

Overgeared

c 1783-1790

Overgeared

Chapter 1783

Idan—he was originally from the East Continent and he was the most famous chef in the entire world. It was because he had the tremendous history of serving as the chef of the Overgeared Palace and the Overgeared Knights. There were even rumors that he was in charge of the lunch boxes of the Overgeared members, including Grid.

He was a one of a kind and unprecedented chef. It was strange that he had the alias of 'Poison Master,' but most of the world's chefs respected him and aimed to be like him.

[I am becoming interested.]

Raiders said after listening to Grid's explanation. He had a completely different attitude from the other old dragons. Seeing the way he could listen to others, he had at least a bit of common sense.

The golden scales reflecting the light came closer again.

[If it is the best chef of this time by your side, I can look forward to it. He must be a talented person who can ring an alarm bell in humanity's food culture, which hasn't changed much even after going through several apocalypses and rebirths.]

"An alarm bell... it is similar."

"Okay."

Not long ago, this place was affected by the sea levels that had risen due to the release of Trauka's power. The huge uninhabited ground, where a few castles could be built, couldn't handle the weight of an old dragon and gradually sank. Raiders reduced his body weight with magic and nodded after using Polymorph to become a long-haired, handsome man.

"Bring him. There is no need to hurry. Waiting is also a delight of eating, so my patience has been tempered."

"No. You should hurry and finish your business and go back to the lair to rest. I will hurry."

It was an existence that was stuffy and uncomfortable just breathing in the same space as it. Dragons were like that to Grid. He wanted to finish this deal and send the dragon back to his lair. In the first place, he had to hurry. The Great Robber of the Red Night said that the time when Rebecca was in the cycle was the perfect opportunity to infiltrate Asgard.

'I don't know how he knows that Rebecca is in the cycle.'

Grid didn't doubt the massive intelligence network power of the Great Robber. It was because he had already seen Hwang Gildong, who had insight into most of the work related to the East Continent. It would be arrogance if Grid recklessly judged or doubted the capabilities of those who were struggling in their respective positions.

"Are you going to mess things up while rushing?"

Raiders' cold, golden eyes became even colder. It was the aftermath of recalling the common mistakes made by chefs who had lost their cool.

"Cooks are people who are timid and easily lose their cool. They are often startled just by looking at the lid of the pot and easily make minor mistakes, but how will you take responsibility if he leaves cooking utensils or seasonings behind because you are in a rush? Keep in mind that my anger might be directed at you."

'...He has a strange bias.'

They were scared because they were cooks... couldn't Raiders understand the feelings of the chefs who cooked him food? He wasn't able to understand other people's positions. It was the typical characteristic of lunatics. Raiders might seem relatively decent, but a dragon was still a dragon.

"I understand. I'll slowly come back when everything is fully prepared," Grid spoke politely, contrary to his intentions.

Who was the strongest dragon? At least at this point, it was likely to be Raiders.

Trauka was critically wounded by Ifrit, who had aimed for mutual destruction. Nevartan suffered from madness after falling for Baal's scheme, and Bunhelier was cursed.

Unlike the other weakened old dragons, Raiders was fine. He hadn't suffered any incidents and completely preserved his power.

'There is no historical data to measure Raiders' power.'

Most of the things about dragons recorded in literature was about Nevartan. He acted without hesitation due to his madness. Even the more aggressive Fire Dragon Trauka had fewer records of sightings compared to Nevartan. Most of it was related to Talima. Raiders' record of going on a gourmet tour was bound to be much less.

Grid only knew the characteristics of a Gold Dragon thanks to Nefelina's information, but he had no idea about Raiders' individual strength.

'In any case, it is an old dragon.'

He would definitely be stronger than Bunhelier right now. He wasn't an opponent to become angry at.

"Then... I will be back. I won't be too late, so please wait here."

He hoped that the Great Robber of the Red Night, who was hiding his presence somewhere on the island, would remain safe while he was away.

Grid returned to Reinhardt.

"I don't want to! Are you intending to kill me? Ack! No! I don't want tooooooo!"

A while later, a terrible scream echoed from a middle-aged man in the basement of the Overgeared Palace. He was completely terrified after learning about the situation from Grid.

The presence of a dragon—even a man who was usually so bold turned into a coward when it came to dealing with dragons. Even Dragon Slayer Hayate was afraid of dragons. Grid thought that Jude was probably the only human being in the world who could maintain calmness against the dragons, especially an old dragon.

"Why is Sir Idan acting like that?"

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"I heard that on His Majesty's recommendation, he is going to cook food in front of the Gourmet Dragon..."

"Hah. Is that true?"

The faces of the whispering knights gradually brightened. All the members of the Overgeared Knights had eaten Idan's food for at least a year. Thanks to this, they were strongly resistant to poison, but at the same time, they had a heart that resented Idan. It felt like they had been tortured for a long time.

Of course, it was a feeling that they weren't aware of themselves. How could they laugh at a time when a person was going to be dragged to a slaughterhouse?

The faces of the knights darkened as they felt disappointed in themselves. Then Idan's screams finally stopped.

"I understand. If I can't avoid it, then I will accept it. I will faithfully obey Your Majesty's will, as I have always done."

He was filled with desperation. There was no light in his black eyes that were common in natives of the East Continent. It was a look like he was giving up his life.

Grid tried to clear up the misunderstanding. "There is no way you will be harmed. I will stop it."

"You will stop it... then there is a chance that the dragon might try to kill me."

There was a reason why Idan had no energy. Coincidentally, he now knew that his dishes were tasteless. He couldn't help noticing after years of staying in the palace and cooking for hundreds and thousands of people.

He had heard it many times. The knights whispered that Idan's cooking was the worst. It was eating food, but it felt like eating poison. This sort of thing... making a dish for a dragon called the 'Gourmet Dragon? This was more like deliberate murder.

'If he tells me to die, then I will die...'

The amount of books Idan had read was surprisingly considerable. He used to run a restaurant without customers, so he read books because he had nothing to do. Thanks to this, he knew the history of many kingdoms. The first thing that

supreme rulers did when they became kings or emperors and wielded uncontrolled power—it was to behead the generals who worked hard during the founding years in order to monopolize power.

'Use it when you need it and throw it away without mercy when you don't need it.'

Idan didn't know the reason, but it was clear His Majesty held him in high regard and was afraid of him. Only then could he understand why His Majesty was pushing him to death...

'I should've left when Yan Fei left... I was stupid.'

Yan Fei, who came with Idan from the East Continent—she left the palace last year.

The young woman had entered the workforce before she was old enough in order to take care of her brothers. She managed to climb to the position of maid of honor in the Overgeared palace, but she had a desire to live a normal life before her youth ended.

She left this wonderful and splendid palace to live a life of hardship as a commoner again... Idan couldn't understand it from his point of view.

However, now he knew. She probably realized that she would have to live a life on pine needles.

'It is my sin for not understanding the subject. His Majesty has shown my great kindness, so let's not complain and accept it.'

Yes, the grace he had received so far was very great. He wanted to return the favor and leave. This way, he could curse at death.

'The last dish I am going to cook... it will go down in history.'

Idan's prayer changed. He felt like a completely different person. It was a dying flash.

'I will put away my stubbornness and make a dish that suits the public's taste.'

Idan was obsessed with the 'natural taste of ingredients.' It contained the meaning of admiring the human taste that could revere the ingredients created by nature and savor them. It was the spirit of craftsmanship. For him, spices were filth that spoiled the taste of the ingredient, and flavoring with salt was an act of deceiving the tongue.

However, nobody understood even at the last moment. People's ridiculing laughter rang out like an auditory hallucination. Therefore, he wanted to show it only at the last moment—the reason his cooking wasn't to their taste wasn't because he couldn't cook...

'I will show you a dish that will become legendary to your taste buds.'

'What is he thinking?'

First, Idan shed tears while holding his breath. Then he became determined before laughing in a crazy manner. Grid felt uncomfortable at the sight and urged him, "Let's go. The place is an uninhabited island in the Red Sea. There is a lot of clean sand, so you don't need cooking utensils, right?"

Idan didn't use heat cooking very well when cooking. Even if it was used occasionally, he used sand heated by the sun. He would hold a fan in his hand when things weren't going well or when inspiration came to them, but that was really rare.

"No. I have many things to prepare."

Idan shook his head and entered the kitchen. He packed all types of cooking utensils that he normally wouldn't bother to look at. Finally, he grabbed salt and pepper.

".....?"

Grid's face hardened when he noticed this.

"It is the first time in my life that I am cooking dragon meat. There is a possibility that conventional cooking methods won't work, so I have to be fully prepared," Idan explained.

It was an explanation that hid his intention to make delicious dishes. He intended to surprise Grid.

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'I want to see it. I want to see you belatedly regret it after eating the food I cook and being surprised by how delicious it was.'

After that—

Contrary to Grid's expectations, it took quite some time for the two of them to arrive at the Ruins of the Martial God. Raiders' eyebrows that protruded from his small face twitched slightly. He was inwardly surprised when he saw that cook that Grid brought. It was a slight loss of composure that was unlike an old dragon.

'There is a very intense look in his eyes.'

It was a look where no fear could be felt. It seemed that he wouldn't waver even if death was just around the corner. It was the first time Raiders had ever seen a chef with such eyes.

'That is how proud he is of his skills.'

Raiders' expectations were amplified. Eventually, he even asked with a faint smile on his face, "Tell me how you plan to cook this precious ingredient?"

