

## Overgeared 1031

### [Chapter 1031](#)

Ranked players had exceptional talent, passion, effort, and perseverance. They were highly proud of their own accomplishments. Faker was the same. If he were the best among two billion players, then at least he could feel proud that he didn't shame his grandfather.

It's just that this changed with one person. This story changed in front of Grid.

"You should've learned this."

Faker acquired Fly on Top of Grass through Grid, and he felt truly indignant. The effect of Fly on Top of Grass was much greater than expected. Faker judged that Grid should've learned the skill, not him. He blamed himself for failing to refuse Grid's goodwill. Even Faker, who had the reputation of 'not losing in PvP', was modest in front of Grid.

Grid sighed. "No? It is great that you learned this."

He was serious. The effect of a 20% increase in all speeds would be a great help to Grid, but Grid already used buffs to maximize his speed. If he recalled the 'world that he saw through a transcendent gaze', this speed was probably the maximum possible for him right now... Still, it was doubtful.

In any case, Grid didn't regret giving Faker the secret technique. The main reason was the effect of movement speed doubling in forests or on grassland. Unlike Grid, Faker had to collect a lot of information across the continent. He had always felt sorry for Faker, who sacrificed his time by crossing the continent several times a month. Now Grid was happy that he could reduce Faker's burden. Moreover, Grid was far more dependent on Faker than other people thought.

'Faker must continue to grow stronger.'

Grid often sparred with his colleagues. He had sparred more than 500 times over the years and had experienced the crisis of losing his immortality dozens of times. The one who caused the most trouble to Grid was Faker. In the past, Faker's ability to kill a single guild alone was already unrivaled in the Overgeared Guild, and he had grown steadily since then. Grid thought that if there was a colleague who would go beyond him one day, it would be Faker.

In fact, the war god had pointed to Faker. The war god expressed that Faker was only just becoming stronger. Unlike Grid who had to break through his limits to become stronger in the future, Faker would grow stronger quicker and more easily. Grid wished for that day to come. He hoped that Faker would replace him in his frequent absences.

'Additionally, if...'

If he failed to overcome the limits of being Pagma's Descendant... If he lost his top spot to Kraugel and the Overgeared Kingdom was in danger...

'At that time, Faker must become the best and support everyone.'

Grid entrusted this wish to Faker. It was why he gave Fly on Top of Grass to Faker despite being able to learn it himself. Of course, this trust wasn't confined to Faker. All the colleagues here had Grid's trust and expectations. It was for their sake.

"The imperial soldiers and the Skunk Expedition Group have arrived."

"Um, yes."

Grid was prepared to secure all the secret techniques in this historical site. There was a limit to being alone, no matter how strong a person was. People had to be strong together to respond to crises and valuables. Grid listened to Lauel's report and watched the faces of his peers and the dukes who were waiting for him outside the barracks.

Duke Grenhal approached and told him, "I have instructed the soldiers to build a new camp here. We will challenge the next gateway while the Skunk Expedition Group will remain here and study the murals."

"Okay. Let's start straight away."

Grid took the lead, and the dukes followed behind him. The dukes followed Grid naturally now.

"Hrmm..."

After passing the 53 waterfalls, they reached the end of the valley and saw a long river and a mountain in the distance. It was only around 1,000 meters above sea level and wasn't very high. The unusual thing was that the mountain didn't have a single blade of grass on it. It was literally a barren mountain with gray rock.

The sharp peak was covered with a thick fog, making it impossible for even Jishuka to see what was on there. It was too dark.

"Something is ominous..." Hurent muttered with a rapidly darkening complexion. There would obviously be a greater trial waiting there. At present, Hurent's ability was only enough to hunt one follower. He honestly thought it was meaningless for him to join this march.

Of course, hunting in these ruins would be impossible if Hurent was on an expedition by himself. However, he wasn't alone right now. They passed by the river and started climbing the rocks.

"What are these secret techniques?"

The followers constantly challenged them.

"I'm coming out! They are my prey!"

The Overgeared members became accustomed to the followers and hunted the followers with shining eyes. The thorough cooperation bypassed the followers' attacks and counterattacks and turned them to ashes. No matter how strong the followers were, they were still classified as normal monsters and forced to be helpless in front of the high rankers. Thanks to this, Hurent didn't feel much fatigue and was pleased to see his accumulated damage and experience.

'This is a true party play.'

Hurent had little experience teaming up with talented players. It was hard for him to meet a person stronger than himself, so he had felt that team play was painful and that he was more comfortable alone. Now, that was beginning to change. He knew he could pursue a much more efficient hunting method by working together instead of being alone and that he could grow stronger more quickly this way. Hurent felt thrilled by the cooperation with powerful people. The thrill of the hunt, which he had forgotten after many years of working in the fields, gave him great pleasure.

'Shit. I can't go back to the old days.'

It was interesting. The more primal pleasure that was pursued in games was dominating Hurent's mind and body. Hurent sensed it. After being absorbed in this feeling, he would never be able to leave the Overgeared Guild. In fact, he would like to continue with them in the future.

There was one decisive cause for this. Grid's presence at the forefront made it easier for his colleagues to hunt. One strong person made hunting several times faster and safer. That's right. In fact, Hurent was experiencing a bus. Moreover, it was a Grid bus. He couldn't help being attracted to the pleasure of the bus that resembled farming with Piaro.

[You have found a War God Temple!]

It was hard to find. The group easily climbed the rocks and soon reached the top of the mountain where they found a temple surrounded by dense fog. It was an old and shabby temple. Would this place be guarded by a follower who had learned 10 secret techniques?

The tense Grid, dukes, and Overgeared members held their breaths for a moment. They observed the surroundings without getting close to the temple. Then someone's voice rang out, "I was wondering who else could've reached this place."

Step.Step.Step. Hundreds of footsteps came closer. The party members looked toward the entrance of the temple. Familiar faces were seen. Zhang Jian, Liao Wei, Mei Xiao, and so on—they were Chinese rankers who played a major role in the National Competition in the past. There were around 200 people in total, and among them, there was a person with a deep relationship with the Overgeared Guild.

"The Overgeared Guild. It wouldn't be strange if you reached here this quickly."

It was China's strongest person. All the gathered rankers acknowledged him. The first player to become a half draconian—it was Hao.

China was a country where the Communist Party's judgments and orders were given priority over individual rights. Once the Ruins of the War God emerged, the Chinese government gave orders to all Chinese rankers, including Hao. They were directed to immediately depart for the Ruins of the War God and secure as much of the war god's power as possible.

China's greatest strength was its population. There were many Chinese players in each field. Hao's party took some time, but they succeeded in securing the route to the Ruins of the War God. By the time they arrived at the ruins, that was when Grid's party was tied up in the valley for a few days. Since the jungle traps had already been cleared, the party had no difficulty overcoming the jungle and came to the temple without passing through the valley. They were able to arrive at the temple ahead of the Overgeared members.

“Grid, I’m sorry, but you’ll have to step back here,” Hao stated with a somber expression.

The Chinese rankers, apart from his sister Mei Xiao, had already pulled out their weapons and were pointing them at the Overgeared members. Hao sighed and explained the situation, “The leader became interested after the National Competition. It is rumored that he is angry about the fact that China didn’t take first place in the National Competition. This is the result. We have to secure the secret techniques and become stronger. We have to make good progress for next year’s National Competition. This might be a shameless favor, but I hope you will yield it to us.”

Originally, Hao had a bad relationship with them. He was once the enemy of the Overgeared members. In the process of several repeated fights, Hao acknowledged Grid’s abilities and became favorable to Grid and the Overgeared Guild. He then went to South Korea to give Grid news about Kraugel.

It was painful. Hao didn’t want to block Grid and the Overgeared Guild for ridiculous reasons, but he couldn’t step back. Foreigners living in a modern society might not understand, but the command of the Communist Party in China was absolute.

“I roughly understand the situation...” Grid made an embarrassed expression, but before he could say anything—

“Do you dare to stand in front of our way?” Beast King Morse interrupted. One of the empire’s Seven Dukes jumped into the Chinese rankers’ midst on the saber tiger. (TL: changed it to saber tiger from the previous name)

“Who is that?”

“Is this Grid’s new subordinate?”

The Chinese rankers didn’t recognize Morse’s identity. The empire’s dukes were famous, but they never dreamed the dukes would be with Grid. It was natural. Just a few days ago, a great war was being fought between the Overgeared Kingdom and the empire. Grid and the empire’s dukes became companions? The man with Grid was a duke of the empire...?

A person with a normal mindset wouldn’t have these thoughts. Morse’s power was accompanied by thunder-like explosions. He ignored the counterattacks of the Chinese rankers and punched them, causing dozens of Chinese rankers to be swept away by the explosion.

“...?”

“...”

Grid was sorry for the Chinese rankers who were stunned by the incredible destructive power. An awkward silence filled the area. Morse shouted, “It is a sin to stand in the way of a duke of the empire and king of the Overgeared Kingdom! I, Beast King Morse, will punish you!”

“Ah, no, what? What is this?” The Chinese rankers paled as they doubted their ears.

‘It is really great.’ A delighted smile spread across Hao’s face.

[Chapter 1032](#)

They were many players who opposed the Saharan Empire. No, most players would feel negatively toward the Saharan Empire. How many modern people could be sympathetic to the image of the empire that discriminated and repressed other species and cultures, calling themselves the only right answer? There might be many players who joined the empire to enjoy their infrastructure, but it was hard to find those who devoted themselves to the empire.

There was just one strange thing. The poisonous Chinese players often favored the Saharan Empire. The empire couldn't be seen negatively because the appearance of the Saharan Empire wasn't that different from China's, who put pressure on the surrounding countries. In their eyes, the ideals of the empire were worthy and the attitude of the empire was natural. Rather, they thought the empire was intrepid.

Of course, not all Chinese were the same, but it was true that many Chinese supported the empire by describing the Saharan Empire as Satisfy's China. The same was true for the Chinese rankers gathered here now. For them, the empire was another version of China, and the nobles of the empire who exerted 'appropriate authority' were the objects of envy. The dukes were the best among the empire's nobles.

"Why Grid..."

Yet they were defending Grid, the king of a small nation. No, it wasn't just at the level of defending.

"Your Majesty, you must be very upset that these puny bastards pointed their weapons at you. Govern your heart. We will take care of them."

Unlike the saber tiger that easily climbed the rocks, the two-headed hippo barely managed to climb the mountain because of its lack of agility. Duke Grenhal descended from it with rough breathing and treated Grid like a superior. His attitude made it out like Grid was the emperor.

"What? What the hell is this?"

It was true that Grid dominated among the players, but he was normal when compared to NPCs. Additionally, academic circles stated that the Seven Dukes of the empire were some of the most powerful people on the West Continent. Compared to the Seven Dukes, Grid was lacking in every aspect. Moreover, not long ago, the Overgeared Kingdom was fighting against the empire. Grid's knight had even killed Sky King Rigal. The relationship between the empire and Grid could never be good. It was normal for the Seven Dukes to be hostile or to despise Grid.

'Then why are the dukes treating Grid so well? I can't understand it.'

The Chinese rankers who had been ordered to go to the historical site were all veterans. They could recall many cases, but no matter how many they looked through, it was impossible to guess how the relationship between Grid and the Seven Dukes had formed.

The dumbfounded Zhang Jian muttered, "Perhaps he has a brainwashing skill..."

It was rumored that there was someone among the hidden classes who could use brainwashing skills. This skill only applied to NPCs, and it was said that the person could acquire quests favorable to them by manipulating the NPC. The most important thing was that the higher the level or quality of the NPC, the more the success and effectiveness of the brainwashing skill would drop exponentially. It meant that

brainwashing skills didn't work on named NPCs. In particular, it couldn't work on the dukes who were the best among the named NPCs.

Additionally, the probability that Grid was the user with the brainwashing skill was remarkably low. The relationship between Grid and the Seven Dukes couldn't be formed using such tricks. Consequently, the Chinese rankers were greatly confused.

"I will discipline you with the strict laws of the Saharan Empire. It is an immediate death penalty for those who block the way of the empire's dukes," Duke Grenhal said one-sided and harsh words casually and then drew his sword.

They were Chinese rankers who supported the empire, but they thought the empire was unjust once they became its victims.

"What is this one-sided ruling?"

"That's right! You are going to kill a person just for blocking the way!"

Being selfish just because they had strength—it was unfair and unjust to those in a powerless position. The Chinese rankers realized the obvious and were filled with resentment, but the dukes didn't blink. Grenhal was about to kill the Chinese rankers when Lauel rushed in. "Please calm down."

Of course, Lauel didn't like the Chinese rankers. They wanted to monopolize the ruins and were trying to kill Grid's party, making it hard for him to forgive them. On the other hand, Lauel learned about the difficulty of this place after encountering the follower who had learned 10 secret techniques. He judged that it might be impossible to acquire all the secret techniques in the site with just their power and the power of the dukes.

"Wouldn't it be better to use their power instead of killing them?" Lauel tried to persuade the dukes. He was sure that the Chinese rankers would cooperate if their lives were spared here. Lauel had already calculated that they wouldn't dare to ask for the rights to the secret techniques which were found later.

