

# MEMORIZE

## MEMORIZE EP.31

**Boss Monster. (1/4)** The day was clear. The sun shined brightly on our backs, caressing our heads with its rays. While it wasn't a bad mood per se, no one spoke and just kept walking.

Please continue reading on

It has been six hours since we departed from the hut. Since then, we only conversed on important issues but otherwise remained silent. The mood between me and Kim Han-byeol was cold but that wasn't the only thing the party was looking at.

Anyways. After having hiked for so long, they should be getting tired. But we didn't rest and kept on walking.

I wonder how much have we traveled?

Soon enough we were about halfway there and an impossibly humongous Warp Gate came into our sights. It was like everyone made a pledge to keep their silence as we got closer and closer to the Warp Gate. The only thing I could hear was their shallow breathing.

Everyone seems excited by the prospect of the finish line.

You could reach the destination full of excitement but in return, it was impossible to be relaxed. As I expected, we did not encounter any monsters on our path to the Warp Gate. With the lack of monsters, everyone seemed unconsciously lax.

But my heart was uneasy. If the Boss monster appeared, there would be no time at all to organise ourselves. The Boss monster could appear suddenly like a ghost if it got a whiff of our position. As long as we weren't separated in the confusion, it would be fine. Even though I was here, if I didn't reveal my true abilities, there would definitely be casualties.

The Warp Gate was in front of our eyes. Just a bit more and we would successfully complete the Rite of Passage. With the small distance left, it felt like a waste to abandon our concepts and plans.

By my rough approximations, there was about 600 meters left to the Warp Gate. Wu Jung-min was attacked by the Boss monster at about 300 meters. Half our distance more and we would meet the same fate. I wanted to walk slowly and think of a plan but with our footsteps becoming faster, it was going contrary to my desires. An-hyun feeling the fast pace, finally broke his silence and spoke to An-sol.

“Sol, just a little bit more. If we can reach that big oval building, I am sure we can escape from this scary place. Until then, just hang on.”

“Okay!”

Hearing An-hyun’s gentle voice, An-sol brightened and nodded energetically. Seeing such a rare smile on An-sol’s face, she must be quite happy right now. I was about to ask everyone to rest for a moment before continuing but I kept quiet. I couldn’t think of any good excuse. I obligingly met their pace and as time passed, we got closer to the Warp Gate.

Of course, it could be pointless worries on my part. The best thing to do was enter the Warp Gate as calmly as possible. A happy path where no one was hurt or injured. Still, that feeling of foreboding did not disappear, it was lodged in the corner of my heart. Since entering the Rite of Passage, I conducted an extensive and minute observation with my Magic Detection, yet I couldn’t find a hint of the Boss monster.

In no time at all we were 500 meters from our goal. The Warp Gate gradually revealed its commanding presence. Upright altars were supporting the oval like structures, its grandness could match any tall buildings. And at its centre was a large doughnut like hole, with a spherical blue light floating in it. The fine blue current flowing through the Warp Gate was definitely the magic power driving the spell.

The outward appearance was an exquisite marble and all our eyes were drawn to it. An-sol was innocently admiring it while Kim Han-byeol looked at it with twinkling eyes, finding it to her satisfaction. Lee Yu-jung couldn’t take her eye off the bright light emanating from the marble structure as she continues to gaze at it with a stupefied expression.

“It’s really pretty... I want to chisel it out and make earrings. It would look really nice on my ears. I want it.”

“Unni. I like it just the way it is. It’s a beautiful masterpiece.”

An-hyun looked deep in thought as Lee Yu-jung and An-sol were sharing a friendly conversation. He must be thinking about how Yu-jung would look with such earrings. After a while, he shook his head and spoke.

“It’s would be horrific.”

“Huh? What do you mean by that Hyun...?”

“I found it a bit funny about you want something like that as earrings. I think it will suit Sol better.”

“What’s that?!”

At An-hyun's indifferent comment, Yu-jung flew off into rage and kicked him on his hips. An-sol's mouth was slightly ajar after hearing that the earrings would suit her better. The mood of the scene wasn't so bad. An-sol had a slightly shy smile on her face. An-hyun had all the qualities to become a Harem King but it was unfortunate that he was a sison. Finding myself going off tangent, I laughed unconsciously.

400 meters left. Looking around, the surrounding had a very similar environment as our starting point. Here and there, there were few grass roots growing but it was mostly bare soil. Some parts of the earth were darker colour and when we stepped on it, the darker soil felt harder than the soft lighter soil. Was the soil soaked in blood and had hardened?

If it was, it probably was the Players that had reached the Warp Gate before us who had been attacked. The only person who realised this gruesome truth was me but I kept my silence and kept on walking.

300 meters left. Our pace was fast enough that we were now literally running. We did it, we survived, those emotions bled through in the party's expressions. An-hyun and Yu-jung who moments before were snarling at each other now were smiling at each other. An-sol laughed openly and Han-byeol maintained her unperturbed countenance though she did seem relieved.

Dashing through the 300-meter mark, the Boss monster had yet to appear. In the end, it seems Wu Jung-min's party was just unlucky. I felt it would be alright as our party had An-sol who boasted 100 Luck points. The last few meters, it was in these few instances when I felt nothing with my detection and was about to let my magic subside.

I didn't know what but what I did realise was that we had opened the champagne too early.

Pachzz! Paacchzz!

After passing the 200-meter mark, I heard a crackling sound in the air. The air current changed and space began to contort in a bizarrely manner. It was a phenomenon which occurred when something large moved through magic. The party stopped, feeling unease. I quickly activated my Third Eye.

The space was washed with unexpected mana waves. To the untrained eyes, it may look like the mana was dispersing but at a closer look, it was all moving in one direction. I kept calm and tried to analyse the pattern the magic was drawing on the ground

A loud sound reverberated through the air and a large shape began to appear on the path we were walking on. When I saw the Magic Circle, it suddenly clicked. It was an Advanced Summoning Magic. I quickly sent out my mana to destroy the circle but...

I was too late. The completed Circle rose into the air and began to shine brightly.

Was this it? Did the Boss monster appear through summoning magic? We all looked at the Magic Circle in the air with a stupefied expression. Without a doubt, they could clearly see the Magic Circle as well. But no one spoke. The Magic Circle exuded evil and foreboding.

Wuuuuung! Wuuuung!

Finally, the Magic Circle began the summoning process. The first thing we could see was the Boss monster's face and its fingers. Its face was grotesque, elongated without eyes and from its jagged mouth, sharp teeth protruded. One could mistake the monster's fingers for large scythes. Its pitch black steel like carapace came out with a large tail stuck to it.

The summoning spell finished and the monster that showed up was over 5 meters tall.

The Boss monster had appeared.

Geck, geck, geck, geck. Gulp!

Blood was splattered on the Boss monster's mouth as if it had just finished eating. As if its meal wasn't enough, the monster smacked its lips while looking at our direction.

I immediately sought out my party. It was admirable they hadn't fled in sheer terror but Lee Yu-jung, Kim Han-byeol and An-sol were in a state of panic. Their body looked frozen in spot, unable to move at all. They were all overwhelmed by the bloodlust emanating from the monster.

Only An-hyun alone looked at the monster in disbelief.

"Thi... Impossible... Just what..."

GRAAAAAAAAAAH!

An-hyun couldn't complete his sentence as the Boss monster roar swept through our bodies. Being hit by the roar filled with bloodlust, their bodies should be prickling all over. As if they were released from a magic spell, the party wavered but could only take a step or two. There was no time to dawdle. I spoke to everyone in a low but clear voice.

"Don't get distracted. Don't panic and keep calm."

"Hy, hyung... it's impossible. This much is impossible. We can't win. We need to get away!"

An-hyun replied in a shaky voice after he saw

me aim my crossbow at the monster. The overpowering aura coming off from the Boss monster made him lose the will to fight. Shouting and spurring him on in this situation would only cause panic. I had no intention to fight it with the party in the first place. Lightly using mana on my voice, I allayed their stiffened bodies.

“I’m not saying we are going to fight. Fighting that thing is crazy. Like you said we are going to run for it. But if we run without a goal, we are going to get killed one by one. That’s why we are going to run toward the Warp Gate.”

“Y, yes. At once...”

Yu-jung was gasping for breath as she agreed with me. Inside I sighed in relief. An-hyun and Han-byeol seemed to have gradually overcome the bloodlust, though feeble, I could see the desire to live in their eyes. Putting my faith into the magic that was supported my body till now, I spoke up confidently. They all believed I had a workable plan.

“Everyone, throw away your weapons. We are going to lighten ourselves and run towards the Warp Gate.”

“Eh, eh...?”

The Boss monster roared once again. We were now truly out of time. I felt frustrated when I saw An-sol looking around bewildered. Walking to her, I forcefully flung the bag on her back and spoke.

“An-hyun! Drop your sword and shield! Are you going to run with that?”

“Yes... Yes!”

An-hyun, Yu-jung and Han-byeol threw away all their belongings and weapons. But the Boss monster was running on all four legs towards us. With it’s every step, there was a loud “Boom” that followed by a mini-earthquake.

Using the first earthquake as a signal, I grabbed An-sol’s hand and started to run. The party followed suit and we all began to run full speed towards the Warp Gate.

We ran. Ran and ran and ran. We ran with all our strength but the sound of the monster stomping became louder. I saw an anxious Yu-jung trying to look back.

“Don’t think about looking back. Only keep your focus on whats ahead of you.”

The Boss monster was summoned about 300 meters from the Warp Gate. We were 200 meters from the Warp Gate. There was a 100-meter difference between us but I was certain it would catch up to us. It was my goal to overcome this eventuality. It felt like the Boss monster was gaining more speed as it ran but if I could stop him temporarily then the monster would lose all momentum.

Stopping the monster once would force it to build up its speed again, chasing us with its initial slow speed. We could use this chance to enter the Warp Gate. I readied my grip on my crossbow.

Boom!

180 meters remaining.

Boom! Boom!

160 meters remaining.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Remaining distance, 140 meters. The interval of the stomping sound became shorter and we could all feel the monster's speed increasing. Even if we kept up our speed, it was only a matter of time before the Boss monster caught up. I felt that the time had come. While everyone was focused on running, I took this opportunity to slip in a unit of mana into the crossbow bolt. It would be impossible to pierce through the monster's steel like carapace with a normal arrow.

When the mana transfer was completed, there was a feeling of sharpness that wasn't there on my left wrist before. The preparation was complete. It was finally my time to step up. My hesitance might cause an irreversible situation. I stopped my legs from moving and I let go of An-sol's hand.

An-sol's screamed in horror as she passed my abruptly still form. Everyone stiffened slightly but before they could turn their heads towards me I spoke out loudly.

"Don't look back, keep running!"

They were all alarmed at hearing my angry voice for the first time. After I made sure that their hesitant faces turned back to face the front, I immediately turned to face the monster. The monster saw its first target. And I promptly raised my left arm toward the monster.

TN:

## **MEMORIZE EP.32**

**Boss Monster. (2/4) Thank you:**  
*Thomas Schmidt for your support!*

Please continue reading on

I stretched my left arm towards the monster, with its disgusting teeth bared towards me. On my crossbow, I can shoot 3 bolts consecutively and with the bolts sharpened with mana, it had the power to pierce through iron.

Aim. Fire.

Ping! Ping! Ping!

The bolts cut through the air with a loud shriek. In a little while, it homed in and pierced the monster on its head. But...

Tung! Tung! Tung!

The bolts I fired clanged futilely against the monster, it could not penetrate the Boss monster's skin. But that did not mean it did no damage. The Boss monster flinched as the magic reverberated internally throughout its body.

Though the bolt held a sliver of magic, it was several times stronger than normal. Yet the effect on the Boss monster was minimal. I began to seriously contemplate what the Angel was thinking putting such a thing in the Rite of Passage. But with the bolts, I fulfilled my purpose. The Boss monster had stalled.

The Boss monster reeled in the aftershock and it curled on itself further. Deciding to ask Seraph about the overpowered Boss later, I turned and ran after my party. They were still running as hard as they could. There were only a 100 meters left between the party and the Warp Gate. While I wasn't certain about my chances, the party was safe now.

Starting my run, I felt as if something was wrong. I hadn't inflicted much of a wound and the monster should have recovered already. But I couldn't hear the monster stomping after us. I suddenly recalled the Mankey from the battle yesterday. The Boss monster had curled up in a similar fashion. I heard the wind being buffeted behind me as I began to suspect what it was preparing to do.

Whoosh!

My suspicion became a reality. The Boss monster was quite shrewd and cautious, already having come to the realisation that at this rate it wouldn't manage to capture one of us. When the monster curled up, it wasn't due to the shock but rather it was preparing to jump.