Raiders placed Trauka's arm along the coast and took out a knife as he spoke in order to help. After all, it was an ingredient that couldn't be handled by human cooks. Raiders was going to help. He thought the ingredient and the chef who would use it were worthy of it.

"Please turn the scales into a handful of powder. Cut the skin into pieces thin enough to be transparent."

Idan had nothing to fear. He looked closely at the dragon's arm, touched it, and confidently demanded things.

"Cut the lower part of the armpit while preserving the shape. Then cut the flesh just above it into cubes. The thickness is around this much... additionally, I will use the bones and tendons of the wrist. From here to here. The back of the hand should be thinly sliced..."

"Hmm..."

Raiders met all of Idan's demanding requirements while Grid watched leisurely. In any case, he knew that Idan's dishes didn't look good. Furthermore, it was the first time Idan was cooking a dragon's arm, which could be used for many things. It was impossible for him to cook it properly.

'A worse than usual dish will come out.'

In the meantime, what satisfied him the most was that the amount of materials Idan used was based on humans. Raiders had polymorphed into human form, so

Idan seemed to have momentarily forgotten that he was a dragon. Raiders didn't mind. He was a gourmet, not a glutton. He preferred to eat deliciously, even if the amount was less.

After a while—

"I will start."

Idan's cooking began. He used various spices as Raiders heated up the pan with magical flames.

'What?'

It was a very normal recipe, unlike the usual. It even looked fancy and skillful. It looked like a very good chef was cooking.

'Is he going to make it delicious?'

How was that possible? Unlike the semi-doubtful Grid who was gradually becoming nervous, Raiders' expectations were amplified...

"Eat in this order."

A large table was set up. It was a dinner with dishes that maximized the conflicting textures of the thick tendons and scales fried until the point just before it became mushy. An immensely delicious smell spread in all directions.

The Great Robber of the Red Night, hiding in a corner, gulped. Grid was also filled with a huge sense of hunger.

'I want to try it.'

It was a moment when he had an unexpected desire...

Grid sensed that the plan was ruined while Raiders started to slowly savor the food. After a while—

Clink.

Raiders put down the fork and knife and murmured, "...Trauka is a guy with no advantages whatsoever."

Raiders' beautiful face was distorted in a frightening manner as he silently spat out the steak he had chewed a few times and wiped the corners of his mouth.

"It doesn't taste good from start to finish. Every time I chew, my mouth fills with a certain smell. The texture is also terrible and none of the flavors are right."

"....."

"Don't worry, Chef. I watched you do your best. It isn't your fault. It is the ingredient. I won't hurt you," Raiders reassured Idan, who had paled and stiffened, but Idan didn't find any consolation.

"My best... I really tried my best...! Sob...! Sob sob sob!"

People without talent wouldn't be able to do it no matter how hard they tried.

It was a terrible reality.

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Chapter 1784

A new gourmet experience—it was Raiders' only joy and purpose in his life. Some of his own kind laughed at him, but it didn't matter. Wasn't he better than them, who were simply surviving?

This was Raiders' pride. He resembled Braham.

'It worked out rather well.'

Raiders thought as he looked at the remains of the food.

Fire Dragon Trauka—he had been aiming for Raiders since the beginning of chaos. The naturally aggressive bastard spread the misguided physiology of eating their kin among the dragon species.

'If the body part of that loathsome bastard was able to satisfy my tongue... it would've been unpleasant as well.'

Surprisingly, the thing that Raiders hated the most in the world wasn't tasteless food. The thing he hated the most was Trauka, with the second most hated thing being bad chefs, and the third most hated thing being tasteless food.

Idan was incredibly lucky.

What did Trauka's arm taste like...?

Thanks to Raiders' subconscious desire for it to not taste good, Idan was able to avoid becoming an object of hatred. In the first place, Raiders had a rational mindset that was rare among dragons. He knew it wouldn't be possible for a human chef to cook the body of an Old Dragon as he wished. This was why he helped with the preparations itself.

Of course, it didn't pay off. Raiders saw it clearly. It was the sight of the salt and pepper that the chef sprinkled on Trauka's flesh disappearing without properly permeating it. The boiling oil couldn't fry Trauka's scales and only coated the outside.

"That... should I appease your spoiled appetite? Do you want me to guide you to a restaurant I know well?" Grid said cautiously.

It was very fortunate that only a bit of Trauka's arm was lost, but he ended up feeding Raiders a meal that wasn't delicious. He had to be prepared to deal with Raiders' anger.

'He is being surprisingly decent, but I won't be fooled.'

Grid clearly remembered it. It was the image of Raiders struggling because the food he had enjoyed for hundreds of years had become boring. He looked very calm even when he was thinking about destroying a family of chefs who had passed on the taste for a long time just for him.

'There is no need to worry about the deal falling through. If a dragon doesn't keep their promise, then their Dragon Words will weaken.'

This was unless Raiders intended to be like Bunhelier. Grid would just have to endure a brief storm...

Grid was making a good expression as he thought this. Then Raiders retorted, "There is the best chef of the time here. Is there any need to move?"

Raiders failed to properly assess Idan. First of all, a trustworthy figure called Grid introduced him as the best chef of this time. Additionally, there were no flaws in Idan's recipe that he actually saw. The reason why the dishes were tasteless was purely due to the ingredients. For Raiders, it was hard to doubt Idan's skills.

"...I don't think Sir Idan is in a position to cook again."

The startled Grid was relieved when he saw Idan's appearance.

It was a frustrated appearance. The image of him sitting down on the white sand in a dazed state resembled a person who lost his homeland. His empty eyes and the tear tracks represented his shock and sadness.

'It is unfortunate, but it worked out in many ways.'

Idan fully repaid Grid's trust. He preserved Trauka's arm for Grid by making bad dishes, and he showed a distraught appearance after being shocked by Raiders' honest evaluation. He played an active role without leaving any room for regrets.

'Even Raiders wouldn't trust a chef in this state.'

He would take back the attention he placed on Idan. The case would end without Raiders noticing that Idan 'really can't cook.'

'Let's treat Idan better from now on.'

A faint smile spread on Grid's face as he made a promise.

'Is it a side effect of becoming a god?'

The Great Robber of the Red Night murmured to himself. He hid in the shadows and observed the situation. In fact, he had heard all of Grid's plans beforehand. This meant it was possible to infer how much the cook named Idan must've been hurt. Grid smiled even though he knew that and it worried the Great Robber.

'He has always sacrificed himself because he loved and trusted the people.'

Grid always fought for humanity. Such a person was smiling at the pain of others? Of course, the current Grid wasn't smiling at Idan. He was smiling because he was satisfied with the situation. Even taking that into consideration, it was hard to get rid of the impression that he had lost some of his humanity.

'Is he going to become like the other gods after all... no, wait?'

The expression of the deeply worried Great Robber suddenly brightened. It was because he was reminded of Grid's origin. Why did Grid confidently attempt to smelt the freshly removed Old Dragon's arm?

It was because his origin was a blacksmith. He wasn't the ultimate blacksmith. He started as a blacksmith. Thus, he tried to smelt Trauka's arm in the middle of the city like he was the blacksmithing god.

The Great Robber's thoughts reached this point and he could think of a figure.

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'Pagma.'

Yes, Grid was none other than Pagma's Successor. A person who fought for humanity while sacrificing countless lives.

'Pagma might deserve criticism, but he truly loved humans.'

Thus, he made a pact with Baal even though he was fully aware of what he would suffer when he died. He sacrificed a lot of people for the sake of his cause, but there was no malice in it.

'Grid must resemble him.'

He wasn't losing his humanity as a side effect of becoming a god. By nature, it was originally easy for him to sacrifice people... it was quite double-sided and was almost like a scoundrel.

'Usually, disciples resemble their teachers.'

The more he learned about Pagma's life, the more assimilated he became. Then a voice permeated the ears of the Great Robber, who was nodding in conviction, and Grid, who was swearing for some reason.

"He is the best in his field. I'm sure he is shocked by the unbelievable reality that he made a dish that isn't delicious, but... I believe he will recover quickly with his solid mentality."

"F... Huh?"

Was someone cursing him from somewhere? Why did a chill suddenly run down his spine? Grid was about to reflexively spit out a curse, only to become speechless.

Raiders' eyes as he looked at Idan was full of respect and understanding. It wasn't like an Old Dragon at all.

'This can't be happening? Don't tell me?'

Grid looked dumbfounded and dazed. Then his face soon turned white.

'Did he notice my plan?'

In retrospect, it was natural. Raiders was the Gourmet Dragon. He had an eye for cooking itself. In fact, the skill he used to prepare the ingredients a while ago wasn't normal. So there was no way he couldn't know the fact that Idan's cooking skills were actually lousy.

'He must've noticed that I brought in a chef who couldn't cook on purpose.'

It was obvious what would happen next. Raiders would order food from Idan that used 'normal ingredients.' After confirming that even these dishes were terrible and tasteless, he would hold Grid accountable.

'It is ruined.'

Somehow, he thought that things had worked out too easily.

'Should I break his wrist? Sehee can treat him later anyway. But I must have a justification to convince Raiders afterward...'

Should Grid accuse him of being a thief? Grid was overcome with nervousness as he looked at Idan's hands and pondered on it.

"I greet Raiders, the great Old Dragon who reigns over all things, the brilliant Gold Dragon who shines before the sun."

Just then, the Great Robber of the Red Night came out. He also came to the same conclusion as Grid. Thus, he felt the need to turn things around.

Raiders' eyes sank coldly.

"That is an old greeting."