Yet this happened before Lauel could persuade the duke.

"I have no intention of cooperating with you, even if I die," Hao said. Holding a spear in one hand and a chain in the other, he shouted, "We will fight to the death!"

"Crazy! What is this bullshit?"

The Chinese rankers were thinking frantically.

"It is much better to cooperate with the Overgeared Guild to explore the ruins rather than die like this!"

"If we die, we will be banished outside the Red Sea! Have you forgotten how hard we worked to get here? We were lucky during the sea journey, but there is no guarantee that we can return!"

The Chinese rankers were in an uproar. They were almost screaming, unable to believe that Hao's judgment was right. Nevertheless, Hao didn't reverse his stance. It was because he knew that if he cooperated with the Overgeared Guild to explore the ruins and secure the secret techniques, the Chinese rankers would demand the rights to the secret techniques. Right now, they were talking

reasonably to preserve their lives, but they would change their attitude in a way that was favorable to them at any time. He had seen it happen many times.

‘At that time, I will be forced to side with them.’

Hao’s position in China was still precarious. He was called a traitor just because he had surrendered to Grid, and the Communist Party had warned him about it. The Communist Party told Hao to be the leader of the expedition to test his ideals. Once China and the Overgeared Guild started to contend over the rights of the secret techniques, Hao didn’t know what punishment would be awaiting him if he didn’t side with China.

‘If I stand on the Chinese side, I will deepen the feelings of hostility with Grid.’

That couldn’t happen. Grid was one of the few people he admired. He didn’t want their relationship to fall to pieces. This was the reason why.

‘I will block things before they get out of control.’

The determined Hao shouted to the Chinese rankers, “We came here was to become stronger! How can begging for our lives be a method of becoming stronger? It is an insult. This is lowering ourselves! Do you want to incur the wrath of the leader?!!!”

“...!”The Chinese rankers had distorted expressions once they heard these words. To them, the leader was an object of respect and fear.

“Shit... It is better to die fighting.” Liao Wei clicked his tongue. No matter the reason, she believed that the Chinese rankers should never beg for their lives. The leader of the Overgeared Guild was none other than Grid. He was Korean.

‘There is a rumor that the leader is angry we didn’t perform better than South Korea in the National Competition. He will be furious if he hears that we begged a Korean for our lives.’

The efficiency was the worst, but there was only one choice—fight to the death. The Chinese rankers made their decisions and prepared for combat.

“...” Grid and Peak Sword watched the situation and noticed Hao’s intentions. They were Korean and familiar with the characteristics of China. Thus, they knew what Hao was concerned about and why he instigated this situation. Lael also noticed it belatedly. The gazes of the dukes turned to Lael.

“Do you want to spare them?”

“...No. Please do it well.”

“Hrmm.”

Grenhal and Morse nodded and stood side by side. Grenhal held a sword while Morse wore gauntlets on both hands. Both of them were staring at Hao. A pair of wings emerged from Hao’s back. The latent power of a dragon in his body started to run wild.

“Let’s show China’s power.”Hao seemed to emit a flaming breath.

“Ohhhhh!” The momentum of the Chinese rankers rose. They might criticize Hao as a traitor, but they valued his skills highly. A chain rushed toward Grenhal like an aggressive snake, only to be blocked by a shield. Simultaneously, Mei Xiao threw a cloth that tied up the vibrating shield.

“Um!” Surprised by the power of Hao’s thrown chain, Grenhal was careless, allowing his shield to be pulled away by the moving cloth. The Hao siblings were excellent and comparable to the followers who had learned five secret techniques. The Chinese players unleashed an onslaught to break through Duke Grenhal.

The scene where dozens of weapons and skills flooded toward one person like a tsunami was spectacular. This was the moment that proved why China was classified as a Satisfy powerhouse after the United States. The Overgeared members expected Grenhal to receive a large amount of damage, no matter how strong he was. Dozens of players had died from Morse’s surprise attack, but the number of Chinese rankers still exceeded 150. It was a force that wasn’t weak.

In particular, the pressure coming from Hao was overwhelming. The dragon’s energy wrapped around the end of his spear and contained a destructive force that caused even Grid to flinch for a moment.

However, the opponent was too strong. Grenhal disregarded the attacks pouring toward him and waved his sword, causing a moonlight energy blade to pour out. All the skills of the Chinese rankers were crushed without reaching Grenhal.

“...!!”

Hao’s left arm which was covered with dragon scales was cut off, and the bodies of the Chinese rankers started to turn to ashes. Grid felt electrified when he saw the overwhelming sight.

‘They have been hiding their real skills.’

It was a counterattack with a range and power which far exceeded those of Revolve. This was the identity of the light that Grenhal released. Grid was convinced...

If the location wasn’t the 53 waterfalls, then Grenhal could’ve killed the follower, who had learned 10 secret techniques, alone. Of course, there was no guarantee that Grid would win against them.

‘Spear Sage Rachel and Sword Duke Limit have a slightly higher level than Grenhal. Will they be equal to the follower who learned 10 secret techniques?’

Grid got goosebumps and was convinced that even these strong Seven Dukes and followers would have to give up in front of Yangban Garam. He had to handle Garam somehow in order to be properly active on the East Continent, but he wasn’t sure what to do.

‘I’m becoming stronger, but why do I still feel shabby?’

No matter how he thought about it, the NPC’s natural growth system was a scam. It was too harsh for players. Would a player never be able to surpass NPCs? Grid formed fists and unknowingly started to cheer for Hao.

The battle was intensifying. The army of Chinese rankers, that Grid wasn’t sure he could win against, was dying before the destructive power of both Grenhal and Morse. There was only one person who stayed strong. Even so, he had lost his left arm, and the scales on his body were falling off.



“Ohhhhhh!”

Instead of the broken spear, Hao’s fingernails extended like blades and pierced Grenhal’s chest.

“Kuek...?” Grenhal groaned, while Morse and Basara were greatly astonished. Grid was also shocked. When he saw Hao, the players’ despair about not being able to surpass the NPCs turned into hope that it could be done. Hao’s satisfied smile about his performance was aimed at Grid. ‘I owe you a great deal,’ Hao’s eyes said.

Grid nodded, silently replying, ‘It was a pleasure. Your heart, I received it.’

Grenhal’s sword fell toward Hao’s neck. At this moment...

[The Different Species’ King title effect is activated.]

[The title effect of Different Species’ King is limited to three uses. Are you sure you want to use it?]

Grid used the title effect, that he gained from absorbing the evil eyes species, for the first time.

### [Chapter 1033](#)

Now Grid’s thinking ability wasn’t easily buried. He didn’t neglect the title of Different Species’ King because he was lazy or lacking. Rather, it was because he concluded that he could be wasting energy if he cared about it and chose to be patient.

He needed a reliable helper to utilize the Different Species’ King title.

[Different Species’ King]

[You have proved your king’s qualification by embracing non-human species.]

#### ★ Permanent Effects

- \* Difference species are very favorable to you.
- \* If the target is a different species, the probability of increasing affinity will double.
- \* However, some warlike species will want to test your abilities.

#### ★ Limited Effects

- \* The ‘contract’ system is activated with the title effect.
- \* There are three contracts available. (3/3)]

[Contract]

[If the target is another species, you can propose a contract.]

The target you contract with will ‘awaken’ strengthened racial characteristics. You will acquire some of the racial traits of the contracted target.

You can’t destroy a contract once it is made.

However, the other person can destroy the contract at any time and the racial trait you acquired will disappear. Additionally, the contract will be canceled if the target permanently dies and the racial trait you acquired will disappear. In both cases, the contract count can't be recovered.]

The effect of this contract was unconditionally positive. It was a tremendous benefit to acquire the characteristics of other species. For example, if Grid signed a contract with a member of the evil eyes species, he was likely to open an evil eye even without affinity with the king.

However, Grid didn't propose a contract with the evil eyes king. He didn't even contract with his close confidant Sticks. This wasn't because he didn't trust them, nor was it because he was worried they would break the contract.

It was painful, but he was concerned about the possibility of their death. Unlike players, NPCs were mortal, and death was a fate that even a high elf with a life span of thousands of years couldn't avoid. What if an accident took away their lives? If he couldn't protect them, the contract could be wasted at any time. Thus, Grid concluded that the target of the contract should be a player.

It was clearly a reasonable conclusion. The problem was that the difficulty was very high. First, the fundamental problem was finding a player who had a non-human race—dwarves, orcs, elves, goblins, and so on. Unlike normal games where different species could be chosen when creating a character, there was no such option in Satisfy. Players could only change to a non-human species by performing a hidden quest. It was a quest similar to the quest that gave Grid a chance to become a half-god.

So far, Grid had only met a small number of players with a different species, and there were problems even if he found them. The problem was that the target must be a species with 'usable' characteristics. He also needed to determine if he could trust the player. If the target one-sidedly destroyed the contract, Grid would waste a contract and lose the racial trait.

Thus, he had to find someone he could trust. How could that be easy? His trust in his colleagues was accumulated over the years. Grid thought it needed a great deal of time to find new people and establish a trusting relationship. However—

[The title effect of Different Species' King is limited to three uses. Are you sure you want to use it?]

"I will use it."

Today, Grid saw Hao's willpower, and he felt Hao's liking toward him. He was convinced he could trust Hao, who was a half draconian.

"I will contract with Hao."

[The player 'Hao' is the target of the contract.]

[.....]

[.....]

[....]

[The target has accepted the contract!]

[You will randomly acquire of the half draconian's characteristics as a contract reward!]

[...Interacting with your amazing luck!]

[Congratulations! You have received the top trait of the draconian 'Dragon Wings'!]

"...!?" Both of Grid's eyes widened, and he trembled. Then he lost his dignity in a scene where hundreds of rankers had died. The Overgeared members and dukes were watching him as it happened. Grid spread his arms wide open and cheered loudly, "Niceeeee!"

Was it because the sound was too loud? The old door of the silent temple covered in fog started to open. The eyes of the dukes, who were stunned by Grid's action, naturally turned toward the temple.

Step.Step.An old monk in a cotton robe walked through the fog.

"Huhu, it has been hundreds of years since someone visited," he muttered with a kind smile while raising his long white eyebrows. "Now, come in. You should visit the war god's shrine first."

"..."

The attitude of the monk guiding the party was very kind. However, the expressions of Grid and the Overgeared members were stiff. It was due to the name of the monk. The name of the monk wasn't a follower.

"What are you doing? Come on in."

[Bentao].

The benevolent smile on the round face of the old monk didn't disappear, just like how a clown's thick makeup wasn't erased.

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In the capital of the Ark Kingdom, at the center of the Rebecca Temple...

Pure white light started to gather at the place called the resurrection point. The light gradually expanded and formed the shape of a human. Soon, the light faded.

"Hrmm..." A man showed up. It was a man with long black hair. The man was handsome with impressive eyes and a pointed nose. As a high ranker, the process of 'death' and 'resurrection' was a system he had long been used to. After opening the status window and inventory, he found that he lost 38% of his experience, the durability of his items was lowered, and his spear was destroyed. Death was a fatal loss. His expression was dark as he planned how to recover it.

"It was because of a lack of training."

Hao didn't blame others for the situation. Instead, he merely rebuked his weakness and vowed to work harder. He controlled his heart as a cute girl with double ponytailed hair approached.

"Brother, are you okay?" The identity of the girl with a somber voice was Mei Xiao. She was Hao's younger sister.

"I'm fine. Sorry for worrying you."

She was a poor girl who had lost her family early in life. The child who was always trying to be cheerful was also smiling today.

“My level is low. I can recover it soon.”

“Yes, things have already passed. It is better not to dwell on it.”

Hao had grown up in a martial arts school, and the spear had never left his hand since childhood. He patted his sister’s head with a hand that was full of hard calluses.

‘Grenhal is strong.’

Grenhal’s strength and stamina were twice as high as Hao’s, and the skills he possessed were truly powerful. The swordsmanship that had been strengthened by training for many years had pierced through Hao’s dragon scales easily, and it was a state that couldn’t be easily matched in Satisfy.

‘Absolute supremacy.’

No matter how hard Hao tried, there was no way for him to go against Grenhal right now. A powerhouse who could never be surpassed—how did Grid become friendly with him? Grenhal was even an enemy noble.

‘Did Grid make an item as others expected?’

No, that guess was too unreasonable. A named NPC wasn’t someone who could be exploited by wealth. If that was possible, all the rich people in the world would have one named NPC as a subordinate.

It happened when Hao’s thoughts were deepening.

[The Different Species’ King, player ‘Grid’ has proposed to share the ‘oath that transcends species’ with you who is a half draconian.]

[The king who proved his qualifications as king to all different species can only contract with three people. Your status will rise if you contract with ‘Grid.’]

[The increase in status will awaken and strengthen the half draconian traits.]

[Some of the traits of a half draconian will awaken in ‘Grid’ who is the subject of the contract.]

[You can destroy the contract at any time. Once the contract is destroyed, ‘Grid’ will lose the characteristics of a half draconian. However, the awakening effect you experienced will remain unchanged.]

[Would you like to accept the contract?]

“...”

