

Overgeared 1021

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It had been a journey which spanned over 10 years.

"..." Imperial Prince Benoit had finally achieved his purpose, and he felt a strange sense of power. The truth that he had known from the beginning... Maybe he had wanted it to be a lie. He felt all types of emotions when he saw the evidence that Great Demon Berith gave him.

"Imperial Prince! Imperial Prince!" There was a call for him during the long journey back to the empire. Benoit turned his head in the direction of the call, but he ignored it and kept walking. With a thin body, upright posture, an old attire, and a long beard, he looked like a pilgrim. The people passing by greeted him, unaware that he was the traitor to humanity. However, he couldn't fool everyone's eyes.

"Your Highness!" The running man caught up and overtook Benoit, blocking his way. He was the owner of a demon mark that attached to the target on the premise that the wearer never died. It was Chensler.

"Sir Chensler."

How did he recognize Benoit's current disguise? However, it was expected for the Five Pillars to recognize him. He couldn't hide his red energy in his present state and couldn't escape the senses of the Five Pillars.

"I came to this place by following the trail of the priest that carried out the great demon summoning ceremony."

"Huhuhu, the priest. Is that what the Rebecca followers are calling me?"

"Yes, but they don't know Your Highness' identity."

"It is reasonable. Ah, don't misunderstand. I'm not hiding my identity for the empire. The Yatan Church already knows my identity. The world will know it at any time now... the fact that it is an imperial prince who summoned a great demon."

"Why did you..."

"Why? Are you afraid that the Rebecca Church and the whole world will blame the empire?"

"I'm not interested in political matters. It is just that His Majesty the Emperor will be troubled."

"Sir, you are very unusual."

"...?"

"Unlike the other pillars, you are truly loyal to His Majesty."

"The other pillars are the same. In particular, Sir Bain is more than me..."

"Who knows? Well, by the way, His Majesty knew what I was doing."

"There is nothing His Majesty doesn't know."

“What?” Prince Benoit looked like he was hit by a hammer. The blind man who believed his beloved wife died of illness knew everything?

“Kuk...! Kukukuk! Kuhahahaha!”

Benoit was prepared. He had committed all types of crimes while risking blame and criticism. The killing intent of the inwardly afraid Benoit amplified again. It became louder and fiercer, with a momentum that wouldn't die down again.

“Sir, do you really believe that? His Majesty knows everything? When it took me more than 10 years to find this truth?”

“Your search was carried out in secret, so it took a long time.”

“He will be embarrassed if it is known that his son is a lunatic who wants to summon the great demons. I was forced to keep it secret.”

“Please refrain from speaking like that.”

“Well, that's fine. Let's return to the empire. I was on my way back.”

“Kuoong...” Hurent struggled with the war god follower. He consumed all his ultimate techniques and used all of his power. There was nothing to say.

‘I heard the level of this place is high, but it is really difficult. I can't believe this monster is so strong. No, I'm too weak.’

There were too many great opponents who developed their skills by trying to die. The subconscious aspirations and desire to be at the top again troubled Hurent. Satisfy's worldview wasn't at a level he could handle. Seriously, he wanted to quit the game.

Hurent smiled and dealt the final blow.

“...?” He was dazed for a moment as the follower turned to gray. The experience gained from killing the follower was almost as much as hunting a boss monster. It was more than twice the experience gained from killing the sea monsters.

‘I'm weak, but this guy is also strong.’

What the hell was he supposed to do in this scary place? Hurent shook his head and picked up a fragment of a secret technique book dropped by the follower.

Dog Woman and her companions were ecstatic. They had watched the battle from beginning to end and were aware of Hurent's identity.

“Aura Master...”

He was one of the strongest players of the old era. They heard that he had retired from active duty after suffering the humiliation of losing to Grid in just five seconds. Yet he had appeared here, and his strength was incomparable to what it had been in the past.

'You've changed the sword.'

It seemed that the gaming industry's saying of 'frustration raises a man' was true. Dog Woman gulped and sent a look of envy to Hurent. Obviously, Hurent was much weaker than the Seven Dukes. In terms of attack, defense, health, irregularity and speed, the Seven Dukes overwhelmed their followers in all respects. The dukes won easily if they fought one-on-one against the followers.

On the other hand, Hurent had narrowly knocked down the follower. He had almost lost. However, the surprising thing was that Hurent had taken less than two minutes to kill the follower. The dukes had taken more than three minutes. Hurent was almost twice as fast as them.

'This is the true power of aura...'

Hurent was a hermit. There was a very low possibility that he belonged to a group. It was clear that he had come here alone. Wasn't that why he was alone right now? There was only one conclusion.

'We must invite him to be a colleague!'

If Hurent joined them, it would be a great strength for both the Skunk Expedition Group and the dukes.

"Thank you for saving us. Without your help, we would all be outside the Red Sea right now." Dog Woman approached Hurent and bowed politely. "It is an honor to meet you, Hurent."

"Umm." Hurent wasn't upset despite his identity being discovered. He had used all types of skills with fighting the strong follower. Since he was a celebrity in his old days, the possibility of people recognizing his skills was very high.

Hurent sighed as he changed his guild affiliation to private and took off his straw hat. Short grey hair and a mature face was revealed. Dog Woman reconfirmed his identity and was excited. "We are explorers of the Skunk Expedition Group. We are currently exploring the Ruins of the War God along with the imperial army, including some of the Seven Dukes."

'Along with the Seven Dukes?'

"It seems that you are alone. Why don't you join us? We think that your fighting ability will be a great help to our exploration. It is also a chance to become acquaintances with the Seven Dukes. It isn't a bad suggestion."

"Hrmm."

Was he shy?

Hurent scratched his cheeks for a moment before asking, "Is there a camp nearby?"

"It isn't near. The camp is six kilometers to the east. We left for a moment to find some clues."

"Without an escort?"

"Imperial soldiers escorted us. However, before you came, they were killed by the follower and turned to ash."

"I see. Then what are the clues?"

“...”

He kept on digging up information. Dog Woman was somewhat uncomfortable, but she soon realized the attitude was natural. Since she asked to be colleagues, he had an obligation to ask for information. It was to make sure that they could be helpful to him.

“They are clues to break through the traps in the jungle.”

“The traps in the jungle?”

“You haven’t seen the jungle yet. It is a wise choice for an experienced person.”

Dog Woman gave an explanation. There were all types of traps installed everywhere in the jungle, and they had to collect key pieces to release the traps.

‘Lael will be delighted when I tell him this information.’

Indeed, goodwill was a positive act. The identity of the great explorer who discovered the Ruins of the War God was Skunk. Skunk’s Expedition Group was with the imperial army. There were traps in the jungle, and Hurent even learned how to disable them. He received a lot of information and felt good. Hurent had been worried he would be no help to Grid, so he was relieved.

“Thank you for telling me this, but I’m sorry. I can’t go with you.”

“Huh? It is dangerous alone... Ah? Do you have companions?”

“Yes.”

“This...” Dog Woman reacted in an embarrassed manner. She regretted telling him so many things. Then she changed her mind. ‘In any case, they are things he will discover over time.’

Hurent had saved her life. It was better to pay back some of that grace. Dog Woman cleared her mind and shook hands with Hurent. “I hope you have a good adventure with your companions.”

“Companions...” Hurent made a subtle expression. After the first battle against Haster, he joined the Overgeared Guild but still had no sense of belonging. Hurent felt grateful to Grid but had never thought of himself as an Overgeared member. He had never considered Grid and the 10 meritorious retainers he came here with as companions. However—

‘It’s true that I don’t hate it.’

Hurent had the experience of age and knew how hard it was to build true friendships and trust in this society. He had watched the Overgeared members over the last 10 days and felt the deep friendship and trust between them. They were people who were true to others. He could glimpse the personalities of the Overgeared members.

“It isn’t bad.” This was the reason why he thought it was okay to be companions.

“Huh?”

“No, I’m talking to myself.” Hurent shook Dog Woman’s hand and gazed into her eyes. “Stay healthy.”

“Ah...! Yes! Senior as well! I am honored!” Dog Woman replied, attracted by Hurent’s deep gaze. Hurent was more of a big shot than he thought. He was truly admired by many people.

On the west coast...

“It is too different from what I thought,” Grid’s voice was troubled as he flew into the sky with Noe on his shoulder.

The Ruins of the War God...

He was both worried and looking forward to the danger. Unfortunately, it was so calm that he was disappointed.

“...They are lucky.”

On the ground below Grid, the Overgeared Skeletons were attacking the rock shells. The rock shells were level 250. They weren’t even monsters who attacked first. The rewards were small, and they weren’t worth Grid even seeing them.

However, the Overgeared Skeletons were different. A level 250 monster with weak attack power was like sweet honey for the Overgeared Skeletons. That’s why they acted like they had met lifelong rivals and tried their best to hit the rock shells. The solid body of the opponents didn’t move, but the skeletons wielded their weapons without giving up. It meant they were craving growth themselves.

‘I need items for the kids. It is also essential to maximize their production capabilities.’

He had been worrying about it over the past few months, but he thought it was better to invest two item creation slots for the Overgeared Skeletons. In the long run, it wasn’t a loss for him if the Overgeared Skeletons grew and evolved steadily.

“Um?”

In a posture held naturally by people in an absolute position, Grid had his arms folded in the air, and he suddenly turned his gaze toward the jungle. He heard the resonant sound of iron and iron colliding.

‘Is the imperial army fighting against the followers?’

Knowing the enemy meant victory. Identifying the power of the enemy was very important. Grid hid as much as possible while wondering if he should enter the jungle. His worries didn’t last long.

‘It is dangerous because there is a high possibility of the presence of the Seven Dukes.’

He might be attacked by both the dukes and the war god followers. Then he would unconditionally die and be banished outside the Red Sea. Grid was reminded of his battle with Sky King Rigal.

‘It was impossible to fight him with one eye closed.’

At present, Grid was wearing the Slaughterer’s Eye Patch but one eye was closed because he didn’t want to use the Castration Eye. It was a handicap. He might win against the sea monsters and other enemies with one eye closed, but the Seven Dukes were different.

Grid had to fight them with all his vision. He needed both eyes open to fight, but then he wouldn't be able to use magic because his mana would be quickly depleted. Just like in the battle with Rigal, he had to depend only on Pagma's Swordsmanship and the 100,000 Army Swordsmanship.

'Lael has warned me many times to be careful. Let's not be interested in the jungle yet.'

Grid suppressed his curiosity and descended back to the ground. The Overgeared Skeletons finally finished off the rock shells and high-fived each other.

"We will go a bit further before heading back to the meeting place. Huh?"

Thanks to his stats, Grid had very good eyes. He might not have Hawk Eyes, but there wasn't a non-archer who had better eyes than Grid. Something strange caught his eyes. Some of the giant trees in the outskirts of the jungle had keyhole-like markings. No, it wasn't a marking. They really were keyholes.

"Why does the tree have a keyhole?"

"It is obvious from Noe's view, nyong."

"Obvious? What is it?"

"Doesn't it open something, nyong?"

"How simple..."

Still, it was a correct answer.

'Will there be any presents?'

Grid pulled out the Master Key that he created before. It had been a long time since he used it on the Behen Archipelago.

Meanwhile, the outskirts of the jungle.

"Crazy."

The dukes were only looking ahead and running. Their expensive armor was damaged in various places, and their faces were covered with sweat and blood. Even Basara, who always maintained her dignity, was busy escaping without noticing her crooked gold crown. A huge number of 20 followers were chasing them.

"Shit!" Morse screamed as he once again fell into a trap, and his ankle was severely injured. He turned back with bloodshot eyes and saw the followers running wild without any restrictions from the traps.

"It is too absurd!"

The traps were so perfectly installed that they couldn't be detected with the eyes, knowledge, or senses. They could be vines, leaves, or completely integrated with the soil. Thus, it was difficult to tell if it was a trap or not. Sometimes they were lucky, but there were so many traps it was impossible to move freely. Additionally, many traps didn't respond to the war god followers. It was as if they recognized their masters. It was suicide to fight the followers in this place.

One arrow grazed Morse's earlobe. He felt a stinging pain and gritted his teeth. Although he wanted to turn back and smash the shooter, he endured it. He was carrying drinking water. The magic bag filled with water from a hard-to-find lake—it had to be delivered to the soldiers.

"This..." A few steps ahead, Grenhal suddenly stopped in place. Basara and Morse also stopped moving and frowned at the sight unfolding in front of them. The barbed vines with rotating teeth were blocking the path ahead.

"We'll have to go around."

Then the followers caught up. He spoke to the faltering Basara and Morse, "I'll buy time for you."

Grenhal handed them the magic bag and went to face the pursuers.

"Duke Grenhal! It is too early to give up!"

"Unlike you youngsters, I have raised my children enough. My family won't end even if I die here. His Majesty will care for them." Grenhal was a person who didn't change his mind once a decision once it was made. It was a waste of time to persuade him, so Basara and Morse were about to leave. At this moment, the hundreds or thousands of rotating teeth suddenly stopped. The flowers that had turned into nets faded away, and the leaves emitting poison fell to the ground.

"...?"

The baffled dukes exchanged looks when the traps stopped, and they turned their eyes to one side simultaneously. In the distance, the shape of a person was seen between the vines.

"Nothing happened when I inserted the key??"