Raiders was surprised by two things.

First of all, he couldn't read the presence of a human being. Secondly, he heard a greeting that he never thought he would hear in the current world.

"...How many destructions have you experienced, you ghost?"

The repetition of creation and the end—the cycles done by Rebecca and Yatan were fatally flawed. The point was that beings whose 'power' was above a certain level weren't affected by the destruction. The representative examples were dragons who lived intact even after experiencing countless apocalypses, and Zik, the apostle of the Overgeared God.

They existed every time.

They were ghosts.

"As you know, humans are different from you great existences. We are pitiful beings who can't live unless we forget. When I was born and how many apocalypses I went through. I've long forgotten."

Raiders didn't ask anything further, as if that was enough of an answer. He just muttered while staring at his long blond hair that was being dyed by the red sky, "Great Robber of the Red Night.... so..."

"Raiders, may I dare to say something?"

"I respect you as much as an outstanding cook. I give permission."

"The reason Grid made a deal with you was because of my request."

Usually, the Great Robber treated Grid as if he was a young man. However, he referred to Grid respectfully when he encountered a high ranking target. It conveyed an unspoken meaning to the target.

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The hierarchy of you and Grid is no different. You should also respect Grid.

Raiders looked like he was being noisy, but he agreed.

"Do you mean ascending to heaven?"

"Yes, he came up with this plan purely to help me. So if you must hold someone accountable, please..."

"Accountable?"

Raider was cocking his head in a confused manner when his ears shook slightly. He was responding to the signs of Idan, who stopped crying and was catching his breath.

"Let's talk after we finish eating."

Then something amazing happened. Raiders rose up with magic and instantly moved to Idan's side. Then he reached out to Idan.

"The best cook of this age."

"....."

"I will give you a chance to serve me the right food."

It was the aftermath of biased information. Raiders believed in Idan's history that was submitted by Grid and still thought he was the best cook. From Idan's perspective, it sounded like mockery.

'This XX.'

Calling him the best chef of this age after spitting out the food he made because it was terrible? Idan had given up on living from the beginning. Even though he burned his soul to cook, he failed in the end and he couldn't see anything in his eyes. In a word, he lost his fear.

"Okay. I'll make it for you."

There was a very defiant look in his eyes. The chef's eyes that were confident rather than being afraid after having failed once slightly thrilled Raiders.

'He is truly the chef I was looking for.'

Show the source of that confidence. Finally, the smiling Raiders used magic and a mysterious scene unfolded. All the cooking utensils and food ingredients that existed in the world, as well as spices that Grid had never seen before filled the center of the coast where there used to be nothing.

"Anything is good. Do what you want."

"I don't need all of them."

".....?!"

Grid, who had been restlessly watching the situation, turned contemplative while Raiders raised his eyes in a scary manner.

The Great Robber of the Red Night murmured, "I'm sure he will be killed..."

It was because he watched as Idan put away the cooking utensils prepared by the Old Dragon, kicking them away with his feet and sweeping them away with his arms.

In the awkward silence, Idan spoke, "I will do it my way. Give me a bit of dragon meat again."

It was right after an unexpected failure. In his despair, Idan had realized. It was a mistake to abandon the skills he had honed all his life to cook in the same manner as others.

'What if you deny the path you have been pursuing, Idan? Are you going to leave with last minute regret?'

Cooking that relied on sweeteners and spices was too ordinary. In the first place, it wasn't pure skill. He cooked with nature.

Idan didn't hold any kitchen knives or pots in his hands. He made the shape of a pot by digging the pit himself while burning his hands on the white sand of the beach that was heated by the sun.

".....?"

The moment that Raiders sensed something was wrong...

Idan threw the newly acquired Trauka's meat into the pit and finally held his knife. Was he going to prepare other ingredients now? As everyone paid attention to him, Idan picked up a glass bottle that had washed in by the sea, carefully broke it in half, and placed it on top of the meat. Then the glass became hot in the sun...

"...What is this?" Raiders' opinion of Idan was downgraded. It was while being bewildered by his series of actions.

Idan didn't care. Idan cooked the meat in his own way and eventually gave Raiders a piece of meat that was slightly cooked on the outside. It wasn't even on a plate. It was meat on a stone.

"Are you treating a great dragon like an animal right now?" At some point, Raiders' voice had become completely cold. He held a knife and fork while glaring at Idan. "If you have deceived me, you will pay a high price."

Some time later—

Clink!

Raiders dropped his fork and knife once more. It was with a very surprised expression.

"...The taste of meat in my mouth mixed with spices... it has become fragrant?"

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Chapter 1785

"It is the power of anion and light wave cooking," Idan explained. His expression was quite different. He showed no signs of hesitation or frustration and was full of confidence.

"First of all, the anion cooking. The electrons naturally obtained from the soil and sand penetrate into the meat in waves, causing a softening effect. At the same time, it expels foreign substances to eliminate the bad smells."

'Isn't anion a pseudoscience that is legally banned?'

Grid clicked his tongue. As a modern man, he knew from common sense that the anion theory was a superstition.

"Next is the light wave cooking. The pure light of the sun is different from man-made flames. Once it heats the meat, it produces all types of beneficial nutrients. It is literally the energy of the sun. This maximizes the natural aroma and taste of the ingredients, adding great flavor to the meat without the need for sweeteners or spices."

'Does he believe in ghosts?'

Ah, there really were ghosts in this world...

Grid gradually became nervous as Idan continued to talk sophistry. He wondered if Raiders would forgive the human being who mocked him.

'I have to protect him.'

The results were strange, but...

After all, Idan was a valued colleague. Grid was ready to respond as soon as Raiders showed any strange signs. Of course, he was going to persuade Raiders through a conversation rather than fighting. Thus, he sent a whisper to Huroi beforehand. He planned to lead the conversation to the advantage using real-time advice from Huroi.

Such preparations were unnecessary.

"Hmm." Raiders' expression gradually changed to interest. "Are you incorporating what humans call science into cooking?"

Human beings were different from other transcendent beings. They were born with poor strength and knowledge from birth, so they had to create, learn, and train themselves in all types of things.

Science was a prime example. It was the study of humanity.

"Science...? No way. No matter how you look at it, I am a pure chef."

'It looks obvious, so you don't have to say it.'

Grid, who did his best even though he didn't study well, inwardly kept criticizing it.

"You mean that you just enlightened yourself."

Raiders looked very satisfied. It was a reaction that showed he didn't care about Idan's baseless claims. It was natural. The food that entered his mouth tasted delicious right away. This taste was the power that supported Idan's claims.

"Understanding and utilizing the elements of nature as materials for cooking... you are the wisest and most outstanding of anyone who has ever called himself a sage. You are the sage who has been hiding all this time."

At this moment, a world message appeared. It was natural. A mere human being received the recognition of an Old Dragon in front of some of the world's leading figures, Grid and the Great Robber of the Red Night. The world wouldn't be able to stand by and ignore the person called Idan.

[A new legend is engraved in the world.]

'No way, there is no way.'

What an absurd yet obvious development? Grid felt joy and sorrow at the fact that the soon-to-be-born legendary chef was Idan. He was happy that his person had become a legend, but he wondered if it was okay for Idan to become a legendary chef.

What if Idan's cooking in the future increased stats or gave them buffs? The Overgeared members, the knights of the empire, and the soldiers would have to unconditionally eat the dishes he made. Of course, they couldn't afford not to eat

it. Thus, they would have to suffer through his meals three times a day in the future. It was hell just imagining it.

[A new legend, 'Dragon's Chef,' has been born.]

".....?"

The legendary chef was predicted. But a Dragon's Chef?

The Great Robber's astonished words rang into the ears of the flustered Grid. "Are you going to make him your exclusive chef?"

His prediction was right.

"Your cooking truly has infinite possibilities. Unlike other chefs who rely on uniform recipes, you are a wise man who uses the ever changing power of nature."

".....!"

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Idan's eyes widened. They shook wildly before water appeared in them, representing his feelings.

Idan shuddered. It was because he was being acknowledged for the first time in his life. He had blossomed his talent in a different manner and might've met the only being in the world who understood him. A light shone on the life that was lonely almost to the last moment.

"I want to keep you by my side forever. Of course, my lair might be too big and desolate for you, a mere human being. As a dragon, I won't be able to understand your hardships and loneliness and will hurt you a lot."

It had been proven time and time again, but unlike ordinary dragons, Raiders was a rational thinker. He felt a liking that was beyond species for the human chef in front of him who would bring him the 'new delicacies' that he had been searching for all his life.

"But I still want to keep you by my side. I want to end my meaningless wanderings and settle down."

"....."

"The price I will pay for you is enough. I will use my magic and authority to offer you eternal enjoyment."

Raiders' voice was very soft. He looked at Idan with affectionate eyes that contained a bit of fear. It resembled the attitude of proposing to a lover.

'It is a dream...'

Grid couldn't accept reality. It was because the situation was too unrealistic to be easily convinced.

Ida was watching Grid. 'His Majesty didn't mean to hurt me.'

He wanted to pave a new path to me, who is different from ordinary cooks, so he arranged a meeting with a dragon. I'm sure he remembered Nefelina eating my food without any resistance...

'He is the one who... from beginning to end... helped me...'

It wasn't enough that you rescued me from the East Continent, that was on the verge of destruction at the time. You allowed me to cook for so many people and now you arranged a better life...

"I will gladly accept it."

Idan stared at Grid for a long time before soon replying with a determined look.

"The great you..." Idan spoke with his eyes still fixed on Grid, "I will follow you."