A large shadow covered the whole area. The Boss monster was now ahead of me, leering at the still running party. An-hyun was at the forefront, while Han-byeol and Yu-jung were right behind him. An-sol was several steps behind, lacking the stamina to catch up. The three in the front might be fine but An-sol was within a dangerous distance from the Boss monster.

I didn't even have a chance to shout out a warning. The Boss monster arced and landed just behind An-hyun and the party. The ground shook and loud cracking peal rang out, creating a strong tremor that staggered An-hyun. A white static noise filled my head as I observed this scene.

And at that moment, a message appeared in front of my eyes.

Latent Ability Mind's Eye (Rank: A Plus) was invoked.

Seeing beyond the outward appearance, a mind's eye to see the target's inner being. Self-contemplation, the observation of all creation, the ability to detect or call forth similar phenomenon. With the heart governed by an iron fist, the principal can keep calm under the influence of mental pollution magic below S Rank.

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“Hu.....”

The burning sensation in my head quickly cooled in an instant. That white, blanked mind was starting to spin with cold rational reason. My previously narrow view began to expand and I saw things that I couldn't have seen before.

And then, I laughed. I laughed out loud.



What was it that I was worrying about till now? This was insignificant to I, who had face greater hardship and pain. I had no fear, pushing myself to the utmost limit. I tried my best within the boundaries of possibility. This was my creed I lived by the first time I played Hall Plain.

There was no time for weakness in Hall Plain. People had perished before they could bloom because they showed off their strength and abilities. I vowed to never expose myself like these people. I lived in complete obscurity, where no one knew I was a Sword Master with nothing more than 48 Magic points. Having operated with such compulsive concept for ten years in Hall Plain, it had become a habit.

If obscurity was still required, I would follow through with it. But then, nothing would be different. Using the same method would beget the same result.

I couldn't protect my hyung and the Clan Lord I believed in, the one that I followed and loved, died right in front of me. My regret was palpable. I didn't want to follow the same road twice. I had returned to the past to change the outcome. I wanted to change.

Analysing the battle, I calculated for the most optimum action. Estimating the exact amount of mana required and formulating an efficient plan. No longer did I plan to hide myself. If necessary, I acted. Could be troubling if I was discovered but the solution was simple. Don't get caught. I was confident with my skills to get away with it.

Not even a second later I finished my analysis, establishing An-sol's status and location. My very first task was to aggro the Boss monster. The monster's bulk hid me from the prying eyes of my party. I raised my mana and prepared a magic bolt that could pierce the monster's skin. No longer needing to pretend my aiming, I fired off the bolt immediately.

Ping! Ping! Ping!

Feeling my killing intent, the monster startled and turned its head to look back. However, the bolts flew off with a speed that was on a whole different level and pierced the Boss monster's chest. But there was still one more thing.

Pung! Pung! Pung!

The bolts swirling with mana destroyed its skin and bit into its flesh with an explosive sound. The effect was immediate.

GRAAAAAAAAH!

Is it painful? It should be. I ran swiftly as the Boss monster began to shriek in pain. Utilising my Third Eye, I saw the party except for An-sol running and stumbling along. They hadn't realised yet that An-sol had lagged behind. Still within expectation, rather this was better for me...

Wait. An-hyun just stopped.

“So! So! Answer me!”

An-hyun had just noticed An-sol wasn't with them and was calling for her anxiously. That dumb idiot. I increased my speed and the distance between the monster and I decreased in a flash. Having seen my running toward it, the Boss monster raised its large hand sky high, its entire being trembling in rage.

I had reduced the intensity of the attack to keep it alive and that damn ingrate doesn't know the mercy I bestowed as the monster slammed its hand toward me. The hand came at me sharply and quickly. Anyone who was watching would be quaking in their boots but to me, it was moving at a painfully slow pace.

Keeping my fast pace, I kicked the ground for an extra push. I bent my knees and tried to keep my upper body parallel to the ground. Immediately large fingers brushed past my face but only a few strands of my hair flew by. I had completely avoided the Boss monster's attack and managed to get within. A perfectly clean slide. I soon saw An-sol clutching the ground with both her hand as she coughed loudly.

“Cough! Cough!”

This dense cloud of dust must have lifted when the Boss monster landed from its jump. I would have usually moved into comfort and reassure An-sol but this wasn't the time or the place. Moving next to her quickly, I picked her up in a princess carry. She was startled by my presence and asked shakily.

“Su... Su-hyun Oppa...?”

“Shush. Let's get away from this bastard first.”

Firing off the bolts I had loaded while running, I didn't wait to see the results as I jumped head first into the dust cloud. Hearing the Boss monster giving out another painful shriek, I must have hit the mark.

An-sol expression was something to see. Her eyes were filled with tears as she stared at me like I was her Messiah. Looking ahead, I saw Yu-jung and Han-byeol were trying their best to dissuade An-hyun from turning back around. But when An-hyun saw me coming out of the dust cloud, his jaws fell wide open in disbelief.

To see An-hyun's expression change in such myriad of emotion was a funny thing to watch. First, that look of stupefaction, then relief which soon turned to one that was on the verge of tears. Any rate now the siblings could start a crying party. I kept on running, cursing the sheer stupidity of it all.

At that moment, I saw Han-byeol shouting desperately and I felt something cold brush my back. That bastard had no plans to send us off easy, as it was using its tail as a whip to catch my back. I could survive getting hit by that writhing tail but An-sol won't be able to handle it.

I was filled with the desire to kill this thing as no one in Hall Plain had done it yet. Killing the Boss monster would be quite an achievement and there might be some kind of reward for defeating it. Another reason was the desire to Solo a Boss monster. For such an outcome I needed to separate myself with the party and so I decided to take the hit from the monster.

My back was soon smashed by the monster's tail. With a thud, the force pushed through my back. While it wasn't painful I felt like I was going to be catapulted off the ground due to the force. 'Felt like it' because the force wasn't going anywhere.

Rousing my mana, I counteracted and fought against force within my body. The basic principle was using a small amount of force to control a greater power. Through this principle, I could control or divide the force exerting on my body. This technique was mostly used to diminish the force I couldn't control by spreading it out throughout my body but in other times I had used it like I did now.

Controlling the force within a tolerable level that An-sol could withstand, I let the residual force lift us off the ground. I shifted the residual force to my left and before we separated I whispered into An-sol's ear.

"Get up as fast as you can and head straight for the Warp Gate."

Our bodies were violently thrown apart. I was thrown to the left while An-sol flew in the direction of the party. I am not sure if it was An-sol's Luck points acting up again but she landed straight into An-hyun's embrace.

I scrambled to get up as soon as I landed. There was something fundamentally different about the Boss and the monsters that appeared in the Rite of Passage. The Boss monster had recognised the danger I was and leapt for me without dropping its guard. The Boss monster's whole body exuded killing intent. I seemed to have successfully aggroed it.

THUD!

With the explosive sound, the earth shook heavily. My body shook violently but I had avoided its attack. That made the monster angrier as it began trying to squash me with its feet.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

"OPPPAAAA!"

“HYYUUUUNNG!”

WWHHHAAAAT! Well, that was how I wanted to respond but I wanted to keep the image of that cool and silent Oppa so I kept my mouth shut. I would have usually waved my hand and said I was okay but this wasn't the time. I signalled them to keep running but the party wouldn't budge. I shouted at the top of my voice.

“Fly, you fools! Run to the Warp Gaaattttee!”

There was some commotion as I saw An-hyun running while forcefully dragging along a defiant Han-byeol. Man, that guy. He ran back for An-sol without hesitation and now he's running for the Warp Gate without hesitation. When I was about to click my tongue in disapproval, I had to quickly jump to the left. This bastard was still at it with its feet.

My temper was rising as I dodged attacks from this worthless piece of shit. But I kept my cool because once the kids were gone, this thing was going to experience a serious beat down. With the constant thumping of the monster's foot, dust covered the whole area.

Wanting a clear view clouded by the dust, I used my mana to erase traces of myself and slipped behind the monster. I disappeared from the Boss monster's senses. Having no eyes, the monster became frantic as it searched for me. I stared impassively for a moment before I turned my head towards the party.

Fortunately enough, An-hyun seems to have succeeded dragging Han-byeol along as all four of them had reached the Warp Gate. An-hyun's hair was dishevelled, probably Han-byeol's doing. To be honest, it was rather hilarious.

The Warp Gate came alive, with blue mana trembling as a translucent barrier surrounded them. Their transfer to the Summon Room was starting. I breathed a sigh of relief as faint blue light gently surrounded them. One major part was finished.

The only thing left...

I quickly threw myself on the ground as I saw the dust cloud had cleared slightly. I wanted to avoid any argument of why I hadn't run for the Warp Gate. With Han-byeol's cold deduction I wanted to use the Boss monster's tail as an excuse.

The dust cloud had completely settled. The intensity of the blue light surrounding the party had increased. Starting from their feet, they were slowly being erased. Still flat on the ground, I raised my hand toward them. There wasn't any meaning behind it other than signalling them I would see them later.

But... An-hyun wiped his eyes with his hands. Yu-jung had flopped to the ground (it was amazing to see someone sitting down without their feet) crying. Han-byeol had

covered her face with her hands, her shoulders shaking while An-sol was waving her hand, shedding tears in my direction.

Wh, What? I never meant to make them cry...

TN:

33 is done but still fixing up the chapter so it should be out in couple of hours.

## **MEMORIZE EP.33**

**Boss Monster. (3/4)** Kim Han-byeol did not look away until the end. I could see in her eyes, urging me to get up and get away but I had no such plans. Although the party had all somehow utterly misunderstood me.

Please continue reading on

The party soon completely disappeared after the Warp Gate pulsed with blue light. Everyone had managed to safely transfer out.

Had they left?

They left right?

Yup, they are gone.

Darkness began to fill out my surroundings. The Boss monster hardly cared at losing most of its prey as it growled and focused its attention on me. Using both my hands, I slowly pushed myself up. My body felt stiff all over as it has been quite a while since I've been tossed around like this. Standing up, I stretched my back and heard my joints twist and turn making that satisfying crackling sound.

I stared bemusedly at my excellent crossbow and let it drop. I had no use for it any longer. Clattering on the ground, the crossbow kicked up dust as it bounced on the ground. I stepped on it without hesitation.

Crack!

I stared indifferently at the broken crossbow, all the while as I stretched out my hand at the spot the party dropped their gears. Raising my hand, I invoked my mana and cast telekinesis. An-hyun's sword spun in the air as it flew into my hand.

Finally, a sword in my hands.

One of the unaccustomed feelings that dogged me through the Rite of Passage was that I was lacking a sword. In Hall Plain, the sword was my life. I always had a sword

with me when I slept, when I ate and even when I was bathing. When I had given the sword to An-hyun, it was like losing a dear old friend.

This was almost over, I would soon be able to return to Hall Plain. How I longed for this moment. How I had yearned to return to that place. The dream had finally turned into reality when I grasped the Zero Code within my hand. That reality was just one step away and my heart heaved in anticipation.

My fervent emotions had awakened Hwajung that had settled within my heart. I felt like lava was flowing instead of my blood and my heart was pounding. My breath that had stopped, the heart that was long dead was renewed in a roaring fire. This was the opening act to a long battle.

GRAAAAR!

The Boss monster howled its battle cry. I silently gazed at the sword in my hand. I had acquired abilities that could enable me to surpass my past self but there was no guarantee that I was the strongest. But I had no fear. Though I may fall into the abyss once again, I vowed to never give up. Calm, I raised my sword toward the Boss monster.

I held my sword with new resolve and the air exploded out around me.

Blade Master (Rank: Extra) has been activated.

The moment a blade is held, a corrective action is asserted onto every swing. Through years of experience and hard work, a multitude of achievement and class selection, the Ability has been adjusted upward by 2 Ranks.

Close Combat (Rank: A Plus) has been activated.

An Ability that surpassed the extreme of what people can do with a melee weapon. In close combat, it is impossible to be pushed back. Due to years of experience and hard work, with the current Class selection, the Ability has been adjusted upward by 1 Ranks.

I had changed my Class from Sword Master to Sword Specialist when I had returned to the past. I had Abilities related to the sword and a Class related to the sword. The difference of power with and without a sword was like heaven and earth. If my killing intent before was like a floating vapour, it was now a definite aura of <I will kill you>. This intent surrounded me and buffeted all around me like a wild storm.

In my eyes, this thing was so insignificant that it wasn't even worth crushing it like a bug. Taking a step forward, the Boss monster took a step back. Well, it couldn't be helped.

No matter how smart the monster was, it still possessed that animalistic instinct. The monster had already lost the will to fight, realising how far apart our level was.

My swordsmanship had its origins in Tai-Chi. Instead of using overwhelming power, the technique used the opponent's own strength against him. This was the only way for me to overcome my lack of muscle strength compared to the other top-rated Players. To explain in more detail, it's principal was based on Electrotherapy (targeting the soft spots) and lyugeukkang (overcoming hardness with softness) to suppress the target through tranquil movement.

