away the elite knights, killing more than 150 instantly.

“I'll be holding on to these bastards. Go and hunt the fragment first!” Richard shouted. He judged it better to prioritize hunting the fragment than dealing with the Venomous Anacondas.

Hearing his orders, the troops hurriedly bombarded Helenia's Fragment with their attacks.

“Kihyeeeeeeck!”

Rhode stepped forward and pressed down on the struggling fragment while Disaster Specialist Ricor bombarded it with the disasters he summoned.

‘I can endure and hold on until they hunt the fragment,’ Richard thought, his eyes constantly checking his MP.

His MP was currently at 40%. They could hunt Helenia's Fragment before the Venomous Anacondas could move if it were still this much. Once they finished hunting the fragment, it would become easier for them to finish the anacondas. Wounds and scratches continued to appear one after another on the body of Helenia's Fragment. Just a bit more, just a bit more, and they would be able to kill it.

Richard felt delighted when he saw the wounds covering the entire body of the struggling fragment. However, Rhode, pressing down on the struggling fragment, saw clearly how the corners of the snake's mouth stretched out and curled into a grin. Rhode's mind turned as several conjectures flashed in his head.

‘This bastard went for His Majesty with its first attack.’

‘There's a high chance that it has wisdom and intelligence.’

‘This bastard deliberately waited for us to gather together.’

Rhode immediately tried to order everyone to disperse, and back away the moment the crazy thought flashed in his head.

Shwaaaaaaaaa—!

Helenia's Fragment started to spit green poison all over the place. The poison swiftly entered the lungs of the elite knights of the Maserrati Kingdom the moment they inhaled it.

[Your nerves have been paralyzed!]

[You will be unable to control your body!]

Richard also inhaled the poison. The moment the poison entered his body, he lost strength and was rendered immobile. No matter how hard he tried, he could not move his body. But that was not all; the veins on their bodies had also grown swollen, which made them look grotesque and horrifying.

“Haa... Haa... Haa...” Richard’s breathing started to grow labored.

Baaaaaaaang—!

Richard, who could only look straight ahead with his immobile body, saw Rhode get struck by the fragment and sent flying back with a broken leg.

Plastered on a nearby tree, Rhode stretched his hand toward Richard while struggling to say, “Your... Majesty...”

Helenia’s Fragment immediately stretched its body out and wrapped all of the elite knights, who tried to stop and kill her, all at once.

Craaaaaack—!

Crack, crack, crack—!

The fragment crushed them like it was crushing a tomato. It did not even take one second.

Crack—

Crack, crack—

Spurt—!

Richard fell into the pits of despair as he was forced to watch his precious elite knights die so quickly like that, one after another. These people had stayed with him ever since he built Maserrati. The worst part? He knew that he would not be able to see most of the NPCs who died in this place again.

The Venomous Anaconda, now free from Richard’s hold on them, immediately gathered around Helenia’s Fragment. At that moment, a small ball of light gathered at the tip of the fragment’s tail. Following the fragment’s lead, the gigantic anacondas’ tails began to glow with a small ball of light.

This was the *Sprint* that they had seen just a few moments prior, the skill that allowed Helenia’s Fragment to sprint at a speed that was three times faster to attack her enemies. When Helenia’s Fragment and these 1,500 Venomous Anacondas used Sprint, Richard was sure everyone here would be wiped out.

“Kihyeeeeeeeeeeck!” Helenia’s Fragment screeched, delight evident in its voice as it charged forward with the anacondas following right by its tail.

While charging toward him, Richard saw Helenia’s Fragment kill more than fifty of his elite knights. In just a blink, it appeared right in front of him.

“What’s going on here?”

But then, at that moment, an unidentified voice entered Richard's ears. At the same time, a man, Valentino, fell from the sky. When he landed, he slammed his gigantic square shield on the ground right in front, where Richard was immobile.

Baaaaaaaang—!

The gigantic square shield stopped Helenia's Fragment and the more than a thousand anacondas coming their way.

Booooooooooom—!

Bang, bang, bang, bang—!

Richard heard the sound of the enemies colliding against the huge, sturdy, and broad shield. Surprisingly, the shield did not shake or tremble despite the earth-shattering collision with Helenia's Fragment and the heavy and powerful gigantic anacondas.

At that moment, a man appeared beside Richard. The man, who was none other than Beyond the Heavens' Emperor Minhyuk, asked, "Hey, can I kill that?"

In a way, it could be considered stealing if Minhyuk indeed killed Helenia's Fragment right here and now. After all, the Maserrati Kingdom was the one that initiated the hunt. However, Richard considered this an excellent steal, not a bad one.