It was only at the last moment that he turned his attention to Raiders.

His intention.

It was clearly revealed to Raiders, who had existed since the beginning of chaos. He knew that the 'great you' that Idan was referring to was Grid, not himself. He didn't care. Raiders was just grateful.

"My sleep can be quite long for humans. At that time, I can give you freedom. You can live to your heart's content, at least during that time."

It meant he could meet Grid at any time. Idan read the consideration and was moved to tears. "I have no regrets even if I die, because I am loved by great people."

"....."

This was enough.

Grid also smiled. He noticed that Idan was genuinely happy.

'I don't know what is going on here, but... in any case, I think everything went well.'

Raiders didn't become angry, the deal worked, and the legendary chef Idan found happiness. The only regret was that he ended up saying goodbye to Idan. He was hesitant to give up Idan. Idan was a chef Grid didn't want to entrust with cooking, but he was too good a person to just be abandoned. Hadn't he shown his faith over the years they spent together? He also made achievements like raising the poison resistance of the Overgeared members and knights.

'Unfortunately, it can't be helped. It is enough as long as Idan is happy.'

Moreover, from this point on, Idan's value was astronomical. He would become the closest being to Gourmet Dragon Raiders in the future and would act as a bridgehead connecting the Old Dragon to the surface. Putting aside Grid's personal regrets, Idan, who became a Dragon's Chef, would unconditionally be beneficial to humanity.

Grid was controlling his mind when he heard the murmurs of the Great Robber.

"Isn't the average sleeping time of the Gourmet Dragon one hundred years...?"

"....."

In the past, Hayate had also explained it when asking Grid to participate in Raiders' gourmet cycle. The first thing Raiders did when waking up was to find a new delicacy.

"Of course, there is no guarantee that I will sleep for one hundred years. If something big happens like this incident, I might wake up suddenly. Conversely, if there is no big event, there is no need for me to wake up."

'...In other words.'

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In the end, the legendary chef Idan would return to the Overgeared Empire safely.

"Thank you."

Raiders would call the chef named Idan once every few decades or once every one hundred years. He polymorphed into a beautiful man with brilliant blond hair and gold eyes, the coloring of a Gold Dragon, and bowed slightly to Grid. It was an attitude that shocked both Grid and the Great Robber.

Raiders didn't mind.

"Didn't you introduce me to the best chef of this age and make concessions? You deserve to be thanked."

Unlike other Old Dragons who are obsessed with instinct, I am a noble being with principles...

Raiders' arrogant eyes seemed to contain such thoughts.

Grid judged that there would be nothing good about staying on this matter and nodded.

"I am honored that you have recognized my favor. So I can trust that you won't break our deal, right?"

"Of course. There is no need to waste time. Let's carry out the deal immediately."

"Are you saying that we will be leaving right away?"

"Is there a problem with that?"

"No. No..."

On the Ruins of the Martial God that had been reduced to an uninhabited island, Idan watched the group with a kind smile on his face. Grid immediately ascended to heaven with Raiders and the Great Robber, only to feel a sense of strangeness.

It didn't take long for him to figure out the reason for this feeling.

'Aren't we going to Asgard right now?'

Then why were Raiders and the Great Robber as calm as if they were going for a walk in the park in front of their house? Raiders was an Old Dragon and had little to fear, but why was the Great Robber so calm?

"Don't you need to prepare anything?"

"Raiders, you, and I are the preparations. It is enough, so don't worry."

"Rig..."

Grid's expression distorted as he was nodding in understanding. Was he included in the preparations?

"Do I really have to go up and fight?"

"That will only happen if we are discovered. Even I can't guarantee 100% safety when I am invading the realm of the gods. Then you have to protect me."

Why didn't you tell me...

Grid missed Biban for some reason and his face moved like it was about to peel off. It was the aftermath of Raiders flying with him and the Great Robber on his back. The Ruins of the Martial God instantly became a dot and the vast Red Sea was obscured by clouds, becoming invisible.

[Keep this in mind. From a human point of view, we are better than the gods of Asgard.]

It happened as Raiders' meaningful words appeared in Grid's mind...

[You have entered the world of the gods, 'Asgard.']

Golden clouds filled Grid's vision. Using the power of an Old Dragon, they crossed dimensions in an instant.

"Follow me!" The Great Robber jumped off Raiders' back and shouted urgently.

"Thank you." Grid chased after the Great Robber, but he didn't forget to thank Raiders. It was a chance to save Hexetia and Khan. They were words that came out naturally due to gratitude.

Raiders smiled. 'Thank you for the deal.'

He should be the one who was thankful since he received more than he gave.

'...It isn't bad.'

'Golden Protection' chased after the moving Grid.

Overgeared

Chapter 1786

'I had better calm down for now.'

Today, he met Raiders and ascended to heaven.

Grid was considerably nervous. Of course, he didn't show it on the outside. According to the Great Robber of the Red Night, even Raiders wouldn't be able to read Grid's agitation.

However, the Great Robber had met too many people. He had endured the long years of repeatedly living in a world devastated by an apocalypse and then living in a world that suddenly began again, so he saw all types of people. He had witnessed the qualities of a true ruler and hero several times. It was possible for him to 'guess' and understand Grid's anxiety.

'It was the deal with the dragon.'

Dragons were unpredictable. Their temperament itself was completely different from that of humans. They had the ability to destroy the continent as long as they wanted. They were unpredictable monsters and should be accepted as a disaster. If they were touched incorrectly, they would bring about the end.

Grid was responsible for humanity of the present age, so he must've felt a lot of pressure dealing with dragons.

'It is great that he didn't decapitate the chef called Idan when he thought things were going well.'

Sacrificing a little one for the greater good. It deserved to be criticized. It was hard to forgive no matter how a hero justified it. However, it was sometimes a necessary decision. This was why people who knew Pagma's true nature couldn't deny that he was hero despite criticizing him.

Earlier at the Ruins of the Martial God, Raiders seemed to question Idan's cooking skills. The Great Robber would've accepted it even if Grid had shifted the blame to Idan and beheaded him. He thought it was a cheap price to calm a dragon's anger.

Nevertheless, Grid watched the situation silently. He must've been very nervous, but he couldn't betray the human. Naturally, he must've suffered great anxiety.

"You don't have to be anxious even longer," the Great Robber told Grid, who was chasing after him, "It is right to say that most of your work has been done from the moment you successfully concluded the deal with Raiders. Having to protect me is a request made considering the worst possible variable. There will be no fighting with the gods unless things go awry."

"Then I'm glad."

Grid was relieved. It was a response that acknowledged the anxiety that had been hidden. He knew the power of the divine world. Based on the benefits of the Overgeared World, it was clear that the celestial gods would be immensely powerful in Asgard. Asgard's level would be incomparably higher than the newly born Overgeared World. Of course, more power would be bestowed upon the gods. It wasn't suitable to be a battlefield.

"You can't fool the gods' energy detection with things like that."

The Great Robber looked at the invisible hood that Grid was wearing and took out a brooch with a large green jewel, handing it to Grid.

[The 'King of Poor Fate's Brooch' has been acquired.]

[King of Poor Fate's Brooch]

[Rating: Myth

The ultimate treasure made by combining materials and magic that can't be grasped with the knowledge and information of this era.

A king who was born a natural transcendent in a world that was about to end, he relied on it until the last moment.

It completely erases the wearer's presence.

However, the effect will be lost if you speak or attack a target.

If the effect is forced to be released, there will be a three day cooldown.

Weight: 0.1]

'Does this mean the stealth will be maintained no matter what skill I use as long as I don't attack anyone?'

It was a perfectly superior version of the Hooded Zip Up.

"It contains the souls of tens of millions of human beings," the Great Robber spoke bitterly to Grid, who was admiring the effect of the great artifact.

"...Huh?"

"The King of Poor Fate. It is the brooch of that powerful man, who was born with a poor fate and driven to the brink. Therefore, he offered his people as sacrifices and traded with the Refractive Dragon."

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"Such an absurd history... I've never heard of it. In the first place, is there such a thing as the Refractive Dragon?"

"It isn't a history of the current world, so it is right that you haven't heard of it. The Refractive Dragon... it doesn't matter if it exists or not. It is a concept, not a creature. A concept so inefficient that all human beings in the world have to worship it to make it have substance. You will never see it."

The Refractive Dragon was a deified being in the form of a dragon. A dragon god born with the immunity of the Gods of the Beginning from the humans of a near-apocalyptic world, who learned that the Gods of the Beginning would soon destroy humanity.

It was as the Great Robber said. The efficiency was very poor. The proof was that not a single apocalypse had been prevented so far. However, it gave definite survival to a small number of humans who were the object of worship.

"Still, there are traces of the Refractive Dragon remaining somewhere in this world, just like this brooch. I have been searching for them."

A transcendent who couldn't bear the weight of the times.

"Treasures containing the wish of the people who want to avoid the end of the world. I had the simple hope that if I collected all the things from the worlds that have ended, I might one day be able to prevent the apocalypse."

Don't expect anything from others. There are no human beings who can stop the end. Don't interact with others. I am just a thief anyway. I will definitely betray them one day.

He had shunned other humans while being constrained by only being able to operate at night, causing people to shy away from him because it was ominous.

Now, he started his purpose in front of someone else for the first time. It was proof of his expectations for Grid. It was a declaration that he wouldn't betray Grid.

The old man's deep eyes, filled with more years and emotions than Grid could ever fathom, conveyed his truth and sincerity to Grid.