I slowly drew back my sword. I was going to strike before the monster's brain could even register an attack. My posture was set as if I was about to unsheathe my sword. This made me look unprepared and defenceless.

This technique made it impossible for the opponent to predict the first line of attack. With a lightning speed attack, the opponent would be hit before it could even anticipate an attack or, in most cases, allowed me to take the initiative.

I prepared myself, aiming at the monster shivering before my eyes.

Soon.

My sword cut through the air without hesitation.

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“Begin debrief. That was a marvellous sword skill, Player Kim Su-hyun. Congratulations on surviving the Rite of Passage. After six days, sixteen hours, forty-two minutes and twenty-seven seconds you have earned the right to enter Hall Plain.”

With but a swing, the Boss monster was cut in half. When I returned to the Room of Summoning, those were the first things Seraph spoke when she saw me. She was still sitting lightly on top of that small altar, staring at me calmly as her wings waved gently by. Not even a week had passed since I last saw her but it had felt like an eternity.

I nodded stiffly and sat on the floor.

“What about the others?”

This was a bottomless pit of questions but the Rite of Passage was fundamentally different from Hall Plain. The Rite of Passage had no limitation on Player monitoring. This was clearly evident by Seraph's comment about my play and I was certain she was tracking other such Players similar to myself.

“You do not have permission to access information on other Players.”

“I'm not asking about your three sizes, I just want you to tell if others are okay. Man, you are so touchy about this things.”



Seraph sighed deeply at my response and replied composedly.

“The Players An-hyun, An-sol, Lee Yu-jung and Kim Han-byeol have all been transferred within procedure to their Room of Summoning. They are all awaiting entrance to Hall Plain with their respective Angels.”

“I see. I presume they are learning about Hall Plain with the remaining time?”

“Knowledge of Hall Plain will not take that long to impart. Rather, the Players are been shown Classes and Abilities that are suitable for their characteristics. Player Kim Su-hyun, please do not regard yourself in a similar light to the other Players.”

I kept silence as I heard her explanation. In the past, I had managed to survive for seven days and was able to return to the Room of Summoning. When I arrived, I was taught the basics about Hall Plain and was able to select basic Player settings. Back then, it felt like I spent half a day.

“All the Players are transferred to Hall Plain simultaneously. Therefore, there is a need to wait for all the Players to qualify within the seven day period.”

“Then just send me on ahead...”

“That is not permissible.”

This wasn't what I was hoping to hear. I had finished the Boss monster in record time so that I could enter Hall Plain as fast as possible. I had asked just in case but Seraph had cut me off before I could complete my request. I grumbled petulantly at Seraph.

“That means I have to stay here for a day and a half. Are you telling me I have to wait for that long? What should I do? Clap and play games with you?”

Despite my petulant manner, Seraph replied clearly.

“If you so desire it, I shall. But for those who passed the Rite of Passage early, a more detailed explanation of Hall Plain is provided.”

“Don't want to hear it.”

“Then shall we clap hands and play games?”

“Ho... No. Let's just chat.”

I shook my head at Seraph's earnest reply. There was no joking with this Angel. Since I had the time, I decided to ask her about some points that were bugging me about the Rite of Passage. Of course, I was going to be sarcastic. Seraph tilted her head thinking and then nodded her head.



“I felt this during the Rite of Passage but did you guys actually think about balance?”

“Yes.”

A short answer from Seraph.

“... Let’s ignore the fact about being dropped in the middle of the forest and those Wraiths. But what the devil was up with that Boss monster by the Warp Gate? What kind of Rite of Passage does that? Prospective Players won’t be able to pass through at this rate.”

“Is there a problem?”

“If I wasn’t there, our party would have been wiped out. I just can’t understand the reasoning behind summoning a monster like that.”

Seraph replied without hesitation.

“The Rite of Passage is automatically balanced by the standard of Players summoned each time. Of course, during this run, we took particular care to exclude Player Kim Su-hyun. However, the number of exceptional Players that participated this time could be counted on five different hands.”

“That still doesn’t justify such powerful Boss monster. How do you expect Players who don’t even know how to use magic to beat such monster?”

“Beating it is impossible, a different approach is expected. The Boss monster is summoned randomly around two hundred and three hundred meters from the Warp Gate. Facing the monster alone is impossible. When there is a minimum of five people, it is expected that one in five will manage to reach the Warp Gate.”

Hearing Seraph’s explanation, I caught on immediately what she implied.

“... Then you are saying that four people are bait.”

“Correct.”

I became speechless. But I understood the reasoning behind the Boss monster set up around the Warp Gate. The Player who survived needed to experience the sadness of losing their comrades. Such loss was common in Hall Plain and it might be better from them to experience the shock of loss now than later.

This left a bad taste in my mouth but I had nothing to say. I had turned back time because I couldn’t overcome the sense of loss. Letting out a loud sigh, I was about to change the topic when Seraph interjected first.

"I admit that there was some level of difficulty. For this, the four who had arrived first will be given a small amount of Gold Points as a reward."

"... Oh? That means that our group arrive before anyone else. What about me?"

"Player Kim Su-hyun had arrived fifth. The aforementioned four people had arrived first concurrently. To each of these people, 2500 Gold Points are planned to be allocated as a reward."

Oho. That's good news. 2500 Gold Points is really helpful in the beginning. The Player exclusive shops that only accepted these Gold Points was extremely useful. My eyes sparkled.

"Gold points. Give me."

"Unfortunately, it is only given to the first arrival. Originally, it was intended for one person to be award ten thousand Gold Points. Coincidentally, with four people having arrived first, the reward was divided into four portions. Player Kim Su-hyun is not applicable."

Was it? I nodded regretfully. There was no need to worry about money if I exchanged 2500 Gold Points to Hall Plain Gold. Or rather, I could even acquire some beginner equipment. Seeing my despondent expression, Seraph looked at me uncomprehendingly.

"Player Kim Su-hyun. You seem quite remorseful. The reward is no more than 2500 points."

"Gold Points don't grow on trees you know."

"That is correct. However, Player Kim Su-hyun currently possesses exactly 3 784 720 Gold Points. I do not believe you need to dwell on 2500 Points."

"... What?"

TN:

Been meaning to post this yesterday but I didn't have the opportunity till now. My apologies.

MEMORIZE EP.34  
Boss Monster. (4/4)

Please continue reading on

I had over 3 million Gold Points?

For a moment, I was overwhelmed by what she said. But then I remembered something Seraph mentioned just before I came back to the past.

<Please do not misinterpret what I am about to say. I spoke before, Player Kim Su-Hyun, you are currently in possession of considerable GP. To let it disappear like this is not a rational action.>

Did I had that much Gold Points left after my Privileges? I wondered if it was possible to have this much Points remaining but it kind of made sense to me. Even though I had accomplished numerous deeds, I had stopped caring about Gold Points in the later half of my life in Hall Plain. I do have a hazy memory of receiving an unimaginable amount of Gold Points when I got my hands on the Zero Code. I guess hindsight is twenty/twenty.

“Good. Then call up the Player store list for me.”

“Yes. Understood. However, there is still an outstanding reward. ”

“This again?”

Seraph nodded her head at my question

“This pertains the Boss monster you have defeated. I shall transfer the reward at once. Please check the message box for more details.”

Hearing this, I lightly flicked my finger. Suddenly, message after messages began to pop up in front of me.

An Outstanding Achievement!

You have defeated the Boss Monster – An apex predator that had kill numerous potential Players in the Rite of Passage. An achievement will be added to the count.

You have received 2 Free Attribute Points.

You have received fifty-thousand Gold Points. Gold Points can be used within the Room of Summoning or in large cities with Player exclusive shops.

Whoa.

Getting an Achievement and fifty-thousand Gold Points was great but receiving Free Attributes Points was quite unexpected and pleasant surprise. A Player could receive these as a reward for completing the first stage mission, which was to graduate from the Player Academy. But that would take three months and the Player only received four points.

There were other methods besides the Academy but they were few and far between. Also the time it took to completely one was insane. In the past, I had twenty-one Achievements but from all that, I was given a partly one free Attribute Point. Knowing this, I became ecstatic.

Seraph still looked on with that casual, nonchalant expressing as she pulled up the Player store listing.

[Player Store]

\* Items can only be purchased through Player's own Gold Points.

[Player Kim Su-hyun's Gold Points: 3,834,720 GP]

- \* 1. Weapons(▽)
- \* 2. Armors(▽)
- \* 3. Accessory(▽)
- \* 4. Other Equipment(▽)
- \* 5. Potions(▽)
- \* 6. Elixirs(▽)
- \* 7. Spells(▽)
- \* 8. Materials(▽)
- \* 9. Wish(Need GP: 1,000,000)
- \* 10. Miscellaneous(▽)

Shifting through the lists, I couldn't see the items I was looking for. But then I had a eureka moment.

"I am going to donate 77,777 Gold Points to the store. So hurry up and show me the hidden items."

There was a rumour about a Player that had used 77,777 GP by chance and discovered this secret. This 77,777 GP was a secret Easter Egg that allowed the Player to see the hidden items within the Player store only once. The funny thing was that this Player was so broke he couldn't purchase anything.

"... How did you know this as well?"

"The Boss Monster told me while it was begging for its life."

"Processing this is certainly not a problem but please stop with your falsity. Also please refrain from doing anything strange like the Hwajung."

I nodded all the while smirking at her comment. Seraph just scowled lightly with her usual grace, unwilling to take my answer at face value.

“... Confirmed, 77,777 GP has been received. For one time only, all hidden items will be revealed. Player Kim Su-hyun has 3,756,943 GP remaining.”

Seraph indicated as she lightly waved her hand but I could see her slightly cringing as she spoke. The list renewed itself and was updated. I didn't even bother with all the options on the list, I went straight to the Elixir tab as there might be something that could increase my vitality.

The Potions tab began to spread out and increase in size. I slowly began to scroll through it.

Oh, there was something like this? Having an elixir or two would come in handy... but it was three hundred thousand GP each. Hmm, an elixir that can increase Special and Latent Ability by one rank... Not bad at all at five hundred thousand GP each. Quite affordable.

Other Players would probably gasp at this extravagant prices but I bought them without a second thought. Spending GP was more beneficial than saving it up and with chances like these happened rarely, I decided to spend as much GP as possible. But, there was one thing I absolutely refused to consider and that was buying a wish. Wishes were in direct violations with my principal and other than using it to save another Player, it was useless to me.

“Wha, an elixir that increases Attribute points by six and it's only nine hundred thousand points. Seraph, this, I want three of them.”

“That is impossible. Items purchased from the hidden list disappears immediately after purchase. Except for potions, it is impossible to buy more than two of the same item.”

This meant no-one else would be able to purchase these elixirs after me. Slightly regretful I decided to concede for the other Players. After carefully going through the store list from 1 to 10, I decided to purchase the following items:

\* Angel Tears (x1) : Generates six new Attribute Points. The points can be added to any Attribute the Player desires. (900,000 GP)

\* Elixirs (x2) : Cures any status. Recovers all mana and vitality. Can bring back a person from death's door.

\* Vision Elixir (x1) – increases Skill: This elixir can increase Special : Latent Ability by one rank. However, this does not apply to Unique Abilities. (700,000 GP)

\* Vitality Boosting Elixir (x1) : Increase Vitality by 2 Points. Cannot increase other Attributes. (200,000 GP)

\* Nil-Sword (x1) : An invisible sword that has been passed down since time immemorial. The sword confers an ability to the Player. The sword is invisible to the naked eye as it is made from a substance that exists in the spirit world. Therefore the sword's attack can pierce enemies in different dimensions and if the Player can satisfy a set condition, the Player can summon a Sword God into the world. The sword possesses an impressive sharpness and boasts an excellent durability, with an ability to restore itself in the case of damage. Another of Nil-Sword's properties allows it to consume 100% of Magic Attacks and create a Magical Defense. (1,200,000 GP)

\* Exchange GP for Hall Plain Gold (10 GP = 1 Gold) : 10000 GP → 1000 Gold

Total purchase amounts to 3,610,000 GP. There is no refund. Would you like to purchase?

"Yes."

Purchase complete. Player Kim Su-hyun has 146,943 GP remaining. Items have been transferred to the Player's storage. Player can access their storage in any settlements.

Whew. After ending a joyful shopping session, I lifted up my head and saw that Seraph was palming her lovely face with her hands. This was the first time I saw Seraph being so frustrated. Naturally, I took advantage of it.

"Seraph. Are you hurt? Why are you crying?"

"... Player Kim Su-hyun"

"Yeah?"

"To spend so much at once... I can understand a few things but... and that Nil-Sword... And..."

Letting out a deep sigh, Seraph looked at me strangely. I bought this much as I was certainly not going to get this opportunity again. The GP? I could simply save it up again. I spent the GP I earned the way I wanted to so I couldn't fathom why Seraph was giving me such a look.