The distance was so far that the voice was barely audible, even with the sharp hearing of the dukes. Additionally, the dukes knew the owner of this voice.

"Overgeared King?"

Yesterday's enemy was today's friend. Their relationship was changing.

Yesterday's enemy became today's friend, causing repercussions that would change the landscape of the world. It was a truly valuable victory. This was a win without fighting.

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[The key fits perfectly.]

[An effect has occurred.]

"Ohhh!"

It was a small keyhole in a big tree. He put in and turned the universal key, then a notification window emerged with a cheerful sound effect. An effect had occurred!

Grid imagined it. The tree would split in half, and hidden treasures would appear. If Lauel had to guess, it would be a scene where he was likely to obtain a skill book that gave a 'war god's secret technique'.

“...?”

However, the tree didn't move. Unlike the notification window, nothing really happened.

“What? Why?” Grid was confused for a moment and searched around. There were all types of plants and trees, and some of the trees had keyholes.

‘Are there some losing tickets? Let's open some more.’

Grid moved to a big tree that was 20 meters away.

[You have fallen into a trap!]

It was an absurd thing. The ground sank the moment he stepped on a protruding tree root.

[You have suffered 10,200 damage!]

There was a 10-meter-deep tunnel. Grid fell into the terrible trap installed in the ground and spat out blood.

“...I would've died if I had fallen into it during a fight.”

Why was there a trap in this place? Grid was thinking about it as he used Fly to escape the tunnel.

‘Did the imperial army do it?’

The empire wanted to monopolize the ruins. Considering their abilities, it was certainly possible. It was highly likely that the imperial troops, who arrived here first, installed traps to interfere with latecomers.

‘The empire is the empire. They actually installed traps like this.’

As their stats and experience rose, players wouldn't fall into traps so easily. In particular, Grid had a high insight stat and could easily distinguish between traps. However, the perfect traps that assimilated with nature couldn't be distinguished and were a threat to Grid. Maybe there was another trap?

“Ack!” Grid screamed as he maintained Fly. The moment his shoulder came in contact with a leaf, the leaf turned into a blade. The deeply wounded Grid pulled out a potion and swallowed it.

“What is the level of these traps?”

This wasn't a level that could be discovered by paying attention. Wasn't it too powerful at this point? Grid wanted to know the person who installed the traps. It would be a big jackpot if he obtained them. After suffering the wound, Grid arrived in front of the second big tree and once again inserted the Master Key. Once again, there was a sound effect and a notice of an effect occurring, but no treasures emerged.

“Is it another failure?”

His obstinate spirit was stimulated. Grid confirmed he still had time to spare and moved to the next tree. It was naturally a tree with a keyhole, and the universal key was properly inserted and aligned. Once again, nothing happened. It was the same with the next tree and the tree after that. Grid got upset because he ran into several traps along the way and wasted potions.

“Nothing happened when I inserted the key?? What is going on?”

“Why are you asking me, nyong?” Noe seemed to be in a very good mood.

Warm sunlight fell from the sky, and a cool breeze gently blew his fur. He puffed out his belly and rolled around. Grid complained because the cat made his neck sore after using his head as a bed.

“In any case, you’re no help.”

Noe had evolved after eating the thunder stone. He had great skill, but his sense of presence wasn’t the same as before. Noe’s help was great when Grid was still weak. Now, he had become too strong that Noe’s weight as a helper had fallen. In order for Noe to play a prominent role again, he must show a unique strength such as against the final evolutionary golem in the golem invasion. Was an enemy like that common?

‘In the first place, I hope there are no such strong enemies.’

Grid thought he would rather Noe not be active. Then he smiled.

‘Why do I care about Noe? It isn’t due to Noe’s combat strength. I just like Noe.’ He realized this truth all over again.

‘Yes, he should just stay happy. Sometimes Noe will do chores.’

Didn’t a memphis have a long life span...? Perhaps it was even longer than his. Recently, Noe’s fur had turned black again for some reason.

Grid stroked his tail and moved to insert the key in the next tree. He hoped he would win a treasure this time, but it was also a bust.

There was a notice about an effect, but Grid didn’t know the effect...

“...Eh?” Grid looked around, and his eyes widened. He discovered that some of the traps plaguing him on the way had disappeared without a trace.

‘Releasing the traps?’

Grid finally figured out the purpose of the keyholes. It was a feasible idea. He made reasonable inferences by identifying the ‘key trees’ that still existed in the jungle.

‘It is impossible for the empire to have installed hundreds of traps during that short period of time.’

These traps were originally present already. Perhaps releasing the traps was one of the keys for exploring these ruins. Possessing the universal key meant he was in a much more favorable position than the empire.

‘Wow... It really is present whenever I need it.’

The universal key he made in the old days was needed. The more he looked, the more fraudulent of an item it seemed. The Grid of the present time wouldn’t be able to create it. Grid was now more cautious in comparison to the old days and had many considerations to think about when creating an item. However, this process limited his imagination.

'It wouldn't be possible for my current self to think about making such an item. I would think that such a fraudulent item couldn't be made, and it would naturally be blocked.'

Sometimes, it was necessary to be simple. It was a moment of small enlightenment.

.'..!' He suddenly realized he couldn't hear all types of sounds in the jungle. Then there was the sound of someone sliding through the bushes and footsteps approaching.

"Overgeared King!" Two men and one woman popped out.

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

[The Hero King's fighting energy has started to boil!]

"...!!"

They were Grenhal, Morse, and Basara. Grid was wrapped in a blazing fighting energy in an instant as he recognized the three of them. They were dukes who had attended the luncheon that occurred back when he visited the empire at the emperor's call. Basara hadn't looked at Grid during the luncheon, but her beauty was memorable. Morse's form was different from the other dukes, and Grenhal boasted the highest level alongside Limit and Rachel. No, he would've remembered them clearly even if they didn't have any special features. He couldn't forget the dukes of the empire.

'Damn XX!'

It was bad. Grid had violated Lauel's order not to enter the jungle. Sensing his death, Grid hurriedly pulled out his sword.

"Hey! Can't we show appreciation after receiving help from you?" Morse was talking nonsense.

"...?"

They received help from him? Grid cocked his head and soon noticed it. They escaped some type of crisis because he released the traps.

'That's why they didn't attack me?'

It was a situation where three of the Seven Dukes were together. If they intended to kill Grid, they would've attacked him the moment they appeared and Grid would've already lost his immortality. However, Grid was fine and the dukes showed him no hostility. Grid identified the three people's personalities.

'They have personalities of people that don't want to owe debts.'

From the dukes' standpoint, Grid was an enemy king. It was right to kill or capture Grid as soon as he was seen. Their encounter with Grid was a chance to earn a huge achievement and end the war. Yet they kicked away this big opportunity just because they were helped.

'It seems to be a big help?'

This was a chance. He had to use an excuse to leave here. Grid judged this and tried to remain as calm as possible.

“I’m glad to help. I pretended not to know out of humility.”

He tried to pretend to be casual, but his voice was shaking. Honestly, it was scary. They were monsters who could kill him at any time. He would be killed and deported from the Red Sea. Grid was most afraid that he wouldn’t be able to protect his remaining companions.

“Such a person killed Rigal?”Morse snapped out after hearing Grid’s words. There was no need for Grid to say anything.

This was because Grenhal stepped in for him.“It was something that happened on the battlefield.”

It meant for them not to blame Grid.

“Bah.”Morse was convinced and didn’t say anything else.

Grenhal descended from the giant two-headed hippo, approached Grid, and saluted slightly.

Grid didn’t know the meaning of the action, but Morse and Basara were very surprised. It was because Grenhal didn’t show politeness to anyone by descending from his hippo apart from when he saw the emperor. Even Empress Marie couldn’t make Grenhal get off his hippo.

“Thank you. We were able to pass the crisis thanks to Your Majesty. Of course, it wasn’t pure benevolence, right? You definitely had a reason to help us. Isn’t that correct?”

‘No?’

An unknown situation was being created. Grid was devising words to reply when Grenhal struck a drum by himself.

“Your Majesty’s strength alone won’t be able to endure the power of the war god followers. Thus, you planned to work with us.”

“...”

“In conclusion, it is a very excellent plan. Your Majesty has the key, so this suggestion of cooperation is very attractive for us who needs the key. This way you can coordinate the situation... You are a great man to make this bet. I have to acknowledge Your Majesty. I was pathetic to look down on you until now.”

From Grid’s standpoint, Grenhal was babbling absurd sophistry.

“Certainly. You have a forward-looking insight and bold determination,”Basara also agreed while Morse was busy thinking.

Grenhal reached out a hand to Grid.“I will make a proposal with the authority of an imperial duke. Let’s forget the war and make an alliance here. You will borrow our strength, and we will borrow your key. If we combine forces, we can explore this place safely.”

“...”

Should he agree to the cooperation? Should he talk to Lauel first? Grid hesitated, but it was only for a moment. He had to hold this hand as it was too risky to explore this area while being hostile to the empire. It was possible to judge this much.

"I understand. Let's do it."

Grid's and Grenhal's big hands shook vigorously.

"...Huong."

"...??"

"...??"

Grenhal suddenly hummed, and Morse and Basara cocked their heads.

"Hum hum." Grid pulled back his hand and coughed hurriedly.

At the S.A Group's headquarters...

"T-This is ridiculous. How did this happen?"

The staff in the meeting room were shocked by the scene on the monitor. Originally, the empire was destined to be destroyed by the rampage of Insane Dragon Nevartan. This was one of the basic scenarios of Satisfy. The scenario had completely changed due to the finals of the 3rd National Competition.

The empire had survived and started a war with the Overgeared Kingdom. Due to the numerous causal effects from this, Skunk had discovered the Ruins of the War God. If Skunk and the dukes hadn't met in Galest, Skunk would never have sailed through the Red Sea and he wouldn't have found the Ruins of the War God. The butterfly effect caused the Ruins of the War God to appear much earlier than planned, and the major powers of the Overgeared Kingdom departed the continent.

Satisfy's management team was very frustrated.

Great Demon Berith descended on a land far from the Saharan Empire. In order to raid the great demon, the top players needed to cooperate. It was the worst situation since Grid's party wasn't present. The employees thought that the players would suffer irreparable damage because of Berith, who would kill countless people and open the gates of hell to summon an army. It was calculated that the players who tried and lost everything were likely to quit the game.

Grid's party would waste time in the Ruins of the War God and wouldn't be able to handle Berith who summoned the army. Yes, it was a waste of time. The current level of Grid's party made it impossible to properly explore the Ruins of the War God.

Yet... Yet!!

"Where the hell did he get the key? It is ridiculous to have collected the key pieces in that short period of time."

Grid held a key and easily released the trap trees. Then he obtained a chance to ally with the dukes.

"...Is he going to clear the ruins?" Finally, one of the employees spoke nonsense, but no one raised a counterargument. It was possible based on the development.

"Hah... Hahat!" Chairman Lim Cheolho was laughing. Grid used the key he made previously to ally with the dukes. This was truly admirable. He was forced to praise Grid who surpassed predictions several times. The atmosphere was awkward.

"Chairman," the director of operations Yoon Sangmin suddenly got up and asked Chairman Lim Cheolho a question, "Shall I order chicken and beer?"

"Yes."

"It is also half-and-half?"

"Yes."

"I understand. I'll order two right now." Yoon Sangmin took out his phone and left the conference room for a while.

"Director Yoon, are you crazy right now?"

The agitated employees pointed at him.

"How many people are here? Yet you're only ordering two portions?"

"..."

That's right. Now the other employees were also enjoying Grid's path. Grid, who had been solving most of his problems with force, faced a situation where force didn't work and broke through with wisdom. It was a wonderful sight.

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The 10 meritorious retainers back at the meeting point were agitated.

"Why is he so late?"

"Did something happen?"

"I can't get in touch with him."

It was 15 minutes past the promised meeting time yet Grid still hadn't returned. Of course, Grid was much stronger than them. A crisis for them would be a small problem for Grid. Still, as his friends, they couldn't help worrying.

"He will be fine. According to Lauel, the waterfront is safe," Jishuka tried to reassure her colleagues, but she was visibly anxious. The Ruins of the War God were still unknown. No one knew what dangers were lurking. The atmosphere became increasingly darker.

"...!?"

"...!"

Then Lael got a shock, and Faker raised his eyebrows. They detected three monstrous presences with their developed senses. It was a presence that emanated without any concealment. It seemed to be showing off, roaring at the world with no fear. These beings...

“Huh?” Jishuka’s eyes caught sight of a huge rock and beast. No, they weren’t rocks and beasts. Looking closely, they were both beasts.

“Prepare for battle,” Lael ordered. Faker was already hiding in the shadows. The 10 meritorious retainers noticed the situation and pulled out their weapons in unison. Euphemina, who never fought throughout the sea voyage to preserve her duplicated skills, also activated her orb’s magic.

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

[You are overwhelmed.]

[You can’t move, and all stats are reduced slightly.]

They were terrible notification windows. Large footprints were left on the sandy beach. They were the footprints of a two-headed hippo and a sharvel tiger. The body of the two-headed hippo was tightly packed with muscles and looked like a mountain. Meanwhile, the canines of the tiger were long and sharp like knives. They seemed like they could kill a person by skewering them.

“...”