Trust—it was one of the driving forces that moved Grid.

"That is why you stole all types of precious treasures."

Treasures born in worlds that had disappeared a long time ago. The old man became a thief in order to find them, which would surely still be operating solidly due to the dragon god's will.

"You are my companion as well."

The distinction between good and evil was blurred. Grid's track record also wasn't always good. Therefore, he didn't harbor any prejudice against the Great Robber. He just paid attention to the fact that the Great Robber was someone with the same meaning as himself.

"Let's hurry. If you take the lead, I will follow you without losing you."

Grid soothed his mind that had been shaken for various reasons. He let go of his hesitation and increased his concentration. He would rescue Khan and Hexetia and escape safely with the Great Robber of the Red Night... They would be new allies to stop the approaching apocalypse.

The Great Robber responded to Grid's resolve. He immediately ran at full speed. He was undaunted by the shape of the roads and stairs created by golden clouds and pierced through them. It was a tremendous speed while suppressing the use of Shunpo to control the consumption of physical strength.

Grid also had to run close to full power. The distance traveled was longer than expected. The road made of golden clouds stretched out endlessly no matter how far they traveled and it was reminiscent of the Red Sea.

His eyes became tired. Asgard's sky was a black universe, while the ground was brightly lit by golden clouds.

Finally, a whole day passed.

"Hah..."

In Grid's somewhat dim vision, the outlines of huge temples started to appear. They were really great temples. Even the tallest spire of the Overgeared Palace couldn't keep up with the size of a single pillar supporting the temples. Such temples stood tall above the hills made of golden clouds, exuding a sense of grandeur and dominance.

-The higher the temple on the hill, the higher the status of the god living in it, right?

-That's right.

The two of them had a conversation through Sound Transmission.

-Then what is that little temple?

Most of the temples resembled Greek ones. The temple on the fifth highest hill resembled a temple, but it was small and compact.

-I don't know for certain, but... perhaps it is Zeratul's temple. I guess he copied Chiyoun. But it is too small. It doesn't fit Zeratul's personality.

-Um...

It was only then that Grid noticed it. The thick chains and huge padlocks surrounding the small temple and sealing the entrance proved Zeratul's current status.

'As expected, he is being punished. He must be locked up and unable to come out, right?'

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It made perfect sense. There was no way Asgard could forgive Zeratul, who came down to the surface and shamed the gods.

'It serves him right, but...'

He felt more regret than relief. It was because Zeratul had always given Grid's great benefits. It felt like he lost a customer. At the same time, deep anxiety started to bloom in him. Even Zeratul, one of the chief gods, was like this. What type of punishment was Khan, an angel, subjected to...?

-First of all, we have to infiltrate that place.

The Great Robber showed little interest in the high temples. He pointed to a particularly large place among the temples in the lowest location.

-It is the barracks of the angels. There is a good chance they are keeping the keys we need over there. The security of Asgard is controlled by Raphael.

The key to the treasure house that the Great Robber wanted and the key to the prison where Hexetia was kept would be there. The two of them hurriedly sneaked into the barracks.

Buzz buzz.

Unlike the quiet outside area, the inside of the barracks was very noisy. Angels with golden halos of different shapes above their heads were chattering noisily. They all looked stubborn. They were like the legends of the previous generations whose pride pierced the sky.

"....."

The Great Robber's steps stopped halfway. Many of the angels seemed to have familiar faces. His face even distorted when he saw a certain female angel. Was it an old lover...?

It happened the moment when Grid was about to suggest rescuing her as well...

-Hurry.

The Great Robber increased his pace. He seemed to regard the angels as completely different from the people he knew in the past. Thanks to this, Grid realized that the case of Khan, who remembered him, was very special.

'Khan.' His longing grew after he learned the truth.

The two men thoroughly searched the barracks. Sometimes, they even showed boldness as they searched the bottom of the chairs that the angels were sitting on. The treasures of the Refractive Dragon that they carried made it possible.

"That rat is hiding."

Suddenly—

Grid and the Great Robber stopped moving. They stiffened like stone statues and slowly looked in the direction that the voice came from. They saw an angel who just entered the barracks.

The number one archangel, Raphael. The leader of the seven angels created by Rebecca in the beginning, they had a higher status than most of the chief gods despite being an angel. They were an Absolute. Of course, Raphael didn't show their proper majesty on the surface, but this was Asgard.

Grid didn't recklessly cut at Raphael. He held his breath while wondering if Raphael had detected their traces.

"I am referring to the prison. There is so much noise inside that it made it all the way outside."

"The Martial God is a rat hunter. How interesting. Should we go down to the surface and catch some rats?"

"Cut it out. If you provoke Zeratul more than necessary, Hexetia and the angel might be inadvertently hurt. Then it would get confusing in many ways."

Unexpected information flowed in. It was information that Hexetia and Zeratul were currently in the same prison. Additionally, an angel seemed to be with them. It was likely to be Khan.

'How dare they put Khan in prison...?'

-Rather, I think this is good.

Grid was overwhelmed with surging rage, but he forced himself to calm down.

-It is easier to steal when the targets are gathered together. But if there is one variable, it is Zeratul...

'Ah...'

Grid had an expression like he was chewing shit.

Having Zeratul present when rescuing Khan and Hexetia? He couldn't predict what Zeratul would do.

Overgeared

Chapter 1787

"Goddess of Light, Rebecca! While you are asleep, your faithful servant is being subjected to all types of insults!!"

The Prison of Eternity—it was the final destination for sinful gods. Even gods who were close to omnipotent, like Zeratul, were unable to escape from this place on their own. In the first place, it was a prison created to imprison the gods. The environment itself counteracted the gods.

"Hurry and wake up to rescue me and defend your authority and honor! I, Martial God Zeratul, the one who will protect Asgard from the wicked who are running wild while you are away. Use me as your sword and wield me!"

Martial God Zeratul was realizing that his power and authority were weakening in real time. The longer he spent in prison, the more he fell into an endless sense of loss. Thus, he was shouting to hide his shame.

Please save me.

"...Hexetia, how can you be okay?"

The blacksmithing god, Hexetia—he had already been trapped here 'for many years,' but he was different from Zeratul. He was meditating calmly and was unfazed despite being in prison for a long time. It was a state where his mental training reached the limit.

The old angel had great respect for Hexetia. He was a blacksmith, so he was fascinated by the God of Blacksmiths. It wasn't only this simple reason.

The Prison of Eternity—it was a very strange and scary space for the old angel to experience.

Time stretched out like a piece of taffy. At first, one second seemed like a minute. Now one second felt like a day. In fact, it had been a long time since he started to confuse the units of time. It was just that one moment always stretched out for a long time.

Hexetia was trapped here first, so one second could seem like a year. Nevertheless, he was always calm. In this eternal space where nothing existed and it was simply dark, he firmed up his mind without relying on any external force.

"You are truly amazing."

Hexetia's half-open eyes shone in the darkness. It was the aftermath of the blue and red flames on both his nipples reflecting on his pupils. The tired face of the old angel was projected in those eyes.

"I heard you have regained your memories of your human days. You must be infinitely close to a human being right now. How are you keeping your sanity?"

An angel who regained his memories—he was no different from a human being. Regardless of his appearance, he thought like a human. Human beings were weak beings who couldn't stand being trapped for less than 100 years, let alone when discussing eternity. There was no capacity to withstand the infinitely increasing flow of time. However, the old angel endured it.

"That..."

A smile gradually spread across the angel's haggard face.

"It seems to be because I have a lot to remember."

Of course, there were many sad and painful memories among the memories he recovered. However, there were many more joyful, happy, and gratifying memories. They were memories mostly acquired in his later years. At the center of his memories was always a young man named Grid. He was a benefactor, a friend, and a family member.

"Is that so...?"

Hexetia's mind became complicated after reading the sincerity contained in Khan's expression. It was because it wasn't very good to stay here for a long time with a sane mind in the Prison of Eternity. It meant he would feel a more vivid pain for a long time. It was hard to handle with the human mind. It might be better to let go like Zeratul.

'It isn't a matter for me to talk about.'

Happy memories? There was nothing specifically for Hexetia. He was born as a god and took many things for granted, so he didn't know the standard of happiness. Thus, he couldn't arbitrarily judge the position of the old angel. In the first place, Hexetia had little leeway. He had to focus on himself.

The memory of trying to harm humanity because he was blinded by jealousy—he maintained his sanity by recalling and reflecting on his mistakes, which was considered one of the greatest sins of all ages.

"Angel over there."

"Yes, Martial God."

"Do you really believe in Hexetia? Cut it out. He won't forgive you for filling his vacancy in his absence. It is ridiculous to see how you are being fooled without knowing when a dagger will suddenly be stuck in your back." Zeratul abruptly interrupted. It was simple sarcasm, but the old angel didn't know Zeratul's personality very well.

"Are you caring about me, who is insignificant? You truly have a wonderful personality worthy of being the Martial God worshiped by everyone. I am just a blacksmith, but I respect you deeply and appreciate you."

"....."

Zeratul's expression distorted. He glared at Khan like he was a madman. Then he glanced back at the unresponsive Hexetia and snorted.

"Goddess of Light! I know you are listening to me! Please send me a true apostle, not a mad angel blinded by power, and save me!"

Then he started shouting at the dark ceiling again. Zeratul's shadow was only dimly visible due to no light coming in and it resembled an old man, not the Martial God. In the aftermath of the successive decline of status and the seal, his body, just like his temple, had become smaller.