Catching her staring at me, Seraph hastily fixed her expression.

"The Nil-Sword... on the surface, its design is quite plain. There are numerous other swords with good abilities and splendid design. I would like to hear the reason why you have selected this particular sword."

"Only fools focus on the appearance of their swords. Also, while it's a shame that it doesn't have particularly good perks, the fact that the sword is invisible gives me a huge advantage at the start of the battle. This sword also provides 100% defence against

Magic attacks and reuse that mana as Magic Shield. If I use Hwajung in conjunction with the sword, there would be no equal. The sword is also durable and recovers itself... What? You worried now?"

Seraph let out a solitary laughter at my jab.

"To be honest, I do feel a little worried. Player Kim Su-hyun is strong. With all the items you have obtained using the Gold Points you can be considered stronger than the other top Players who had entered before you... However, monitoring is forbidden. Perhaps you might know this already but in Hall Plain, the Players have a strong tendency to keep and protect their vested interests. There are also small groups that resort to using extreme measure. In there, it is impossible to accomplish things alone."

Her last couple of words poked my heart sharply. I unconsciously chewed on my lips before replying.

"I understand what you are saying. The protruding awl is a target. You don't have to worry."

"I am relieved that you know this."

I looked at Seraph nonchalantly.

"By the way, how much time is left?"

"Two hours has passed since you have cleared the Rite of Passage. If you would like, I can provide an overall explanation of Hall Plain."

"... Don't want to hear it."

With the remaining time, I decide to meditate. Meditation was primarily a training tool in which one lost track of time while contemplating one's inner being. I sat cross-legged and was about to sink into my inner being when I heard Seraph's alluring voice.

"Player Kim Su-hyun."

"What?"

"There is one thing I would like to ask."

"Spit it out."

No matter how harsh I spoke, Seraph still looked at me calmly.

"Player Kim Su-hyun, do you hate me?"

What dribbles is she on about now? Opening my eyes, I gave Seraph an unpleasant look. I couldn't grasp the meaning behind this sudden rhetoric. Having realised this Seraph amended.

"Player Kim Su-hyun, I am your Assistant and guide."

"To me, you are an annoying Angel that meddles in everything."

"In the Rite of Passage, I saw a man who was patient and reliable to his fellow companions. Is that Player Kim Su-hyun's real persona? Or is the person whom I am speaking with the real persona?"

I looked at her with scrutiny. To put it bluntly, the me right now was closer to my real self. The Rite of Passage allowed me to practice and build my persona. With her amendment, I understood what she was trying to ask.

"... Humans are creatures with thousand different faces"

Seraph eyes became wide as I answered her gently rather than snapping at her again.

"I would like to request a more detailed explanation."

"It means you act differently depending on the person. I act nice to those who like me and do you think I need to act friendly to those who hate me?"

Seraph nodded briefly at my answer.

"The line between the two seems to be clearly drawn. Based on your explanation, I do not hate Player Kim Su-hyun. However, you have yet to look at me in a friendly manner."

"Don't distinguish between the two so easily. Human sometimes hopes for those who hate them to like them. That means the exact opposite also exist."

If there is one thing I like about Seraph, conversation flowed directly and to the point. She didn't misinterpret but accepted things as I said them and analysed them rationally. Seraph nodded once more and answered.

"I understand. I feel as if I received good guidance today."

"I really have no idea what you hoped to gain from someone you forcefully kidnapped and using as a guinea pig. Unbelievable. Anyway, don't talk to me anymore."

Seraph looked like she wanted to continue the conversation but she kept her mouth shut. Clearing my mind, I immediately started my meditation.



MEMORIZE EP.35  
To Hall Plain! (1/4)

Please continue reading on

Hall Plain was divided into four different continents. The East, West, North and Southern continents were established areas which are under the control of various Players and Residents (Existing citizens of Hall Plain). Yet, compared to these established regions, there was still a vast tract of lands that was left unexplored. Only a day's travel away from the established zones laid unknown dangers.

To deal with the anxiety of travelling through the unknown dangers, expeditions were sent to explore and occupy the wilderness. These expeditions created safe passageways to travel between continents and towns but fears persisted as the wilderness blanketed the whole regions.

Ah-hyun and the rest of the party were assigned to the Northern continent as the starting point. Players who earned their qualifications in the Rite of Passage were first summoned to the <Starting Inn> found in the largest city of each continent. With a total of 5 <Starting Inns>, this meant that there were five different Rite of Passages that happened simultaneously.

By Angel's decisions, An-hyun and the party were the first to arrived in Hall Plain. They woke up from the Inn and went down to the first floor as they were instructed. Seeing the chairs and tables littered around the place, they sat down and waited for other Players to emerge.

There wasn't anything special about the inn, this was a place built just for people to rest and to wait for others. There were a door and windows on the far side, looking outside through the windows, An-hyun decided against leaving the Inn. There was nothing out there except for pure blue barrier that completely surrounded the Inn. This made the Inn feel separated from the outside world.

The inn was silent as other Players had yet to arrive. An-hyun paced around the windows before cautiously sitting on one of the empty chairs. There were familiar faces around him. An-sol, Lee Yu-jung and Kim Han-byeol... Not a word was shared between them. Rather, they couldn't.

Stealing a glance at his sister, An-Hyun saw that she was shaking and her teeth were chattering insatiably. An-hyun knew exactly what she was going through, the remorse of survivor's guilt. He himself was filled with it and tremor rumbled through his body. The source of this deep apprehension was that Kim Su-hyun was dead. The support they desperately needed disappearing.

An-hyun's mind was filled with memories of Su-hyun. That Hyung was patient and calm. Whenever Hyung spoke with his silent countenance, An-hyun felt his confidence rising.

Not even a week had passed since they had met, but Hyung had left a deep impression on them all.

<Fly, you fools! Run to the Warp Gate!>

Hyung, who had send them off with a wave and a smile, all the while he was crumbled on the ground. Laid low by that monster's tail. An-hyun realised he was nothing. All this time, it was Hyung's reassuring presence that allowed him to step forward. He had unconsciously leant too much on the support Hyung provided.

An-hyun couldn't bear to look at Yu-jung and Han-byeol, knowing that Hyung had sacrificed his life to save his sister. But he gathered his courage and lifted his head, he wanted to see how they were.

Yu-jung had flopped on the table. She had buried her head in her arms the moment she came down and hadn't moved since. He could see her trembling occasionally, trying to hide showing her weakness from the others.

An-sol was still the same. Though she wasn't weeping bitterly, tears leaked from her eyes and dripped to the floor. There were still many unshed tears left in her eyes. Even the Angel had gently consoled An-sol while setting up the basic settings. Only Han-byeol managed to maintain her cold expression. An-hyun couldn't fathom what she was thinking but he felt a cold aura encircling the surrounding.

No one opened their lips and the silence reigned in the quiet Inn. Only faint weeping was intermittently heard. Time passed and raucous could be heard inside the Inn. The sound of multiple people speaking leaked out from the second floor. The party could hear unfamiliar voices when the door of the second floor opened. From this, An-hyun recognises that it must be others that survived the Rite of Passage. But a silent idea betrayed his line of thought.

'That could be Hyung. He could have escaped. Then...'

An-hyun quickly leapt up from his seat. At the sudden noise, everyone focused their eyes on An-hyun. Even Yu-jung lifted her eyes and looked at him with her swollen eyes. An-hyun began to speak excitedly.

"Hyung, that could be Hyung."

"... What are you talking about?" Yu-jung retorted in a hoarse voice.

An-hyun quickly pointed toward the stairs leading to the second floor. "We can't be the only people that survived. There's definitely other survivors that were transferred back. Hyung might be one of them..."

Hearing An-hyun's explanation, Yu-jung quickly rose herself and ran toward the stairs. An-sol chased after her, having come to the same conclusion. Only Han-byeol looked on apathetically, unwilling to believe in a fool's hope.

Humans were such pitiful animals. Inclined to self-justification over and over. They had all seen Kim Su-hyun collapsed before the monster. They had all shed tears at his final goodbye. But they all had hope, that maybe, just maybe...

"If it's Hyung, he can do it. Right? He must have escaped."

"Ye... yeah. Oppa isn't a person who would go quietly. He will slam open that door like he did in the City and climb down stairs. Yup. Exactly like that."

With a shaky voice, An-hyun and Yu-jung looked toward each other, trying to convince themselves. Before they could rush up to the second floor, they heard the door opening. Like magic, they stop in their tracks and turn their site upwards. Their hearts thumping madly.

The door soon opened and the person was... regrettably not Kim Su-hyun. They were merely people that the party had met before. A total of four people were coming down the stairs and the person leading them looked at An-hyun with recognition.

"Oh. You guys are here already. Good to see that you are all alive."

"Huh? Wu Jung-min. Who the hell is... Ah~ It's those kids from back then. So they all survived? Didn't they say they were going to the Warp Gate?"

"... Chun Seun-Hyun. Shut up."

The three guys chatted amongst themselves as they came down to the first floor. The woman who had lost her sister, Won Hye-Su, followed behind them silently looking depressed.

But An-hyun and the rest had no desire to pay attention to such matters. For An-hyun, the identities of people coming down the stairs was a matter of life and death. The moment he saw Wu Jung-min, he was overcome with disappointment. A strange mood permeated the air. Noticing this, Seon Yu-un led Won Hye-Su to one of the tables and sat down. Only Chun Seun-Hyun was grumbling about in discontent.

"Feh! There is no need to look gloomy because of us. We are all in the same boat you know. Okay, okay. I am sorry for throwing that dagger."

"... Uh."

"Ah. Okay. I am really sorry. I've changed a lot since then."

“... It doesn't matter.”

“Re, really? I see... That's good then. Haha... ha...”

Yu-jung's reply turned Chun Seun-Hyun more fretful. He was puzzled as she seemed out of character. Even Wu Jung-min caught on and began to calmly scan the surrounding.

“Come to think of it, you are one person short. Where is the young man with the crossbow?”

Only silence met Wu Jung-min's question and he immediately connected the dots, imagining what could have happened. There was only one reason that guy wasn't here, it meant he died in the Rite of Passage.

“Perhaps... did it get him? I told him not to go to the Warp Gate but looks like he was too stubborn to listen. Then how did all of you survive...”

“He's not dead!”

“He's still alive!”

Yu-jung and An-sol shrieked their denial. The atmosphere turned awkward for a moment, but Wu Jung-min pushed on and turned to An-hyun.

“Did you perhaps meet that monster? The alien looking one.”

An-hyun nodded weakly and turned away, unwilling to answer any more questions. Understanding what An-hyun was going through, Wu Jung-min made a bitter smile as he moved silently toward where Seon Yu-un and Won Hye-Su was sitting. Chun Seun-Hyun followed suit, sitting in the closest chair and stretched his legs

“Uuuuuuuuu. Finally, I feel alive sitting on a chair rather than cold stone. So those guys met that monster as well?”

“Seun-Hyun. Don't talk so loudly. It's the same for them like when we lost Jin-Tae.”

“Then he's 100% certainly dead. Unlucky. I was going to get him back once I saw him again. By the way, Hye-su...”

Chun Seun-hyun stopped in the middle of his speech, seeing the glare Seon Yu-un was sending him. Won Hye-Su heard her name being called. Lifting her head for a moment, she spoke with a weary voice.

“It doesn’t matter to me whether he’s dead or not. Though it is regrettable. I wished he would go through the pain I went suffered. Looks like he became the cause of the pain rather.”

Hearing such thoughtless words, Lee Yu-jung was about to explode. Jung-min sent Won Hye-Su a cold look and cut her off in a heavy voice.

“Stop talking to others so carelessly.”

“I said this doesn’t matter to me at all. What’s there to argue about?”

“Then why did you said that young man should go through the same pain you went suffered? We lost Jin-tae and your sister. You know how it feels to lose someone precious and you think it’s alright to bitch about it like this?”

“That’s...”

When Won Hye-su hesitated, Jung-min snorted and continued.

“If you have nothing good to say, keep your mouth shut. Again, that young man had nothing to do with Hye-yun’s death.”

“Jung-min. Hye-su. Just stop it.”

Those two continued to glare at each other. Hye-su was fuming in her anger. Seon Yu-un interjects before it could become worse. However, the two continued to stare daggers into each other’s eyes.

Except for Yu-jung, An-hyun and the party didn’t care at all what was happening next to them. Their eyes were still focused on the staircase. The second floor became more and more noisy, signalling more survivors being transported there.

The sound of joy, of despair and numerous others could be heard. The survivors grouped themselves and began to descend the staircase. The door opened once more and the two latest figures revealed themselves. They were another set of familiar faces.

Park Don-gul.

\*\*\*\*\*

His felt refreshed from the pleasurable feeling of having mana spread throughout his body. The effect seemed amplified by the fact that Hwajung had unclogged the minute points from his fingertips to the toe. From detailed inspection of his body, he could see that both the quantity and the quality of mana had increased. That wasn’t all.