It was a one-sided disadvantageous contract for Grid. This was the first thought that came to mind. The person who could destroy the contract was Hao, not Grid. Additionally, Grid was the only one who would suffer from the loss of the contract. It was a contract that couldn’t be offered unless Grid thoroughly trusted him.

‘The contract is one-sided for a reason.’

Grid could contract with a total of three people. He would gain a lot if he maintained contracts with all three of them. Maybe the gains were too unreasonable. These constraints were to contain the minimum of fairness.

'Anyway...'

Hao vaguely noticed the reason why Grid could attract even the nobles of an enemy nation. Was it due to the trust he showed first? Seeing Grid's true heart gave an overwhelming impression.

"I'll accept the contract."

'I won't betray your favor,' Hao swore.

[You have accepted the contract of the Different Species' King, player 'Grid.']

[The increase in status will awaken the half draconian traits.]

[The dragon scales, dragon's breath and dragon wings are strengthened.]

[The dragon's blood has become thicker. The level of Draconian Transformation has increased from 2 to 3.]

[Draconian Transformation's increase in strength, agility, health, and resistance has risen from 15% to 20%. The fire ability and regeneration ability has strengthened. Your flying ability is more stable.]

[However, your skills are still lacking.]

[You have become a bridge between 'Grid' and the half draconians. As long as the contract is maintained, the militancy of the half draconians will be somewhat tempered against Grid.]

"...!" Hao was filled with boiling power, only to come to his senses.

He was surprised by the last notification window. The half draconian's militancy would be softened? In the past, Hao visited the towns of the half draconians for his racial quest and saw their madness. Their ferocious temperament was similar to that of the evil dragon, Bunhelier, who had given birth to them, and Hao thought they were a species that could never reconcile with humans.

'Their strength...'

No matter how strong Grenhal was, it was only in the human world. Hao was reminded of the half draconians after a long time, and his expression changed.

#### [Chapter 1034](#)

The moments of joy and crises—which kind of moment would people remember longer? For Grid, he remembered the moments of crises longer. It was in the realm of instinct, a type of defense mechanism to avoid going through the same crisis. One of the biggest moments of crisis for Grid was...

[You have heard Bentao's bad laughter. You can't stay calm after listening to it.]

[You have lost your composure. The deployment of all active skills will be canceled.]

[You have heard the enticement of the half god, Insane Clown King Bentao. Resistance has failed.]

[It will take over one minute to overcome the ‘frenzy’ state.]

[During the frenzy, your base damage will increase slightly, but your defense will decrease slightly. Additionally, the casting speed and resource consumption of all skills will increase greatly.]

[Bentao has stretched out his hand while you are losing your cool. Your health has changed with the owner of Bentao.]

It was the first battle with Agnus. Grid remembered the contents of the notification windows that emerged the moment the situation flipped over. It had been too shocking. A half god... What kind of existence was Bentao who managed to hit the Seven Malignant Saints and how was Agnus able to use his power? It was a mystery that Grid couldn't solve.

“Blacksmith God Hexetia gave tools to humanity.”

Now, Bentao was right in front of him. Was this Bentao the same Bentao? The phantom of the insane clown king that appeared when Agnus used Bentao's Mockery had let out an evil and cruel laugh. On the other hand, the Bentao in front of Grid now had a kind and trusting smile. The only thing that could be seen from his deep gaze was a feeling of charity. The madness was nowhere to be seen.

“It was War God Zeratul who taught humanity how to use those tools.”

“...?”

They followed Bentao inside the temple, and Grid—who was closely watching Bentao—felt a sense of discomfort. Finally, Bentao stopped in front of a stone status with no face.

“Stab the beast with the sharp spear. Cook food to fill the stomachs of you and your family every day. If someone craves your food, cut off his hand with a sharp knife. If someone harms your safety, slice open his stomach. The sharper your sword and spear, the safer you will be.”

Clap.

Bentao clapped loudly and bowed his head in front of the statue. Then he looked back at Grid's party.  
“These tools, they exist for violence.”

“...”

“Violence is the way for you and your family to live peacefully.”

“...”

“It is the greatest blessing of humanity that the war god gave martial arts to humanity.”

Grid's party got goosebumps. Bentao was speaking with a benign expression and voice, but the contents were ruthless and fierce, giving him an even stranger feeling. That's right. Unlike his appearance, the presence of Bentao was far from charitable. This was Insane Clown King Bentao, who fought against the Seven Malignant Saints that hoped for the peace of humanity. Grid was filled with this conviction.

“You glorify violence. Is this Zeratul's doctrine?”Lael asked on behalf of the agitated party.

Bentao nodded. “That's correct. I'm sure you are sympathetic to the doctrines of our church?”

“...?”

“Isn’t it because you trampled on the followers with violence that you’ve reached this place? You are qualified.”

At this moment...

[A hidden piece has occurred!]

A common notification window emerged in front of all the Overgeared members.

[You can convert to the hidden class ‘War God Follower’!]

[As a war god follower, your strength, stamina, and agility will permanently increase by 15%, and you will randomly acquire four secret techniques!]

[However, you will lose your existing class and the class specific skills.]

[Do you want to become a war god follower?]

This was one of the rewards that could be obtained from the Ruins of the War God. It was the hidden class, ‘War God Follower.’ This was an opportunity only given to those who passed the trials, reached Zeratul’s temple, and were qualified.

‘This...!’ Grid immediately refused the class change and turned his gaze toward his colleagues. His companions dreamed about becoming stronger than anyone else. For them, the class ‘war god follower’ would be attractive. In particular, it was an irresistible charm for those with a normal class.

“No...!”

Grid had peeked at the reality of the war god followers. A war god follower was a slave to the goal that couldn’t be reached in a lifetime. If a player became a war god follower, the system would harass the player by presenting them with a quest that could never be cleared. They must never become a follower. If they were blinded by the stats and secret techniques that could be obtained immediately, they would suffer forever.

The concerned Grid reached out to stop his colleagues.

[Do you want to become a war god follower?]

It was too late. The Overgeared members saw the same message window at the same time as Grid. They made their choice before Grid could stop them. Their choice...

“Hoh...” Bentao’s eyes flashed. “All of you refused to become war god followers?”

“...!” Grid was startled.

They all refused the hidden class...?

In particular, Vantner and Pon often expressed dissatisfaction with their classes. Grid’s colleagues grinned at his confusion.

“We can’t change our classes now, right?”

“I’m aiming to be the strongest guardian knight. I have no intention of following the war god.”

“...Ah.” Grid glimpsed the trust and enthusiasm in his colleagues’ gaze. The Overgeared members had been with Grid for a long time, and they envied him—far beyond how much the normal player envied him. For them, Grid was the goal and the dream, not the war god. The war god follower class had no charm.

“Kukuk...! Kuhahaha! Kuhahahat!” Bentao grabbed his belly and started laughing. The frivolously cheerful laughter, rather than a warm one, resounded through the room. The Overgeared members, who were wary of him from the beginning, were filled with tension.

Bentao formally introduced himself, “I am the half god Bentao. After a lifetime of training, I came to the Peach Blossom Spring but didn’t peek at the reality of a god.” (Peach Blossom Spring = Utopia where people live in harmony with nature. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Peach\\_Blossom\\_Spring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Peach_Blossom_Spring))

Energy slowly started rising around Bentao. A majestic white aura round from his round body. The spiritual aura emitted an icy chill but repeatedly warmed up like the sunshine of spring. Surprisingly, it contained the power to promote life. Flowers and trees started to grow from between the old tiles which had been lain on the temple grounds.

“A long time ago, I went down to the ground to carry out the god’s will and punish the seven wicked people. In order to pick out those who were confused by the seven evils and find their tracks, I wandered the entire continent as a clown. The thing I saw at the end was the darkness hidden in the bright light... The seven evils weren’t evil.”

Bentao waved his hand, and the landscape of the temple disappeared. The place where the party members stood turned into a paradise covered with beautiful flowers and trees. Rich rice fields were visible, and there were large floating lotus leaves on the lake. Far away, beyond a stone wall, there was a tree with white peaches. A sweet smell shook the earth and sky.

[You are the first player to discover the Peach Blossom Spring!]

[You got a white peach as compensation for discovering the Peach Blossom Spring!]

“...?”

Suddenly, a big and fat peach appeared in the Overgeared members’ hands. Bentao stared at them briefly before turning around. “I heard that the Ruins of the War God were opened, and I was worried that evil aroused by the aesthetics of violence would appear. Thus, I tried to deceive your eyes for a moment. Forgive me.”

This was the end. The wind blew, and the scenery in front of them flipped around. Then Bentao vanished like mist.

Grid shouted hurriedly, “There is a person using your power on the ground! How can he use your power?”

“It was Baal who killed Insane King Bentao...” A faint reply that got interrupted in the middle was heard. Then the vision of the party members were once again obscured.

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“...”Grid’s party recovered their minds and found they were standing at the top of the mountain.

“What are you doing?” The voices of the dukes rang out. Looking back, their appearance hadn’t been seen since going into the temple. When had the party fallen into Bentao’s illusion? This was unreal. It wasn’t easy to distinguish if what they just experienced was reality or an illusion. It was like the group had fallen asleep, but it was clearly reality. There was a white peach to one side of the Overgeared members’ inventory.

[White Peach]

[A mysterious peach that grows only in the Peach Blossom Spring.

It has a heavenly flavor and amazing potency.

When eaten, all health and status abnormalities will be recovered and character experience will increase by 30%, regardless of level.

\* Can only be taken once in a lifetime.

Weight: None]

“...”

If they chose to become a war god follower, they would be standing at the resurrection point right now. Basara urged the thinking Overgeared members, “The temple is empty and doesn’t contain anything. Let’s go to the next place before the day is over.”

Below the mountain, there was a field of reeds that rose as high as a human’s height. Three or four followers were gathered together and wandering around the field. In the future, it would be impossible to defeat the followers individually.

Now it was starting for real. They would have to fight without any rest. The prepared Overgeared members descended the steep mountain, and the followers wandering in the field welcomed them. The Overgeared members and dukes crossed the field in search of secret techniques. The more wounded their bodies got, the stronger they became.

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There were no more humans in the ruins that had been the capital of the Rotemon Kingdom just a few days ago. Only the dead and demons roamed the ruins, while Great Demon Berith sat on the throne of the fallen kingdom.

[The Rotemon Kingdom has been destroyed.]

It was a shocking world message.

[22nd Great Demon Berith will launch a new march with two armies.]

[Berith’s next destination is the Haken Kingdom.]

There was the following warning. The camera showed Berith get up from the throne and start to walk.

『 According to a survey by the US Bureau of Statistics, this incident has left 42 million players without any place to go. It was estimated that approximately 280 million quests were permanently destroyed. The economic losses resulting from this will affect reality... 』

-Ah, shit. What should I do if I belong to the Haken Kingdom?

-There is a hidden quest to protect my hometown but how...

-The king of Haken's brain seems to have come to a halt. There is no military gathering.

-What about the Saharan Empire? They usually get involved in other countries' affairs, but they are wiping their mouths at a time like this.

-What should the empire do? The empire would have to suffer great losses if they fight the great demon. Why would they do that for another country?

-No, this is a nation-wide affair. The entire continent is in danger.

-Even the Overgeared Guild isn't doing anything ㄹㄹ. The game is screwed.

-S.A Group, what are you thinking sending out a boss that is so strong??

-Sigh, it is a really messy operation...

-When is the new virtual reality game Briton releasing?

-It is delayed indefinitely due to the harsh criticism from the closed beta ㅎㅎ.

-Ah, this really sucks.

Experts in each field believed that this situation would destroy half the continent. Players from all over the world trembled with anxiety and fear. Some rankers argued that all players should unite to block Berith, but it was extremely rare for people to come forward and take action. People just wanted the empire to stop Berith before he invaded their kingdom. Additionally...

"Hey! Zibal! Are you crazy?"

In the capital of the Saharan Empire, Titan...

The Magic Machines Unit of 4th Imperial Prince Edan was turned upside down. It was because one of the riders of the four magic machines, Zibal, moved his magic machine without permission.

"...Damn, I'm from the Haken Kingdom."

Zibal, the former second ranked in the unified rankings, had risen to the rank of earl in the Haken Kingdom. Most of the ties he'd made in the Haken Kingdom continued to this day, so he couldn't just watch as the Haken Kingdom fell. The destruction of the Haken would not only cause him substantial losses but it also sickened his mind. There was also a hidden quest to protect his hometown.

"Shit! I'll just take a look!" Zibal closed his eyes, shouted to his superiors, and left.

4th Imperial Prince Eden, who belatedly came running after hearing the news, laughed as he saw Raiders disappearing into the sky. "It is a good excuse."

The emperor had used all types of reasons to block the launch of the Magic Machines Unit. It was to stop Eden from building up achievements. Eden was angry at the emperor's actions, so he welcomed this incident.

"What can I do if a soldier moves on his own? Isn't that right? Kukuk, the whole world will finally know the greatness of the magic machines."

Simultaneously, at Kirinus' hut...

"Stop." Spear Saint Rachel threw her spear. The declaration was too abrupt.

Kirinus frowned. "The winner hasn't been determined yet?"

