

MEMORIZE

Chapter 2

Zero Code, Turning Back 10 Years. Pt.(2/2)

When the light that was unceasingly hammering my eyelid began to gradually weaken, I gently opened my eyes. Only traces of that brilliant light that filled the whole room remained, and was slowly disappearing. As I blink several times, my hazy sight came into focus. While later, when I recovered enough that I would not misstate things, I began to calmly observe my surroundings.

'It's different.'

In the moment that I closed my eyes, so many things had changed. The sword that was in my right hand, the equipment I wore all had disappeared into thin air. Looking down towards my empty hands, I noticed the camouflage patterns of a military fatigue. When I saw the tag attached to my left breast pocket, I held my breath. Then.

"Code Name Zero. Complete. Confirming the activation of Zero Code. Confirmed. Activation Normal. User Kim Su-Hyun, Congratulations."

A familiar voice made me look up, Seraph was sitting on the altar, still focused on me. I furrowed my brows as I spoke. Just looking at her, I could see her state was abnormal and severe.

"Why do you stare at me so?"

Her alluring white wings that swayed behind her were so transparent it could no longer be seen. Her whole body was translucent that I could see through her. Only her expressionless face was the same as before.

Maintaining my silence, tilting her head Seraph spoke.

“It feels like a long time since I have been a target of your worried gaze. But do not worry. Right now in Earth Time, it is the year 2011 month 12 day 27 of a Thursday. By your request, time has been reverted to the period when Earth Kim Su-Hyun has first entered the ‘Summon Room.’ Again, let me reiterate, Player Kim Su-Hyun’s request has been successfully processed and compiled.”

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“Yes.... Of course. Then Seraph, did you came back with me?”

As I spoke softly, Seraph responded by shaking her head gently in a negative.

“While I cannot give an exact description, for now, I shall answer it as NO. User Kim Su-Hyun, there are still things yet to explain and so I have asked the Zero Code a momentary respite. Fortunately, it seems the Zero Code has deemed my points adequate as it accepted my request.”

“Some things to explain?”

“Yes. As you say.”

Still seen the frown on my brows, Seraph just gently smiled in return. In all my 10 years in Hall Plain, it was the first time seeing such smile on the Angel. The abruptness of her frank forthcoming made me unknowingly relax my frown.

That awkward atmosphere from before had subsided. Rather than me, it was Seraph who had opened her mouth first to speak. Tucking in her silvery white hair behind her ear, she spoke with her eyes half closed.

“I remember the day when User Kim Su-Hyun was first summoned to Hall Plain. Do you recall what you said when you first saw me?”

“Don’t know.”

There is no way I could remember such thing. I don’t know what cock and bull story she was trying to tell, but I decided to listen to it calmly. Seraph was an ‘Assistant,’ an existent that always at the minimum gave the most appropriate advice.

“Whe, where am I? Uh? Wh, who are you! Was what you said.”

“Really, even my stuttering? You remember some useless things.”

“Huhu. That’s not all. After that....”

PAJAAK!

A sound of space being torn could be heard. In the middle of her exasperating tale, Seraph’s whole body warped. Like a TV that could not receive signal, her body distortion like a static white screen.

“Hhk!”

She warped and snapped back to normal. Seraph gave out a pained moan, as her state cycled back and forth, her transparency became worse and worse. Her appearance was becoming so strange to look at. If I opened and closed my eyes, it felt like I would see her normal tranquil self again. But like a candle in the wind, Seraph looked frail.

After a while, as the noise phenomenon lessened, Seraph straightened her body with a bitter expression on her face.

“My desire for authorization from the Zero Code is difficult to gain. Though we spent 10 years together..... Authorization for the time to discuss the affection of our regretful parting has been denied.”

‘Ah, I really can’t adjust.’

The old her would have never uttered such words, rather she would have entered the main discourse straight away. As Seraph said, Angels as a Race were defined by rationality. Having been on the receiving end of their conspicuously same demeanour for the last 10 years, I just couldn't adapt to the sudden change in her attitude.

“So.... Yes, then let's finish the discussion quickly.”

In the end, I replied brusquely. Staring at me with her sorrowful eyes, Seraph gave a short sigh before continuing.

“Player Kim Su-Hyun, since mid-game you have barely consumed any GP. Utilising some points you have earned up till now, I thought to bestow several privileges upon your restart.”

“Um? Privileges?”

“Of course, I shall leave in your possession the remaining GP.”

“Privileges.... I don't know what that is but receiving such service for reaching the end. I am crying tears of joy.”

At my mostly sarcastic remark, Seraph shook her head to fix my assumption.

“I would appreciate if you would acknowledge this as goodwill rather than a service. I, including all the Angels, understand your sentiments sufficiently, we empathise and sympathise.”

“Sympathise? Hahaha.....”

“I apologise if you heard 'sympathize' with a negative connotation. I held no intention of debasement. But, we Angels still upholds the minimum duty of aiding the Players in Hall Plain. Had I ever mislead Player Kim Su-Hyun with my counsel? Please think careful. Accept this goodwill, or pass it by, I shall entrust this entirely in Player Kim Su-Hyun's hand.”