The 10 meritorious retainers froze like stone statues. They looked up at the beasts without even being able to gulp. Two men and a woman could be seen. The back of the tiger carried a man who gave off a rebellious impression and a beautiful woman with a golden crown, while the two-headed hippo had a middle-aged man with tranquil eyes. The names were marked as Beast King Morse, Gold Crown Basara, and Immortal King Grenhal, and they were shimmering with gold.

Lael muttered, “Dukes...”

This was the majesty of the true absolutes. Lael and the 10 meritorious retainers were troubled just by making eye contact with Grenhal. The latent power in his eyes reminded them of the night before a storm, making them afraid. They were enemies who had to be crossed one day. However, currently, it was so hopeless that Lael and the 10 meritorious retainers didn’t even dare to fight.

“The moment the status effect is over, get on the ship and run away.” The only one unaffected was Yura, who stepped forward. She was also a legend. Although she was still weak compared to the previous generation, she didn’t shrink back in front of the powerful enemy.

A white armor summoned by the jade magic power wrapped around Yura’s thin body. It was a class specific item, Demon Predator, which she had earned as a hidden piece from hell. The armor had a vicious name that was different from its beautiful appearance. It was only unique rated, but its performance exceeded legendary rated armor. Alex’s Magic Engineering Bayonet, which had been made by Pagma, turned into a sword. It was a perfect battle stance.

Yura was upset because she judged that Grid had already been hit by the dukes, but she didn’t forget to protect her colleagues. She tried to calm down and was determined to buy them time.

Morse made an invidious remark, “Where are you running away to?”

It was a frivolous tone that was hard to believe came from a duke of the empire. Morse's gaze shifted to Grenhal. To be exact, it was to someone behind Grenhal. The 10 meritorious retainers followed his gaze and were astonished. It was because Grid was sitting behind Grenhal. Grid looked pale.

"Damn scum!" Jishuka raised her eyes and swore.

She wanted to fire her bow, but she still couldn't lift her finger. Her overall status resistance was approaching 30%, but the rate of recovery from the abnormal status was slower than expected.

"Daring to hold my man captive?!"

There was no time for Grid to shout about why he was her man. Beyond Jishuka, the angry Yura was already leaping forward. She jumped and stabbed her sword toward Grenhal on the two-headed hippo. Grenhal didn't even bother taking out a shield. He stopped Yura's attack using his gauntlets and rotated his wrist to grab Yura's blade.

"...!" Yura bit her lips. By the time she felt the grip that she couldn't resist, her body was already flying through the air. Yura was thrown onto the sand. There was a despairing gap in power between them. Yura's obsidian eyes were shaking, but she quickly recovered from her confusion and got up again. Then it happened the moment she was going to use Hell Leap to save Grid...

"W-Wait a minute! Wait! Calm down!" Grid jumped down from the two-headed hippo. His body was free despite being a prisoner. His pale complexion was restored to its original state. No injuries could be seen.

"Ugh, I feel sick," Grid grumbled. Riding on the hippo was the worst because he had felt like he had been on a roller coaster the entire time. He should've stuck to walking instead of riding on this beast's back...

Grid judged Grenhal inwardly while making introductions to his colleagues, "As you know, they are dukes of the empire. They will be our colleagues while exploring the ruins."

"What?"

"Huh?"

The 10 meritorious retainers doubted their ears. There had been countless surprises during their time with Grid, but this had the biggest impact. In this short time, he managed to ally with the dukes who were their enemies...?

Lauel's eyes widened and he muttered, "A human magnet..."

From Piaro, Asmophel, Bland, Sticks, the people of the East Continent to Mercedes, and the dukes—Grid picked up people wherever he went. Lauel applauded silently.

"This type of thing..." Skunk's eyes flashed as he heard the news from Dog Woman. The followers started to appear on the coast, and the dukes who went to get water hadn't returned. He'd felt uneasy, but then the Aura Master appeared. Hurent had even helped Dog Woman's party.

'He is full of justice. In the worst case, we can depend on him.'

Without strength, they couldn't explore the Ruins of the War God or cross the Red Sea. If something went wrong with the dukes, Skunk's group would be trapped in the ruins and could only wait for death. However, there was hope if they could get help from the Aura Master. It wasn't bad for the Aura Master who needed their exploration skills.

'Still, that is in the worst case scenario. I should believe that the dukes would return safely.'

Skunk's thoughts were complicated. There was no need to worry about things that hadn't occurred yet when he should be focused on finding the location of the key pieces.

'It won't be long now.'

There were clues that couldn't be solved even with advanced archaeological and deciphering skills. Although there were too many unanswered questions about the ruins, things were gradually becoming better. After consulting the old books in his inventory, Skunk eventually found some answers.

A job that should've taken decades was performed in a few days while losing sleep. The saying 'worked hard enough to shed blood' might be a bit exaggerated, but he was approaching the whereabouts of the key pieces. There was still a problem with the saying, but it was sufficient to use it. Then it happened while he was focused on deciphering.

"The dukes have returned!" Dog Woman shouted, smiling brightly as she rushed over. The inwardly worried Skunk jumped from his seat and ran out of the barracks. The soldiers' shouts were heard from everywhere. There was a pile of drinking water in front of them.

Skunk approached the dukes and greeted them, "I'm glad you returned safely."

"You must've been worried."

"I know your strength, but the jungle is extremely dangerous. I was worried the traps would grab your ankles."

"The traps have already been solved."

"...?" Skunk couldn't react to the sudden words. He reflexively checked his ears.

Grenhal's words continued, "This person of distinction has already obtained the key."

"...?" The words still couldn't be understood. Skunk couldn't figure it out and doubted that Grenhal's words about 'traps' and 'key' meant the 'traps' and 'key' he was thinking of. He didn't know how to react as Grenhal introduced a person to him, "The Overgeared King."

"...!?" Skunk finally responded properly. After Grenhal's introduction, he saw a man with black hair and a familiar face.

"P-Person of distinction?"

"G-Grid!"

The traps were resolved. The key was obtained.

Skunk finally started to accept Duke Grenhal's absurd words. Grabbing Grid's hand, Skunk honestly admired him. "I arrived first and haven't obtained a single key piece. It is surprising that Grid has already completed the key. It is truly amazing. I see you have great exploration skills."

He had learned from the Sword Grave that Grid's eyes and ears were likely to be scattered all over the continent. Grid's talents according to the situation were unfathomable. Even the Aura Master, who was known for his retirement, wasn't near Grid at the moment.

'I didn't think Hurent's party would be the Overgeared Guild... Many explorer rankers must've already been hired by Grid.'

Skunk hadn't been able to find the key pieces himself, but it wasn't strange for Grid to have completed it if several equally powerful people had joined forces. There were many talented people in the world.

'I wonder who they are.'

Skunk asked carefully, "Are you able to introduce them to me?"

"Them?"

"The other explorers who gathered the key pieces."

"There are no other explorers...?"

"Then how did you get the key?"

"I had the key to begin with."

"...?"

The conversation was a bit weird. Skunk was confused! He was shocked. Come to think of it, weren't the Overgeared Kingdom and the empire at war? Yes, Grid and the dukes were hostile to each other. Yet now they were now together so naturally. Additionally, Grid didn't seem to know what the key was exactly. If he knew, he wouldn't give the impossible answer that he had it to begin with.

Skunk became heated up. 'He used a trick to deceive and approach the dukes!'

What did he use to completely fool the dukes? There must've been a battle that he couldn't imagine.

'Definitely... He is definitely a wise and careful person...!' Skunk's eyes shone brightly like lanterns as he watched Grid.

He didn't think there would be a day when he sincerely respected someone younger than him. It was refreshing. It was shocking. It was exciting.

On this day...

"Grid, what is your hobby? What do you generally enjoy when you're not playing the game? What is your birthday? Your blood type? Your family relationships?" The highly inquisitive Skunk bombarded Grid with questions.

Skunk felt a great liking toward the person called Grid.

'This guy is crazy about socializing.' Grid was feeling baffled.

Meanwhile, Lauel was delighted. 'Human magnet! Well done!!'

[Chapter 1024](#)

The emergence of Great Demon Berith stimulated many players. They believed it was an opportunity to gain great wealth, and the unsuspecting rankers and guilds challenged the Berith raid. It wasn't just the existing powerhouses. The forces that had been secretly gathering power also appeared in the world.

Then all of them failed completely. Sometimes dozens, hundreds, or even thousands died before Berith's lies and alchemy. Berith's wrath didn't stop there, and the land he stepped on turned to ruin. In particular, two kingdoms in the eastern part of the continent suffered irreparable damage.

[Sagaltina City in the Haken Kingdom has been destroyed.]

[Agarna City in the Haken Kingdom has been destroyed.]

[Germon City in the Rotemon Kingdom has been destroyed.]

[The Rotemon Kingdom...]

Dozens of towns and cities disappeared from the map. It meant that even the armies couldn't block Berith. The players felt a sense of crisis. As more territories were destroyed by Berith, the number of facilities and hunting grounds available to them decreased.

The people shouted unanimously:

-We need to get rid of Berith as soon as possible.

-If this continues, we will disappear.

-This is when the rankers should work together.

Now, the Berith raid was promoted as an opportunity to win wealth and honor at the same time, not just wealth. More and more guilds challenged Berith to become heroes. The rankers forgot to compete and worked together to fight Berith. Then they were all defeated again. A large expedition, including the Ares Army who re-challenged the raid, managed to reduce Berith's health by 30%. Then Berith entered a new phase after losing health and caused the expedition to collapse at an even greater speed.

After this, the situation became worse. Berith secured enough souls from the battles and used them as sacrifices to summon his first army. He became more powerful with the presence of the army, and the devastation of the continent accelerated.

The Haken Kingdom and Rotemon Kingdom were on the brink of destruction. The players who were active in these kingdoms almost lost their lives. The great demon's rampage caused the existing rule and order to collapse, and numerous players suffered great inconveniences. The Berith raid became a common problem that had to be resolved for players as a whole, not for wealth or honor.

The nervous people started to make a lot of noise. Why wasn't the Overgeared Guild coming forward? Why did they turn away from this calamity? They were criticized for being irresponsible. How funny. People had accused them of monopolizing the Belial raid, and now they condemned them for not

participating. Of course, this wasn't everyone. However, many people placed one-sided standards on the Overgeared Guild.

Lauel naturally didn't care about their accusations. In the first place, the Overgeared Guild was a private organization. They had no obligation to respond to other people's wishes while taking damage. Moreover, there was sufficient justification for it.

"We can't afford to challenge Berith yet. Our top priority is to recover from the war and explore the ruins. There is a low probability that Belial will be raided while we're away."

Lauel logged out of the game due to the connection time limit. These were the contents of an email he sent to all guild members after confirming the news articles and public opinion. No one disputed the contents of the email.

In the imperial barracks, Grid, the 10 meritorious retainers, the dukes, and Skunk sat facing each other. Grenhal was seated in front of Grid, showing his authority was the highest among the dukes.

"Since we are now working together, we will be honest about our affairs and provide you with the information we have so far," Grenhal said, shifting his gaze to Basara.

Then Basara started explaining, "There are 4,959 soldiers and 300 knights. We have a total of 5,259 people, but the soldiers are useless in front of the followers while the knights are helpless against the traps. The three of us were the only ones who actually fought in the meantime."

The imperial army had suffered on his small island. It was hard to believe the noble dukes were struggling.

"However, things have now changed. Your Majesty has the key. In the future, we will be able to include the knights in our combat strength. The knights are skilled and will be a big help if they fight eight against one."

The 10 meritorious retainers had experience fighting the followers who had learned two secret techniques. When they first met, two of the 10 meritorious retainers had to work together to knock down one follower. A long time had passed since then, and they should now be able to fight one-on-one.

Yet the duke was stating that eight knights were needed to fight one follower. Peak Sword shrugged and couldn't stop his lips from curving up.

'The dukes' knights are worse than us.'

As expected, the 10 meritorious retainers were strong. Even if they were folding screens in front of the duke... That was because the dukes were too great. Peak Sword was trying to be confident when he doubted what he was hearing.

"Of course, this is only a story when dealing with a follower who had learned five secret techniques. However, most of the followers in the jungle have only learned five secret techniques. Based on our experience, we should be able to at least break through the jungle area."

Five secret techniques... The classic short advertisements on the Internet flashed through Peak Sword's mind. He clearly heard 'five.'

'Crazy. Five techniques?'

They could barely fight one-on-one against the followers who had learned two secret techniques. Now there were followers who had learned five? Peak Sword closed his eyes. He was worried because the difficulty of the ruins was higher than expected, and the dukes' knights were also strong.

Meanwhile, the others were fine. The former Tzedakah Guild members—they had easily predicted that the followers in these ruins would be stronger since they had played all types of games before Satisfy. Yura, Chris, Euphemina, and Katz weren't shaken because they were confident in their skills.

'Am I the only one who feels uncomfortable?' Peak Sword felt somewhat alienated.

Meanwhile, the conversation between Lauel and Basara continued.

"You might be wondering about what lies beyond the jungle, but we don't know yet."

Lauel asked her, "More than that, the question is about the uncertainty that we can somehow break through. You don't have the confidence that we and 300 knights can break through the jungle easily?"

"Yes."

"Why? Wasn't the problem about breaking through the jungle due to the traps? If King Grid resolves the trap, won't the problem disappear and it will be easy?"

"The traps were the biggest problem, but there are other problems."