Wastes were burned away and blood vessels were opened, making the whole body more receptive to mana. This meant that if I faced a Player with same attributes and sword, I would be superior.

Still, I had a long way to go before I could fully use Hwajung. That 70 Vitality point was just too much of a stumbling block. Seraph stated that to use Hwajung, I required a minimum of 90 Vitality points and to use Hwajung to its maximum potential, I needed a minimum of 101 Vitality. (I was astounded when I heard this. The difference between 99 and 100 points was like heaven and earth. Between 100 and 101 the difference was a whole world apart.)

Trying to use the full power right now with only 70 points would result in my body breaking down. Counting the maximum amount of points I could earn in the beginning, I found I could earn a total of 14 points.

2 points from the Boss monster, 2 points from the Vitality-Boosting Elixir, 6 points from the Angel Tears and 4 points for completing the Beginner Academy. I knew I should put all the points I earned and was about to earn into Vitality, but there was one corner of my heart that was filled with greed.

In Hall Plain, someone with an average Attributes of around 60 could pull their own weight. For that reason, as the person increased their Attribute to 70, 80 and 90 their value increased correspondingly. Once an Attribute went over 90 points, it became progressively difficult that even 1 point increase became precious.

That's why my greed flared up. I called up my Attributes.

[Strength 94] [Resistance 92] [Agility 98] [Vitality 70] [Magic Power 96] [Luck 88]

Excluding the points from the Vitality Booster Elixir, I had 12 points that I could use.

If I increased Strength by 4 points, Agility by 3 points, Magic Power by 5 points, then I had two attributes over 101 points with strength at 98 points. If Seraph could read my mind right now, she would be frothing at the mouth.

Vitality was the foundation for all the other Attributes. A weak foundation would cause a bottleneck, no matter how high the Attribute point was. I knew I shouldn't but there was that nagging thought kept egging me on.

For now, I decided to wipe my thoughts clean. I decided that I was going to train my vitality like crazy in the Beginner Academy for three months. There was a high chance that Vitality wouldn't even increase but I was grasping straws at this point. As more Vitality I increased, the more points I had for other Attributes.

After calling back the mana from my whole body and storing it, I opened my eyes. I didn't know how much time had passed but I was sure it was more than a day. Looking

around, I saw that the portal to Hall Plain was already opened. Feeling dumbfounded, I called out to Seraph who was still silently watching me.

“... Did the transfer start already?”

“Yes. Transfer of most of the Players has been complete, only Player Kim Su-hyun is remaining.”

“Why didn’t you say anything?”

“Rather than meditation... it seems you were deep in thought. I did not want to act rashly. You have no need to worry as there is still time left.”

The guys must be worried. This grated me as I wanted to enter early and clear up any misunderstandings. Shaking off the dust, I stood up and walked toward the portal to Hall Plain.

I did not say any goodbye to Seraph. There was no need, as we had to see more of each other in the future. However, Seraph seems to have a different idea as she grasped me by the collar before I could enter the portal.

“Player Kim Su-hyun.”

“What?”

I didn’t turn around. I already had one foot inside the portal.

“Please be safe. If there is a need to call you, I shall send a message to the temple.”

I shrugged casually and threw myself into the blue light.

MEMORIZE EP.36  
To Hall Plain! (2/4)

Please continue reading on

There was nothing special about the transfer. Having experienced it over a hundred times, it was a so~so feeling. I was transferred to the <Starting Inn> and came out of the second floor hallway. Arriving here, I heard a large commotion coming from the lower floor. This was a time to wait for the Players in Hall Plain to come and introduce us to the world. Usually, there was a silent anxiety in the Inn as the survivors waited to find out what next, but this level of noise was unexpected.

The Summoning Net surrounding the Inn was released once all the new players had finished their set up and was transferred to Hall Plain. Once this net was released, the



existing players entered the Inn and introduced the world to the new players. My old self detested these guides.

These guides were quite arrogant. They looked upon the new comers like fresh new recruit in the army. Though I do acknowledge that these guides had passed their Rite of Passage, had gone through these transition period and survived through countless hardships.

There was nothing worth listening to. After adjusting to Hall Plain, one begins to get conceited and look upon the new players like "I was like them once." I remember the player who told me this died three month later.

Although I didn't like these guides, there was nothing much I could do about it. The best thing to do right now was listen to their explanation and go through the Player Academy.

Well, since I already spoke this much, let me explain more about Player Academy. I think the concept of this Academy was quite ingenious. I don't know who suggested establishing it but that person must have been a bit crazy. Rather than spending their early days being clueless about things, the Academy trained the new players. The improvement was remarkable and pointless early death drop significantly.

Regardless, I needed to meet up with the party and clear up all the misunderstanding. After that, I had no idea what to say. Thinking on this, I reached the end of the second floor hallway. Now I just needed to open the door in front of me.

"Fuck you!"

While I was thinking of a lie and how to clear up the misunderstanding, I heard a voice from the door. It was a familiar voice that could be heard from the other side of the door.

"Don't bark at me! You son of bitch!"

"I am telling you, you crazy bitch. I saw it clearly with my two eyes!"

"That means your going blind! You lying asshole!"

"You crazy bitch. You think I was the only one? You think? Bo-rim also saw it. I keep telling you, that crossbow was broken in half!"

Hearing the familiar name, I could guess who was spewing this much profanity. The troublemaker, Park Don-gul. I never have expected him to survive. Well, truthfully, I had lost all interest in them. Dead or alive, I just didn't have it in me to care. Regardless, I decided to be a positive as possible. The early memory was still seared in my mind and the time will come when I can beat him to a pulp.



The other high pitch voice, I recognized it in an instant. The constant friction between the two, Park Don-gul and Lee Yu-jung, what an ill-fated relationship. I clicked my tongue and quietly opened the door.

“Shut...!?”

Hearing the creaking of the door opening, many people turned their gaze to it. Before Yu-jung could tell Don-gul to shut up, she heard the door opening and turned her head up. Seeing this, I laughed awkwardly.

As expected, I was the last person to be transferred. As I took a step outside the door, everyone in the Inn was looking at me. There must be over forty people crowding the Inn. Last time, there was less than twenty. Discounting the number of high-state players, it look like there was a clear effect of killing the Boss on the sixth day. Last time, about half of the people in this room had been killed.

Walking down one step at a time, I greeted them easily enough.

“Everyone is alive. Glad to see that you are all safe.”

Of course they were alive. I sent them off at the Warp Gate with the utmost care and affection. Even then, I received no response at my greeting. I felt slightly disconcerted while Yu-jung came stumbling towards me.

“Oppa...?”

“Yeah.”

She lifted her arms and gently rubbed her hands on my cheeks. Her eyes and lips were trembling, her emotions gushing up, amazed at my sudden appearance. Yu-jung wasn't the only one. The faint hope had become a reality. The party, even Wu Jung-min, looked at me in disbelief.

Yu-jung asked with a strained voice.

“Oppa... Su-hyun Oppa? You are not someone else, are you?”

“Of course, do you think I am a doppelganger? Ou, ouch! Cut that out, it hurts.”

“Congratulations on coming back alive. I never thought there was a chance you would survived... amazing.”

I barely managed to pull Yu-jung's hands off my cheeks, before I heard a husky voice next to me. Turning my head, the voice came from Wu Jung-min. He looked like he had more to say but I shook my head slightly. Wu Jung-min seems to have caught the sign

as he closed his half opened mouth. Next, I caught the eyes of Won Hye-su behind Wu Jung-min, who immediately looked away.

An-hyun looked at me with a welcoming expression. Yu-jung's expression was half happy, half crying. Sol was crying out right. An-hyun and I stared at each other for a while. He seems like he wanted to say something, as his lips kept moving but no sound came out.

A case where no matter how much you wanted to speak, the words didn't come. This didn't matter much, but I wanted to get out of the spotlight. The situation was already awkward, but with Sol crying it just became really embarrassing.

I tried to soothe the tearful Sol as I deliberately moved to a corner. Park Don-gul was in that place. Seeing us approaching, he took Lee Bo-rim with him to the opposite side of us.

I waited for the gaze to turn away from us and for the party members to compose themselves. But there was one person bothering me and that was An-sol. She sat next to me, grabbing my cloth and refusing to let go.

I signaled An-hyun for help, but he just opened his mouth and laughed.

"Hyung. I still can't believe it. You are like a phoenix, coming back from the dead.."

"Haha. That's a bit too farfetched. I was just lucky, that's all."

An-hyun shook his head from my reply. Never mind that, do something about your sister. She's not a baby, so why is she clutching my cloth so tightly? An-sol didn't seem to care about my position as she spoke with a shaky voice.

"That's not it. For me, I saw a miracle. I waited at the bottom of the stairs, thinking maybe... Then Oppa..."

Her voice and her grasp on my cloth became stronger. She couldn't finish what she was saying as she burst into tears once more. Seeing this An-sol I felt hopeless. But, I felt a bitter in my heart as it was time for me to lie to them.

"Anyways, I am glad to see you all alive."

"If you were alive, you should have came earlier! You are always making us worry... No, I am sorry Oppa. It wasn't even your fault..."

I tilted my head at this scolding, apologies and tears from Yu-jung. I never knew these kids were worrying about me this much, I felt happy. Yu-jung clenched her hand into a fist and rubbed the evidence of tears from the corner of her eyes.

“Oppa, tell us. That bastard was telling us that he saw your crossbow broken in half by the Warp Gate. Oppa was gone and the monster had disappeared.”

Ahem. The time had come. How fortunated that I had the foresight to burn the Boss monster’s corpse. But leaving that crossbow behind was quite careless of me. I wanted to avoid the topic but then I felt a cold glare. It was none other than Kim Han-byeol. If I answered vaguely now, I felt I would be in some kind of trouble with her later.

Kim Han-byeol had not spoken a word since I entered the Inn. Except for when she first saw me, her expression hadn’t changed at all. I turned my head for a moment and faced her. Reading the emotions within her eyes, although it was really small, it was mixed.

She felt overall relief but mixed in there was small amount of distrust and suspicion. Han-byeol was definitely not like the others. She had quite a similar personality as me. She never let the situation affect her or showed her emotions, always leaving room for reasoning. She would never grasp the truth about the essence of the matter, but the fact was, she had doubts about me.

The Inn had settled a bit, however that didn’t mean it was silent. Conversations erupted all around between the survivors. I sighed in my heart. I felt I was sighing too much these days. I decided that I would tell them I didn’t remember much of it.

“Yeah. That’s right. I was trying to avoid the monster’s attack... but that thing was targeting my crossbow from the beginning. It shattered in half immediately. The situation was quite gloomy. Hahaha.”

“Is your left arm fine?”

Kim Han-byeol interject immediately after I finished. She sounded sincerely, however she had an ulterior motive ‘wasn’t the crossbow on your left arm?’ I wetted my lips before answering her.

“The monster attacked with it’s tail. My left arm was raised and the tail grazed passed it, taking the crossbow with it.”

“... Then what happened next?”

“Well, truth be told, I don’t know. What can I say? I can’t remember it well. I really felt like I was going to die, nothing else came to mind. That thing was trying to stomp me to death and I rolled like my life depended on it...”

I explained in a quiet voice, twisting and looping my original experience. It ended with me saying that in the dust cloud, I took my chance and ran with all my strength toward the forest. Everyone nodded at that. Of course, everyone except Kim Han-byeol. Anyone who had faced the Boss monster for three minutes would immediately pick up on that my explanation was riddled with mistruth.

Kim Han-byeol seems deep in thought as she didn't ask anymore questions. She kept her mouth closed as they all remembered what had happened and the atmosphere was celebratory on my survival. The suspicion in her eyes had yet to clear up. I decide to stop for now. This spin doctoring was all a delaying tactic on my part anyways.

Before we knew it, the blue light outside the window was fading.

## **Chapter 037 – To the Hall HaPlain! #1**

Please continue reading on

As soon as the protective barrier disappeared, the previously tightly closed Inn door... opened! As soon as it did so, a group of people immediately entered. Judging by their shabby clothing, they were the users that entered Hall Plain before our group.

The city I'm starting at is a place called Babara. It's known to be the largest city in the Northern Reaches of the country. Since each country only has one large city, they became the base of many users. Each user within the city possessed a keen spirit, giving them a deadly look.

The users all had a design carved over their hearts: a gold lion. It was a design I recognized. The North Country's Golden Lion Clan... I remember them as a clan that had made history in the Whole Plain. Alas, as a result of a difficult expedition and a weakened military, another clan jumped at the chance and attacked them. Thus started their walk towards self-destruction, but that happened later on.

A titan, about 190 cm tall, that wore a colorful robe that didn't quite fit his domineering figure skimmed his eyes throughout the Inn a bit, then spoke with an odd voice.