Rachel was suddenly angry. "Dammit, we've fought for close to two months? How can the winner be decided? Hit me. I will stop."

In fact, Rachel's motivation had disappeared from a month ago. However, Sword Saint Kraugel constantly provoked her and she couldn't retreat. Rachel had reached her limit. She would give up. She thought it was a waste of time to fight with Kirinus, who was equal to her. There was nothing to learn, and it was impossible to compete with him.

At this time, Kraugel interrupted, "You have surrendered, so Sir Kirinus has won."

Rachel felt a momentary rage.

"Sigh. I won't fall for your taunts anymore." She controlled her mind. Rachel wanted to go to the historical ruins soon. She failed to defeat Kirinus, and this increased her desire for the war god's secret techniques. This was what Kraugel tried to stop. Kraugel wanted Grid to monopolize the rewards of the ruins. He didn't want this monstrous woman to go to the ruins and take away Grid's rewards.

Thus, he made a suggestion. "Why not change your method of fighting?"

"How?"

"What about the one who deals more damage to Great Demon Berith?"

"Hoh..."

Both Kirinus and Rachel showed interest. Rachel's knights looked like they were going to cry.

Meanwhile, Kraugel sighed with relief.

'If I can slow down the destruction of the Haken Kingdom...'

He could reduce the number of people suffering until Grid returned from the Ruins of the War God. Then once Grid returned, Berith would be raided by both him and Grid.

#### [Chapter 1035](#)

"A Berith raiding strategy exists."

The place where Berith was summoned was too far from the empire. The empire had little room to intervene, and the military power of ordinary kingdoms couldn't bear Berith's power. In order to minimize the damage, players had to move and raid Berith.

However, it was impossible. In this case, half the continent would really be destroyed. Hundreds of billions of quests would be permanently destroyed, and hundreds of millions of players would lose what they had built up. Was this really what the S.A Group wanted?

Some intellectuals weren't convinced. The S.A Group also hoped for Berith to be raided and analyzed that they should've arranged a strategy.

"The 33 great demons are based on Solomon's 72 demons."

The fact that the 1st great demon was Baal and the existence of Belial and Berith were obvious proofs of this. Not all 33 great demons might have the same settings as the 72 demons of Solomon, but many of the great demons were created the same or had slightly modified configurations as Solomon's 72 demons. The Berith depicted in Solomon's 72 demons was a target that could be controlled by the 'Magic Ring.'

"We will be able to drive Berith out with the Magic Ring. The balance makes it impossible for a player to control a great demon, so we can't completely control Berith. Still, we should be able to command him to return to hell."

"How can we get that Magic Ring?"

"We should make it."

"How can one player make an item that drives away a great demon?"

"It will be easy to make if we cooperate."

At the boundaries between the ruined Rotemon Kingdom and the Haken Kingdom, the 1st ranked alchemist Zelgah had gathered the players of the Haken Kingdom to defend their country. People were angry.

"Alchemy and lies. We know that Berith's power is consistent with the depiction of Solomon's 72 demons, but the ranks are different. Berith is 28th in the 72 demons of the Lesser Key of Solomon while he is 22nd in Satisfy. It means there is some variation in the setting."

They couldn't be sure if Berith still had the same weakness.

"What if the Magic Ring doesn't work? What do you intend to do then?"

The 5,000 players gathered here hadn't come to play around. They were here so that they would not lose their home kingdom where they had been active for a long time. The players were determined to sacrifice their lives in order not to lose their precious relationships and assets.

From their position, Zelgah was seen as a scammer. He was trying to take advantage of the desperate people who were on the edge of a cliff.

"Moreover, you need our cooperation to make the ring? What? Should we give you money?"

The players showed obvious hostility, but Zelgah wasn't shaken. Their suspicions were natural and their reactions were within the range of his expectations. Zelgah said calmly, "No, I don't want your money. The material needed to make the Magic Ring is the Stone of Life. It is the ultimate alchemy stone that can't be valued."

"...?"

The Stone of Life—there were many people who had heard of it, even if they weren't alchemists.

"...Crazy guy."

The stunned people soon regained their senses. Then they sent even more explicit hostility toward Zelgah.

"You aren't a scammer trying to fool us but a madman playing with us. The 1st ranked alchemist? You can only use low-grade alchemy. It's that why you don't have any pride as a ranker?"

They didn't know what the Stone of Life was exactly. According to what they had heard, it was a universal alchemy stone that was almost a fantasy. Yet the material of the Magic Ring was the Stone of Life...? It was like saying they couldn't make the Magic Ring. This meant Zelgah didn't know how to raid Berith to begin with. He was just making fun of them.

Some of the players started to grab their weapons. It was to condemn Zelgah. Still, Zelgah remained calm. "Did you know that a few months ago, Mad Dog Agnus was going around murdering accessory makers in each country? The Overgeared Guild revealed that he was framed, but it was obvious that Agnus was looking for them."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

How did the story that began with Berith lead to Agnus? It was a stupid way of talking. Zelgah threw decisive words at the frowning players, "It was to make the Stone of Life."

"What?"

"Agnus has the Stone of Life. According to the information I've obtained, Agnus is currently in the Haken Kingdom."

"...!!"

"Of course, it would be impossible to take the Stone of Life from Agnus. However, there is a way to get him to do it himself." Zelgah looked around at the 5,000 players. "We can use the justification that the world needs the Stone of Life. Berith is threatening 2 billion players. All the players in the world will start crying out to Agnus for the Stone of Life, and it won't be possible for him to endure the pressure."

Moving public opinion was simple. Zelgah's argument was reasonable. Agnus just had to give up one thing and they could raid Berith. The moment this news was announced, people would start pressuring Agnus. None of the 5,000 players gathered here had to take any risks.

It was a great way to do it. However, this was on the premise that the Magic Ring would really work.

"Let's say Agnus yields the Stone of Life. Then what if the Magic Ring doesn't work?"

“In that case, I will bear all the blame and violence. You don’t have to worry.”

It was a chance to blow their nose without touching it. Even if nothing was blown out, there wouldn’t be a problem.

“...Hrmm.” After thinking about it, they made a decision. “Okay. We will tell the world about how to raid Berith and make the demand that Agnus yield the Stone of Life. On the other hand, you will bear all responsibility for subsequent problems.”

“Of course. You can rest assured about that part. I don’t have the power to go against you anyway.”

After that...

(Haken Kingdom players in crisis, find out how to get rid of Great Demon Berith!)

(The strategy of the Great Demon Berith raid is the ‘Magic Ring’.)

(The material needed to make the Magic Ring is the Stone of Life.)

(The Stone of Life turns out to be possessed by Agnus.)

(The campaign of thousands of players have started... They are demanding for Agnus to yield the Stone of Life.)

(Agnus hasn’t expressed any stance.)

(The accusations toward Agnus are becoming fiercer every day.)

A huge 5,000 people contacted the media and used all means and methods to move public opinion. The media from countries all over the world started to mention the Berith strategy, the Stone of Life, and Agnus. It didn’t matter if the Berith strategy was real.

The players were just looking forward to the possibility, and the media was happy to report it. The high-quality topic boosted the enthusiasm of the media. If the attack strategy turned out to be wrong, it wasn’t the public or the media who would suffer. They cornered Agnus without hesitation. It would be natural for him to give up the Stone of Life.

On the outskirts of Innsbruck, Austria...

“Uhhhh...” Agnus sat alone in a lonely ancient castle, with his trembling body wrapped in a blanket. He was a sinner without knowing why. In the past and even now, he had to endure the contempt and reproach that people sent toward him.

“Kuweek!”

Everyone hated him. There was no one he could rely on. He was alone. Reminded of this reality, Agnus trembled with fear and horror. He didn’t understand why he had to go through this again and was terrified by the emptiness of his heart. Then suddenly...

“Why...” He questioned it. Why should he be a target? He wasn’t going to be weak anymore. There was no reason for him to succumb to violence without reason.

Stagger.

Agnus raised his body and approached the capsule that he had been away from for a few days. His body was now trembling with rage, not terror. It was anger toward the entire world for persecuting him and trying to take away what was his.

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“Wow, really... I sat down with a bunch of creeps.”

Those who would sacrifice a minority under the name of the majority... He witnessed a herd that hid behind the name of the ‘masses’ and forced sacrifices on others. In this case, the theory that ‘human nature is fundamentally evil’ came to mind. It was disgusting to see the players chanting Agnus’ name due to the uncertain solution of the Stone of Life. The discomfort simmering inside him made him feel disgusted.

“Tsk.”

Zibal—who deserted his unit on the magic machine, Raiders—arrived at his home, the Haken Kingdom, after a few days but lost his burning sense of duty. Tens of thousands of players were gathered under the kingdom’s walls. What right did they have to call for Agnus to sacrifice the Stone of Life for the sake of humanity? Why couldn’t they think of raiding Berith directly with such enthusiasm?

Zibal shook his head.

“Zibal! You really came!” An old friend came up and hugged him. It was Earl Flenitium—a person who had fought together with Zibal when he was a noble of the Haken Kingdom, even though he was a NPC. At first, Earl Flenitium was just a target Zibal recognized as part of the quest, but he later became a valuable friend. The fact that the earl’s life was finite caused Zibal to feel anxiety and sorrow.

“It is because of this great demon that my home is in crisis. Of course, I should come. Is everybody gathered?”

“Everyone is here apart from Marquis Yulan, who is protecting the king. This place is so raucous. We should head to my mansion.”

“Um...” Zibal walked with Earl Flenitium and felt the chaos of the kingdom. The people showed a variety of reactions to the fact that the fearsome great demon was approaching. Young parents learned to use spears to protect their children while young children dressed in military uniforms to protect their old parents. Then there were others who just sat down and sobbed. Could he really protect them?

Frankly, Zibal had no confidence of that. The end of the already ruined Rotemon Kingdom was terrible. The great demon Berith was a formidable opponent. However, Zibal wanted to fight. If even he turned away from them, the people of the Haken Kingdom would die without a single bit of hope.

‘...Crazy.’

Was it due to the desperate situation...? Zibal kept wanting to rely on someone. He wanted a person stronger than him to fight with him. The one who came to mind was Grid—a person who had frustrated him many times. Why did the person Zibal usually hated come to mind now? It was because he acknowledged Grid’s skills.

“I’m past my prime now.”

Zibal made a bittersweet smile. He was never weak. In fact, he was much stronger than when he was the leader of the Seven Guilds and had shouted that he would be the best. Nevertheless, Grid was a special existence.

### [Chapter 1036](#)

The Berith crisis spread to Agnus. The masses urged him to yield the Stone of Life, and the media further encouraged them by convincing and defending the public's attitude. It was an abnormal flow. There was no certainty that the Stone of Life could drive Berith away, and the public had no right to demand that someone give up their private property. So, why was Agnus a target?

The experts analyzed this.

『 You reap what you sow. In the meantime, Agnus has been famous for his PK. In order to monopolize the hunting grounds and fulfill his own quests, Agnus slaughtered players for selfish reasons. There are many people who are afraid of him. He is a suitable target to be a scapegoat. The public's anxiety and fears—which have been called unavoidable despair—need hope to be resolved, and Agnus was chosen as the subject of hope. 』

『 It doesn't matter to people if the Stone of Life is effective or not. They just want to share their insecurities and fears with others. Agnus is a good fit for the target. 』

Kraugel headed to the Haken Kingdom along with Kirinus and Spear Saint Rachel. As the night deepened, Kraugel logged out while the two people were sleeping, and he became unnerved. He felt disgusted when he heard the story of Agnus, which had been a hot topic lately.

Reap what you sow? It was nonsense. The PK was just a good excuse to buy people's hatred. PK was a system that used both the strong and weak as needed. It was the PK system that protected one's rights, interests, and self-esteem, making it loved by many people.

Those who were talking on the news panels right now would be the same. PKing wasn't exclusive to Agnus, yet only Agnus was harshly criticized. Why? It was because he was easy to deal with. The Agnus of a few years ago had been the head of a huge organization called Immortal while the current Agnus was alone. He was easy prey because his position was weak, just like when he was falsely accused and on the guillotine. The people who once envied him for running wild in the world without any fear were now trying to touch him.

'That person named Zelgah is counting on this and targeting Agnus.'

Zelgah was the essence behind it. He used the people's fear of Berith and turned Berith into a target to be avoided rather than raided. The players of the 'absolute majority' weren't capable of raiding Berith and easily agreed with Zelgah, causing the enthusiasm of those dreaming of raiding Berith to cool down. In the end, Berith entered the vicinity of the Haken Kingdom, but no players were willing to stop him.

'Based on what I see, the Stone of Life isn't what Zelgah wants.'

The destruction of the Haken Kingdom—this was Zelgah's wish. There was no other way to interpret the situation. Kraugel was convinced.

'There is the Yatan Church behind him.'



The purpose of the Yatan Church was to summon the 33 great demons and turn the world into hell. From their perspective, they didn't want Berith to be raided. However, if they openly helped Berith, then they would be pointed out as the enemy of the entire human race and completely isolated. Thus, they played tricks by using Zelgah.

'In the first place, Agnus was framed by the Yatan Church for killing the accessory makers...'