"What is it?" Lauel asked urgently. This was the first time that a noble of a small country was so talkative in front of a duke of the empire. Yet Basara showed no signs of discomfort at all. It was natural to respect the other person once they had a temporary partnership, and they were going to discuss everything anyway.

"The followers learn different things, and they use different weapons. Some have a strong defense to neutralize attacks while others use deceptive means to distract the mind."

The gist of the explanation was simple. The more followers that were gathered, the stronger their fighting power would be. Eight knights could defeat one follower, but this was a story when it was eight against one.

"If there are 10 followers and 80 knights, the knights would be defeated unconditionally. It will be hard for Duke Grenhal, Duke Morse, and I to deal with more than 10 followers at a time."

It was too much to deal with five followers when there were traps, but that had improved. Lauel had a troubled expression. "This means we will be defeated if we encounter many followers during the march."

"That's right. The followers basically roam alone, but when a battle occurs, the nearby followers will arrive quickly. Thus, it is often necessary to retreat depending on the situation. Additionally, the followers are monsters and will respawn after a certain period of time."

“This...”

There was a high probability that the retreat would be repeated. That’s why it was unknown as to when they could break through the jungle.

‘I am worried about Berith if we drag out the time too much.’

Berith would summon new armies and raise his strength as time passed. After all, Lauel couldn’t let the enemy that they were going to raid become stronger.

“It isn’t good to drag out the time. Are there any reinforcements?”

“A total of five ships departed from Galest a fortnight ago.”

“A fortnight...?”

“There must’ve been an accident.”

“...”

Eventually, reinforcements would arrive. Even if the first reinforcements had experienced an accident, the empire would dispatch second and third groups of reinforcements. However, this meant a delay in time.

‘We might have to change the order of the historical site exploration and the Berith raid. Then the empire might monopolize the site rewards while we’re gone. It is the worst.’

The genius Lauel wasn’t able to make guesses easily. Why had the imperial troops failed to arrive?

Nobody knew that ‘he’ was working so hard. (TL= Huroi)

It was a problem because his activities could turn into trolling.

Two hours later, the meeting led by Lauel and Basara ended. Sufficient information was exchanged, and future plans and command systems were completed. Grid rose from his seat. “Let’s start right away.”

He had been bored to death during the meeting. As he couldn’t even make underwear in front of the dukes, he had to just sit there and listen. Skunk gulped when he saw Grid’s ambitious appearance. ‘Is now the time for the rebellion?’

Grid hadn’t collected any key pieces. Skunk didn’t know how the dukes were fooled, but Grid had no means of releasing the traps. Skunk became afraid as he imagined how Grid would attract them to the jungle and deal with them in some way. He wondered if he should help the dukes who treated him well. As Skunk hesitated, Grid’s party and the dukes finished their preparations to move.

“Let’s go.”

“...Yes.”

Naturally, Skunk also went with them. It didn’t make sense for him to stay away from the exploration when he was the only person who could reveal the secrets of the ruins.

“...”Skunk’s expression was dark as they arrived in front of the jungle. This was a jungle where animals couldn’t live because of all types of traps. It was quiet and sinister.

Duguen.Duguen.Duguen. Skunk’s heart beat quickly.

He was worried about how Grid’s group would clash with the dukes and also felt pure curiosity. Grid reached out to the air. His hand sank into an invisible inventory in front of everyone.

‘I have to stop it now.... No, Grid and the Overgeared members will be the ones to die. Ahh... Dukes, it is dangerous!’

Skunk was in a dilemma and eventually closed his eyes. He chose to ignore it and just imagined Grid drawing a sword from the inventory. However, the item that Grid pulled out of the inventory was a key, not a weapon. His universal key unlocked the tree. There was the sound of a lock opening, and the startled Skunk opened his eyes, only to look blank. “...?”

Grid was approaching every visible tree and inserting a key. The traps of the jungle started to be released one by one under his hand.

“W-What?”

In the previous conversation, Grid seemed completely unaware of the key pieces. He gave the absurd answer that he originally had the key. That’s right. Grid’s key was completely different from those available at the ruins.

Was it effective? What the hell was this?

“Wait a minute! W-What the hell is that key?”

“This? A universal key.”

“...?!”Skunk belatedly recalled something. Grid was the Overgeared King. It was the reason he became king, not because of other exceptional talents.

“O-Overgeared...”

Yes, overgeared. Grid was the most overgeared person in the world.

“Hmm?”Grid was curious about Skunk’s reaction, only to suddenly pull out a sword.

Then he started a sword dance.“Pinnacle Kill.”

There was a follower who approached Grid while hiding in the vines. Grid’s high insight and Slaughterer’s Eye Patch meant he saw the follower before the attack. The two fused sword dances didn’t consume a lot of sword energy, and some of the sword energy was recovered by the subsequent basic attacks. It took only 10 seconds for the follower to turn to gray.

“Hey, you said they were basically wandering on their own? Don’t we just have to kill them as soon as we see them?”

The followers in the Galgunos Temple were classified as elite monsters while the followers at the ruins were classified as normal monsters. The followers might be stronger, but their health was low. Thus, it was easy to kill them in a few blows. This was Grid's opinion.

"..."There was an awkward silence.

[Chapter 1025](#)

The 300 knights were stunned. They were truly amazed by Grid killing the follower in a matter of seconds.

'There is a reason Lord Grenhal respected him.'

The knights had been thinking that Grenhal's attitude was too much. They might need his key, but Grid was the enemy king. He was a rebel who had killed Duke Rigal. However, Grenhal expressed a subtle liking toward Grid. Why did he do this? In the end, there was a reason. Overgeared King Grid was better than the rumors said. Grenhal might've been fighting many followers, but Grid hunted a follower in a matter of seconds. He was faster than the dukes!

The knights felt fearful of Grid and were unable to believe there was such a strong man outside the empire. They were already worried that he would be the second coming of the Undefeated King.

The 10 meritorious retainers were also surprised. A humanoid normal monster might have the weakness of 'less health', but the follower was still level 400. Grid's fighting power, which knocked down such a monster with a skill and a few basic attacks, had risen significantly compared to just a few months ago. The 10 meritorious retainers respected Grid's constant development. The impact on Hurent was particularly large.

'I used all my skills just to catch one...'

Hurent hadn't participated in the meeting. Unlike the 10 meritorious retainers, he wasn't a noble and it was somewhat uncomfortable to take part in the meeting with the dukes.

Thus, he had taken the time to look around the coast. Piaro, who had farmed in the underwater city of the water clan, had said he'd created a crop that grew in sand and ate seawater. After sufficient verification, Piaro had given some seeds to Hurent. How pleasant would it be to farm in such a beautiful coastal area...?

Hurent looked around the coast with sentimental feelings. However, being sentimental was a luxury. He should've used that time to train. Now, he was worried that he wouldn't be able to reach Grid's toes in his lifetime.

"..." On the other hand, the dukes showed no reaction. They didn't feel admiration at all despite seeing Grid easily taking care of the followers.

Grid was also feeling a bit suspicious. 'Isn't the experience too little?'

The amount of experience given was the same as the amount of experience received from killing a level 300 monster. The follower only gave this much experience and left. It was a strange thing.

“...!” Grid was cocking his head only to quickly raise his sword. A fist flew out and collided with the Sword Aiming at the Gods. There was an intense explosion. Grid’s two feet left the ground. It was evident that the strength contained in the fist was superior to Grid’s strength.

Grid was pushed his sword against the punch and kicked out. The war god follower, that was attacking Grid, lowered his elbow. The follower’s elbow headed toward Grid’s knees. Thanks to this, Grid’s leg couldn’t go up and his kick was rendered useless.

“You...?” Grid identified the face of the follower and was astounded. The facial features of this follower were completely in line with the follower he had just eliminated. The moment Grid felt some doubts, the follower split into two, three, four, or five followers. They were clones. The initial follower Grid killed was just this guy’s clone.

“When they first emerge, the followers who mastered cloning will throw out their clones as bait to distract the opponent,” Grenhal murmured.

The followers of the war god were the strongest enemies who threatened even the dukes. There was no need to mention those who had learned dozens of secret techniques, but even the followers who had learned five secret techniques weren’t easy opponents. It was difficult to eliminate them in just a few seconds. That was impossible for the dukes unless they used their ultimate techniques.

Grenhal remained alert as he silently watched how Grid would cope. Grid had become the Hero King through certain achievements. Grenhal had a pure curiosity about whether Grid desired to be called the hero among heroes.

‘He will naturally have a hard time in the beginning.’

The cloning technique that the followers used was different from traditional cloning. The original cloning reproduced 30% of the user’s abilities, showing a weaker presence. Meanwhile, the cloned followers boasted a powerful destructive power. It was due to the characteristic of ‘momentarily exchanging stats with the main body’.

Of course, since it was an exchange, the power of the clone became stronger while the main body weakened. This weakness exposed them to danger, and the key was to capture the weakness. However, there was no difference between the appearance of the clones and the main body. It was impossible to find the main body and kill it.

Grenhal wondered how Grid surrounded by five followers would break through the crisis. For reference, the first time they fought a follower with the cloning technique, Grenhal took four minutes while Morse took five minutes.

“Um?” Grenhal’s eyes grew slightly wider. It was due to the blue sparks that appeared around Grid’s left eye hidden by the eyepatch.

“...?!”

At the same time, all the clones surrounding Grid exploded and disappeared.

“W-What? What is this ability?” The cries came from Morse, who had been repeatedly yawning out of boredom. He regarded Grid as weak and showed little interest in his battle. The follower who lost his

clones was also baffled. The followers of the war god were truthseekers. In order to achieve ultimate nothingness, they detached themselves from their emotions even before death. Their confusion was an unfamiliar and surprising sight for the dukes.

Basara exclaimed, "Evil eye...!"

"What? An evil eye?"

An eye that exercised power—it was a privilege only for the evil eyes species. It didn't make sense that the human Grid was using an evil eye, but Grenhal and Morse couldn't deny Basara's interpretation. There was no error in her vast knowledge.

Grid's struck the follower, who only had the main body left. However, the follower's skin hardened like steel and crossed his arms to block Grid's attack. The follower's defense was so strong that normal attacks couldn't hurt him.

"...?!" The follower's arm was cut off by Grid's sword, and blood spurted out. The face of the follower distorted with pain.

[Contempt of the Weak]

[Inflicts a fatal blow to a target who isn't in the realm of transcendence.

Deals a blow that consumes 80% of the target's current health.

Skill Mana Cost: 5,000

Skill Cooldown Time: 1 hour.]

This was the skill attached to the Blade Aiming at the Gods. It was a skill that didn't apply when the opponent was named, but it was like a nuclear warhead against an ordinary monster. Grid dealt eight more basic attacks to the follower who was stunned from suffering great damage. Then the follower of the war god turned to ash.

Grid was able to gain a large amount of experience, unlike when he killed the first clone. His experience gauge increased by 0.01% despite being level 398.

"..."

"..."

This time, the dukes were astonished and closed their mouths. This was the first time Grid fought a follower that possessed the cloning technique, yet he managed to easily eliminate the follower...? Honest admiration sprang up at the sight of Grid's skills.

'He didn't manage to kill Rigal because he was lucky.'

In the minds of the dukes, Grid's presence started to grow. Grid succeeded in dominating the atmosphere. It was worth using Contempt of the Weak.

[The Castration Eye is triggered. Mana is being constantly consumed.]

[The Castration Eye has been closed.]

Grid closed his left eye and approached his companions. "The followers seem stronger than I thought. Everyone, be careful."

"...Yes."

The 10 meritorious retainers were heartbroken. They had to be careful of monsters that Grid hunted in seconds... They realized how big the difference between them was and felt a far bigger gap than the one they used to feel with the sky above the sky—Kraugel.

'This can't continue.'

'We will end up being a burden if the gap keeps widening.'

The 10 meritorious retainers were burning with motivation. They would fight when they were afraid and become stronger by overcoming it. They looked around with determination. They had the eyes of predators.

The jungle wasn't large. Thanks to Grid releasing all the traps, the struggle of the 10 meritorious retainers who longed for growth, and the overwhelming combat power of the dukes, the party reached the end of the jungle easily. A valley emerged before them, and the sound of the pouring waterfall entered their ears.

"How about camping here?"

Lauel confirmed the topography of the valley and nodded. "This would be good."

They had started at dawn, and it was currently nighttime. It had taken them 14 hours to break through the jungle. Lauel, who set up the camp with his colleagues, approached Skunk and asked, "There was nothing unusual on the way?"

"Yes. Unfortunately, no clues or treasures could be found. There were only a few murals telling me how to release the jungle traps."

The jungle was just the first gateway of the ruins. The jungle itself was low in importance. Lauel nodded and handed Skunk a piece of jerky. "Aren't there many troublesome things running a guild by yourself?"

"It is a bit troublesome if there are more than 100 people. However, there are no big problems. In the first place, our guild runs according to the concept of conducting an expedition. We don't settle in one place, and there isn't any political fighting. Of course, the difficulty means that many guild members often desert..."

"It seems time to settle down. You've explored almost all the West Continent and crossed the Red Sea."

"Um... That's true."

"Come to the Overgeared Kingdom. We will provide you with many conveniences. If you want to explore the Red Sea, you can borrow the warship at any time. If you want to explore the East Continent, we will help you cross the continent at any time."