However, his high-pitched voice echoed nonstop in the prison that made it difficult to tell whether it was a low or loud voice.

-What should we do?

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The key that the Great Robber of the Red Night was looking for was tied to Raphael's belt. It was a position where they couldn't get their hands on it. Grid pondered whether he should bring up the story of the Master Key. He wasn't sure if it would work in Asgard, but he decided it was worth an attempt rather than stealing Raphael's things and getting killed.

However, it happened before Grid could tell the story...

"....."

The Great Robber snatched the bundle of keys from Raphael's waist. It was an incredible sight when seeing it with his own eyes. Originally, the senses of an Absolute were something that couldn't be deceived.

-Is it possible that Raphael isn't an Absolute?

-No, they are very high ranking even among Absolutes. You might not believe it because you have only witnessed their combat ability on the surface, but Raphael has a power and status that is supposedly on par with Hanul, one of the Gods of the Beginning.

Grid had also heard this.

-How did you steal the keys from such a being without being detected?

-It means that the Refractive Dragon has a higher concept than Raphael.

There was a slight cracking sound from the Great Robber's wrist. A quick glance showed that a bracelet, made of an unfamiliar metal weathered for tens of thousands of years, received a direct hit. It might also be a treasure left by a Refractive Dragon born in a world that was about to end.

-Since I have consumed one, I have to take at least two things to make ends meet.

A decision was needed.

After pausing at a fork in the road, the Great Robber handed Grid a key. It was the key to unlocking the Prison of Eternity.

-Originally, my plan was to steal the treasure and then steal God Hexetia, but as you know, the situation has changed.

Raphael would soon notice that an item that disappeared from his hands. This meant that sooner or later, an army of angels would spread all over Asgard. Time was running out.

-Let's meet here again after we both get what we want. If a crisis comes in the process, fight with all your strength without saving anything. I have the means to unconditionally escape from this place, so you just have to join me somehow.

-I understand.

Grid repaid trust with trust. He ran blindly toward the location of the prison that the Great Robber had told him. It was several times faster than when moving with

the Great Robber. He was able to use Shunpo continuously. There was no need to worry about hiding as long as he had the King of Poor Fate's Brooch.

It wasn't even simple stealth. It was a concept that erased existence itself, making it possible to avoid the end of the world. It meant the wearer wasn't designated as a target of the end.

'Over here.'

How long had it been since he started running along the road of golden clouds? It wasn't until dozens of constellations of the universe passed by in Grid's field of view that Grid reached his destination. It was an area covered with cloudy gray clouds, similar to rain clouds.

The deeper inside he went, the more there was a darkness that didn't match Asgard. At the end of it stood a tall and old iron gate. It was a wild and forlorn sight.

Grid's mind became heavy. He felt guilty for Khan and Hexetia, who were trapped in such a place because they did him a favor. Of course, he wasn't shaken by these emotions. He took a deep breath and calmly approached the iron door. Then he took out the key and put it in the cold lock.

[You have entered the Prison of Eternity.]

[This is a player's first achievement!]

[The 'Asgard Map' will be activated as a reward for finding hidden places!]

[Asgard Map]

[Rating: Myth

The structure of heaven can be known.

It seems to have a special function.

Weight: 0.1]

A reunion that was once unimaginable—the reunion where they could discuss the 'later days' only after becoming a god and learning about the truth of the world was finally just around the corner.

Step.

It happened the moment when Grid barely held back the thumping of his heart and stepped into the prison...

"The goddess has answered my prayers." Then there was a voice that caused him to frown. It was clearly different from the voice that Grid missed immensely. The loudness of the voice caused some discomfort.

"Zeratul..."

Why are you the one to greet me?

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In a prison where the scale was hard to fathom because it was dyed in thick darkness...

Grid glared at Zeratul, who slowly approached while his body covered the dim view inside the prison.

"You sent an assassin rather than a savior?"

Zeratul looked very shocked. The airflow in the area cooled down instantly.

"Why did it happen to be you...? Ohu, now I am sure. The shadow behind all the trials I went through must've been Rebecca."

A powerful wave of energy burst out from Zeratul. His long white beard reached all the way down to his lower abdomen and swayed like the legs of a giant octopus. It was a tremendous energy that Grid had only experienced once. It was similar to when Fire Dragon Trauka released his energy. It was the majesty of the 'Martial God' that was completely different from what he showed on the surface.

Grid realized that this place was in the middle of the enemy camp and stiffened.

'From his appearance, he is much weaker than before... yet it is still this much?'

"Only One God Grid, who was only able to be born due to having Rebecca behind you. I will decisively kill you today and correct the distorted myths."

Zeratul's grudge toward Grid ran very deep. It was because every time he got involved with Grid, regardless of the context, the result was always detrimental to him. The decisive reason was the epic. The power to write distorted myths based on the subjective gazes of the witnesses, rather than the full truth. It was a concept equivalent to an 'irrational power' that every chief god had at least one of.

"If I absorb all the myths you have accumulated in a cheap way and make it mine, I will have a chance of winning against Dominion. I will make it the stepping stone to be the new ruler of Asgard."

At the moment, Zeratul was a half-mad god. It was to the point where he spoke openly of rebellion.

'His eyes... they have completely turned inside out.'

Originally, Zeratul's combat stance hid his pupils. He exposed only the whites of his eyes and made it impossible for the other person to get his intentions and feelings. However, it was particularly severe this time. White light gushed randomly from his eyes, where only the whites remained. It was as if he was seeing tangible killing intent.

"...Grid?"

In the midst of the turmoil—

The voice of a new person permeated the ears of the nervous Grid. It was a voice he had never forgotten. It was a voice he would miss yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

"Khan..."

The old angel approaching with a look of disbelief made Grid cry.

"Where are you looking?"

It happened the moment when Zeratul, whose eyes were turned inside out, came out and disrupted the reunion between the two of them... A powerful explosion occurred at the entrance of the prison that Grid had his back to. It was a pair of blue and red flames that guided Grid as he was swept away by the explosion and sucked into deep darkness. They were very divine flames rising from the nipples of the blacksmithing god.

"It has been a while."

Hexetia's expression was determined as he supported Grid. He looked in the direction of the explosion with a stiff face, as if he couldn't even afford to smile. There were angels there. Leading them was the 1st ranked Archangel, Raphael.

"I didn't really expect a rat to break in. This is heaven. Is it really okay for such filth to be here?" Raphael spoke with a frown while pinching their nose like it stank.

It wasn't just Grid. They treated everyone inside the prison as filth.

"I knew that the angel with the belly would be the key to leading you here, but... I thought it would be at least a few hundred years later. Are you stupid enough to know no fear? You are really bold," Raphael—the closest confidant of the Goddess of Light, Rebecca—criticized Grid.

It was a trigger to develop a new situation.

"...I see. Maybe I was mistaken for a moment," Zeratul muttered and his killing intent started to turn to Raphael, not Grid. His eyes were still turned inside out.

"It would be right to kill you, Raphael, who dared to put me in prison and mocked me, first"

"Huh? You are going to kill me? Me, the subordinate of Goddess Rebecca? Isn't this treason? Are you completely crazy?"

"....."

"....."

A blatant declaration of treason. It wasn't just Raphael and the angels who were baffled. Grid and Hexetia also watched the situation in a bewildered manner. However, Khan was calm. It was as if he was expecting this to happen.

"As expected, you are the great Martial God..."

The whisper of an old angel who was no different from a human...

"Raphael! I've always hated you the most!"

It ignored the fighting energy of Zeratul, who hoped to be worshiped by people and become the true Martial God.

Overgeared

"If the declaration to hurt you is a sign of treason—"

Zeratul's greatest strength lay in his mastery of all martial arts. He could perform supreme feats regardless of the presence or absence of weapons. Even the chains of magic power binding his hands weren't a constraint. They would turn into a deadly weapon the moment he wielded it.

"You have insulted me many times in the past, so how many times have you committed treason?"

Grid suddenly remembered something as he watched the situation with bated breath.

One time in the past, when Raphael discussed Zeratul, they laughed at him for being a fake, a clone, etc.

'As expected, people have to live a good life.'

Don't do anything to earn people's resentment.

It was just like Raphael at the moment. It was easy to get caught at a critical moment.

"I don't want to admit it, but the Goddess of Light had a hand in my birth. According to your logic, not respecting me is the same as not respecting the Goddess, right?"

"Eh? You usually pretend to be the Martial God born purely from the worship of the people. You only admit the truth when you are at a disadvantage?"

"Don't change the subject, you feathered mongrel."

"....."

Raphael had remained mischievous without losing their composure even after going through all types of humiliation on the surface when their power was sealed. However, now their expression stiffened. No, they looked solemn. They had shown it occasionally when on the surface, but now even the light in their eyes was cold. They looked genuinely angry.

"I have also hated you for a long time. The existence created to replace Chiyu treated me like a pigeon."

"I remember saying it was chicken."

"...This is good. I have to get rid of you, who has gone completely crazy. There is no need to keep you alone, who is incompetent contrary to expectations and unsuitable to be Chiyou's replacement, right? You are filth with no value."

Rattle, rattle.

Zeratul looked like a clear sinner as his wrists were restrained by a chain of magic power.

His beard that hadn't been maintained at all, a dwarfed physique, and worn-out attire made him look unsightly. However, it was difficult to see him as degrading to something other than the Martial God. The momentum he was exuding was incredible. It was incomparable to when he was on the surface.

The power of the angel army, led by Raphael, was also immense. The moment magic power was injected, their perfectly refined prayers wrapped around their bodies in brilliant armor. It felt like hundreds of beings were one.