The Yatan Church's plan was to protect Berith and eradicate Agnus. The influence of the public and media could be maximized because they exerted influence in the background.

'Rose...'

She was first on the black magician rankings and someone who possessed enormous wealth and power as one of Yatan's Servants. When Kraugel met her by chance, Rose's attitude had been kind and friendly.

'In fact, she might be a scary woman.'

In any case, it was a headache. Since people stopped coming to raid Berith, Kraugel had to fight Berith purely with Kirinus, Rachel, and Rachel's knights. It was a struggle without any helpers. Kirinus' life could be in danger.

'It might be presumptuous... but I have to ask Hao and Alexander to participate.'

Kraugel needed enough power to open up a chance to retreat at any time. Thinking this, Kraugel pressed the button of his smartwatch.

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"Bah!"

"Che!"

The imperial army barely reached the ruins after a few weeks of sailing. They came here in a hurry as reinforcements for the vanguard. After more than a month, they arrived at the historical site and had to quickly join the vanguard to support them. However, the procession of the soldiers wasn't smooth, and the marching rate was as slow as a tortoise.

The 10,000 soldiers and dozens of nobles were busy looking at each other with distrustful eyes. At the centre was Huroi, who was disguised as Earl Baget.

"Huhuhut..." He was the only laughing man in the procession of 10,000 troops who were filled with confusion and anger. Huroi was very pleased with the current situation that occurred due to his high-level incitement.

'I have delayed the meeting of the empire's advance team and the reinforcements by three times the original length of time. I should be proud and consider it a great success.'

His liege, King Grid, had already arrived at the site and must've had a hard time exploring while avoiding the eyes of the empire. He might've suffered hair loss because he was threatened by the powerful imperial army led by three dukes.

'If the empire's reinforcements arrive in such a crisis...'

His liege would suffer a greater crisis and would have to give up on his exploration of the ruins. However, Huroi had taken action. The supreme loyalist managed to use maneuvers to prevent the empire's reinforcements from arriving in a timely manner, helping King Grid to explore the ruins. Huroi was confident that he had been active enough. He shrugged as he was reminded that Grid was somewhere praising him.

Marquis Fulbas approached Huroi and sighed, "Hah."

The marquis' eyes, which used to be full of energy, were long dead now. The dark circles under his eyes had also deepened. He had been suffering too much during the last few months. Marquis Fulbas felt betrayed by the colleagues he trusted his whole life, and every day was like hell.

Huroi got rid of his smile and faithfully played the role of Earl Baget. He looked at Marquis Fulbas with a worried expression. "You look very sad."

Marquis Fulbas said to him, "There is a rumor that Earl Silva is talking nonsense again."

"No, really? That dog again... No, why are you worried about his absurd insinuations?"

"He said that my daughter, who married two years ago, would be with her husband for 100 years."

"N-No? Such shit...! That son of a bitch! He is truly a lowly human!"

"Haha... That's right. I never dreamed that I would hear such a terrible curse in my life."

Marquis Fulbas' daughter had married a 41-year-old man. It was an arranged marriage. Marquis Fulbas had always felt guilty for being forced to send his daughter to an older man. The marquis hoped that his white-haired son-in-law, who recently started to suffer from dementia, would die as soon as possible. He prayed that his daughter would be able to enjoy freedom, even if it was late. Yet Earl Silva, who had been respectful to him for 20 years, was hoping that his daughter would spend 100 years with her husband. A great shock and sense of betrayal caused Marquis Fulbas' eyes to darken. He felt there was no one in this world he could believe in.

"This... It is disgraceful behavior."

Was he not supposed to treat people with charity and kindness? It meant he had been living wrong. This feeling of skepticism caused Marquis Fulbas to hurriedly wipe his wet eyes. He was ashamed and unable to raise his head.

"Please take this." Huroi handed him a handkerchief. It was a handkerchief that smelled like chicken poop, but Marquis Fulbas felt thankful.

"Earl Baget. I only have you now."

"I will never betray the marquis."

Then it happened while they were absorbed in the conversation.

"There is nothing in the temple."

"I was able to find traces of a huge battle near the temple."

At the summit of the mountain that was past the jungle, the knights returned after searching the temple there and gave a report.

“A huge battle? I thought the followers only emerge one by one?” Drunk Duke Diworth responded immediately while drinking a bottle of alcohol and scratching his stomach. “That means it wasn’t a fight against the followers?”

Diworth’s eyes glittered for the first time in awhile. He had been annoyed by the pathetic actions of the nobles fighting each other in the back. He focused his eyes, directly checked the signs of battle near the temple, and lowered his gaze down the mountain. Far away, a vast expanse of reeds could be seen. Blood stained the reeds that had been cut or crushed to pieces.

“The blood hasn’t died yet. Let’s hurry.” Diworth went in front of the nobles who were busy questioning and doubting each other. He decided that the advance team and Overgeared Kingdom had already met each other and were fighting. Diworth believed that the advance team were tracking the Overgeared Kingdom.

‘I can’t let Grid talk about Piaro.’

He admired Piaro, but the other dukes who still missed him would be agitated. It was hard to tell how Grid would take advantage of their agitation. Before that, he should join the advance team and cut off Grid’s head.

“Go.”

Diworth started to descend the mountain quickly. It was a speed that didn’t take the soldiers into consideration. In the first place, Diworth seemed to think he was only accompanied by nobles and knights.

‘This—!’ Huroi anxiously chased after the procession as the marching speed accelerated sharply.

On the other hand, Grid’s party...

“Pant... Pant... Pant...”

The difficulty of the ruins rose rapidly starting from the reeds. The Overgeared members, who barely managed to break through the reed field after a few days of struggle, faced a crisis without time for a break. It was because the followers who had learned six secret techniques started to appear in groups of four.

There were even those who had learned the ‘unconditional counterattack’ and ‘unconditional avoidance of skills seen more than twice.’ Surrounded by 30 followers, the Overgeared members and dukes were exhausted. It was enough to make them think that this expedition was impossible.

‘It is a pity to eat the White Peach here. If I link 100,000 Army Swordsmanship and open up Astaroth’s Strength, it might be possible to open up the path of retreat.’

Grid’s vision flashed red. Vantner was in a dying state, and Grid’s health was also falling to dangerous levels as he acted as a tank in front. He had a means to break through the immediate crisis, but there was the question of how much trust he could place in the dukes.

Yura came up to the hesitating Grid. Armed with shining armor as white as her skin, she spoke with a determined expression, "I'll summon the elemental king."

In fact, she was also hesitant. She couldn't easily judge if she should let it be known that she had contracted with an elemental king. However, Grid and her colleagues were currently in a desperate situation. She couldn't ignore her colleagues because of political issues. A circle of light was drawn around Yura as she started the summoning.

"Wait!" Lauel stretched out his hand on behalf of Grid, who couldn't easily make a decision. An elemental was a power that most humans coveted. More than that, the empire's desire for the elementals would be great. Exposing the elemental king in a situation where they couldn't be sure of the relationship between the empire and Overgeared Kingdom was going to be risky.

Thus, Lauel tried to stop Yura, but the dukes were one step faster.

"There are very few people in the empire who know why I am called the Immortal King."

Trust...

Grid didn't show it, but the dukes showed it first. Grenhal started taking off the armor he had been wearing the whole time. From his gauntlets and leggings to his helmet, shield, and even body armor—every time a heavy piece of equipment fell to the ground, a loud noise rang out due to the heavy weight.

Grenhal revealed a scarred and muscular body. His eyes were stained with a red light. A berserker—he was an ultimate fighter who showed extreme attack power and blood-sucking ability as more of his health was consumed. This was Grenhal's reality.

"Not many people know why I am the Beast King. It is because they die the moment they figure out the reason." Then Morse's body became covered with rough beast-like fur as his teeth and nails sharpened.

Perhaps the reality that Beastman Toon would ultimately reach could be seen through Morse. At this point, the gazes of the party members focused on Basara. The embarrassed Basara blushed. "I-I can't transform like that."

"..."

### [Chapter 1037](#)

"Then let's get started."

Duke Grenhal stepped forward while loosening his neck. At this moment, he wasn't a noble duke. With a provocative expression and large muscular body, he was like a soldier who came to the arena, throwing off his mask and revealing his true nature. His two eyes were coveting violence.

"This uncle will play for a bit."

Peak Sword gulped as he stared at Grenhal's fighting spirit and killing intent. Duke Grenhal leaped forward. He plunged into the followers like he couldn't bear it anymore. Duke Grenhal's sword aimed at three followers. The three followers immediately fought back, hitting toward Duke Grenhal's chin and feet.

Duke Grenhal naturally didn't fall down. The basic characteristic of a warrior was lower body training. He stepped firmly, grabbed the ankle of a follower aiming at his face, and swung it like a hammer. The heads of the followers hit each other. There was a shock to their skulls as Duke Grenhal pushed at them with his shoulders and struck them with a sword surrounded by a red aura.

The 30 followers, that were blocking the Overgeared members like a barrier, split apart like the Red Sea. Duke Grenhal's aura was reminiscent of planets orbiting due to the gravitational force of the sun. It swirled around in the form of spheres and damaged the followers' bodies.

However, most of the red blood that was scattered in the desolate canyon belonged to Duke Grenhal. The injured followers immediately counterattacked, turning Duke Grenhal into rags. Duke Grenhal, who abandoned his armor, quickly lost health and was unable to cope with the followers' attack power. Under normal circumstances, Duke Grenhal would seem like he was at risk, but he was a berserker.

「 They become stronger as they get hurt. 」

This was the backbone of a berserker.

“Ohhhhhh!”

“...!”The eyes of the Overgeared members widened. One of the followers was hit by Duke Grenhal and burst like a watermelon. Once Duke Grenhal's health fell below 30%, his attack power would reach its limit. It was a tremendous combat power that was appalling even for Grid, who was confident that he boasted the best attack power among the players.

‘I would die in one blow.’

Of course, Grid would survive using the power of immortality, but he wouldn't be able to withstand the damage to his armor or parts of his body. Grenhal certainly was strong. If the duke who invaded had been Grenhal instead of Rigal...

‘I wouldn't have protected anyone.’

Grenhal's rampage intensified. Once his health fell below 20%, a follower died every time he threw out aura and wielded his fist and sword.

‘Is it dangerous?’ Grid watched the battle for a while and was in a state of anxiety. The berserker's characteristic of becoming stronger the more they were hurt was both a strength and a weakness. The berserker, which had various ‘conditions’ and ‘constraints’, was a job that could never be valued. The more they threatened the enemy, the more threatened they were.

“Stop! Wake up!”

Duke Grenhal's health fell below 10%. At this rate, he would die. A berserker was the symbol of someone who got lost in their minds. They were trapped in the battle and risked their own limbs.

Just a bit more... Just a few more wounds could make them stronger and allow them to eliminate the enemies in front of them. The berserker was easily occupied by such thoughts and was the most frequently killed class in combat.

“Shit!” Grid didn’t want the strong helper who showed trust in him and his colleagues to die in such a manner. He stepped forward to help Grenhal, only to stop in place. Would this person remain his help forever? Would he remain by Grid’s side when the exploration of the ruins was over and they returned to their daily life?

Grid couldn’t be sure. Grenhal was a duke of the empire. As long as the empire regarded the Overgeared Kingdom as an enemy, the tip of Grenhal’s sword would point at Grid and his colleagues. Maybe he should let Grenhal die...

‘No, that isn’t it!’

The later work was for a later day. In order to safely explore this historical site, Duke Grenhal couldn’t die. Aside from these calculations, he liked Grenhal. Grenhal was a true noble who knew how to respect and care for others despite his strong power. Grid liked his elegant style. He couldn’t let this person die.

Grid made up his mind and started collecting the resource of the Hero King, fighting energy. A spear wielded by one of the followers penetrated Grenhal’s chest. Grenhal’s health fell below 10%. Simultaneously, Grenhal’s aura became redder. Grenhal cut down the follower with the spear and absorbed almost 5% of health back.

“What?” Grid stopped using 100,000 Army Swordsmanship and the Overgeared members, who followed Grid to help Grenhal, froze like stone statues. Grenhal regained health every time he attacked the follower. The ultimate attack power was still maintained, and the blood-sucking ability reminiscent of a direct descendant vampire was expressed.

Duke Grenhal’s body, which was so ragged it would be easier to find uninjured parts, was quickly restored. It was a sight contrary to common sense. The characteristic of blood-sucking—it was common to all berserkers, but the effect was minimal. Not even the prominent high ranker berserker Asuka showed such great blood-sucking ability. As a third generation chaebol, she maximized her resources using items and was assisted by Black Teddy during battle. Nevertheless, the limit to her ability was ‘barely regaining enough health to survive infrequently.’

However, Duke Grenhal’s blood-sucking ability was of a different dimension. He was a berserker, but he was different. His blood-sucking ability was beyond the level of the class characteristic.

The final blow killed the remaining four followers. As the bones of the followers were crushed and brain matter poured from their heads, Grenhal seemed as intact as he looked originally. The new wounds obtained during the battle disappeared without a trace, and only the old scars remained. It seemed like time was reverting.

“...”

“...”