"Haha, I can cross to the East Continent at any time? That is an irresistible proposal," Skunk laughed.

The remark about being able to go to the East Continent at will was absurd.

Lael spoke with a serious expression, "You might not know this, but Sage Sticks is serving Grid."

"...?"

"We can create magic scrolls that enables intercontinental movement."

"Huh? What?" Skunk's eyes widened.

"Is that really...?" Skunk was about to ask for confirmation, only to close his mouth. It was due to the waterfall behind where Lael was sitting. He glimpsed the human lurking behind the massive waterfall falling in the distance. The person had his eyes closed like he was training, and he wasn't paying any attention to this side.

However, the party was forced to feel worried. The name of the person seen through the waterfall was 'war god follower who has learned 10 secret techniques.'

Skunk sensed it. This was the guardian. It obviously existed to protect some treasures.

[Chapter 1026](#)

'Just this?'

Grid was troubled as he walked through the jungle. The Ruins of the War God...

It had been six years since Satisfy was released and a new area opened. Wasn't it normal for the difficulty level to be very high? To be honest, he had determined that the expedition itself wasn't possible. Yet once he actually embarked on the expedition, it wasn't a big deal. There was the universal key, and the work was too easy.

'Rather, the Galgunos Temple is harder.'

The followers at the ruins were 50 levels higher than the temple followers and had more skills. However, they weren't threats because they were normal monsters, and they appeared one by one. Rather, he perceived the difficulty of the undead-infested temple as higher.

'...Indeed. I heard that Galgunos was also revered as a god.'

It was impossible to establish a hypothesis that this place was more difficult just because it was in the Red Sea. Before dividing the world into the West Continent, the Red Sea, and the East Continent, the settings were different from place to place. Dragons lived on the West Continent.

'Let's not jump to conclusions.'

The jungle was only one gateway in the ruins. After that, the difficulty might rise significantly.

"Hrmm."

In the private barracks, Grid was busy thinking as he patted Noe's fur, which was gradually becoming darker. What item could the Overgeared Skeletons make using their bones? He thought about what to create. The system set up Overgeared Skeleton One to make a sword and Overgeared Skeleton Two to make a helmet, but it was purely Grid's responsibility to decide the type of sword and helmet. Grid

wanted to present the best items for them since the Overgeared Skeletons would use the items for the rest of their lives.

“Ah, it is hard.”

At present, the Overgeared Skeletons could only learn one production method each. This made it harder.

“Nyong.” Noe licked Grid’s hand.

He noticed that Grid’s expression was distorted with worry.

‘A cute guy.’

While Grid was smiling with a warm expression of affection, it happened.

“King Grid!” Lael ran in and shouted, “Come out for a second!”

Their ears were ringing. At the valley that existed at the end of the jungle, there were 53 large and small waterfalls pouring down in the centre. In particular, there were two very big waterfalls. They were only 30 meters wide, and the water pressure was strong enough to drill a hole in the bottom of the valley.

Therefore, no one noticed the existence of a follower hiding behind the waterfall. It was purely a coincidence that Skunk found him. The two waterfalls collided, and a crack was formed. Finally, the falling moonlight illuminated the follower.

“A follower who mastered 10 secret techniques.”

Some of the 10 meritorious retainers couldn’t gulp. It was hard enough to deal with a follower who had mastered five secret techniques. No one knew how strong one with 10 secret techniques would be. In particular, Vantner had received a great deal of damage from the followers who had acquired the ‘Force Palm’ technique that penetrated through defense. He prayed that the follower who had learned 10 secret techniques hadn’t learned Force Palm.

Grid belatedly arrived at the scene. “How long has he been hiding in there? Is he planning to ambush us when we are off guard?”

To put it bluntly, the follower was an insidious person who was equipped with a named-grade level artificial intelligence. The color of the name couldn’t be seen because of the disturbance of the waterfall and the distance, but it was likely to be a boss monster.

“Since he is still there, he doesn’t know that he has been caught by us?”

“It seems so. From inside the waterfall, the sound of the waterfall will be louder, and he can’t see this side very well.”

The follower seemed to be in training. He stood as still as a statue with his eyes closed, as a waterfall cascaded over his body. Surely, he didn’t know the situation.

“We should get rid of him quickly. Assist me.”

Grid felt that the jungle was boring, but this was just an individual impression. He was hoping for some thrill, but he didn't want a crisis. Consequently, he judged it was better to handle the risk factors quickly. The Pulling Device was used on Sword Ghost. Grid attached the Blade Aiming at the Gods to it and then used Fly. The distance to the waterfall was around three kilometers long. He planned to fly over as quickly as possible, use the four fused sword dances to critically damage the follower, and then kill the follower using the assistance of his colleagues.

However, Grenhal stopped him. "It is dangerous."

Grid paused. "Dangerous? Isn't it an opportunity to attack when he has yet to notice us?"

"He is watching us."

"What are you talking about? Isn't his eyes closed? In the first place, would he be so still if he has noticed us?"

"Your Majesty, do you know why he has detected us? It is because he has achieved Natural State. We can't capture him with our senses because we haven't unified with nature. Meanwhile, he shares the senses of nature and knows what we're doing and what we look like."

Natural State was something that Grid was familiar with. It was something Piaro had obtained a few years ago. Yet, so what?

"What should we do? Wait until he attacks first?" Grid asked with frustration.

Grenhal nodded. "We are far enough away from him that we can read his movements. Furthermore, we have the numerical advantage. It is better for us to prepare our battle lines to intercept him."

"Hrmm..."

Certainly, it was true. There was no need to run into the rough waterfall and fight. The convinced Grid nodded.

'By the way, the dukes are surprisingly cautious.'

The Seven Dukes were some of the most powerful people on the West Continent. Grid knew they would be terribly arrogant. He expected them to be emotional people who acted fearlessly in the world, but that wasn't the case. The dukes knew they had to hold hands with an enemy king to overcome the crisis and had a thorough plan when they fought the strong. They were stronger and more cautious than Grid, who often only believed in his own power.

'I try to be careful every time, but it doesn't work when I'm excited...'

Amazing...

They definitely seemed like they were a cut above him. He thought it was necessary to be as wise as them if he wanted to be in the same class as the dukes.

"..."

After that, morning came.

“...”

Another day passed.

“...”

Two days passed by, but the follower in the waterfall continued to stand still. At this point, the dukes also became irritated.

“Why is he staying still?”

Staying in place for two days? The knights had been on edge for two days because they weren't sure when the follower would attack, and now they were exhausted. The Overgeared members couldn't hide their tiredness either. Beast King Morse insisted that it couldn't continue, “I can't endure it anymore. We will attack first as the Overgeared King suggested.”

Skunk gave a boost to Morse's argument, “There is treasure beyond the waterfall. The follower isn't leaving the waterfall because he is protecting the treasure.”

“Umm...” Grenhal couldn't hold back anymore and turned his gaze to Grid.

Grid nodded. “We can't leave him like this. Who knows if he will come after us and hit our backs?”

His decision wasn't due to being greedy for an uncertain treasure. They had to take down the follower in order to move forward. After Grid spoke, Grenhal finally nodded. “I understand, but I can't send you alone.”

They crossed the jungle together, and Grenhal was able to fully peek at Grid's skills. It was frankly hard to understand how Grid had beat Sky King Rigal, but it was clear that he was quite powerful.

...Grenhal also didn't feel so bad when he shook Grid's hand. He couldn't let Grid fight alone. This was a result of the synergy between Grid's charm stat and his 'easily recognized' class characteristic.

“Come with us.” Grenhal, Morse, and Basara stood side to side behind Grid. The Overgeared members were thrilled by the sight. The empire was an enemy, yet these people—who were like beings in the sky that rankers couldn't meet—seemed to follow Grid. Grid felt pretty good. The people who were the worst threats just a few days ago were now supporting his back in a wonderful and reliable manner.

‘Garam is different.’

Still, maybe it was like what Lauel said—the empire could be reborn as an ally without needing to fight. If that's the case, the Overgeared Kingdom would be safe. Grid wouldn't have to worry about when the people who believed and followed him would die.

“Okay. Let's go.” The motivated Grid used Fly while the dukes followed behind him. Jishuka and Yura were at the pre-arranged sniping spots while Euphemina and Lauel cast magic. Faker, Chris, Pon, Regas, Peak Sword, Vantner, Katz, and Hurent followed Grid and the dukes into the valley. Additionally...

“Transcended Link Flower!” Grid, in Blackening mode, reached the waterfall first and fired 40 waves of sword energy.

“...” Simultaneously, the follower behind the waterfall slowly opened his eyes. There was a huge explosion, and the water falling down on the follower scattered in every direction. The follower’s body was very strong as he used the power of nature.

[The target has received 3,500 damage.]

[The target has received 3,320 damage.]

[The target has received...]

“...!?”

The follower who had learned 10 secret techniques boasted a tremendous defense. Transcended Link Flower dealt 122% physical and 20% magic damage, yet the follower only received 3,000 damage. It was a shocking result for Grid who had confidently compared his attack power to that of the Seven Dukes.

Grid’s body crashed into the valley. He was thrown out by the waterfall.

“Ah!”

Grid swam quickly and emerged from the water again. Combat was unfolding between the follower and the dukes. The colossal destruction was as spectacular as the four fused sword dances, and water columns rose in all directions. The attacks of the three dukes unfolded quickly, and the follower rushed to defend themselves. The follower might’ve learned 10 secret techniques, but it was too much to fight against three of the strongest people of the West Continent at the same time.

‘Why were they so worried about Natural State if they were going to win anyway?’

Why did the dukes shrink back? Grid clocked his tongue in a ridiculing manner and hurriedly started the sword dance for Linked Kill Flower Pinnacle. He was planning to use the marks left behind by Transcended Link Flower to deal a bigger blow to the follower. Contribution was important in order to get as many items and experience as possible.

At this moment, the 53 large and small waterfalls went against the laws of nature. The water falling down turned into living dragons and changed angles, pouring toward the dukes.

“Keuk!”

“Cough!”

The dukes were hit by thousands of rays of water, and they lost their health and collapsed. They couldn’t cope with the water pressure concentrated on them and started bleeding. It was the power of Natural State. Piaro was only at the beginning stages of Natural State and was able to replace some of his strength with the natural mana of the world. Meanwhile, the follower could control nature according to his will. The follower turned his gaze to Grid and declared, “You aren’t qualified to challenge me.”

Then he pointed to the dukes. “Empty shells who have already consumed all their talents.”

The follower’s finger pointed somewhere else. It was to indicate the hiding Faker. “Child who just started training.”

Then the finger pointed to a distant place. It was toward where Yura was in sniper mode. "A half-grown person who has yet to fulfill her duty and whose strength has been suppressed."

Finally, the follower pointed to Grid who was standing right in front of him. "A blacksmith who has already exceeded his limits."

"...!"

"All of you are weak. You don't deserve to challenge me, a being who is walking on the path of true martial arts."

This follower was capable of talking, unlike all other followers who had emerged so far. His words sparked anxiety deep in Grid's heart. It was the anxiety created by the evaluation that he had already exceeded the limit. Grid noticed what the follower was saying and gritted his teeth to deny reality. "Exceeding my limits is bullshit. Do you think I'm an ordinary blacksmith? I am Pagma's Descendant."

In fact, Grid had been feeling uneasy since a while ago. The combat skills of a Demon Slayer blossomed over time.

"I can become stronger in the future."

The Sword Saint was strong from the beginning.

"There is still a lot of potential left."

Grid often felt that the class-specific combat power of Pagma's Descendant was really shabby. He had been through all types of incidents and gone beyond the limits. Perhaps it was impossible to become stronger. He often had this thought. The anxiety of whether he would eventually come down from his hard-earned seat filled him, but Grid tried hard to ignore it. He remained hopeful that he could develop further. He tried hard to keep his hard-won present reality and to not fall into the past.

Yet, right now, the follower was denying those efforts.

"A blacksmith has no qualifications. Didn't Pagma eventually know his limits and sign a contract with the great demon?"

"Shut up!"

The furious Grid fired Linked Kill Flower Pinnacle. The follower had five marks on him thanks to Transcended Link Flower and received great damage from this fusion sword dance. However, the boss monster's defense and health were transcendent. The follower's health gauge remained intact.

"You will eventually abandon the sword."

At this moment...

[Zeratul]

"...?"

The name 'war god follower with 10 secret techniques' changed to a short word. It even resembled the name of the war god. The 53 waterfalls were in a frenzy. The screams of the dukes and the 10 meritorious retainers were heard as the confusion inside Grid soared to the extreme.

[Braham's soul has woken up.]

Grid heard the nostalgic voice.

-Your tail is wagging all over the place. Since when did you receive attention from the war god? He is the one who isn't worthy.

"...!"

It was a terrible indifference. The gaze of the follower watching Grid blankly changed. Braham calmed Grid down, -Let the trashy words flow out one ear. Don't think about going astray. You are strong. You can become stronger.

Grid was different from Pagma. Unlike Pagma who had abandoned his friend and joined hands with the great demons, Grid had people he could rely on.

-I am by your side.

[A hidden piece has occurred.]

[Chapter 1027](#)

The children of Shizo Beriache had inherited one desire from her. Among them, Braham had inherited her desire for knowledge, endured the Curse of Idleness, and reached the truth of the world. Like his mother Beriache, he had peeked at the true nature of the gods.