Richard jerked his heavy head and nodded. Then, he said, "Pl-please hurry and summon Ben!"

The level of Helenia's Fragment was beyond Level 700. And that was not all. There were also more than a thousand Venomous Anacondas present. It would be tough for them to deal with the enemies with just the two of them.

But Minhyuk just chuckled. "Grandpa Ben is busy. He told me he would research how many cups of coffee he could extract from an elephant's dung today."

"...?" For a moment, Richard had to wonder about the crazy shit that this man in front of him was spewing.

Then, Minhyuk said, "Besides, there's no need for Grandpa Ben to step out to deal with something at this level." He paused momentarily before continuing, "Put away the shield."

Just like an obedient dog, Valentino immediately removed the shield. At the same time, the countless enemies on the other side of the shield immediately pushed forward. The situation suddenly blew up and turned into an immediate crisis.

However, one of Minhyuk's swords was already covered with the flames of the Supreme Overlord's Technique.

Crackle—!

The Venomous Anacondas, which the elites of the Maserrati Kingdom had a hard time dealing with because of their high defensive power, melted away when the flames licked their bodies. Even Helenia's Fragment started to melt from the intense heat of the fire slowly.

Richard had stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Minhyuk in the past. But now, he realized that Minhyuk had reached a height so high that he could not even chase after him.

Chapter 950

[You have hunted Helenia's First Fragment.]

[Your EXP acquisition and item drop rate will double.]

[You have obtained 1005 platinum.]

[You have gained 120,001,000 EXP.]

[You have obtained six Helenia's Fragment Tokens.]

[You have obtained 479 Helenia's Dungeon Monster Tokens.]

These were the spoils that Minhyuk had obtained after hunting Helenia's Fragment and the Venomous Anacondas. The rewards might seem shabby compared to the artifacts, monster parts, and parchments that would often drop when hunting ordinary monsters and boss mobs. But that was not the case at all.

When the quest notification rang out, a world message stating, "Helenia's Fragments' Episode has started." also rang in everyone's ears. This was the information they could view after the world message rang.

[If you can hunt Helenia's Fragment and her dungeon monsters, you can obtain fragment tokens and dungeon monster tokens!]

[You can use both tokens to exchange for various items in the Heroes' Tree placed in each kingdom and empire!]

Simply put, the Heroes' Tree was a store where they could exchange items for their tokens. And from what Minhyuk had guessed, he could exchange many items the more fragment tokens he had on hand.

The following notifications also rang for Minhyuk:

When he heard the notification about his Class Inheritance Quest after hunting Helenia's Fragment, Minhyuk realized, *'This will decide who will have the upper hand between Nerva and me.'*

If Minhyuk were the true Battle God and inherited his throne, he would grow rapidly. Although it might take a long time, he could bring the Beyond the Heavens Empire to higher heights and turn it into an empire that could rival the Luvien Empire.

It would also solve his problem with Minhyuk's Religion, which worshipped the Food God, and its lack of followers. If he could successfully take the Battle God's position, then he would be able to boost his own religion once he built the Battle God's religion. Minhyuk could not build the Battle God's Religion because he was still not yet the true Battle God.

"Thank you," Richard greeted Minhyuk. Despite having high casualties among their group, he was relieved to see that the pillars of the Maserrati Kingdom remained alive.

"I obtained 1,005 platinum, six fragment tokens, and around 470 dungeon monster tokens. Do you want them back?"

Of course, Minhyuk hunted Helenia's Fragment all at once by using his Supreme Overlord's Technique. However, unbeknownst to the members of the Maserrati Guild, the Supreme Overlord's Technique's flames might be able to melt the Venomous Anacondas. Still, it could not do the same to Helenia's Fragment.

It was often obvious whenever a mob's HP had dropped below 10%. When Minhyuk made a move to hunt Helenia's Fragment, the gigantic snake was already glowing. Therefore, he thought giving back some to them was only fitting.

"No, it's fine. We have already gained a lot. Besides, if it wasn't for you, Minhyuk, then..." Richard trailed off; the thought alone made him feel dizzy. "Thank you for your kindness."

At this moment, Richard felt like the Maserrati Kingdom had grown infinitely shabby.

'How far will you continue to go?'

Richard wondered what Minhyuk had done to cause him to grow so much that he could no longer reach him.

Minhyuk replied, "I have shown kindness to the powerful kingdom of Maserrati. It seems like I will be rewarded greatly for this kindness."