The silence continued. Grid and the Overgeared members, who felt more frightened than in awe of Grenhal, were close-mouthed. One man broke the silence.

“...Cough.”

It was Grenhal who was bleeding. He groaned as the wounds that had been erased were once again etched on his hard body.

‘Duke Grenhal...?’

Why all of a sudden? Grid made a worried expression as he belatedly came to his senses. Morse, who tore apart the new followers that arrived while Grenhal was fighting, explained, “The reason why Duke Grenhal doesn’t use his abilities is due to the aftereffects.”

Ever since he saw the power of the assimilated Grid and Braham, Morse was deeply respectful and courteous to Grid. Yet he spoke a bit crudely at this moment, perhaps due to his wild state after turning into a beast. Still, Grid didn’t dwell on Morse’s tone. He thought of Morse like a puppy scratching his ears.

“Grenhal recovers from the damage during the battle, but he will suffer them again after the battle ends. Additionally, those wounds will never heal. They can’t be healed through any means.”

“The scars on his body...”

“They are signs of the aftereffects. Well, Duke Grenhal fights for the nation and its people. In his position, the scars are like decorations. He must feel that he got a new medal today.”

Grenhal fought for Grid and his colleagues. After these words, Morse ended his beast transformation. He took off his fur and returned to human form, once again acting politely to Grid. “I think Duke Grenhal will need time to rest.”

“I will help.” Grid moved ahead of Morse and approached the fallen Grenhal. He lent his shoulder to the still bleeding Grenhal. Looking closer, there was a deep cut on Grenhal’s chest that had never been there before. It was a mark from being penetrated by the spear.

Grid opened his mouth, “...You have worked hard, my friend.”

Maybe someday they would become enemies again. Grenhal couldn’t play a role in political matters as long as the emperor and grandmaster existed. It was a fact that both Grid and Grenhal knew. However, Grid accepted Grenhal as a friend. What else could he call a person who fought for them while taking the risk of disclosing his weakness? It was Grid’s way of repaying the same goodwill, friendship, trust, and favor.

“...Your Majesty.” Duke Grenhal was thrilled. Those who witnessed his insanity and violence so far had avoided or feared him. Yet Grid was different. His own interests didn’t obscure his essence. He didn’t forget the reason for Grenhal’s insanity and violence and completely accepted Grenhal’s heart. Duke Grenhal was glad and grateful for it.

In addition, Grid’s favor didn’t end with these words.

“Do you know?”

“...What?”

“My sister is a Saintess.”

“...”

“My dear little sister.”

“...!”

Grid’s gaze was focused on the duke’s left shoulder as he boasted about his little sister. It was an unusually deep wound—to the point of permanent disability. This couldn’t be considered a medal even for Duke Grenhal. He would feel resentment toward the scar whenever his right arm moved better than his left arm. Grid thought that it was the reason Duke Grenhal’s level was lower than that of Spear Saint Rachel and Sword Duke Limit.

“You can meet with my sister at any time. Her healing power can be of great help to you.”

“Thank... Thank you, Your Majesty.” Grenhal’s body trembled. He straightened himself using Grid’s shoulder and expressed deep gratitude. At this moment...

“Gridddd!”

A terrible smell drifted from somewhere.

“I finally found you!”

Along with a gale, Drunk Duke Diworth appeared.

“Ohu?”

Diworth glimpsed the scene and smiled significantly. He noted that Grenhal facing Grid had taken off his armor.

“It is just before death.”

Grenhal was in a temporarily invincible state after opening the power of a berserker. The usual Grenhal might be different, but even Rachel and Limit didn’t dare say they could defeat ‘Immortal King Grenhal.’ Diworth imagined that Grid would die from Grenhal’s violence. By the way, why was the progress so slow?

‘What? Don’t tell me?’

Diworth sensed that something had gone wrong and stared at Grid and the other dukes.

“This wicked guy! You sold Piaro’s name!!”

“Piaro?”

Why did that name come out here? Grenhal, Morse, and Basara doubted their ears. Huge questions swirled in their minds. Still, there was a problem to be addressed before resolving the questions.

“Duke Diworth, remove your gaze.”

“Huh? Duke Grenhal? Did I hear that correctly?”

“Don’t look at the Overgeared King with your glaring eyes.”



“...???”

As stated earlier, Diworth was the one with the weakest authority among the Seven Dukes. On the other hand, Grenhal was a powerful man among the Seven Dukes. The confused Diworth lowered his eyes for now.

### [Chapter 1038](#)

Political strife was common. The nobles divided into factions for their own interests and kept each other in check. The Seven Dukes were the same. Apart from the Sword Duke, they were all loyal to the imperial family, but they kept a close eye on each other and were vigilant. In the worst case scenario, there would be armed conflict.

It was inevitable that the dukes would fight. The dukes led millions of people, so incidents and accidents continued. Someone didn't want to lose the inheritance gained from their ancestors, and someone else became relentless for their own ambition. Irrespective of the position and tendencies of such individuals, there was a common feature among the Seven Dukes.

It was that they had respect for each other. They might be afraid of or hostile to each other, but on the surface, they showed courtesy and goodwill to each other. It was because they didn't want to lose their honor. This was to let people know that the 'dukes of the empire' deserved respect from everyone.

It was a type of image marketing. In other words—

“Don't look at the Overgeared King with your glaring eyes.”

“...”

It meant this situation wasn't normal, even if Duke Grenhal's strength and authority was above that of Duke Diworth and even if their two families were fighting over the commercial rights of Saileta.

'In front of others...'

It was far from common sense for Grenhal to show such hostility to Diworth in front of an adversary. Diworth lowered his eyes while clenching his fists. He breathed deeply as his body and mind trembled with anger. 'I should be calmer.'

Defending the Overgeared King while undermining the value of the empire's dukes...? The present Grenhal must be out of his mind. Grenhal was crazy enough that Diworth suspected he had already become a berserker. Diworth was once again convinced that Grid had used the pretext of Piaro to mislead the dukes.

'Wicked person.'

Grid was the king who had betrayed the royal family he served and overthrown the kingdom. He was as cunning as a snake. Was it a coincidence that he took in Piaro? No, the likelihood of a coincidence was extremely low. This was calculated from the beginning.

Piaro was a special presence in the empire. Grid could make a great profit by placing Piaro by his side. As a result, he succeeded in dampening the empire's desire to unify the continent and successfully obtained Mercedes. It was evident that the emperor sent Mercedes to the Overgeared Kingdom after

learning about Piaro's survival and took a passive stance toward the war against the Overgeared Kingdom.

'He is too dangerous.'

Grid was too smart. His existence alone was a threat to the empire. Perhaps he was a dangerous existence beyond the Undefeated King. Madra only believed in strength and stuck to halting the empire's advance. Meanwhile, this genius and cunning man would make the empire rot from within. In fact, the emperor and dukes were already playing in his hands.

'For the sake of the emperor and the empire, this person must be eliminated.'

However, now wasn't the time. Grenhal and Morse had already bitten the bait called Piaro. At the time of Piaro's treason, they had petitioned the emperor, stating it was clear that Piaro had been framed. They pleaded that his family shouldn't be put to the guillotine. Those who longed for Piaro would be delighted by news of Piaro's survival. They would have complicated feelings toward Grid who misled them by saying he was caring for Piaro.

'Piaro's presence can't be hidden anymore. It is a priority to inform them that Grid is using Piaro for political reasons, not caring for him out of pure benevolence.'

'Thus, let's bow down. Let's aim for an opportunity to ignite Grenhal's rationality.'

Diworth would cooperate with Basara. Unlike the other dukes, she had no personal feelings or relationship with Piaro. She would be able to analyze the situation objectively. Diworth used a lot of effort to suppress his anger. He apologized to Grenhal and removed all the alcohol in his mana.

"I made a mistake. The opponent might be the leader of an enemy country, but he is also a king who leads the people. I was too excited that I lost my dignity as a duke of the empire and didn't show him the minimal courtesy."

Diworth's eloquent words were subtle. He clearly declared that Grid was an enemy of the empire and that Grenhal's act of protecting him was for noble reasons. It was also a veiled criticism of Grenhal, who was misled by Grid for personal reasons. Diworth felt that Grenhal would feel shame and regain his lost reason.

However, the result was different from what he expected. Grenhal said even crazier nonsense, "I told you to put away your hostility for your sake, not for those pretentious reasons."

"For my sake?"

"That's right."

"...?"

'This lord, you must've suffered quite a bit during the exploration of these ruins.'

There were countless scars on Grenhal's body under the name of 'medals.' He wasn't as good as before. Grenhal had fought for the emperor and the people for 60 years, and his mind and body had become tired a long time ago. The Ruins of the War God would be a continuous suffering for him. It was hard for Diworth to guess what would be the most difficult part of exploring this place for more than a month

without troops. It seemed Grenhal had gone crazy at the end of the hardship. Diworth clicked his tongue.

“Drunk Duke, you would’ve died if you continued using that impure attitude in front of King Grid,” Morse said out of nowhere and pretended to cut his neck.

“What? I will be dead? Am I hearing properly right now?” Diworth scowled.

Morse nodded. “Yes.”

“What?” Diworth’s face was as red as a jujube. He seemed drunk despite burning off all the alcohol. “Duke Morse, you might be a duke, but I can’t let those words go.”

It was Diworth’s pride. He might be weaker than them, but he wasn’t a fool to be laughed at or have his life threatened.

“You would kill me? Why? Are you afraid you won’t meet Piaro if I interfere? So you will kill me? I am a duke of the empire like you! You dare to kill His Majesty the Emperor’s servant?” Diworth was misunderstanding their words.

He accepted that those who would kill him were ‘Grenhal’ and ‘Morse.’ It was naturally a misunderstanding. No matter the situation, a duke wouldn’t harm a duke. They could only stay on the sidelines.

Morse waved his hand. “Are you crazy? Why would we kill a fellow duke?”

“Then by whose hands will I die?!!”

Morse’s words, which weren’t a clarification, only further fueled Diworth’s anger. Without knowing the seriousness of the situation, Diworth thought that Morse was a madman. He would surely tell His Majesty the Emperor the things that happened today. Then he would make them take responsibility.

A jade-like voice entered Diworth’s ears as he was making this pledge. It was the voice of Basara, who had remained silent the whole time. “You would die by the hands of the Overgeared King.”

“...?” Diworth felt that he had been struck by lightning.

He would die because of Grid...?

...To that small fellow? Was this a new type of nagging?

“...Duke Basara, I’m disappointed.”

The circumstances right now weren’t very important to Diworth. He realized that he was being ridiculed. Diworth realized how much the dukes usually ignored him and was filled with a shame that would traumatize him for life. He was gritting his teeth when Grenhal asked him, “Why does the name Piaro keep coming out?”

Piaro was dead. Grenhal had long accepted it and buried Piaro in his heart. Yet Diworth kept mentioning Piaro. Additionally, he kept tying Piaro to Grid. There must be something more to it. An unexpected feeling of anticipation started to wriggle from deep inside Grenhal’s heart.

However, it wasn't Diworth who responded to his expectations.

"The former captain of the Red Knights, Piaro. He is currently my knight." It was Grid who spoke.

"W-What?" The startled Basara and Morse opened their eyes wide.

Grenhal's face stiffened, and he demanded confirmation again, "Your Majesty, are your words true?"

His eyes sent the message that he wouldn't tolerate anyone fooling around with Piaro's name. Was Piaro a special person to Grenhal? Grid perceived this and paid attention to Grenhal. "Yes. It was a very long time ago. I met him when I was an ordinary person, not a king."

It was a strange fate. Piaro was a fearsome madman, and Grid had almost died to him. Yet this strange fate led to a precious relationship.

"Piaro has been with me since the moment I became a noble."

"W-What..."

Piaro was alive? He was even serving a foreign king...?

Grenhal had a madness that descended from generation to generation in his family. The only person who smiled warmly when everyone was afraid and shunned Grenhal for the madness imprinted in his genes had been Piaro. He had told Grenhal:

"Don't be ashamed or afraid to reveal your madness.

"You are revealing your madness for your homeland and for the people. Thus, don't be afraid or scared when other people point at you."

It was a time when they were called the Nine Dukes, not Seven Dukes. Piaro was the former pillar of the Nine Dukes.

"Ah... Ahh..."

"Duke Grenhal!"

Morse helped support Grenhal, who reeled from the shock. Grenhal's eyes were red. He was happy. It felt like he washed away some of the sadness that had been stuck in his heart like indelible burn marks. He thanked the goddess of light and was relieved that Piaro had survived safely and was serving someone worthy. Simultaneously, an enormous feeling of guilt swept over him. It was the sin of him failing to protect Piaro's family. All types of complicated emotions swept over Grenhal and made him cry.

"..."

Piaro was a greater person than Grid had thought. When Grid saw Grenhal's response, he thought of the time when he first heard Piaro's story. It was a story that began with 'Born in the best family in the empire...'

'Maybe Piaro was also a duke.'

He would've lost everything overnight. How much loss and pain had he felt? Thinking about Piaro's past, Grid felt it was such a pity. Piaro had forgiven Asmophel and was smiling every day, but he still couldn't surrender the heart that was dreaming of revenge against the empire.