"The second Inn has more people than I would have thought."

His speech wasn't particularly directed towards us. The users that entered the room after him seemed to hold the same sentiments. Among them, one started to count the people in the Inn, then spoke.

"Wow... there are actually 43 new users at the second Inn! I haven't seen this many noobs in a long time."

"Isn't this the most noobs we've had recently?"

"I'm not sure, if compared to last year at just this Inn alone, probably, but what about the other Inns?"

The survivors (new users) looked at the Veterans worriedly. Among the survivors, some were observing the current atmosphere and others were listening to their Veterans' words. For now, I decided to remember their faces.

“I’m sure they’re counting them. Hey, Hyun-Woo is coming from the first Inn. Line up.”

After hearing the name Hyun-Woo, the previously chatty users quickly lined up in a straight line perpendicular to the sides of the Inn’s door. Hyun-Woo. The Golden Lion Clan. As soon as I connected those two names, I thought of something: if I’m correct, the Park Hyun-Woo that will eventually become the clan’s leader is about to appear.

Moments later, someone walked in between the lines of users, straight towards the Inn. He was good-looking guy that had a clean cut and gave a good impression. He looked a lot younger than when I first saw him, but after seeing his eyes, I was certain that he was Park Hyun-Woo. I was stronger than before, enough that I could activate the third eye.

### **Player Status**

- \* Name: Park Hyun-Woo (4 Years)
- \* Class: Normal Sword Expert
- \* Nation: Babara (Global City)
- \* Clan: Golden Lion
- \* Alias / Nationality: One to leave traces of the sword / South Korea
- \* Sex: Male
- \* Height / Weight: 179.2cm / 68.7kg
- \* Susceptibility: Neutral / Neutral

### **Skills**

- \* Power 90 / Endurance 81 / Agility 73 / Stamina 87 / Mana 89 / Luck 60

As expected... he’s Park Hyun-Woo. There was no point in looking at his stats, but seeing as how he’s only a Sword Expert, it seems like there is still room for him to grow. I think that he’ll become a sword master after leveling up another two times or so. No, he definitely can. He was even welcomed as Sword Master during the First Alliance War.

Although I’ve heard a lot about him, he wasn’t the one that I had a sword fight against. His Agility stat was pretty low, but that was evened out by his impressive average mana since he was a sword wielder.

I decided to stop paying attention to him. I heard that he was killed when the Golden Lion was defeated during the Alliance War. More importantly, having an enemy within a big clan will make making alliances with that clan hard.

While I mused within my own world, the rest of the survivors’ attention was focused on Park Hyun-Woo. He slowly walked in and carefully observed each of our faces. Soon, a look of surprise appeared on his own.

“Seems like there are a lot of new users here. Probably... over 40?”

“There’s 43. How many survived the first Inn?”

“19. No matter, this is good. Separate them by class and gather them at the square. I’ll have them bring the survivors from the third, fourth and fifth Inn.”

After answering their question and giving the command, Park Hyun-Woo left the Inn with a stern look planted on his face.

\*

The square was filled with so many users. It felt nice to be back at Babara Square. There isn’t anything particularly amazing here; if I had to compare it to something, I would say that it’s similar to an outdoor theater.

Directly at the center of the square was a round stage with staircases leading up to it. After separating the new users by class, the Veterans sat down on each of the stairs. Although their butts were chilled by the cold bricks, they endured it and turned their attention towards the center of the stage.

There were many users with the gold lion design on their bosoms on the stage. They each carried a conceited look on their faces, looking at us as they would animals at a zoo.

If there were people who witnessed this and also knew of the Hall Plain issue, they could say that Babara was in a better situation. The Western Country was taken care of by American users and had an open policy towards the people. This was why they had a large population and were called a “free country.” However, they can’t be considered a peaceful country.

In the Korea-controlled North Country, the Golden Lion Clan was considered the best out of all the clans there. I think I heard someone mention that the rules in the North Country were pretty strict. It makes them look pretty arrogant though.

Right now, I wasn’t with my group. I wasn’t the only one; most of the new users were probably also away from their groups. The Veterans said that they were going to group the new users according to their class.

Momentarily, I was curious as to what An Hyun and the others picked for their classes, but I decided to find out later. I pushed the thought aside, and soon I turned my attention back to the stage. Park Hyun-Woo and several others were talking amongst themselves. As there was not much else to do, I quietly gathered my mana and amplified my hearing. I was curious as to what they were talking about.

“Report on the number of people by Inn. First Inn, 19. Second Inn, 43. Third Inn, 22. Fourth Inn, 29. Fifth Inn, 17. There’s a total of 130 new users.”

“What about number of users per class?”

“There are 75 Close Range Fighters, 26 Long Range Fighters, 18 Magicians, and 11 Priests. There are no one of secret or rare classes.”

“... I see. Thank you. Well, let's begin then. Yoo-Bin. Activate the Voice Amplification magic. Also, bring that guy in front of me here.”

That guy? Who was he talking about? Now that I think about it, there was some sort of commotion when we were leaving the Inn. I couldn't find out exactly had happened since I was mixed within the users that went outside after being separated by class.

Soon after, my question was answered. Park Hyun-Woo dragged a brutally beaten guy to the center of the square. As soon as they stepped in the middle, the small whispers disappeared. It was so quiet that I couldn't even hear people breathe. Park Hyun-Woo continued to drag him with one arm, then threw him up on the stage.

The guy that was thrown onto the stage was Park Dong-Gul. He had foam in his mouth, and his right arm was twisted bizarrely, making him look miserable. I think that maybe he had lost his mind, because his body would occasionally spaz. The expression on his face made me think that he was experiencing excruciating pain...

Ignoring the condition of Park Dong-Gul, Park Hyun-Woo looked at the new users, and spoke.

“First, it's nice to meet the new users that passed the Rite of Passage. I'll skip the small talk since you've probably heard most of it from the Angels. But...”

He stopped talking for a moment before continuing. Everyone's attention was glued on him.

“However, there are still things that have to be said. Everyone right here right now were once citizens of Korea. Everyone right here right now have passed the Rite of Passage. Between you and me is only one difference: who had entered Hall Plain first, and who had entered Hall Plain later. The important thing is...”

Thanks to the Voice Amplification magic, his booming voice filled every pocket within the square. I'm sure that all 130 people could hear him loudly and clearly. As he slowly strode towards the crown, he stopped in front of Park Dong-Gul's body.”

“We. Are not the ones that sends you home.”

There was a certain pressure to his words just then. The new users that were listening to his words intently started to feel uneasy, myself included. I don't think Park Hyun-Woo will put the blame on the new users.

Why? Because I was like that too. Even if you had heard it from the Angels, hearing the words said openly in front of everyone will result in disappointment. After observing the



crowd with a stern expression for a second, Park Hyun-Woo continued to speak with a deep voice.

“We were dragged into this crappy Hall Plain. I understand how frustrated you all must feel. But you must understand- we were once in the same situation that you are in now. I’m sure that you’re all curious as to why we’re here. We have one goal, and it’s to help all of you to get used to Hall Plain. It’s to help all of you to survive. It’s to help all of you, and provide guidance.”

He stopped talking, and glanced down at the body of park Dong-Gul. Even though he was deeply in pain, Park Dong-Gul’s body shook, as if in defiance, as if in defence of his remaining pride. However, as soon as his eyes met Park Hyun-Woo’s, he lowered them. It served him right.

“To elaborate, you can think of it as a video game where the higher-leveled players are helping the new players. HOWEVER! This man here used profanity and violence towards a user that was here to help! Yes, we guarantee one’s freedom- we respect one’s freedom. I know that there are users here that don’t want our help; there are users here that don’t believe our words. To those people, I give a chance right now. If you don’t want our help, please leave this square right now. We will not stop you.”

Even though he had stopped talking, no one dared to speak. Of course, no one stood up either. Silence enveloped the square. Moments later, after Park Hyun-Woo was certain that no one would decide to leave, he nodded twice and started talking again.

“It seems like no one wants to leave. Then, I’ll assume that those here are willing to receive our aid. If at any point an user causes harm towards another, we will take appropriate actions to dispose that that user. Our help will be somewhat painful- but remember, if you feel that the pain is too much, you can give up at any point. Please, keep all that I have said in mind. Yoo-Bin, cancel the Voice Amplification magic.”

Their voices disappeared as the guy named Yoo-Bin released the Voice Amplification magic. Park Hyun-Woo called over a priest, pointed at Park Dong-Gul, and told him something. I hurriedly depleted my mana to increase my hearing once again.

The priest was the titan that I saw at the Inn. To think that he was a priest! The stark contrast between the stereotypes was totally unbalanced. The titan got down on one knee and lowered his body in front of Park Dong-Gul. Moments later, a bright light enveloped his hand as he moved it near Park Dong-Gul’s right arm.

“Recover.”

Ping!

As soon as the titan whispered the word, he raised his hand that was covered in the bright glow. The light blossomed in the air, and was soon greedily absorbed by Park



Dong-Gul's arm. The previously bizarre looking arm was slowly returning to its original position. A couple of the users that witnessed this sight started yelling excitedly.

Park Dong-Gul blinked his eyes, surprised that he was the one being treated. He slowly sat up and tested his right arm. It moved without restrictions, and seemed fully recovered. Park Hyun-Woo looked at Park Dong-Gul with the same stern expression as before and spoke to him quietly.

“Get up.”

As soon as Park Hyun-Woo stopped talking, Park Dong-Gul immediately stood up. He was weak to the strong, yet he was strong to the weak. Park Hyun-Woo's body language suggested that he didn't like Park Dong-Gul at all. His face scrunched up and spoke growlingly.

“Being hostile towards a new user in Babara is a crazy move. On top of that, he was a fellow clan member! I'll let it slide this time, but if there is a next time...”

From this one sentence, I sensed the violent temper blended in his voice. Park Dong-Gul quickly shook his head in denial; it was as if death emanated from Park Hyun-Woo.

After receiving Park Hyun-Woo's instruction, the priest took Park Dong-Gul and led him to the Close Range Fighter group. Park Hyun-Woo once again turned his attention towards us after affirming that Park Dong-Gul was taken care of.

## **Chapter 038 – To the Hall Plain! #2**

Please continue reading on

After Hyun-Woo had the Voice Amplification Spell casted again, he raised his head and looked at the new users. When they had disabled the spell earlier, no one could hear Hyun-Woo other than those that were next to him.

Compared to when he was dealing with Park Dong-Gul, he seemed more calm and spoke more quietly.

“I understand that you've all heard it from the Angels and I know that you have a lot of questions. But, answering all of your questions here would take weeks, even we spent all day answering them.”

Obviously. Since I wanted to enter the User Academy, I quickly agreed with him in my head. Then, as if he had read my mind, he said just what I wanted to hear.

“Also, I'm sure that those who recently passed the Rite of Passage are all very tired. Since all of you agreed to train with us, I'll only briefly go over our future plans.”

He cleared his throat, then continued.

“In our large city of Barbara there is an User Academy building. Among the new users, is there anyone who have already heard a brief introduction from the assistant Angels?”

He emphasized on the word assistant. The Users looked around, as one by one, they started to raise their hands. As they talked amongst themselves, the number of hands in the air steadily increased.

Just from a quick glance, more than half of the group had raised their hand. In fact, excluding some sections of the group, others had all raised their hands. This meant they rated the Angels, as well as the User Academy, very highly. Seeing that a good amount of people had raised their hands, Hyun-Woo signaled for them to lower their hands.

“Great. This may sound repetitive to many of you, but this is very important, and there are still those that haven’t heard it yet. I will explain one more time. The User Academy is a training institute that helps new users adapt and survive. Since they are an institute that’s widely recognized for their efficiency, they are obligated to receive compensation.”

I’m not sure who decided that the Academy required compensation, but it’s something I can agree with. It’s usually very rare for users to voluntarily acknowledge and support such an organization.

Hyun-Woo began by talking about academy’s history and its foundation. He then explained in detail in regards to the training as well as the benefits they’ll receive once they graduate. To sum up the important details:

The training period at the User Academy is three months. In the beginning, a user’s skills tend to improve at a fast rate. The Academy provide efficient ways of training for each user according to their skills and their class. As a result, one can expect a faster increase there than training with their bare hands by themselves. Those that receive training at the Academy receive a 20 silver stipend every week. Users that finish the three months training program will receive four attribute points as a reward. This is the general outline.

I honestly just wanted the four points, but as for others, there were many benefits that probably interested them. Although the description of the Academy was exaggerated, they at least provide food, shelter, training and money. These were already a lot of benefits.

Finally, Hyun-Woo explained about how each of the user’s skills had a limit. It meant that, although raising skill points can be done by every user, there is a limit that differed between each user. He ended by explaining that the four points that’s offered as reward should be used carefully since increasing one’s skill point was difficult.