Every moment, their choices and actions cooperated with each other. Even the buff magic that strengthened their abilities were completed by changing one letter each and overlapping it with each other. Dozens of types of magic were literally completed in a flash.

'None of them are ordinary. Each one of them is at the level of the 10 Meritorious Retainers?'

Asgard was a divine world that had existed since the beginning. Considering the fact that the newly born Overgeared World removed the skill cooldown time and skill resources consumption of its gods. In addition, a target that Grid allowed to enter the Overgeared World would receive a 30% boost to all stats. If he didn't allow it, then all stats were halved and their status would decrease.

The effect of Asgard would exceed anything Grid imagined, unless he had the power to 'neutralize the dimensional effect' like an Old Dragon. It was suicide for an intruder to fight here.

'No... it might be the level of the Apostles, not the 10 Meritorious Retainers.'

An army with each member resembled Mercedes or Braham?

It happened the moment when Grid was intimidated by the angels' prayers and gulped...

"Take advantage of this opportunity to run away."

Hexetia shattered Grid's thoughts. His voice was firm. He seemed to be criticizing Grid for not focusing on the situation and thinking nonsense.

"It is hopeful that Raphael didn't bring the entire army with them. I will help Zeratul and draw away attention. You should find a chance and take Khan away."

"Hexetia..."

Khan's eyes shook.

Hexetia might be in prison now, but he was one of the higher ranked gods. Nevertheless, he remembered the name of an angel. Furthermore, it was the name of an angel who betrayed Asgard. It was touching.

Grid shook his head as he looked at Hexetia, who was turning a blind eye to Khan's affectionate gaze. "I don't want to."

"What?" Hexetia's expression distorted. "Are you going to run amok in Asgard? What is the difference between you and Zeratul who went to the surface?"

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"Trying to fulfill my responsibilities is different from running amok."

"Responsibilities?"

"I am going to save you."

".....!"

"The reason I took the risk to ascend to heaven is to save you and Khan."

Even before obtaining Trauka's arm, Grid's goal was to rescue Hexetia. It was a goal he had been harboring even before he knew that Khan had become an angel. Hexetia shook his head slowly as he saw only the truth that was contained in Grid's dark eyes, which were as sharp as a bird of prey.

"It is ridiculous... as long as you are fighting for humanity, I don't deserve your favor."

Hexetia had a history of betraying humanity. His petty and disgusting jealousy led the demons to the surface and pushed Pagma, who was like Grid's teacher, into

Baal's hands. It was like committing the sin of denying Grid, who fought for humanity. It was a position where he didn't dare to win Grid's favor.

Grid asked Hexetia, who was deep in thought, "Are you still bound by your past sins, even though you deeply regret it and have reflected on it?"

"It isn't a crime that can be washed away with cheap reflection."

"If you really think so, we can communicate better. Please leave here with me."

"What nonsense is that...?"

"Let's go down to the surface. Reflect by standing by the people's side and serving them."

"....."

As Grid was persuading Hexetia, Zeratul was clashing with the army of angels. The battle gear of the angels, covered with all types of destructive magic, were reduced to worthless shards and shattered. It was thanks to the chains wielded by Zeratul. Zeratul's advance was unstoppable as he repeatedly bound and crushed the approaching swords and spears. He proceeded as quickly as a guest of wind and collapsed the camp of the angels.

"Single-handedly taking on a Braham-level power?"

[Braham? Who here has the same power as him?]

Zeratul retorted to Grid, who was surprised and admiring it. It was an unbelievable reaction from someone rampaging in the middle of enemy lines.

Grid replied to him in an attempt to resolve his doubts with thoughts rather than words. "I mean... those angels."

[Are you rating the chickens who are enemies as a red phoenix to increase your value...? You are like a rare scammer.]

Zeratul's thoughts contained absurdity, anger, and ridicule as he thought of the distorted epics. It was an attitude that angered the angels who were hesitating to fight against a higher ranked god.

"Isn't mocking the Goddess' army clearly an act that crosses the line?"

There was only one Archangel here, Raphael. For some reason, the 2nd ranked Archangel and below weren't here. It was a dispersion of power that made it possible to have the ridiculous speculation of 'is it possible that intruders appeared elsewhere?' Zeratul was good at 'fighting' since he was the Martial God, so he understood that the current situation was a huge advantage.

He laughed contentedly at the sight of the angels, who normally wouldn't be able to breathe in front of an Archangel. "Even chickens know how to chirp."

".....!"

A terrible killing intent appeared in the eyes of the angels, visible through the gaps in their helmets. The provocation worked properly. The angels didn't bother with a conversation. They didn't hesitate any longer as they actively linked up and unleashed killing attacks on Zeratul.

They recalled again that their duty was to protect Asgard, not the gods. It was an unworthy duty that they recalled in the wake of petty anger.

Grid felt a sudden surge of anger.

'Why couldn't they have fought so hard when the surface was in danger?'

The humans in Satisfy were so pitiful. They worshiped the celestial gods and provided them with daily food, but received no rewards. Hell was the place where most people fell after dying. They suffered eternally regardless of the merits they accumulated during their lives. Only a few selected humans ascended to heaven, but they lost their memories and were consumed as soldiers of the gods.

Why?

Why should they be treated like that?

Khan, Irene, Piaro, Lord, Mercedes, Basara, Asmophel, Jude, Isabel, Han Seokbong and Sua, etcetera—Grid's divinity gradually deepened as he recalled his cherished relationships.

The shape of the Yellow Dragon had faded after being mixed with the light that dominated Asgard. Now it dispelled the darkness of the prison and started to reveal its full form. Its momentum was so majestic that the gazes of Raphael and the angels reflexively shifted from Zeratul to it.

"Dragon...?"

Even if it was just the form, wasn't it a dragon combined with divinity?

"Are you saying it is the second coming of the dragon god?"

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Raphael frowned like they were displeased and used their authority for the first time. A powerful dimensional force that couldn't be matched by the Overgeared World crushed Grid.

[The 1st ranked Archangel, Raphael, protects the security of Asgard and has defined you as an intruder.]

[Asgard won't tolerate your traces.]

[All of your stats are reduced by 70% and your status is greatly damaged. You have lost most of the beneficial effects of a transcendent.]

[Shunpo can't be used.]

Raphael only used their authority, not their power. This was just a basic debuff. It was the penalty for breaking into Asgard without permission.

"Unfortunately, this place isn't that trivial," Hexetia spoke bitterly.

It was because he knew it would be difficult for Grid to even take care of himself. He wouldn't be able to get out of here...

Two flames rose from both of Hexetia's nipples.

At first glance, the blue flame resembled the hellfire river and it split the encirclement of angels in half. Meanwhile, the red flame mimicked the Fire Dragon's Breath and forced Raphael to use their halo for defense.

"Run away in this gap."

The power of a god who gave up on his way to live—Hexetia performed bravely like the God of War, not the God of Blacksmiths. He was filled with the determination to open a way for Grid to escape, so he poured out all his divinity regardless of future troubles.

His hand trembled as his energy was rapidly exhausted and Grid grabbed it. Hexetia was surprised and reflexively tried to resist, but it was useless. Grid's grip

was so strong that he couldn't resist. It was a strength that was completely unbelievable even when it was suppressed in Asgard.

"You... what are you doing?"

Hexetia's question didn't last long.

"You fools! Avoid it!"

It was due to Zeratul's urgent cry. Raphael had pierced through the fire in an instant and was stabbing their spear. It was a spear that shot in a straight line to pierce Grid's back and Hexetia's heart at the same time. It was literally like a ray of light.

The speed of the attack was reminiscent of an Old Dragon and was one of the highest speeds among the attacks of the Absolutes that Grid had experienced many times. It was a level where it was hard to react immediately without the effect of Dragon Knight. If it was a surprise attack then he would have to give up some of his flesh.

In fact, there was no special emotion on Raphael's face. They didn't seem to doubt that their attack would achieve the results they intended.

Hexetia was unable to hide his frustrated expression.

"Aren't you too calm?" Grid asked Khan.

Khan smiled softly. "I am with you."

By the time Khan's answer ended—

".....?!"

Raphael's spear was sliding away with a roar. It was the aftermath of Grid wielding Twilight and twisting the trajectory of the spear.

"How?" Raphael narrowly avoided the orange divinity that approached their neck in an instant and asked while not caring about their reputation. It was close to astonishment.

[You have resisted.]

[The 'Golden Protection' from Gourmet Dragon 'Raiders' is temporarily neutralizing the dimensional effect that oppresses you. 9 minutes and 56 seconds left.]

[The energy of the Old Dragon in 'Golden Protection' has activated the Dragon Knight effect.]

"Have you forgotten who I am?"

Grid was more flustered than anyone else. Of course, he didn't show it. He just asked calmly and reminded the angels that he was an Only One God. It was the appearance of facing the 1st ranked Archangel in Asgard, where it was absolutely disadvantageous for him. It was enough to astonish not only the angels, but also Hexetia.

Zeratul's sneer rang out in the silence. "I got beaten by him for a reason."

Raphael had to pay the price for ignoring Zeratul, who was the Martial God. Raphael was counterattacked after failing to ambush Grid. Then Zeratul's fist precisely aimed at the top of their head and caused blood to spill. Thanks to this, a path of retreat was perfectly opened. Grid didn't miss this opportunity and joined hands with Hexetia and Khan to escape the prison.

"Stop them! Stop them!!" Raphael shouted urgently, but it didn't work.