In this turbulent atmosphere, the smell of alcohol appeared. Grid shifted his gaze and saw Drunk Duke Diworth drinking from a bottle of alcohol. The liquid flowed down the clear neck of the bottle and into Diworth's mouth.

"I have devoted my whole life to the empire and fulfilled my duties as a noble."

Diworth emptied the bottle instantly and started to speak.

"Yet you are treating me like this for a traitor who has already left a long time ago."

Diworth glared at Grenhal with red, bloodshot eyes. The pressure he gave off was fierce.

"A small kingdom... Treating me less than the king of an enemy kingdom? I would be killed by the Overgeared King? Kuk! Kukuk! Duke Grenhal! Now I know how funny you have found me!"

Diworth had spoken frankly when he reunited with Piaro, "I am jealous of you and envy you."

He had a constitution that could only exercise strength when he relied on alcohol. Although he didn't usually express it, Diworth was a person with low self-esteem. He was ashamed of himself for being unable to give up alcohol. It was no wonder why he exploded when he was treated as weaker than Grid.

"I will prove it! I'm not as ridiculous as you think!" Diworth roared and rushed toward Grid.

Now it had nothing to do with Piaro. He had to kill Grid to prove himself. The mana that contained alcohol dramatically improved Diworth's physical abilities. Diworth was so fast that Grid couldn't properly capture the movement, even when he reflexively wore the Slaughterer's Eye Patch.

"I won't allow your comfort." Grid opened his closed eye that was under the eyepatch.

[The Castration Eye has been activated.]

[Blocking all beneficial effects of the target!]

[This effect is retained while watching the target.]

The power of the Castration Eye not only blocked the 'possibility' of receiving buffs but also denied the buffs already applied. It was the ultimate debuff skill that had been proven against Damian.

"...!?" Diworth's drunk mind cooled down.

His speed, which had made him like a bullet flying at Grid, fell to the speed of an arrow. The aroma of wine disappeared.

"Linked Kill Flower Pinnacle."

[The effect of Braham's Enchant Weapon has been triggered.]

[Your weapon's damage is increased by 50% while the sword dance is in progress.]

The Sword Aiming at the Gods resonated with the magic of a legend.

[The effect of Braham's Detect Force has been triggered.]

[The target is being tracked, and the hit rate of the sword dance increased.]

The end of Grid's sword aimed precisely at Diworth.

[The effect of Braham's Wind Cutter has been triggered.]

The sword dance of Link was accompanied by a sharp wind.

[The effect of Braham's Lightning has been triggered.]

The rampant blue petals emitted lightning. Was there such a splendid and beautiful skill in the world? Diworth was fascinated by Grid's sword dance and was eventually stabbed in the chest. "Cough!"

The situation seemed like a lie. To think that a king of a small nation forcibly removed Diworth's alcohol, exposed his weakness, and then dealt a critical blow? The seriously wounded Diworth pulled out a new bottle with shaking hands. There were still three bottles hanging from his waist.

Gulp. He brought a new bottle to his mouth.

"Summon Knight." Grid quickly made a decision.

The effect of the Castration Eye was to randomly strip the buffs of the target, not to strip all of them. It might be all of them, but that might not be the case. Additionally, Diworth still had two-thirds of his health left despite being hit by Linked Kill Flower Pinnacle. There was the possibility of raiding Diworth if Grid cooperated with his colleagues, but it would be a messy fight. The longer the fight, the more room there was for the other dukes to intervene. He had to act quickly. Additionally, it was worth trying to maximize his affinity with Grenhal, who had a relationship with Piaro.

Grid calculated all of this... and pulled out his strongest hand.

"Piaro."

Maybe this was Grid's real ultimate technique. By the way, this was the middle of the Red Sea. All communication methods and teleport magic were blocked here. Would Summon Knight work?

Grid was worried but still attempted it. The reason that communication with the outside was blocked at the Ruins of the War God was to prevent the 'weak' from entering. On the other hand, the war god welcomed the strong. He welcomed the strong and didn't interfere with the summoning of the strong.

[War God Zeratul will temporarily allow the application of teleportation magic.]

[Your knight 'Piaro' has arrived by your side.]

"I've been waiting, Your Majesty."

It looked great. Piaro, who wore the armor of a knight and not dirty clothes, caught everyone's attention. The knight's armor was an outfit that showed the mind of Piaro, who had been waiting patiently since Grid left for the Ruins of the War God.

"S-Sir Piaro..."

It was true. Their old hero was still alive. Grenhal and Morse trembled with excitement.

### [Chapter 1039](#)

After Grid's party left for the Ruins of the War God, Piaro never slept comfortably. Being a farmer and warrior, he knew too many of the stories about the War God and his followers. Piaro estimated that the Ruins of the War God was a very dangerous place and was worried about Grid.

He didn't dare blame Grid for not bringing him as he took off his clothes and put on his armor. That way, he could run at any time when Grid needed him. Yet he hoped that Grid wouldn't need to call him. During the last month, Piaro wasn't a farmer or a legend. He was just an ordinary knight waiting for news of his master. Finally, he was called by his master and arrived at the historical site.

"...You." Piaro gazed at Drunk Duke Diworth who was confronting Grid. He immediately noticed that Diworth had chased Grid from Reidan to this location, placing Grid in danger.

"A person who dares to go against my king doesn't deserve to even be used as manure."

When Piaro became a legendary farmer, he was liberated from his obsession with becoming a Sword Saint. The misunderstanding with Asmophel was lifted, and the pains of the past were relieved. Since then, Piaro had a relaxed mind. He delayed his anger, and his peace of mind was slowly recovered.

However, at this moment, he was a vicious demon. He wondered if he would look like this when he met Empress Marie. The anger he had been suppressing caused him to have a terrifying expression that was completely unbearable. No, it channeled his anger.

Dozens of sparks flew up into the sky that was red from the setting sun. The nature in the atmosphere was reacting to Piaro's life and anger. It was the manifestation of Natural State.

"I never dreamed about reliving the old days."

Air currents swept over Piaro, causing the hand plow, sickle, and hoe hanging from his waist to rub against his armor. The weight of the weapons (?) was so light that a loud and clear sound echoed like notes played by a musical instrument. Piaro swung his hand once, throwing out something as small as a seed and hard to identify with the naked eye. Dozens or hundreds of the small seed-sized things were scattered across the empty space.

The flustered Diworth moved back. He used his eyes and senses that transcended the human reality and immediately grasped the identity of the small things pouring toward him. They were fragments of a strong energy. It was in the form of fine particles, but the destructive power contained in each one was enough to stir up the heavens and the earth.

No, was it really that? Something felt different. Strong energy... This power was often known as the upper echelons of sword energy and was thrilling to face, but Piaro's strong energy was very gentle. No destructive power was felt. It was as expected. The strong energy fragments, that failed to hit Diworth and fell to the ground, didn't exert any power. They melted like snow and were absorbed into the ground.

'A trick?'

It forced Diworth to evade. Would he encounter some type of storm after this? Diworth was prepared for the shock. Unable to easily guess how Piaro would link an attack, Diworth retreated. He wasn't confident about beating Piaro in a fight. Still, he wanted to believe in his wits. He would boost his alcohol intake and respond in real time to what was happening. Unfortunately, his determination was useless.

"...?"

Piario was still standing in place. Unlike Diworth's expectations, Piario didn't link to the next attack. Diworth was engulfed in doubts.

"Free Farming 2nd Style," Piario then recited quietly while pulling out his hand plow, "Super Growth."

"...?!" Diworth's eyes widened.

Immense chaos surged like a wave, making him dizzy. They were in a desolate canyon. Somehow, all types of grains and trees started to grow from this impoverished land that was only sand and dust. It didn't take long for the barren land to turn into an abundant field. In fact, it happened in the blink of an eye.

Diworth felt like he was dreaming.

'Illusion magic?'

No, it wasn't. The sight of the fields and the sweet scent coming from the hanging grapes could never be a fantasy. In the first place, an illusion master wouldn't allow him to distinguish between fantasy and illusion.

"You've learned a weird thing!"

The fragments of energy that Piario sowed contained life, and Piario created the environment using techniques that promoted life. When Diworth quickly grasped this fact, he took a sip of alcohol and spat it out. The stream of alcohol emitted from his mouth contained powerful magic power. The lush plants and trees were unable to cope with the terrible alcohol and withered. At the end of the stream of magic power was Piario.

Diworth ran across the withered fields and reached out a hand. Piario's hand plow and Diworth's attack collided, causing an explosion. Since the opponent was strong, Diworth didn't intend to contend with unnecessary skills. He took out the hidden weapon in his other hand and shot it. It was covered with an extremely poisonous substance made by an aging white bamboo spider. The needle, which was filled with a terrible poison that boasted no color or odor, flew silently and struck Piario's thigh.

'He wasn't alert!' A smile spread across Diworth's face.

The Tiphon dukedom was famous for poison. Even those who had reached the top would become vulnerable in front of Duke Diworth's poison. At this moment, Diworth was convinced of his triumph. He was proud that Piario, a former pillar of the empire, failed to respond to his hidden weapon.

However, Piario was fine. "It is insignificant."

"...!?"



Piaro didn't respond to Diworth's poison. Natural State combined with the body of a legend made him unaffected by the poison needle. Piaro knew it as well. He let himself be hit to thoroughly shatter Diworth's self-esteem. It was to sentence him to the worst death.

Piaro's hand plow flew toward Diworth's heart. However, Drunk Duke Diworth wasn't easily hit because he boasted unpredictable movement paths. Diworth's clothes were loosened as he used gentle movements to avoid the hand plow.

"What?"

Piaro was fine after being poisoned with the hidden weapon...? Diworth was baffled by the appearance of Piaro, who didn't seem poisoned. He suffered greater confusion and shock from this than when he saw the fields. Even so, he didn't lose his concentration. He drank more alcohol and drove out the confusion and fear.

"You built up a bigger status..." Watching the confrontation, Duke Grenhal was thrilled. Piaro had lost everything apart from his life and lived as a hermit. Did he live in pain and anxiety every day? Honestly, Grenhal had been dubious about that. He had expected Piaro to be weaker, even if he was alive.

Yet what was this? Piaro boasted an excellent shape after being called by Grid. It was a bit ambiguous to say he was stronger, but based on his resistance to poison, he had definitely built up a stronger status.

'Why is he sealing the sword?'

Grenhal and Morse became more doubtful. The Piaro they knew was a great swordsman aiming to be a Sword Saint. Yet the current Piaro didn't use a sword at all and was holding farming equipment. He had a knight's spirit and armor, but the things he showed throughout the battle were no different from those of a farmer. Why was he putting constraints on himself? At this rate, he might not be able to win against Diworth.

Then it happened when Grenhal's and Morse's suspicions became stronger.

"Free Farming 4th Style."

The hand plow missed Diworth who dodged like a fish, then Piaro pulled out a trident attached to his back. No, he pulled out a rake.

"Plow the Field!"

The soil in the field was turned over.

"...?"

The ground suddenly turned upside down, and soil rose, causing Diworth's stance to collapse. Somehow, seeds flew in his vision as he tried to keep his body upright. It was the effect of Free Farming 5th style, Harvest. Hundreds of thousands of seeds flooded toward Diworth.

"Kuek...!"

The retreat was blocked. Diworth became extremely tense as he was surrounded by seeds.

'They are just seeds,' he calmed his mind.

Yes, he was only surrounded by seeds. There was no problem. A person couldn't die because of seeds. Diworth judged and bent his waist. He planned to fight back and deal a blow while Piaro was harvesting, but that was a huge mistake.

"Free Farming 8th Style, Polishing Rice."

"...!?"

There was a huge explosion that shook the entire canyon. The thousands of seeds harvested by Piaro exploded at once, swallowing up Diworth.

"Kuaaaack!" Diworth's scream echoed.

He failed to respond to the unexpected attack and was seriously wounded. His body became dull as the alcohol flew away. Piaro took action without hesitation. He took out his sickle without delay and aimed at Diworth's heart. There was no time to avoid it.

[The Saharan Empire's duke 'Drunk Duke Diworth' has been defeated.]

[It is a great accomplishment that no one has achieved.]

[Your reputation throughout the continent has increased. You have acquired 2,000 reputation points.]

[Your level has risen.]

[The Duke Tiphon Family's Magic Gourd has been acquired.]

[The Duke Tiphon Family's White Dragon Wine has been acquired.]

[Your knight 'Piaro' has accomplished the achievement of 'Overwhelming the Seven Dukes'.]

[Your article, 'Piaro', is progressing!]

It was an unprecedented and vain end for a duke of the empire. There were complicated emotions in Grenhal, Morse, and Basara's eyes as they watched Diworth turn to ash.

"No one helped," Piaro then blamed them, "You haven't changed at all."

That's right. Piaro had been aware of the three people's existence from the very beginning. However, only Diworth was threatening Grid at that moment, so Piaro had to kill Diworth first. He calculated that the dukes wouldn't help Diworth. The dukes had already turned away from Piaro and his family in the past.

Piaro gritted his teeth. They were people who he had believed to be his friends. He couldn't blame Basara because he had not had many moments of contact with her, but Grenhal and Morse were different. During his time as chief of the Red Knights, Piaro had a profound connection with the warriors, Grenhal and Morse. He had respected and trusted the people who served the same imperial family and fought for the same people.