“With that, I have finished explaining your general outline for the next three months. We were originally going to have you all go to your dorms after this, but it seemed like there are some that still have questions. I’ll answer three or four before we head to the Academy.”

As soon as he said this, a female user that was part of the Long Range fighters quickly raised her hand. I was curious as to what kind of question this impatient girl had to ask. After Hyun-Woo nodded in acknowledgment, the female stood up from her seat and spoke.

“Um...will we...be able...t-to survive and...r-return in...one piece?”

Personally, I was really disappointed by her question. To think she would ask such a ridiculous question... I clicked my tongue at the girl’s idiotic question and observed Hyun-Woo expression. His expression looked really uncomfortable as he looked over at the girl.

Her question made it sound like she hadn’t listened to a word he had said so far. Everyone could tell that he let out a heavy sigh before he answered the question.

“I specifically explained in the beginning that we’re not here to send you home. If I knew how to send people home, would I be standing up here doing this? This is something you new users have to figure out together while spending time at Hall Plain.”

Her cheeks turned red after seeing the pitiful look he gave her. Silence filled the plaza for a brief moment, until a male user from the Spell Caster group raised his hand. He had a clean haircut and looked fairly smart. After Hyun-Woo nodded his head, he stood up and delivered his question.

“I understand that this world we are in now is called Hall Plain. Ordinary people like us are called users. And Barbara is the largest city in the Northern Country. Are there other users like us that live in this city?”

Hyun-Woo nodded his head at the question, then answered.

“No. I’m sure you’ve heard it from the Angels already, but Hall Plain is split up into four countries. Barbara is only the largest city in the Northern Country. Other than this city, there are four mid-sized cities and eight small cities within this country. Users like us have been dispersed throughout those cities. I can’t say that the Northern Country is completely safe, but Korean users do have some degree of control around the cities, so it will be fine.”

“You just said Korean users. Does that mean there are users of other nationalities?”

“Yes. Korean users aren’t the only ones in the Hall Plain. The Eastern Country is controlled by the Japanese users. The Western Country is controlled by the American

users. The Southern Country is controlled by the UK users. Of course there are many users of various other nationalities within each country. However, this ethnic divide is how they're currently separated as a whole."

The second question wasn't as useless as I had expected. As soon as the male user bowed and sat back down, Hyun-Woo started observing the new users. Since he said he would only take three or four questions, it's quite likely that this will be the last question.

Seeing as how no one took the initiative, it seemed like everyone knew it too. Then, Hyun-Woo pointed to someone, and as I turned my head I saw a female user with a hand raised.

I was able to see her face after she stood up; I silently cheered inside my head. That last person to stand up was Kim Han-Byul. With her calm and cold face, she silently observed Hyun-Woo. Since I knew of her keen thinking ability, I was really interested in what she was going to ask. I think the boredom that I felt this whole time finally disappeared.

Her soft lips slightly opened and her beautiful voice escaped through them.

"I heard that all the people here are planning on training at this so-called academy. But, what's your goal for having us train there?"

As soon as she finished, everyone started whispering amongst themselves. Seeing as most of them scrunched up their face, it seemed like they believed that it was a dumb question. Those people were the ones that didn't understand the true intention behind her question. The small group of people that actually understood the true meaning of her question quietly awaited for Hyun-Woo's answer.

I was also surprised by Han-Byul's keen question. Compared to the expression he had when he was answering the first girl, he looked like he was actually contemplating the question. Seeing as he wet his lips, he must've been taken aback.

Han-Byul's question was deeply calculated. Reason and goal wasn't as important and reason and true goal. She wasn't simply asking why they had to get training; she was asking for the real reason behind having the users train there and their purpose for utilizing the academy.

Hyun-Woo hesitated, and kept on opening and closing his mouth. He was very different from when he answered the other questions without a delay. The users started to catch on to his odd behavior since they stopped talking amongst themselves. Slightly uncomfortable, he answered.

"...I have already explained in detail regarding our purpose in utilizing the Academy. The user that asked the question, do you have an issue with the training?"

“It’s not as if I have an issue to talk about. I agree to enter the academy. What I want to hear isn’t how the academy is a necessity; it’s why it is so. Is it truly a training institute that helps new users train and adapt?”

I saw that Hyun-Woo kept his mouth shut. I suddenly recalled her words to me at the hut earlier.

“You’re doing it again. It might work on An Hyun and Yoo-Jung, but it won’t work on me. Don’t try to change the subject.”

Hyun-Woo, too, tried to change the subject. It was like he didn’t know how to answer Han-Byul’s blunt question.

A bitter smile appeared on his face after he bit his lips and kept silent. It was the first time I’ve seen such an interesting expression since entering Hall Plain. Was Han-Byul’s question such a big of a deal that it caused him such internal strife?

Hyun-Woo wet his dry lips with his tongue and answered in a low voice.

“You’ll... naturally find out in time- whether you’ll like it or not.”

### **Chapter 039 – Make an Offer**

Please continue reading on

“The humans that live in Hall Plain are separated into two major categories. There are the original residents of Hall Plain, and then there are the users that entered Hall Plain through the Angels’ intervention. However, it’s a big misconception if you think that all users are of the same thought.”

“They’re... not the same?”

Hyun-Woo nodded at Han-Byul’s inquiry.

“There are users that are working hard to go back to Earth, and there are those that have settled down in Hall Plain. To be more exact, they’re converting themselves into true residents of Hall Plain. Hm...convert does sound a bit odd. To put it simply, you can think of them as people that refuse to return to Earth.”

He kept on swallowing, which made me think he was thirsty. I wondered what he would say next, and my expectations kept increasing.

“I’m sure your wish to return to Earth is the same as that of the members of the Golden Lion Clan. We’re working hard even as we speak to try and find clues on how we may return. However, the users that have settled in Hall Plain are different- they would like to live in Hall Plain forever.”

“Can’t we just leave them behind and group up with those that want to return to Earth?”

It was a reasonable expectation, but the reality was harsh. Hyun-Woo shook his head at Han-Byul’s inquiry.

“To be honest, we can’t just separate the users. Hall Plain is not a playground. This is a reality, and Hall Plain is an actual world. As a result, complex situations are appearing and more issues are arising. There are people doing everything within their power to try and stop us from returning to Earth.”

Was he talking about the Vagrants? There was one clan known as the Murder Brigade. While not an official clan, they were one of the well-known clans that Hyun-Woo mentioned. Although they only had 10-some members, they were a psycho clan that felt pleasure from killing people. From what I remember, they were first created right after the recent Alliance War.

The Murder Brigade’s dying moment was especially intense. When the Northern Country climbed over mountains and invaded Atlanta (though invaded might not be the proper word), the Murder Brigade was prancing about- going at their usual business- when they accidentally provoked a user from the Red Fang Clan (who owned the largest city in the region). Under the angry retaliation from Clan Leaders Woo Jung-Min and Seon Yoo-Woon, each and every one of them were suppressed.

“To these people, if it meant achieving their goal, they won’t hesitate to even kill their own members. I just wanted to warn you all that apart from those that wish to peacefully live in Hall Plain, there are dangerous people too.”

The atmosphere suddenly got heavy. From the new users’ point of view, they probably previously believed that all humans were on the same side. The thought that users could be enemies with each other never even crossed their minds. Of course, there were also users who had on an apathetic expression- users like Park Dong-Gul. They’ve either already committed murder before arriving at Hall Plain, or they’ve had to commit murder during the Rite of Passage for unknown reasons...

“These users work in the shadows in order to not get caught. Their strength is something that cannot be ignored. Given a chance, they will immediately jump out of the shadows at a moment’s notice. Young lady, you asked for the Academy’s true motive? This is our answer.”

He quietly stared at Han Byul for a moment before continuing.

“The new users that just recently passed the Rite of Passage will probably be their primary targets. They’ll try to be friends with you and fulfill your desires. At the User Academy, we’ll teach the new users on how to protect yourselves and others, and we’ll teach you about those with evil intentions. The Academy is an institute that serves as a foundation where we provide training so that we can band together and oppose those



with ill intentions. For that reason, we agree with the Angels and recommend entering the Academy first. You, new users, have nothing to lose from this.”

In the end, Hyun-Woo’s wanted us to team up. *We the veteran users will protect you the new users from danger and help you all adapt to Hall Plain. With our help, you new users will be able to grow, and eventually become skilled enough to protect yourselves.* A user that experiences such growth will become valuable to both the city and the country.

Han-Byul sat down after hearing the satisfactory answer. Seeing as the rest of the new users also seemed to agree, they probably sympathized with Hyun-Woo. Except for one person. Except... me. Of course, all that he said was true, and there was nothing wrong with his explanation. Since I wanted to enter the Academy from the beginning, I didn’t have any issues. However, he had failed to tell the entire truth.

If we considered the source of the first Alliance War, then his diatribe was irrelevant because he left out all the important parts. The Golden Lion Clan had contributed greatly to the cause of the war. To think that he could still talk like that... made me feel really uncomfortable.

He was working hard to put the Vagrants in a bad light. The Vagrants weren’t called vagrants for no reason. There were those that were too extreme and had wanted posters in each city. They weren’t welcomed in any city- at least, not in the Northern Country.

I wanted to ask Hyun-Woo a question: Ultimately, aren’t you guys are the same as the Vagrants? Of course, I wasn’t on the same side as the vagrants. I didn’t think the two groups were any different because they both wanted to protect the power they currently had while stripping away the power of others.

There was a time when the Golden Lion Clan took over Atlanta after overcoming a close call with death in the Hall Plain. However, other clans were lying in wait, waiting for a chance to appear. When it did, the other clans teamed up and, with the support of other countries, managed to take Atlanta for themselves.

There’s a famous saying in Hall Plain: Users that understand will gather and form a clan; clans that share a common enemy will gather and form an alliance. It means that in the end, whether they’re Vagrants or Clansmen, each will fight when necessary. Hearing him cover that fact up made me angry. Even though it wasn’t something new users had to know, to me the words he spouted was pure nonsense.

After calming my anger, I saw Han-Byul sit back down. It seemed like she had somewhat agreed to his words. There wasn’t anything that could be done. If you’ve not experienced how Hall Plain will progress in the future, all of Hyun-Woo’s words appeared to be valid. He turned his head to the center of the stage and let out a sigh of relief, probably at the close call with the unexpected question.



“I didn’t think that it would take this long to answer a couple of questions. I see that some of you look pretty tired...I think it’s for the best to end it here. I recommend resting for the rest of today. Training begins tomorrow. The guides will take you to your dorms.”

He once again turned to Yoo-Bin and commanded, “Stop the Voice Amplification magic.” Afterward, he turned to the users beside him and issued a few commands. The users then walked towards us as Hyun-Woo stepped down from the stage.

As he stepped down the last step, he looked around at a group of users by the stairs. It was only for a moment, but I saw Hyun-Woo look at Han-Byul. His eyes showed a hint of deep interest in her. I quickly glanced over at Han-Byul and saw them exchange eye contact. At that moment... I felt really uncomfortable.

Although many users wished to join a large clan, most merged with a small clan as large ones only sought those with potential. Joining the clan that represented a large city was a privilege; one that was tempting and hard to refuse.

I believed that Hyun-Woo was interested in Han-Byul because he saw potential in her. And I- I was not quite sure why- but I had a strong feeling that Han-Byul might accept the Golden Lion Clan’s offer.

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By the time we arrived at the academy the sky was already dark. The dorms were divided according to class and could satisfactorily fit up to 8 people. An Hyun noticed this and quickly moved to stand beside me. We ended up in the same dorm room.

The beds had just a mattress and two blankets each. One could say that the dorm was in poor condition and quite shabby. Those seeing it for the first time complained, but the users that were used to it didn’t say anything and directly went to sleep. The User Academy’s system was like that of the military.

With a fishy smile, the training instructor told us we were somewhat free for today. (As soon as I heard his words, I requested for a cigarette. He gave me one without a word). The others, however, immediately went to sleep despite his words.

An Hyun laid down beside me and fell fast asleep, but it made me uncomfortable. I observed his face. He was probably dreaming, as he was smacking his lips. Was he dreaming about eating something? I smirked and thought about how carefree he was.

The User Academy in the Northern Country is widely known to be the country with the most brutal training. It employs unimaginable numbers of training methods. It made worried about the other users because the 13 weeks of training gets harder as it goes.

“ ... ”

I was getting frustrated. I let out another deep sigh. I was wondering what the source of my discomfort was as a thought popped into my head. The scene of Hyun-Woo and Han-Byul looking at each other began to play over and over again in my head.

I tried to push the thought away and go to sleep, but the more I tried to push it away, the more complicated my thoughts became. After tossing and turning for a while, I sat up. I put on the slippers placed on the floor and opened the door to the dorm. The cold air drafting through the dark hallway cooled my body down. I enjoyed the cold air at the moment before taking out that cigarette from my pocket and placed it between my lips.