She said she would entrust it to me, but as if she was forcing me to take it, Seraph had given me hardly any leeway to refute this 'goodwill.' Although I wanted to ask her more question, I was drawing a blank. Uneasy, I nodded.

"Excellent choice. I have no doubt with this selection Player Kim Su-Hyun's will have a markedly easier path."

The moment I expressed my agreement, the expression of her eyes were conspicuously relieved and narrowed in a smile. And for what seemed to be the last time, she gave a mighty beat with her faint wings. The distance between me and her vanished in an instant, and I could feel a soft hand above my head. As I furtively looked above, Seraph spoke with a relaxed voice.

"Though this may be unpleasant, please be patient. Not much time is left. I shall begin the transfer of the information directly into your mind."

As Seraph finished speaking, I felt a shock flash by where she laid her hand on the crown of my head. There was no pain. Rather fascinatingly, the information Seraph was transferring was embedded directly into my mind. With my eyes closed, I calmly savoured the information.

With a different process, the 'Unique Ability' slot can be opened. The Unique Ability is applicable above the Special Ability. If you abandon the Unique Ability, 1 Special Ability slot and 5 Latent Ability slot will be freed up for the Player's desired selection. (At this point,

the expanded slot will be automatically applied to the Latent Ability)

But if you chose to accept a Unique Ability, a Latent Ability will be consumed. Only half of the remaining 4 slot will be freed up for the Player's desired selection. (The other 2 slot will be filled up at random.)

Without rest, a clutter of information concerning privileges was filling up my head. With mixed feelings, I opened my eyes. Only a vague outline of Seraph

could be seen now. Though she had yet to move her hand from my head, I no longer felt the previous touches.

With great difficulty, I sorted out the transferred information. I gave out a quiet groan.

“This is....”

Truth be told, I could not in my wildest dream imagine such privileges to be bestowed and was left astonished. If I could truly start off with this privileges, it was no different to starting a game at the character creation page.

As if she read my mind, Seraph gave a trifling smile as she spoke.

“These privileges has been created from Player Kim Su-Hyun’s procured points. Of course, I would not deny that my goodwill has some input. Having the consent of the communion of Angels power, there should not be the slightest of problems..”

“I like them, but you will eventually disappear. So won’t I be restrained by checks and balance?”

“Not so. From Player Kim Su-Hyun’s inflection just now, I detected a hint of conceit. Time and again I have reminded you for the past 10 years, inattention in any situation is prohibited.”

“I will pay attention. But won’t balance be a problem. Think about it, what would the other recently joined Players think when I start off with these privileges?”

“Please do not worry as that part can be resolved through Tanay. In terms of balance.... Of course, the balance has been thought of....”

Stopping for a second, Seraph tried to read my countenance. Then with a hesitant voice, she began to speak cautiously.

“Taking into consideration Player’s Kim Su-Hyun’s original latent potential, this, on the contrary, can be seen as fixing the balance.”

There were so many implications in what she said, but I could pick up what she meant immediately. In reality, ‘latent potential’ was a crucial key in deciding the ‘Player Information.’

While I could fathom Seraph’s meaning, I wondered why it still left a bitter taste in my mouth.

No matter what anyone says, I was the only Player who has reached the zenith of Hall Plain. It was through countless miracles and mishaps that I had climbed to this point from rock bottom, I held no thought to deny it. But wasn’t there such saying? That it’s not the strong that survives, but the one who survives that’s strong.

If I was speaking about ordinary strength, then I was confident enough to say I was strong. Of course, I knew without a doubt that I could not be referred to as the best, the strongest. But however you put it.....

“...Whew.”

“Being self-conceited is prohibited. Please be vigilant.”

In the end, I felt this was not what Seraph wished to convey. As if she made me aware of my self-conceitedness, I suddenly felt disheartened. Giving out a short sigh, I nodded. After all, her words were not wrong, and only my ego was slightly wounded. But as I gazed at Seraph’s form, it was now hardly recognisable and very indistinctive, that I relented immediately.

“Truly.... The time to depart.... Has come....”

As Seraph said, the end was almost upon us. Like a TV screen on the brink of breaking, she constantly warped and distorted. Seraph no longer returned to her original shape. That, I could only stare at that vacantly.

“There is.... You.... Something.... Really.... Say....”

Gradually, Seraph words could no longer be heard. Slowly but surely, her presence was disappearing. Even then, Seraph continued to speak desperately.

“That.... Really....”

“Seraph. I know this is the end and I am sorry, but I can’t hardly hear you.”

Still, as if she heard what I said, Seraph’s face was submerged in sadness. But in this situation, there was nothing I could do. In the first place, this was something I desired, something I brought on myself. But she did not give up.

“Ple.... ase....”

PHAK!

As it seemed the noise was becoming worse, the white light made a sudden Phak sound and flashed. Around Seraph, several brilliant rays of light appeared and winked out. The end was finally upon us. Seraph chewed her lip once, and strength seems to fill her eyes as she slowly parted her lips.

“Please be happy....”

Sarururu....

With her last words, Seraph disappeared. No longer did the noise phenomenon occur. But her last words, the words she divulges with all her strength, remained in my ears. In her last moment, I thought she gave me a spirited smile, but I was so focused on her words I wasn’t so sure.

For a brief moment, I just continued to stare absentmindedly at where Seraph was sitting.