That's why in the past, he felt uneasy when Pagma confessed that he had met the war god. War God Zeratul—Braham had been convinced that this prideful and arrogant god wouldn't pay attention to humans out of goodwill. It had been as he'd expected.

Pagma said he had gotten rejected by the war god. Then he confessed that he realized his shortcomings thanks to the war god and vowed to be more determined to gain the power to protect the world. This vow later returned to Braham as a terrible betrayal. Pagma killed Braham and took away his life span under the name of destroying evil.

-I still clearly remember Pagma's eyes as he pierced my heart. There was no affection, regret, or pain in his eyes as he looked down at my dying self. He was only filled with a desire for strength.

-The followers aren't noble truthseekers. They are just cursed slaves who will never reach the ultimate realm with their own talent, even if they are reborn several times.

-Don't listen to the voice of the faithless. Those bullshit words will make a person crazy. Pagma who fought to destroy the great demons—he betrayed his friend using this pretext yet he ironically contracted with Great Demon Baal.

Braham's voice continued ringing in Grid's mind. Meanwhile, the words of the followers were entering his ears. "A demonkin is residing in your body. You have already gone beyond your limits, but you are still a weak blacksmith. Don't be deceived by evil beings and face the truth.

"You are weak. You aren't qualified to use the sword. Don't be complacent and embrace a greater strength.

"Yes, how about absorbing the soul of the demonkin in your body? I will teach you how. I will give you a way to once again jump over your limits and become a master of absolute knowledge."

The name of the follower changed to Zeratul again. Zeratul's consciousness seemed to have temporarily descended by borrowing the body of his follower. It was called Receiving a Soul. However, Grid didn't shrink back. He didn't feel any more confusion. There was Braham by his side.

[Your affinity with Braham has already surpassed the maximum.]

[War God Zeratul is interested in you.]

[Braham is with you.]

[All conditions are met and the hidden piece has occurred.]

The name of the hidden piece was 'Don't Repeat the Mistake.' It was a completely different name from the hidden pieces of Pagma's Descendant. This was a hidden piece created purely through the relationship Grid had built up.

-I won't repeat the same mistake. I won't lose my only friend again.

Along with Braham's declaration, Grid's black hair started to fade. His tanned skin turned white like milk, and his eyes became red. Once the change in color was over, his body frame became thin and beautiful. Grid had assimilated with Braham. This was the event assimilation that he had experienced when he first met Braham, not the Assimilation skill. This was complete assimilation.

[Forced assimilation has been carried out under the influence of the hidden piece.]

[Your class will change.]

[Name: Braham Eshwald (Grid)]

Class: Great Magician

Title: Duke of Wisdom

* The best intellectual of this time. The truth hasn't been learned yet, so he is still obstinate. This pursuit of knowledge is very strong, sometimes acting as a poison.

* Intelligence has increased by 35%.

* There is a low probability of running wild.

Title: Title: One who Became a Legend

* Abnormal conditions don't work well on you.

* You won't die when health is at the minimum.

* Easily acknowledged.

Title: ???

*???

....

...

Level: 545

Health: 858,310/858,310 (Correction)

Mana: 13,964,000/13,965,000 (Correction)

Strength: 258 Stamina: 3,400

Agility: 1,009 Intelligence: 15,880+5,558

* In this human flesh, Braham Eshwald's full strength can't be drawn out. Most of his stats are sealed.]

A massive amount of magic power exploded.

"Mana Drain," Braham said. Then the 53 frenzied waterfalls that were running wild as dragons, stopped in place. They lost their form and poured down like rain.

"...?"

The dukes, who were constantly beaten by the waterfalls, were lying on the ground in a bloody manner. The pain suddenly disappeared, and they slowly opened their eyes with wonder. Then they saw it. The arrogant war god follower was stepping back with a distorted expression.

"Bah, how lame," the Overgeared King snorted while his arms were folded.

"W-What?" The dukes were stunned. Grid was overpowering the follower they couldn't fight against. The dukes found it hard to distinguish between dreams and reality.

'Braham!' Grid was forcibly deprived of his physical body and cried out toward Braham. Rather, it was more like a scream. 'Don't overdo it! You are still weak!!'

He forgot to use honorifics as he expressed his worried heart. Braham just laughed as if he liked it.

"Stupid. It is only this much because I am weak."

This was the Red Sea. It was the original of the world where an infinite amount of mana gathered. Braham's Mana Drain was like a cotton ball of infinite size. He continued to absorb mana, amplifying his strength and stimulating the fear of the follower. The follower kept shrinking back as Braham said, "Evaluate me once."

"..." The follower was naturally silent. The opponent was a true legend. Braham was different from the still unfinished Grid and Yura. He wasn't a target to be evaluated by a mere follower.

The follower wasn't possessed by Zeratul anymore. He couldn't stifle Braham if only part of his consciousness descended. In order to stop Braham, Zeratul had to descend directly, just as when he fooled Pagma.

"Grid, I was troubled for a long time."

Braham pulled out the sword hanging from his waist.

[The conditions of use aren't met.]

[This item can't be equipped.]

[The characteristic inherent in the body's original owner will alleviate the wearing conditions.]

The Sword Aiming at the Gods—the sword, which was able to produce an optimum efficiency, was reduced to a mere ornament in the white-haired man's hand. Braham's appearance was unrealistically beautiful as he raised the golden sword, making all the landscapes in the background look like a blur. Even the Gold Crown Basara, who always had her eyes closed, opened her eyes at the beauty.

"Is it right to give my magic to someone stupid like you?"

'...'

"Will you be able to use my spells properly before you die?"

'...'

"I admitted it in the end. Giving my magic to you won't help you. It is pointless."

'What are you saying all of a sudden?' Grid gulped. It felt like Braham was going to take back his magic. Was this a hidden piece that would cause him damage? Putting aside the spells that hadn't been used yet because of his low intelligence, would he be deprived of Magic Missiles and the other spells that he had been using well?

Grid was filled with anxiety.

"Look." Braham took out the formula of Pagma's Swordsmanship. He held a perfect posture that was beyond greatness. It was easy for Braham who had watched the swordsmanship beside Pagma and Grid.

"I will refer to the pattern that Pagma used in each sword dance to imprint my magic formulas on the sword dances. In the future, you won't need to use magic and swordsmanship separately. No matter how dumb you are, you can easily take advantage of my magic."

Step.Step. Braham took a few steps closer to the follower while performing a dance. Flames reminiscent of the sun flashed around him.

"Don't look down on me!" The follower noticed there was no more place he could withdraw to and flew straight forward. The person pursuing the ultimate martial arts chose to challenge Braham rather than run away. Some of the matter gathered by Braham scattered in the air as the follower shot forward like a ray of light.

The power of the follower was formidable. Grid couldn't deal with it even when armed with Valhalla. Yet Braham handled it easily. A transparent shield appeared in front of him as he finished the sword dance. He spoke to Grid, who was admiring him, "The new swordsmanship will destroy your enemies and protect your body."

Braham made a definite promise. He thrust the sword into the follower's chest. Grid expected the follower to turn to ash. The brilliant picture of Braham defeating the enemy was naturally drawn in his mind. However, imagination and reality were very different.

"..."

Braham's strength stat was only 258. It was a very weak strength that couldn't be supplemented with items. Moreover, Braham wasn't using Pagma's Swordsmanship at the moment. He was just following the form.

"..."

"..."

There was an awkward silence! The follower became more uneasy after the sword didn't hurt him, and Braham coughed.

"Haaap!" The first one to deal with the shock was the follower. He thought this was an opportunity and broke the awkward silence. Moving like a lightning bolt, he grabbed Braham's arm. He threw Braham to the ground and was probably planning a rapid-fired bombardment, but Braham didn't allow it. The hand of the follower holding Braham's arm was cut off with Wind Cutter. The follower retreated with a groan. "...?!"

Meanwhile, Braham threatened, "You can't touch my body without my permission."

'My body?!' Grid cried out.

However, Braham ignored him. He threw his hand forward in an irritated manner and omitted the casting as he released Tornado, tearing the follower apart. Braham's white hair slowly blackened again. He was returning the control back over to Grid.

"Keep this in mind. The war god reaches to the bottom of the target's self-esteem and then extends the hand of salvation. In the end, it is corruption rather than salvation. His pride is no different from a machine. It is worse than the empty instincts of Yatan, who only repeats the destruction of the world."

Braham had consumed a very large amount of power. He felt that he would fall into a deep sleep again.

"Please don't fall into the temptation of the war god. Don't forget that I am with you."

'Braham, you...!' Grid noticed something as Braham was talking. This person was saying goodbye for a while.

"I will repeat it if the war god approaches you again."

The color of his hair, skin, and eyes completely returned back to their original states. Control of the body had returned to Grid. Braham barely held onto his consciousness and finished his last word with difficulty.

“...Fuck.”

‘...’

[Braham’s soul is in a deep sleep.]

[However, Braham will be watching you.]

[The information of Great Swordsman Pagma’s Swordsmanship has been updated thanks to the compensation of the hidden piece.]

[The reaction of the hidden piece has removed the possibility of Legendary Great Magician and opened the possibility of Braham’s Descendant.]

[(Braham’s Favor) Great Swordsman Pagma’s Swordsmanship Lv. 1]

[Increases physical attack by 40%, critical hit rate by 50%, and critical damage by 80%.

- * This effect is only applied when a sword type weapon is equipped.
- * Reduces the stride of the sword dance.
- * The number of fusion sword dances you can create is five.
- * Every time the skill level rises, the number of fusion sword dances that can be created will increase.
- * With this skill effect, you can only create up to four linked sword dances.
- ★ Whenever a sword dance is used, one of Braham’s enhanced spells will be revealed.
- ★ The spells that are expressed are limited to basic spells, and each sword dance has a different spell.
- ★ In the case of a fusion sword dance, several spells are overlapped.
- ★ Mana is consumed, so you can activate/deactivate it.

Currently active.]

“Braham...” Grid regained control of his body and grabbed his chest. The deep affection he received from Braham made him laugh and cry.

[Chapter 1028](#)

‘It must be a series of pain.’

Pagma had fought against an army of hundreds of thousands of demons in the Behen Archipelago on his own. He had glimpsed the essence of Hexetia and realized that his distinction between good and evil had been wrong. Then he regretted the damage he’d done to Braham. In retrospect, perhaps Pagma felt betrayed by the war god. Every time he discovered a new truth, he would’ve been in shock and pain. In the end, he would’ve felt skeptical about his own life.

'...He is pitiful.'

Braham and Pagma—they were both pitiful people. It was the same for Piaro and Asmophel. Grid thought seriously about friendship and trust.

'I won't betray a friend, even if I have a blade at my neck.'

They were precious and hard-earned friends. He couldn't betray them. His heart touched Braham's sleeping soul. Feeling hopeful, Grid brought up the list of Pagma's Swordsmanship. A new option had been added to every sword dance.

[Wave Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Shield will wrap around the caster's body when Wave is deployed. The shield will absorb 10,000 damage + the intelligence numerical value, and the caster's defense will increase by 300 while the shield is maintained.

Mana Consumption: 500]

[Restraint Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Grease is activated when Restraint is deployed. The range of Grease is the same as Restraint and the deployment time is equal to the duration of Restraint. Since the friction coefficient of the ground in contact with Grease will disappear, the target must slip. However, this effect is limited to when the target is standing on the ground.

Mana Consumption: 2,000]

[Link Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Wind Cutter will be released when Link is deployed. Wind Cutter is created between the air currents that occur with every fourth strike of Link. The damage of Wind Cutter is fixed at 5,000. Wind Cutter will cut the target with a low probability. The probability of the cut is affected by Wind Cutter's hit rate and the target's defense.

Mana Consumption: 1,800]

[Kill Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Detect Force is activated when Kill is deployed. Detect Force has the nature of chasing the target. The hit rate of Kill will increase greatly.

Mana Consumption: 1,000]

[Pinnacle Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Weapon Enchant will activate when Pinnacle is deployed. The weapon's attack power will increase by 50%. This effect will disappear with the end of the sword dance.

Mana Consumption: 1,200]

[Revolve Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Shield will wrap around the caster's body when deploying Revolve.

Mana Consumption: 500]

[Drop Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Fire will be released when Drop is deployed. All targets within range of Drop will receive 3,000 damage and three seconds of burn damage.

Mana Consumption: 800]

[Flower Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Lightning will occur when Flower is deployed. A target hit with Flower will have a low probability of being shocked and receiving 3,000 damage. During the electric shock, their body will be paralyzed.

Mana Consumption: 800]

[Transcend Lv. 1]

[★ Braham's Detect Force is activated when Transcend is deployed. The hit rate of Transcend will greatly increase.

Mana Consumption: 1,000]

[Flower Revolve]

[★ The Lightning and Shield effect will be applied.

Mana Consumption: 1,300]

[Pinnacle Kill]

[★ The Weapon Enchant and Detect Force will be applied.

Mana Consumption: 2,200]

[Transcended Link Flower]

[★ The effect of Detect Force, Wind Cutter and Lightning will be applied.

Mana Consumption: 3,600]

[Linked Kill Flower Pinnacle]

[★ The effect of Wind Cutter, Detect Force, Lightning and Weapon Enchant is applied.