Minhyuk did not act arrogantly. He even praised the Maserrati Kingdom. And this praise was by no means an exaggeration. Minhyuk understood the current situation. One look and he could tell that all of the dungeon monsters had rushed out of the dungeon. In a situation like that, it did not matter whether those who faced them were a small kingdom or a thousand of an empire's elites; they would still be wiped out. And there was also the Level 700 Helenia's Fragments. Most players would find it very difficult to handle a boss mob at that level.

"I will make sure to repay you someday," Richard replied.

A faint smile appeared on Minhyuk's face when he heard that. Richard, who possessed the unique power called Absolute Monarch's Stigma, would greatly help him.

With the situation finally settling down, Richard and Minhyuk finally calmed down.

"Everything's a mess."

"Yep."

The two looked at their guild chatting windows, which had been turned upside down by the sudden events.

Minhyuk immediately focused on the words that Abel, the one with the most excellent information network in the Beyond the Heavens Empire, said.

The moment he read that, Minhyuk hurriedly examined Helenia's Fragment, which was in the form of a snake. Only after looking closely did he see the small red gem, which was only as big as a baby's nail, at the tip of the snake's tail.

"A gem...?"

“That gem is the one that was flashing with light earlier,” Rhode piped up after drinking some potions and recovering to some extent. He could tell since he was the one who was fighting closely with Helenia’s Fragment earlier. Then, he said, “But there’s something strange. I’m sure it was bigger than that when I first saw it?”

At the same time, Abel’s message popped up in the guild chatting window once again.

Minhyuk’s expression grew solemn. If they allowed Helenia’s dungeons and her fragments to come out and spread into the world, then Athenae would be plunged into chaos. The worst part? The number of dungeons that appeared seemed higher than he expected.

Richard seemed to have received a similar report from his guild as he said, “We will go back for now.”

“I should go too,” Minhyuk agreed as he hurriedly returned to the Beyond the Heavens Empire to devise specific measures against Helenia and her dungeons.

The slumbering Nerva was plunged into deep darkness as he fell into a dream.

In his dream, Nerva was leading hundreds of people through training. When he turned, he saw a young Brod running beside him and leading his group.

‘Nerva, can you beat me and take first place today?’

‘Of course! I’ll take first place today!’

Nerva looked happy even though he ran past the finish line simultaneously with the young Brod. The two young men fell to the ground and looked up at the sky as they tried to breathe.

‘Brod.’

Brod turned to Nerva in confusion when he heard Nerva speak.

‘I– If I receive the recognition of the Battle God, I will make sure to create the biggest, the strongest, and the most peaceful empire in the world.’

Back then, the still pure and innocent Nerva harbored such a grand dream.

‘Once I create the greatest empire, I will restore the peace in the war-riddled human world and rule them all.’ Nerva raised his fist to the sky as he continued, *‘I will build an empire where everyone would want to come and join.’*

‘An empire that everyone wants to visit and join.’

‘An empire that everyone loves.’

‘An empire that supports peace.’

That was the dream of the young Nerva. But when he turned to his side, he saw Brod with an ugly look on his face.

‘Liar.’

‘...?’

Nerva looked at Brod in doubt. Then, Brod reached both hands and grabbed him by the neck. At the same time, the bloody members of the Red Sword Knights, the same people whom Nerva ordered to kill, appeared and jumped at him.

‘You have become a monster, Nerva.’

‘Uwaaaaaaaaack!’ Nerva shrieked as he broke free from Brod’s hold and ran away from them.

As Nerva ran toward the darkness to escape from them, he caught sight of the dying R?lszd kneeling in front of his figure with a bitter smile on his face.

‘I hope you will be able to smile.’

“Haa... Haa...!” Nerva gasped. He woke up from his drunken slumber amidst countless strewn bottles of alcohol inside the Luvien Imperial Palace. His heart ached. And the only thing that could numb the pain was the numerous bottles of alcohol around, which he promptly picked up and chugged again.

Knock– Knock–

“Your Majesty, this is Duke Vlad,” he announced as he entered the room.

There was no change in his expression, even though the stale and disgusting smell of alcohol flooded his senses the moment he entered. He just reported, “Helenia’s Dungeons have appeared worldwide. This is Your Majesty’s chance to take and inherit the position of the Battle God.”

Nerva, engulfed by guilt, anger, sadness, and several other indescribable emotions, had been in a drunken stupor ever since the day he lost both R?lszd and Don. The Swords of the Gods were left buzzing inside the palace while what happened that day spread throughout the empire.

“Are you talking about this emperor? You’re saying that this emperor will become the Battle God?! Keuhahahahahahaha!” Nerva cackled.