I looked around to make sure no one was around me. I sent a small amount of my mana to my hand. Fwoosh. Along with the sound, flames birthed and lit the end of the cigarette then quickly disappeared. I took a deep breath.

Sigh.

The male and female dorms were in two different buildings. Surprisingly, Han Byul was categorized into the Spell Caster group. Since her mana level was pretty high, I could understand it. My previous clan, the Road Clan, was of the combat group. Truth be told, I was feeling a bit disappointed.

I first joined An Hyun's group because we had the same goal and they would be useful in the future. Even now, my goal hasn't changed. My thoughts, however, had. I acknowledge the fact that Han-Byul was special in comparison to others, but I didn't think I would be swayed this much by the possibility of losing her.

Was I starting to like her? Or was it... love? I shook my head at the nonsensical thought. The ash broke off slowly dropped through the air at the motion.

I'm the one that knows myself the best. Moreso, I knew myself very well. With my personality, it was impossible that I would fall in love with someone after merely one week. In that moment, I realized the truth. Why was I disappointed that she was a Spell Caster?

From the moment I met her through all of the Rite of Passage, she had reminded me of a woman. That woman was one of the users that I used to follow. I thought... that I saw Han So-Young within Kim Han-Byul. I thought... as a feeling of bitterness started to fill me. I felt pathetic to be contemplating such an irrelevant matter...

I dropped the cigarette on the floor, stepped on it, then continued walking. There were a lot of things I had to do, and a lot of things I had to think about. I had to remind myself to stop thinking irrelevant thoughts and focus.

I still couldn't fall asleep, but I made up my mind to forcefully fall asleep. I even thought about making myself faint as I quietly opened the door and walked back into the room.

## Chapter 040 – Make an Offer! #2

As soon as we entered the training ground, the instructors shot up a flare signaling the start of hardcore training. A week after the flare had been fired, the Academy proved that their training was the most hardcore out of all the Northern Country's academies. Out of the 130 new users, 17 people— a little over 10%— were discharged for giving up. The interesting thing was that 15 of those users were Close Range Fighters.

Please continue reading on

I'll say it again: the Northern Country was controlled by Korean users. If there was one thing that differed from other countries, then it would be that Korea required military service. It was required of all adult males, so it wasn't rare to find a user who had served in the military before.

Perhaps, it was because the User Academy in the Northern Country was proud of its foundation that they had a militaristic system. They examine the trainees during training and provide trainees basics like food and clothing, but they controlled our lives by suppressing our freedom.

If it was just the training that was difficult, I would be able to endure it. But, the one thing that users couldn't stand was the training regiment. The training we had to go through in the military was nothing compared to what we underwent here. Most of the users had proved their worth here only after throwing up as they couldn't handle the training.

The special training that took place only on the weekends was the highlight of every week. Oh, days in the Hall Plain were calculated the same way as Earth. The weekend training took place on Saturday and Sunday of the seven-day week, and was the reason why new users left the academy. There was also a reason why most of the Close Range Fighters left.

That reason was that the weekend training consisted of 1 on 1 battles between users.

Of course, Spell Casters and Priests were exceptions. Spell Casters were required to gather mana, materialize it, and then shoot that mana at a target. However, in the beginning, gathering and controlling mana was difficult. On top of that, there were a lot of information they had to learn. Even if one was to train during the entire 13 weeks, it still wouldn't be enough to learn all the basics. Priests were in the same boat, but since their specialty was in recovery and assistance they were exempt from most of the training.

If you thought that battles were just friendly tussles between users, you're sadly mistaken. On cold days, the users are provided with weapons and are given one rule: was to hurt the other user. Of course, the users do wear protective gear on their vitals— but that was it.

Users do preparation right before each battle. The ones with reputation are often recruited as sparring partners by instructors, but they need to be prepared to take heavy blows. Because of that reason, Priests are always on stand-by.

Even so, the actual training was far worse than anyone could have imagined. No. It was beyond crazy; most of the users cursed the training and called it insane. Personally, I rated this training very highly because it was like how I had trained An Hyun's group during the Rite of Passage.

No one knows when something nor what will happen in the Hall Plain. Once you were far enough from a city, there wasn't a safe place anywhere. You could get caught in a trap; you could get attacked by a monster; you could encounter a Vagrant. Even though a place like this was heavily influenced by users, no one can know for sure what could happen in undeveloped lands.

Situations could arise that required a user to have good judgment and stay alert. Depending on how fast they react, they could retain their life or lose it in death. If one stands still and thinks about their own reluctance to hurt the other person, they'll just end up frustrated. The weekend training was where users could get used to getting hurt and, at the same time, to hurting others.

If there was one thing that I was worried about, it was that I wouldn't get hurt in combat training. As all I had to do was win every battle, it was impossible for new users to put a scratch on me.

I didn't have any issue winning against a weak opponent, but it was a bit of a burden when fighting against a somewhat-strong opponent. One time, I balanced a match between Woo Jung-Min and I by focusing on defense. During the battle, I countered his attack, allowing me to claim victory.

Since winning was my only goal, it was only a matter of time before I gained some sort of reputation. However, since it was just among the new users, my reputation wasn't anything amazing. It wasn't uncommon to hear both instructors and users say stuff like, "The overall grade of this batch is pretty high, but among them Kim Soo-Hyun is especially outstanding and will certainly be useful in the future!" As such praise was within my acceptable range, I acknowledged it.

Those with outstanding ability will eventually have their stats revealed without trying to. In the beginning, I had an urge to hide my abilities no matter what— an old habit.

*If this keeps up, you'll end up doing the same things in the same situations. There's a possibility this situation might be repeated once again.*

*User Kim Soo-Hyun. You cannot accomplish anything by yourself.*

If I act the same way this time around, I wouldn't be able to do anything again. What Han-Byul and Seraph had said shook my heart. This time, I don't want to lose Yoo-Hyun and Han So-Young. This time, I want to be of help. This time, I don't want a sad ending. This time... I wanted all of us to experience a happy ending.

In Hall Plain, power was one's trust in others, and could be estimated by how many trusted friends one had. Both history and my personal experience proved it. Even the strongest user in history was taken in by an alliance. Then, how much power and reputation does one need in order to gather these trusted friends?

I realized that my thoughts were different from last time. Now that I've entered the Hall Plain, I was willing to do whatever was necessary. As soon as I made up my mind, my actions changed.

No matter how difficult the training, I finished it without a complaint. Even if the instructors were being a bit harsh, I maintained a polite attitude. Since I aligned my attitude with my outstanding performance, I noticed that the instructors started favoring me. (For example, the user that was in charge of my dorm became my cigarette delivery boy.)

Words soon spread about Kim Soo-Hyun, and as a result my relationship with other users started improving. The number of users that wanted to be my friend or wanted to form a good relationship with me kept increasing. I made them think that I had improved by slowly taking my time.

Humans are animals that adapt to their environment. The time required may differ from person to person, but the matter of utmost importance was that they do adapt. Whether or not they adapt decides whether or not they could continue to live.

The second, third, and fourth weeks resulted in a good amount of users giving up. As time passed into the fifth, sixth, and seventh week, however, the number of users giving up decreased. No one gave up during the eighth week. Those left... were the cream of the crop.

Just because a user lasted until now didn't mean that they were going to survive, just as because a user gave up doesn't mean that they were doomed to die. It was hard to determine the survival rate by just the User Academy as there were so many different variables within Hall Plain. Whatever was possible, was probable here.

After one passes the Rite of Passage and advances to Hall Plain, there's one common requirement to joining any clan in the Northern Country: graduation from the User Academy. Even in other countries, someone that graduated from the User Academy of the Northern Country will receive bonus points from the clan.

Within two years, the users that gave up (if they were still alive then) will probably regret not finishing the training and receiving those four attribute points.

All of An Hyun's group managed to overcome the first segment—the part of the training that I was worried about. None of them, including An Sol, had given up and had completed their training so far.

I had assumed that An Hyun would become a Swordsman because of his skill handling a sword. To my surprise, he picked the lance as his main weapon. I asked for his class, and he replied with Lancer. As his basic physical ability was outstanding (excluding his mana), it was possible for him to wield any weapon with ease.

When Sol got into trouble at the vacant lot, he threw a sword and cut off the Deadman's arm. As a result, I rated his synergy with the sword very highly. If he had chosen the same path as me, I would have helped him become a Sword Master. However, he said that he gets more excited when wielding a lance, so nothing was to be done.

Still, my curiosity prompted me to ask him as to why he chose a lance.

“Back at the Inn, I couldn't come to my senses after being told that you were dead. To be honest, the people back there really pissed me off. I kept asking them for more details, but they avoided my question and kept saying the same nonsense over and over... the man there told me to be a swordsman, but I told him to piss off and grabbed a lance out of anger.”

An Sol, who was listening in on the conversation, quipped in and mentioned that An Hyun had said that he was going to be a Spell Caster in the beginning. She said that their Angels were surprised and even giggled. Seeing the two talk so comfortable caused me to let out a silent sigh within me.

An Sol's decision, however, was within my expectations. Like I had guessed, she chose to become a Priest. An Hyun said that she took a while in the beginning when choosing her class, but she was faster this time than usual. As she didn't like wielding a weapon, nor did she want to hurt others, a priest was the best option for her.

Yoo-Jung chose a dagger—the same kind of weapon she had used during the Rite of Passage. But surprisingly, this time she chose a two-handed dagger. When I asked her for her class, she replied with Mercenary.

Yoo-Jung was well-balanced, so any close-range class would put her above average. I would've recommended an assassin, but a mercenary was okay too since they could to wield many different weapons.

As new users' information could be changed at any time, it wasn't rare for them ask about each other's attribute points and reveal their own at the academy. I gathered my members and warned them to not share details of their attribute points and other stats with neither the other users nor with the instructors.



I warned Sol three times. She didn't know my reasoning and simply smiled. I felt like they started to treat me different after the matter with the Boss Monster.

One person had completely separated herself from the group. As my name became increasingly well-known within the academy, An Hyun, An Sol, and Yoo-Jung all carried a proud look on their faces. Even though they didn't say anything, I knew that they didn't think of me as a stranger anymore. All of them... except for Han-Byul.

Han-Byul kept her distance from the group. After the first training segment was over, we met up. When asked about what class she chose, she answered coldly.

"Soo Hyun just said to not tell anyone our information."

I told her that what I wanted them to keep secret was important information, not their class. Giving away your class was something that couldn't be avoided. On the outside, I just smirked, but on the inside, I couldn't help but feel a twinge of sadness. Han-Byul probably felt it too, as she quietly said that she was affiliated with magic. I ended up nodding instead of verbally responding. Of course, I could've easily found out her class with the Third Eye, but I didn't. I could assume her class by her stating that she was affiliated with magic.

There were many times when she missed our meetings. I understand that Spell Casters had a lot to memorize and practice, but the same goes for the other classes. Sol told me that Han-Byul said that she didn't have the time to meet, despite the fact that we only meet for one or two hours once a week.

"Hey, don't worry yourself over her. She's in a different dorm from us anyways. Just let her be. To be honest...I never liked Kim Han-Byul."

"That's a bit harsh. But still..."

"What do you mean but still? From the rumors... you know the user that was explaining in front of everyone when we left the Inn? That male user. I heard someone mention that he and Han-Byul were talking to each other. That traitor."

A bitter smile appeared on my face when Yoo-Jung called Han-Byul a traitor. My worried assumption was becoming the reality. The fact that she got an offer from the Golden Lion Clan wasn't something that could be blamed on her. It's only the eighth week and I've received offers from five clans. Among the list was the Golden Lion Clan.

However, Han-Byul was definitely keeping her distance from us. She joined our conversation from time to time, but she never talked except for the one time she looked at me and asked what I was going to do after graduation. I told her I was still thinking about it.



After that day, I was able to think of Han So-Young and Kim Han-Byul as two separate entities. I decided to not concern myself about her anymore. Of course, I hoped that she would stay with us, but I wasn't going to force it if she didn't want to. I won't cling to those that want to leave, and those that I accept will undergo a thorough examination first. My goal was a small group; large groups didn't appeal to me.

There's this thing called fate. It's when you form a relationship with a person. I never believed fate to be coincidental, but that it was something one could control. I believed in that fate. I've experienced immense power thanks to the bond created through that fate.

I decided to treat Kim Han-Byul as an example of fate. *If we're fated to meet, we will—but if not, I will let you go.* I have the ability to form connections with people; it's a stupid idea to hold onto a dubious relationship.

As soon as she stepped out of Han So-Young's shadow, I was able to see things that I wasn't able to before through my new perspective. Rather than holding onto Kim Han-Byul for her stats, it was more beneficial to my goals to sift through the users that have passed the first segment of training for more talent. Although there weren't a lot of new users with similar skills, I'm sure that there must be someone out there.