Mana Consumption: 4,800]

* The magic spells have been greatly reduced in the process of simplifying the magic formulas.]

“...”

The power decreased due to simplifying the process. This was clearly stated, but Grid only felt admiration. What did it mean by having weakened spells? As a simple example, the Weapon Enchant used by common magicians improved the power of the weapon by 20%. Of course, this was based on the skill being at level 1. However, each increase in level only increased the effect by 6%. It meant the level 5 Weapon Enchant increased the weapon's power by 50%, and the mana cost was also higher.

'Instead, the duration is three minutes.'

In any case, Grid was satisfied. It was a power gained by sheer virtue of Grid's favor. If he wasn't satisfied, then he would be shameless.

'One drawback is the mana consumption...'

Currently, Grid's total mana at level 398 was less than 18,000. This was due to the second class Duke of Wisdom, which caused half his stat points to be forcibly invested in intelligence.

'Wait?'

Grid opened his status window and confirmed his second class. Since the possibility of Legendary Great Magician was removed, he thought the second class would change. The second class was still Duke of Wisdom.

'Duke of Wisdom is one of Braham's powers. Duke of Wisdom was still present since the possibility of Braham's Descendant was available. Huh? Don't tell me?'

Grid got chills. The disadvantage of the newly changed swordsmanship was the mana consumption, and this could be controlled through activation and deactivation. Additionally, the help of the Ring of Absurdity meant there would be no shortage of mana.

He thought it was simple, but he was mistaken. He thought a bit deeper and found there was a fatal problem. In the future, it would be impossible for him to temper minerals with magic. Grid had been hitting minerals with Magic Missile instead of the hammer depending on the situation. In the future, he wouldn't be able to use the spells, and this would weaken his blacksmithing skills as a result.

'Ah, this isn't good.'

...No, was it really bad?

The frustrated Grid looked back at the results of the hidden piece. Was there any phrase that said the spells he previously used would be deleted?

'There is nothing.'

Grid's complexion improved as he called up the list of available spells. Then...

....

[Magic Missile]

[Alarm]

....

The previous spells that Grid favored were still in place.

'Indeed. The genius Braham wouldn't have overlooked this.'

Good. There were no problems with the hidden piece he obtained this time. Once again, Grid was filled with joy. He clenched his fists in a delighted manner. Grid wanted to run around and cheer, but then he would lose his dignity in front of the dukes and the imperial knights. He tried to calm and soothe his excited mind.

"E-Excuse me. Overgeared King...?" The dukes approached him. Their recovery speed was extremely fast, and most of their wounds were restored. Despite this, their expressions weren't good. They looked half insane. They spoke with great care.

"Were you hiding your power?" Duke Morse asked with a polite attitude, speaking with honorifics. He normally lacked manners and was a bit of a rogue compared to the other dukes. Now he was so polite that Grid was embarrassed. Still, it was only for a moment. Grid didn't miss this opportunity.

"I didn't have to hide it. You were so strong that I didn't have to reveal it."

Could he be this strong? Yes... No, Braham helped. However, they were nobles of an enemy nation, and he couldn't confess honestly. Grid decided to take advantage of the dukes' misunderstanding, and the method worked properly.

"You are the best blacksmith of this age, a swordsman, and also someone who deals with magic... It is very respectable." This came from Beast King Morse. He had a strong and rowdy temperament but he was polite to people he acknowledged. It was because he deeply appreciated and respected the strong.

The knights of the empire were buzzing. This was natural. It was hard to remain calm when a duke of the empire was technically wagging his tail in front of the enemy king, Grid. In fact, it was almost treason. Even so, Grenhal and Basara didn't rebuke Morse's attitude. As they watched Grid, their shining eyes were similar to Morse's. In particular, Basara's face was red.

"Do you usually hide your beauty on purpose?"

"...?"

"I understand. There must be many flies buzzing around you because of your beauty. You had to disguise yourself as if you are ugly."

"..."

Wasn't he handsome? Grid had an aggrieved expression on his face as he glanced at Yura, who avoided his gaze. Although Grid was clearly handsome, he was merely a squid when compared to Braham. The comparison was too bad. The heartbroken Grid had a gloomy expression.

"I really appreciate it." Grenhal bowed deeply in place of the half-insane Morse and Basara. "Thanks to your help, the three of us were able to preserve our lives. Additionally, the 300 knights and 5,000 soldiers could be safe. Your Majesty is a benefactor of the Saharan Empire."

Grid himself... No, he realized how big a deal it was that Braham had saved the dukes. Grid had saved the lives of three of the Seven Dukes who supported the empire, and as a result, he was now a benefactor of the empire. They were the dukes, and the empire couldn't turn away.

"Just a few days ago, Your Majesty's kingdom was one-sidedly invaded by the empire. Yet you saved us with a generous heart and reached out to the empire first. A small person like me doesn't dare to judge your scale."

The atmosphere of the imperial knights softened. They had been puzzled by Morse's attitude a moment ago, but now they bowed deeply to Grid.

"Once again, I am deeply grateful. I swear by the name of Grenhal, the empire will never forget the grace of today."

Following Grenhal's oath...

"Thank you, Your Majesty!"

"Thank you, Your Majesty!"

The 300 knights shouted. Morse and Basara were also courteous.

"..."

It was a scene where the king of a small country was praised by the dukes and knights of the great empire. This was a scene that would go down in history. If news of this were leaked outside, the world would be dominated with news of Grid rather than Great Demon Berith, and Grid's reputation would be many times greater than before.

'He is on a different dimension.'

Lael, the 10 meritorious retainers, Hurent, and Skunk got goose bumps. In particular, Hurent and Skunk didn't know about Braham, so their shock was huge. They thought all of these situations were created by Grid.

[Chapter 1029](#)

[Affinity with Duke 'Grenhal' of the Saharan Empire has reached 50. Grenhal is willing to dine with you at any time.]

[Affinity with Duke 'Morse' of the Saharan Empire has reached 30. Morse will respond to your light jokes with a smile.]

[Affinity with Duke 'Basara' of the Saharan Empire has reached 62. Basara will positively review whatever you ask for.]

"..." Grid felt refreshed as he was surrounded by the dukes and knights of the empire. Those who didn't even look at him a few years ago were now giving him goodwill and praise. This was an unreal situation for Grid. It was a rewarding feeling that was hard to describe in words.

He trembled with happiness. Then he suddenly felt doubts. 'Why does Basara have the highest affinity?'

Grid talked a lot with Grenhal, head of the Seven Dukes. There was even the dexterity effect that he couldn't suppress during the handshake. Additionally, affinity with Grenhal had increased exponentially after saving his life. However, Grid didn't understand why Basara's affinity was so elevated. She seemed to maintain a clear distinction between public and private matters and was somewhat indifferent, so he hadn't shared many words with her.

'I don't understand...'

Then Grid turned his head to the waterfall. The 52 waterfalls lost their momentum and fell like streams in the aftermath of their mana being taken away by Braham. Beneath them was the war god follower. A follower who had mastered 10 secret techniques—he was a little weaker than the yangban, Garam.

Still, an enemy who could be described as powerful was now half-dead. His trembling legs were torn, just hanging by the skin, while his left arm and ears were cut off altogether. Blood was flowing down from his neck. He looked shabby compared to the dignified appearance he'd had when he overwhelmed the dukes and the 10 meritorious retainers just a short moment ago.

'I better finish it quickly.'

The remaining health of the war god follower was less than 10%. There was very little chance of him exerting his original ability because his physical condition was unstable.

"Get up."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Step.

Grid ordered the knights and started to take steps. He wanted to deal a final blow to the followers as he was afraid the war god might descend again while Braham was asleep. More than anything else...

'He is mine!'

He had to worry that the dukes might kill the follower.

Step.Step.

Grid's eyes were blazing with greed as he gradually narrowed the distance to the follower. He dreamed of a 'perfect secret technique' while looking forward to how much experience killing the follower would give him. The followers occasionally dropped fragments of the secret techniques that were damaged and had no value as skillbooks. Grid narrowed the distance to the follower and performed a sword dance. "Pagma's Swordsmanship."

He felt the sword energy and mana exit his body at almost the same time. Blue energy formed around the Sword Aiming at the Gods, and four types of spells appeared simultaneously. It was the precursor of Linked Kill Flower Pinnacle.

[Swordsmanship and magic have achieved unity!]

A notification window appeared in Grid's field of view as he aimed at the follower taking a defensive posture with only one arm.

[The world calls you a magic swordsman.]

[A new class will be given to you to define you.]

[The third class 'Magic Swordsman of the Epics' has been acquired.] (TL: Epics = epic poetry)

Ttiring~

[Magic Swordsman of the Epics]

[Rating: Legendary (Growth)]

A magic swordsman who was born after inheriting Pagma's power and Braham's blessing—his epic will begin with a legend and end with a myth.]

[The class effect of Magic Swordsman of the Epics has permanently increased sword energy and mana by 20%.]

[The class effect of Magic Swordsman of the Epics has integrated magic and swordsmanship and permanently reduced the cooldown of all skills by 10%.]

[The class effect of Magic Swordsman of the Epics has permanently increased the strength and intelligence stat by 100 points.]

[The class effect of Magic Swordsman of the Epics means you will gain two additional stat points with every future level up. The additional stat points will be automatically invested in strength.]

[There will be more beneficial effects if the Magic Swordsman of the Epics class grows to the myth rating.]

[Your status has risen sharply. You are a special being. The special passive 'Origin True Energy' has been created due to the status increase.]

[★Origin True Energy ★

Possessed: 3

You can consume one Origin True Energy to double a specific stat. The duration is one minute.

If you consume all the Origin True Energy, all your stats will be permanently reduced by two times.

* The consumed Origin True Energy is impossible to be recovered.]

"...!"

Origin True Energy—Grid knew about this concept a long time ago. It was the reason why Mercedes's hair turned white. In order to deal with the cave cricket, she had pulled out the Origin True Energy. She had been unable to cope with the aftermath and aged partially, losing her beautiful blue hair. Grid was filled with guilt when he was reminded of Mercedes. He bit his lips and shook off his thoughts.

'I won't use this even if I'm dying.'

This energy could only be used three times. If he used it three times, all his stats would be permanently halved. It was a nuisance. He was afraid to touch it.

Enchant Weapon, Detect Force, Lightning, and Wind Cutter... Linked Kill Flower Pinnacle combined with magic started to hit the follower. The follower resisted Grid by using a counterattack martial arts, but it was an unreasonable feat with only one arm. Grid continued to use the sword dances like Transcended Link Flower and Pinnacle Kill.

“Kuek...! Cough!” The follower lost all his health. Then he said something as he collapsed in a pile of blood, “Thank... you.”

“...!” It was so unexpected that Grid unconsciously backed away. Thinking about it, all the followers he’d met so far had been monsters who respawned in the same spot.

“My name is Merlin... I abandoned everything and trained for 50 years while pursuing the path the war god showed me...” The follower who had mastered 10 secret techniques was able to talk. “...I couldn’t see the end and was blinded by despair. Now it is finally over. I... welcome... the rest.”

He wasn’t a monster and was instead closer to an NPC. The follower called Merlin started to turn to gray ash. Grid gritted his teeth. Rather than rejoice in getting a new class, he felt great anger at War God Zeratul. He was raging because he saw Pagma’s image in Merlin.

‘How many people has he destroyed?’

Countless people must have suffered like Pagma and Braham. It was terrible. The moment Grid thought this...

[War God Zeratul is looking at you.]

-Are you baring your teeth at me?

The voice in Grid’s mind seemed emotionless. It didn’t show any displeasure or bitterness toward Grid. This was natural as War God Zeratul was an arrogant existence. He didn’t react seriously just because a mere mortal showed hostility toward him. Grid’s expression became even more terribly distorted. The war god’s leisurely behavior was hateful. A curse was already eating at Grid. It was a curse resulting from the killing of the war god follower.

[You feel an uncontrollable anger!]

[You want to release your anger!]

[It is impossible to distinguish between enemies and allies!]

“Kuek...!” Grid’s vision turned red, and he spun around heavily. Grid was confused by the changes in the position of the sky and the ground, and he floundered. By the time he barely managed to regain his mind, the area around Grid was crawling with followers. There were more than 300 of them. The dukes, the knights, and his precious companions were gone without a trace.

“These jerks...!”

They dared to hurt his colleagues...? Then it happened when the bloody Grid was about to start a sword dance.

-Calm down.

[The blacksmith god Hexetia is keeping you in control.]

“Grid...! Grid! Wake up!”

“Ah...” Grid’s red and spinning vision was restored to normal. The hundreds of followers surrounding Grid were gone, and there were his companions, the dukes, and the knights.

‘Don’t tell me...’

...The followers he just saw were actually them? He was about to hurt them with his own hands...? The god’s curse—a chill went down Grid’s spine as he grasped how terrifying the weight of this punishment was. His shoulders shook with fright.

“What is it? Did you see a ghost?”

Yura, Jishuka, and his other colleagues supported him. They didn’t say many words and just watched Grid with warm eyes. This alone was a great strength for Grid.

“It wasn’t a ghost. I saw a monster.” Grid smiled and checked his condition. He calmly controlled the emotions that had run wild because of the unknown curse. Grid had gained a huge 20% increase in experience in exchange for killing the follower who had mastered 10 secret techniques. However, he still didn’t get a perfect secret technique. Only a damaged version entered his inventory.