An emperor’s downfall could happen in just a blink. How many more people would come and bother him in his dreams once he inherited the Battle God’s throne? And how many more people would come to mock and laugh at him?

“You think that it’s a good thing, huh?!”

“...Your Majesty, the Beyond the Heavens Empire is about to make a move. The dungeons that have appeared worldwide are wreaking havoc and bringing chaos to countless empires and kingdoms. We have to move quickly and destroy Helenia’s Fragments. Please give me the authority to decide on this matter.”

Duke Vlad was fully aware of the situation.

“In the first place, the Beyond the Heavens Empire is no match to us. The difference between our Luvien Empire’s military power and the Beyond the Heavens Empire’s is around fourteen times. I believe there’s no need for Your Majesty to step forward. And with the support of our allies, Your Majesty will be able to inherit the Battle God’s Throne safely.”

This was not an individual competition. The number of Helenia’s Fragments that would determine who would take on the Battle God’s position was not dependent on how many Minhyuk and Nerva hunted on their own. This was a competition and a battle between the two empires.

“Fufufufu. That’s right, that’s right. Ah, I will become the Battle God, huh? Then, so be it!”

Duke Vlad nodded before bowing his head expressionlessly and saying, “I will set out right away.”

“But.” Seeing him turn around and leave, a glint appeared in Nerva’s gloomy eyes. He said, “What do you think you’re doing?”

Duke Vlad turned his head and looked Nerva in the eyes.

Duke Vlad was a talent who had been with the Luvien Empire for a long time. He did not fall from the sky like Duke Ruffiso, but he was strong on his own. However, at some point, Duke Vlad had grown more restrained, and no one could read his thoughts through his face anymore.

“I am just thinking and moving for the sake of the empire. I hope to revitalize our empire and make it grow bigger.”

Not only was Duke Vlad’s influence huge, but he also possessed great power. He did not expect his position in the people’s hearts to be higher than Nerva’s just because of the slanderous and fierce rumors spreading about their emperor.

Killing intent flashed in Nerva’s eyes.

‘Even if he’s not in the right state of mind, an emperor is still an emperor, huh?’ Duke Vlad was impressed when his hair stood on end from the immense pressure coming from Nerva’s body in waves.

Nerva’s gaze soon drifted away from him as he tipped the bottle and chugged its contents. “Is that so? Fufufufu. Then, I will thank you for thinking that way!”

Not long after, Duke Vlad stepped out of the room. He chuckled and thought, *‘Please don’t worry. I do not want to take away your throne.’*

‘I will help you become the Battle God. I will use you and hold you in the palm of my hands to squeeze you dry of your worth until you die.’

A nasty smile almost ripped Duke Vlad’s face. His smile looked terrifying, like the smile painted with dark red paint on a clown’s face.

Beyond the Heavens Empire.

A meeting was held to discuss their next steps regarding Helenia's Fragments.

"Based on our estimates, there will be around 300,000 monsters that will rush out of the dungeons all at once.

"The level of Helenia's Fragment and the Venomous Anacondas that would appear would be much lower than the one Minhyuk faced earlier. However, even if their level has lowered, 300,000 is a number that could threaten an entire kingdom.

"And if two such dungeons appeared in the same vicinity, then there is only one result... and that is the destruction of whatever is in their path."

The number of Helenia's Dungeons that appeared had exceeded the number that the players had estimated. Less than half a day had passed, and there wasn't that many monster rush coming out of the dungeons, but the entire Athenae had entered a state of emergency.

Haze said, "This is an unexpected situation, and it has already alerted the entire world. We can expect that several of the nations allied to us will send requests for support. We must also declare an emergency in our Beyond the Heavens Empire."

That was right. The entire Athenae was now on the brink of a crisis. While discussing the state of emergency, Minhyuk, who had been pondering about something, took something out. It was none other than several bottles of potion that he had recently purchased from the Infinite Store.

The entire world was in a state of emergency. The fragments, classified as boss-class monsters, would give an unusual amount of EXP. However, this also meant they were at a level where it would take a lot of work for others to handle. Because of this, their allies would most definitely send several requests for support.

Since that was the case, these potions would play a huge role. And the name of these potions?

'Single Target EXP Increase Potion.'

This potion could help him obtain twenty times more than the usual amount of EXP upon successfully hunting the designated target.

'One-hour EXP Explosive Increase Potion.'

'One-week EXP Triple Increase Potion.'

'One-level Level Up Potion.'

Minhyuk's father, the Chairman of Ilhwa Group, had often advised.

–Crisis can always be turned into opportunities.

Yes, Minhyuk wanted to turn this crisis into an opportunity.