However, it had been a one-sided trust. They had turned away from him easily.

"Sir Piaro..." Grenhal and Morse felt Piaro's anger and sadness toward them and lowered their heads. They didn't have the courage to face him. This was despite them having fought for Piaro's family and

prayed for Piaro's peace of mind. They had failed help Piaro's family in the end and hadn't expected to have a reunion with Piaro.

Yet this situation was now suddenly occurring before them. They understood Piaro's pain and sorrow, so they couldn't say anything. Grenhal and Morse could only let out a sinner's sigh.

Piario tried to control his resentment. "...Now, I won't blame you anymore."

He turned away from Grenhal's broad shoulders that didn't save his younger brother. "The destruction of me and my family was the result of my carelessness. I don't deserve to blame you."

He also turned away from Morse, who usually wasn't as proud in front of his parents. "Now I am fighting to protect my king."

Piario wiped his eyes and grabbed his farming equipment. Thinking that Grenhal, Morse, and Basara were naturally with Diworth, Piario interpreted them as a threat to Grid. It was natural. The Saharan Empire was the enemy of the Overgeared Kingdom.

'I can't drag out the fight for too long.'

Piario's Natural State was incomplete. It couldn't exert infinite power. Piario couldn't afford a long fight as he had gone all out in his battle with Diworth. Coldly analyzing the situation, he judged that he had to aim for a swift attack in order to protect Grid from them. He would use all his secret techniques from the beginning, including Origin True Energy.

'I must protect him.'

Piario's life wasn't important. The life saved by Grid would be used for Grid. Piario had just vowed this when a reversal occurred. Grid suddenly made an absurd proclamation, "Piario, put away your hand plow."

"...?"

"They are my friends."

"...Your Majesty?" Piario doubted his ears.

"Additionally, these two people struggled to protect your family, although they didn't succeed in protecting anyone. They have been in pain for almost 20 years," Basara, who was famous for being wise and impartial, spoke up.

"I'm ashamed..."

"Shit, I'm sorry. Really... I'm really sorry."

Grenhal and Morse apologized to Piario who was standing like a stone statue. Piario flopped to the ground and felt something slip out of his body. He was dizzy and seemed to hear the humming of bees in his ears.

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“We analyzed the situation at the time and was convinced that Sir Piaro didn’t betray us. It was just that evidence of treason was found, and we couldn’t prove that you didn’t want to betray the empire...”

Piaro had received the charge of treason. It had been impossible for the dukes to defend him without any evidence.

“In the end, we filed an appeal to take care of Sir Piaro’s family. You know the result of that...”

It was a long distant past, but from the standpoint of the parties involved, it was the pain of yesterday that they wanted to undo. Duke Grenhal knew Piaro’s heart and felt pained and heavy. He couldn’t raise his head, and his vision was spinning as he barely controlled his burning emotions.

“...” Piaro was silent.

They didn’t turn away from his pain, but he blamed them. These two facts buzzed in Piaro’s head and tormented him. Piaro looked up at the sky with a somber expression and suddenly asked, “Who do you mean by we?”

“Me, Duke Morse, Duke Rachel, and Duke Rigal.”

“...Rigal?”

Grid stood to the side and bit his lips. Sky King Rigal... It was now clear why Rigal had been agitated when he discovered Piaro at the last minute. Grid reproached himself for having ordered Piaro to kill Rigal. Piaro grabbed Grid’s trembling hand. “Your Majesty, Rigal was an unforgivable enemy for our Overgeared Kingdom. The guilt is what I have to bear.”

‘That is the problem, you madman.’

There was a new weight on Piaro’s rotting heart. Grid was sorry for that. His colleagues looked sadly at the grumbling Grid and sent him whispers:

-Grid, you didn’t know the past. It isn’t something you should feel uncomfortable about.

-In the first place, Rigal broke the statue of Khan and hit the people. How can you care about the old days when fighting the enemy?

-It happened in a war.

“...”

Their words were true. Rigal had invaded Bairan and killed many people. He had destroyed Khan’s statue. Finally, he had aimed a weapon at Grid. Punishing Rigal had been a natural thing to do. The problem was that Grid had borrowed Piaro’s power to do it. Grid resented his own helplessness.

‘If I was stronger... If I was strong enough, I would’ve dealt with Rigal on my own without needing to call Piaro.’

Then Piaro wouldn’t have to shoulder a new guilt. Grid grumbled and checked the logs.

[Your level has risen.]

[You have reached level 399 and acquired the 200,000 Army Swordsmanship.]

[Swordsmanship Textbook: 200,000 Army Swordsmanship]

[Rating: Legendary]

A textbook recording the basics of Madra's swordsmanship. However, it records the swordsmanship used after Madra became a death knight, so the contents are weak compared to the original.

Only one swordsmanship technique, 200,000 Army Crushing Sword (Degraded) is recorded.

Learning Conditions: Those who have been recognized by Madra. Level 399 or more.]

“...”

Prior to summoning Piaro, Grid was able to gain a lot of experience and achieved level 399 because he had inflicted a serious injury on Diworth. Grid could become stronger. The confident Grid made a new commitment, 'I will bear all the pain in the future.'

Piario, Asmophel, Braham, and Mercedes—most of Grid's friends had big wounds in their hearts. Even the wise sage Sticks was cursed by the gourmet dragon and had nightmares every night. It seemed impossible for his first knight Jude to get married, and Minerals Detector Minor studied while taking care of his ailing mother. They were all difficult and sad people. Grid wanted to be a strength for them. He wanted to be someone who could be relied upon and have them say 'I was happy' by serving him.

'Let's try it.'

Grid wasn't a great person. He didn't have the talent to awaken such heated feelings. To be honest, he didn't know how to do it. Still, he believed that if he kept trying, he would become stronger. Grid was firming up his heart while the conversation between the dukes and Piario continued.

“The biggest reason I couldn't protect your family was Marie. She didn't act directly, but her family and the nobles who served her insisted that the traitors should be punished.”

“It is obvious that fucking woman played tricks from behind the scenes.”

It was ridiculous for a noble of the empire to talk badly about the empress. This was an act of insulting the imperial family and was no different from rebellion. Yet Grenhal referred to Marie as 'her', and Morse took it further by cursing. It was a scene that showed they didn't acknowledge Marie as empress.

Piario searched Basara's expression. Basara was a descendant of the third emperor and a close relative of the current emperor. She had the blood of the imperial family, and her order in the line of succession was very high at 5th place. Grenhal and Morse insulting the imperial family in front of her was the same as insulting her.

However, Basara didn't show any agitation. The way she shook her head and looked away showed that she was also suspicious of the empress. Putting aside the fact that she didn't have much contact with Piario, the reason she didn't step forward for Piario in the past was the restriction on the imperial bloodline.

“...I'm also sorry to say this,” Grenhal opened his mouth with much difficulty, “There is evidence that Earl Asmophel was involved with Marie.”

Piario and Asmophel—there was no one in the empire who didn't know that the two men were close friends since childhood. Thus, Grenhal felt uncomfortable saying this. He was worried that it would give Piario too much shock and anger. On the other hand, Morse spoke without a hitch, "It wasn't just allying with her. He completely followed that woman and stabbed in the knife. He was the one who was most active in chasing down the Red Knights."

"..."

"Sir Piario, it might be unbelievable, but Asmophel was the one who made the biggest contribution to you being called a traitor."

"...I know."

"..."

Piario answered that he knew. Then Grenhal and Morse shut their mouths at Piario's bitter words. They didn't dare to imagine the betrayal and resentment that Piario was feeling. Basara interjected, "A number of years ago, there was an incident where Earl Asmophel disappeared overnight. He is officially missing, but I'm certain he was assassinated by someone."

"..."

"Sir Piario, did you punish him?"

Asmophel had been staying in his mansion. It was a mansion in the middle of the empire's capital, Titan. The intruder had to find Asmophel and hurt him without leaving a trace. There were few people in the world who could do so. Moreover, the one who had most cause to kill Asmophel was Piario.

Basara's reasoning was worthy of being right. Grenhal and Morse nodded in agreement. Yet Piario's answer was unexpected, "The person who visited Asmophel at that time was King Grid, not me."

"...!?" Grenhal and Morse's eyes widened. Overgeared King Grid was strong enough to overwhelm the follower who had mastered 10 secret techniques and had already been operating through the empire's surveillance without any constraints for years...?

'At the time, Asmophel was a waste compared to his old self and the Overgeared King could easily handle him...'

The dukes were easily convinced of it. The past Piario and Asmophel were more influential than the dukes, but they were vulnerable to Grid. In fact, the strong Piario was serving Grid.

'I'm certain. The Overgeared King is a master on the same level as the grandmaster.'

The existence that connected Pagma's skills with the lineage of the Hero King... These two achievements were already more than a common legend. By the way, Grid could also use magic like a great magician.

'To build up such skills at this young age...'

'A genius beyond this world.'

It happened when the dukes were gazing at Grid with admiration in their eyes.

“Additionally, Asmophel said this. Simultaneously, the empress joined hands with the Yatan Church and destroyed the Red Knights in order to increase her authority. In the process, Asmophel fell into the empress’ trap and took the Yatan Essence. He lost his sense of reason and betrayed me and my colleagues,” Piaro said shocking words. “...I’ve forgiven Asmophel. He is currently serving King Grid with me.”

“...?!” The dukes’ mouths dropped open.

The dukes were so amazed that even Basara, who always had her eyes closed, opened them.

‘Pretty.’ The Overgeared members marveled at Basara’s beauty once she opened her eyes. She looked to be in her late 20s, but Basara’s actual age was estimated to be in the 40s. Basara was a beauty who gave off an extraordinary feeling. It was a dignified elegance that couldn’t be measured. There was such nobility that even her husband didn’t dare freely hold her hand.

“Forgiveness... Was it because of the Overgeared King’s persuasion?”

Asmophel had fallen into a trap and taken the Yatan Essence. That was all an excuse. No matter what, Asmophel was still the demon who had betrayed his friends and colleagues while killing their family. He was an unforgivable person, even for the dukes who prioritized political issues before humanity.

Basara didn’t think Piaro forgave Asmophel because he wanted to. She cleverly speculated that Grid forced Piaro to make concessions in order to increase the strength of the Overgeared Kingdom. Still, she had no intention of criticizing him. She purely marveled at the talent of a king who was sometimes ruthless.

Piaro shook his head at Basara’s question. “No, it was my judgment. The object of my grudge isn’t Asmophel but Empress Marie who used him. Additionally, Asmophel is obliged to clean up after his sins.”

“Then that means the former pillars of the empire are in the Overgeared Kingdom...”

The views that the dukes held toward Grid and the Overgeared members changed. Those who already acknowledged Grid now admired the power of the Overgeared Kingdom itself. The Overgeared Kingdom was different from ordinary kingdoms. It could even threaten the empire. Indeed, it was a great fortune that the discovery of the Ruins of the War God brought a lull to the war between the empire and the Overgeared Kingdom. To the dukes who were misunderstanding...

“Do you know that Mercedes has become a legendary knight?”

“Of course. However, she left the empire as soon as she became a legendary knight.”

“She is also serving King Grid.”

“...!?”

“Have you heard of Sage Sticks?”

“...?”

“He is also serving King Grid.”

“...”

“A direct descendant vampire and the best demonic beast of hell also follow Grid faithfully.”

Piario started to boast. The dukes of the great empire saw Piario’s admiration for his master.

“You have been living well and eating well,”Morse grumbled about Piario’s constant chatter.

“Hahaha...” Grenhal burst out laughing. The pain and sorrow that had been with him for many years were being healed little by little. The thing he needed to do in the future was correct the wrongs of the past by telling the emperor the truth and holding Empress Marie responsible. He needed to restore the fallen honor of the old Red Knights and ask forgiveness from their family members who were buried in the ground.

‘In the end, we must have a friendly relationship with the Overgeared Kingdom,’Grenhal and Morse made this judgment. It wasn’t good to be hostile to the Overgeared Kingdom. Then they got headaches as they wondered about how to convince the emperor.

Would the emperor believe in their words?

It was true that Piario had been framed, and the one behind it was Empress Marie who conspired with the Yatan Church. Would the emperor fully accept the truth? He had lost the empress and gotten betrayed by a friend. The emperor had suffered a great wound in his heart and relied on Marie for many years. The emperor’s confidence in her might be far deeper than they thought.

‘No matter how much we shout the truth, His Majesty the Emperor might not forgive Piario. If he knows that Asmophel and Mercedes left the empire to serve the Overgeared Kingdom, he might feel a bigger betrayal and won’t tolerate the Overgeared Kingdom.’

What should they do? Basara whispered to the frowning Grenhal and Morse, “His Majesty the Emperor will be glad.”

“What do you mean?”

“Huhu, you’ll find out sooner or later.”

Did the emperor truly not know that Mercedes was serving the Overgeared Kingdom? Why did His Majesty the Emperor banish the legendary knight? Basara was convinced that the party who sent Mercedes to the Overgeared Kingdom was likely to be the emperor.