‘Is this the right reward?’

Without hesitation, Grid left the place where the follower had died and headed to the back of the waterfall. It was the place the follower had been guarding. Skunk guessed that treasure was likely to be hidden in this place. Once they entered, they found it was covered with murals. The mysterious and dreamlike murals, similar to those in Buddhism, covered the walls and simultaneously stimulated primitive fears.

“I need a long time to interpret it,” Skunk muttered when he saw the scale of the murals. He didn’t seem to expect an answer, but based on his sparkling eyes, he was obviously very pleased with what he saw. Skunk was looking forward to the story that would be told every time he unraveled a mural. Grid thought about it and used his insight stat to look around carefully. Then he found the entrance to a small cave.

“I will enter first.” Faker stopped Grid who was about to enter the cave and moved forward carefully. He used the assassin’s ability to detect traps. Then he signaled to the party once he determined it was safe. The cave was around 100 meters deep and wasn’t too big.

“This is...”

They reached the end of the cave and saw a large mural. Humans as small as ants were bowing toward the sky. It wasn’t clear what existence they were worshipping. There was only a red radiance in the sky. It wasn’t the sun. The radiance was more brilliant and larger than the sun.

“Due to the nature of this place, it must be the symbol of the warriors.” Skunk approached the mural. He took a closer look and cocked his head. “Still, the image of worshipping the god is a bit strange. Normally the humans depicted in these sorts of paintings would have longing or joyous expressions, but the humans in this painting are screaming.”

At this moment, the cave started to shake and the ground surged. The bulging ground took the form of an altar with an old box on it.

[Secret Technique Box]

"It is also locked..." Skunk didn't finish saying that they had to find a key. It was because Grid pulled out the master key and opened the lock.

'A scam.' Skunk clicked his tongue.

Simultaneously, at the waterfront of the ruins...

"We've finally arrived."

An imperial ship anchored itself. It had taken two times as long than expected to get here, but the reinforcements finally arrived.

"This...?" Drunk Duke Diworth jumped from the ship and laughed when he saw the ship flying the flag of the Overgeared Kingdom. "The war will continue here."

Diworth had the previous track record of missing the enemy king right in front of his nose. It was the shame of his long life and a mistake he had to make up for.

"Just wait, Overgeared King. This time I'll cut off your head."

Please note that Diworth's power was one level inferior to that of Grenhal, Morse, and Basara.

[Chapter 1030](#)

At the S.A Group's headquarters...

Tok. Someone ate a chicken leg that had been leftover.

Tutok. Someone else hadn't bitten the chicken wing yet.

"..." It dropped from their hands. Their souls were lost in the aftermath of the first player to obtain a third class.

"...Ah." Director Yoon Sangmin belatedly recovered his spirit and looked at the scattered pieces of chicken on the table. It was fortunate, really fortunate. He dropped the chicken breast. The relieved Yoon Sangmin gulped down bottled water instead of beer. He wiped the spicy sauce on his mouth and said, "I thought the first one to obtain the third class would be Agnus, but there was a reversal."

In fact, the concept of 'first' wasn't very important. There were no benefits from being the first to get a third class. Instead, honor followed. There were currently 1,311 people with a second class. Among them, there was only one person with the title of 'First to Obtain a Second Class', and it belonged to Huroi.

This was something that couldn't be taken away—an eternal record. It was impossible to predict how great Grid's pride would be after surpassing two billion competitors. Moreover, the point to note was that Grid had obtained a class that directly indicated the possibility of a myth rated class.

[Someone unknown has received a third class for the first time.]

[His epic will begin with a legend and end with a myth.]

On the monitor, this world message emerged. The people who noticed this would surely recognize the existence of myth rated classes. Huge ramifications were expected.

“...The reaction of the person involved is really calm.”

Grid didn't show great joy. No, to be accurate, he didn't show any reactions. Grid had to focus on the battle with the follower and then he had to overcome the war god's curse. The employees in this place watched Grid and forgot to eat chicken. They wanted to see Grid rejoicing over finishing everything in order for them to wrap up the day with a warm heart. It was a type of surrogate satisfaction. The employees were aware of Grid's past and wanted to support him.

However, Grid didn't show any reaction until he reached the Secret Technique Box in the waterfall. Some employees questioned the smaller-than-expected response. “Is it possible to be so casual after getting a growth type legendary class?”

“Why not?”

The number of achievements Grid had built over the years was too numerous to count. He was the first to acquire a legendary class and the first to produce the first legendary items. He also became the first king by establishing the Overgeared Kingdom and was the hero who saved the Eternal Kingdom.

The one who won the most gold medals in the National Competition, the Hero King who cleansed the Behen Archipelago, the man who inherited some of the power of the legend Braham and the Undefeated King, and so on—Grid had a number of unique titles. He was also the person who made diplomacy with the Saharan Empire possible and the person who went to Asgard to challenge a god.

Grid's feats were so great that even a mediocre player would become a world star or high ranker with just one of them. Even so, Grid's current achievement was particularly exceptional. It was normal to show a reaction of joy. Thus, the employees were confused when Grid didn't have a significant reaction.

“Is there less joy because it is an opportunity gained through sheer coincidence and luck?”

They weren't being sarcastic. The employees really thought like this. Agnus was scheduled to get the third class Demon World Noble in the next few months. The result was purely due to his efforts. Then what about the Magic Swordsman of the Epics that Grid obtained this time?

It was the result of coincidences and luck overlapping. What if Skunk hadn't found the Ruins of the War God? If Grid hadn't stepped into the ruins, Braham wouldn't have woken up and the third class would still be a distant concept for Grid.

However, not all the executives thought the same.

“It is due to coincidence and luck that Grid could reach the Ruins of the War God...? Not at all.”

“Right. It was possible because Grid gained the sea route by planting Huroi in enemy territory in advance.”

“Katz’ financial resources were also a great help.”

“Didn’t Grid lay the foundation by creating the master key and building affinity with Braham to the maximum? It is purely a result of his ability that Grid obtained the third class.

“Right. A person who isn’t prepared can’t catch up no matter the coincidences and luck.”

“Hrmm...”

That’s right, it happened again. Perhaps it was due to the alcohol. The small number of people who regarded Grid’s achievement as a result of luck and coincidences belatedly reflected and fell silent. They apologized to Grid in their heart. The S.A. Group’s executive meeting room—it became a place for Grid’s fan meetings.

Chairman Lim Cheolho was sweating. ‘These people, have you finished all your work?’

The Overgeared members and the dukes broke through the jungle and killed the follower who had learned 10 secret techniques. These accomplishments were already great. It was natural that a reasonable compensation would be given.

[Secret Technique Box]

[Contains a secret technique of War God Zeratul.]

The second technique of the war god...

It was the ultimate skill book. Grid’s expression brightened when he received it.

The truth of the world... He was relaxed despite the reminder that Satisfy’s final boss might not be Evil God Yatan.

‘Yes, what does it matter if Goddess Rebecca is the final boss? In the first place, a player can’t fight against dragons.’

The final boss of this world wasn’t a problem for players to worry about. It would be dealt with by an entity other than players. There was no need to worry or fear that his people and family might be harmed by the true darkness of the world.

‘Let’s just enjoy it for now.’

Just in case, he would try to be even stronger. Grid controlled his mind and opened the lock using the master key. However, he didn’t open the box urgently. There was a part he had to make clear before opening the Secret Technique Box. Grid spoke to the dukes in a voice that maximized his dignity stat, “I think I have the right to obtain this. What are your thoughts?”

The knights were agitated. This was despite the fact that Grid had played the main role in breaking through the jungle and overcoming the follower who had mastered 10 secret techniques. Even if Grid wasn’t present, the dukes would have eventually reached this point. It would’ve just taken much more time and caused a bigger loss in power. Additionally, the achievements the dukes had achieved while

breaking through the jungle were considerable. After all, the dukes had fought the followers more than anyone else.

The secret technique of the war god... Honestly, it was impossible to concede to Grid a mythical treasure that might be kept in the imperial treasury.

...This was what the knights thought.

“Of course, it belongs to Your Majesty.”

“If it wasn’t for Your Majesty, we wouldn’t be alive now. We don’t have the right to covet the secret technique.”

Meanwhile, Immortal King Grenha and Gold Crown Basara showed a polite attitude that respected Grid’s position.

“Hmm, our achievements aren’t small... His Majesty the Emperor might be angry if he finds out later. But well... the Overgeared King’s merit is the biggest. We will aim for a greater achievement and gain the next reward...” Beast King Morse muttered to himself in a somewhat unwilling manner, but he didn’t raise any objections.

Putting aside his position and thoughts, Grid was clearly qualified to be the owner of the secret technique.

“Thank you for the concession.”

It wasn’t a concession. He had the right to take it. Yet Grid outwardly thanked the dukes, and this raised their pride greatly. Thanks to Grid’s care, the dukes’ affinity increased by one.

Then Grid turned to his colleagues. The Overgeared members were more curious about the world message that had just appeared in front of them.

“I’ll tell you the detailed story later. Let’s check the contents of the Secret Technique Box and decide on the owner.”

There were at least hundreds of secret techniques. It was reasonable considering the number of techniques known by the followers they had met so far had reached 100. If the secret technique regarded the spear, then he would give it to Pon. If it regarded the shield, then he would give it to Vantner. Grid thought about how to share the secret techniques. He had no intention of monopolizing the secret technique. Rather, he wanted to use this opportunity to make up for some of the damage his colleagues suffered fighting the empire on his behalf.

“That is the right idea,” Lauel agreed with Grid, so the reluctant looking 10 meritorious retainers were forced to nod. They also had to become stronger. If they didn’t become stronger, they would only grab at Grid’s ankles.

‘I can’t be indebted to him forever. I have to become stronger and pay him back several times in the future,’ the 10 meritorious retainers pledged.

‘A truly great person.’ Hurent and Skunk were greatly surprised. This was a situation where the secret technique belonged to Grid, yet he declared that he would share it fairly with his colleagues. A normal

guild master wouldn't be able to do this easily. The most important thing about running an organization was the people, but most leaders were blinded by the benefits in front of them.

'An excellent leader.'

Wouldn't it be good to join Overgeared as Lael recommended? Skunk thought that he could recommend Grid to his colleagues. The moment Skunk thought this, Grid finally opened the box. A light emerged from the box. All types of bright colors crossed sequentially and exploded. It was a gorgeous appearance that amplified the anticipation of the Overgeared members, Skunk, and the dukes.

There was a bright smile on Grid's face.

'This is a random draw?'

It was clear from the fact that the different colors continued to cross each other. The Secret Technique Box was a drawing system. The secret technique was determined by sheer luck. There were many types of secret techniques, each with a different value and rating. It was natural for a drawing system to be adopted.

'I am lucky!'

Grid had the good luck stat. He was different from the past. The goddess of luck was on his side.

'I will receive the highest grade secret technique!'

Grid's confidence and anticipation were heightened.

Ttiring~

The light bursting from the box calmed down, and the contents of the box revealed itself.

[The secret technique Light Footwork Technique: Empty Approach Path has been acquired!]

[Light Footwork Technique: Empty Approach Path]

[Category: Skill Book]

Rating: Legendary

A legendary rated light footwork technique that allows you to walk in the sky.

Learning Conditions: 8,000 agility.]

"..."

"..."

The Overgeared members' faces turned to the color of poop when they confirmed the contents. They saw the learning conditions and understood the follower's lament about 'not seeing the end of the path.' Even so, Grid's expression was bright.

[The acquisition of the secret technique has activated the Secret Technique Mixture system.]

[You can get a new technique by combining 10 damaged fragments and one complete secret technique book.]

[However, you can only get the same type of secret technique, and the rating of the secret technique might be lowered.]

“So, if we synthesize them together, a Light Footwork Technique is all that can be obtained?” Grid asked after informing his colleagues about the Secret Technique Mixture system.

Lauel nodded. “It seems so.”

“Currently, isn’t it better to lower the rating by combining them?”

“Of course. Now we know why the followers have been dropping damaged books.

8,000 agility was tough for players to achieve. It might be possible, but it was unknown how many years it would take. In that case, it was better to have a lower rating if the learning condition of the secret technique was lowered. Grid was resolved and pulled out the damaged books from his inventory. He had nearly 50 fragments.

[Attempting the secret techniques synthesis!]

[The secret technique Light Footwork Technique: Walk on Snow with No Traces has been acquired as a result of the synthesis!]

[Light Footwork Technique: Walk on Snow with No Traces]

[Rating: Legendary

It is light and agile enough not to leave any footprints in the snow.

Learning Conditions: 6,000 agility.]

“...The person who is a piece of turd, raise your hand.”

In the end...

[The secret technique Light Footwork Technique: Fly on Top of Grass has been acquired as a result of the synthesis!]

It happened after exactly nine attempts. Grid and the Overgeared members invested all the secret technique fragments they had accumulated.

[Fly on Top of Grass]

[Rating: Epic

A Light Footwork Technique that can run on grass.

Learning Conditions: 3,000 agility.]

The party was able to get their hands on a normal rated technique, and Faker became its owner. The explanation of the secret technique might be simple, but the effect was different.

[All speeds have increased by 20%.]

[Movement speed is twice as fast in forests or on grassland.]

“Wow...”

It was a big jackpot. The party members' desire for secret techniques grew stronger.