It was because Zeratul blocked the entrance as Raphael was regaining their composure. It was too high a wall to overcome with the power of angels alone.

"You bastard, you would've been beaten the same as me."

The corners of Zeratul's mouth twitched. He felt tremendous exhilaration.

Overgeared

Chapter 1789

'I never thought a day like this would come.'

Grid and Zeratul had a bad relationship. They had already clashed directly or indirectly a number of times. Zeratul had suffered heavy losses every time and blatantly hated Grid. It was especially the case in Reinhardt's 'coffin.' Zeratul suffered a fatal defeat in the presence of all the watching humans and faced the worst outcome of having his divinity greatly damaged.

From Zeratul's point of view, Grid was like his sworn enemy. Yet he was helping Grid at this moment. It wasn't enough to just open the retreat route. He also blocked it. Of course, this didn't mean he wanted to reconcile with Grid. He just grabbed Raphael's ankle because he hated Raphael more than Grid.

As a result, it helped Grid tremendously. Grid wouldn't have been able to rescue Khan and Hexetia without Zeratul's help.

'Looking back, Zeratul has always been a great help to me.'

Changes started to occur in Grid's heart as he realized it again. He felt a vague liking toward Zeratul. Of course, Zeratul had a history of trying to hurt Lord and his colleagues, but they weren't hurt in the end. It was thanks to Hayate, but in any case... Grid didn't find him 'unforgivable.'

"What are you doing without running away?" Hexetia urged Grid after they managed to escape from the prison.

"....."

Grid couldn't take a step forward. He quietly watched the door of the prison, which had been restored by a bound magic circle after it had been destroyed by Raphael earlier. He couldn't take his eyes off Zeratul's back through the gate.

'...This isn't the time.'

Grid shook off his miscellaneous thoughts and focused on the warmth felt from his hands. It was the body temperature of Khan and Hexetia, whom he might never be able to reunite with if he lost them here again. Grid shouted while using all his might to hold the hands of blacksmiths that were full of calluses, "Zeratul!"

".....?"

Beyond the door that gradually took shape, Zeratul smiled for some reason as he looked away.

"I will someday repay you for today's grace! So please escape safely as well!"

"...This crazy guy?"

Why? Why did his face turn red and become angry?

Grid was slightly taken aback by Zeratul's unexpected reaction, but shrugged it off as part of Zeratul's eccentric personality.

"Don't forget! Just as you, the Martial God, show off your armed might, I will naturally keep my promises!"

"....."

Killing intent faded from Zeratul's eyes as he glared at Grid.

"Bah, do as you please." Zeratul grunted and threw something at him.

Grid was slightly surprised as he grabbed it. It was the key to the Prison of Eternity. It was an item that went missing from his hand when he was swept away by the explosion caused by Raphael's appearance.

"Even if you have gone crazy, this is too crazy! Are you planning to be trapped here forever with me?!" Raphael's urgent cry was heard. It seemed that even the 1st ranked Archangel in charge of the security of Asgard couldn't escape from the Prison of Eternity as long as they were 'trapped' inside.

"Won't the Goddess you believe in save you?" At the end of Zeratul's sarcastic words, the door finished being restored and completely disconnected the prison from the outside. Hundreds of angels and the lone Zeratul were swallowed whole.

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Surprisingly, Noe was the one who shattered the silence. "Hu... Hurry."

To Noe, the number one demonic creature of hell, everything that made up Asgard acted as poison. Of course, he was okay when staying in the pet inventory, but the psychological pressure was so immense that he urged Grid.

"Yes."

Time was too tight to stay on the lingering emotions. The duration of the 'Golden Protection' protecting Grid was less than nine minutes.

"Hold on tightly."

Grid gave strength to the hand holding the two seniors and used Shunpo. Khan's eyes widened in surprise, but Hexetia was calm. He didn't show any objection to the speed at which Shunpo moved through space and was at ease enough to give instructions. Shunpo was a basic skill for him who was a Chief God. He was also an Absolute. The blue and red flames on both his nipples were one of the proofs. Didn't he exert an unstoppable power that split the angel army in half and pressured Raphael?

'Just because I am an Absolute doesn't mean I am good at fighting.'

The only power that Hexetia showed was the strengthening of the flames. He possessed various qualities of an Absolute, but he wasn't familiar with fighting itself. It was because he was purely a blacksmithing god. If a list of Hexetia's skills could be seen, all the skills possessed would be related to production.

"Your destination seemed to be the crossroads of hundreds. Then you had better head southwest from here. It is a bit faster and is more likely to be poorly guarded. Judar is in charge of that area, so we can only put our hope on his disinterest in everything."

"Indifferent to everything? He truly is Rebecca's descendant. He resembles her in everything."

"It is a bit different. It is only natural for you to misunderstand about the Goddess, but... in fact, the Goddess' personality has always been very active. She pays attention to all things. Don't you already know that? The blessing of the Goddess that is still on you is one of the proofs."

"...Certainly."

In the past, Goddess Rebecca had direct interactions with humans.

Making Damian her agent to help Grid, entrusted Grid with the fate of the Rebecca Church, and giving him a blessing in return—not only did she answer the prayers of the church members, but she had formed relationships with players in various forms.

Then one day, she suddenly fell silent. She ignored people's prayers.

"Why did the Goddess' personality suddenly change?"

"Who knows...? There isn't enough evidence to conclude that her personality has changed. I can't even say anything."

This was even though he was a Chief God. After all, he was created by Rebecca. To Hexetia, Rebecca was like unfathomable territory and it was even more so than the universe that was unfathomable to humans.

"Is that so...?"

Grid sped up his pace. He could no longer rely on the King of Poor Fate's Brooch. It was because it only affected the wearer, so Hexetia and Khan's positions were

exposed anyway. It was best to follow Hexetia's advice to correct his course and move.

'I hope the Great Robber is safe.'

All the Archangels other than Raphael seemed to have headed in the direction of the Great Robber. It was a power that even Grid couldn't handle alone.

'He will be fine.'

Grid recalled the inclination of the Great Robber. He didn't bother fighting. He easily deceived the target with this stealth technique. He also held a large number of the Refractive Dragon's treasures.

'No matter what crisis he faces, he isn't someone who can be easily isolated. He can surely break through even the Archangels' siege.'

After a while, Grid arrived at the scene without having any doubts.

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"Aren't you too late?"

He reunited with the Great Robber of the Red Night at the promised location. The unkempt Great Robber was tied up with a rope. He was surrounded by an army of angels and looked like a sinner, like Zeratul. It was an army led by the 2nd ranked Archangel, Gabriel. The number was small compared to Raphael's army, but they didn't lose in terms of momentum.

"...What is this?" Grid asked in a bewildered manner.

The Great Robber of the Red Night looked like it was unfair as he replied, "I definitely got what I wanted and I managed to escape safely. However, I was caught because I waited for you here a long time."

"It has been a while."

The Great Robber's words were interrupted by Gabriel. In the past, she failed to dispose of Garion, the God of the Earth, and lost her body in reverse. She was very happy to see Grid after suffering great humiliation due to him. She grinned as she pushed up her round glasses.

"You are out of the ordinary and have finally risen to the hierarchy of Only One God. Of course, the Only One God isn't synonymous with Chiyou, so the weight is different."

Not all Only One Gods were the same...

Gabriel was clearly downgrading Grid. It was a normal attitude. It was because one of the most important concepts in the hierarchy of a transcendent or higher was the status. Striving to downgrade the enemy's status was the basis of battle in the upper ranks. Of course, status couldn't be reduced with just a few words as long as they didn't try to scam everyone like Grid.

'Is the identity of the other intruder Grid? I was very lucky to have arrived here before my colleagues.'

Gabriel was feeling a sense of fate that she had never felt before. She had the opportunity to get revenge on the enemy who disrupted her mission and humiliated her. It was also in heaven, not on the surface. The situation was too good.

'Seeing that he managed to escape from prison with the prisoners, Zeratul must've been a variable.'

Gabriel didn't attach any special significance to Grid outwitting Raphael and reaching this far. She guessed it was all thanks to Zeratul. It was purely because she considered the usual relationship between Raphael and Zeratul. Zeratul had been locked up in prison and his grudge deepened. Therefore, he would've poured out his anger on Raphael, opening up a way for Grid to escape in the gap.

'What a fool.'

How would Zeratul be feeling after he saved Grid, whom he hated so much?

Gabriel covered her ridicule with graceful gestures and gathered light in both hands. In a split second, the light took the form of a sword and shield.

Gabriel declared as she reached Grid in an instant, "The sin of invading heaven without permission. It is a summary execution for the conviction of bringing out prisoners who were imprisoned by the gods. You and this human will die here and the prisoners will go back to where they belong."

Just like you did to me on the surface, I will also ruin your work.

Unlike Raphael, she was cautious and understood Grid's power. This was even though she clearly knew that Grid would be greatly weakened after being suppressed by the dimension. She thoroughly prepared a way to neutralize Grid.

First of all, the halo above her head split into hundreds and were used as cannons that shot light rays. It was a weapon that would intercept and disable the God Hands from various angles as soon as they appeared.

The reason why she used a sword and shield to dig deep into Grid was to undermine the power of the sword dance. It was intended to engage in close combat and block the path of the fusion sword dance, which became stronger the more the movements were linked.

Of course, she saved her power. It was a loss to take out this card in a must-win situation. Just like the current Grid, it was better to save her strength for a future situation where she could exploit it.

'Killing him completely here is beyond my power.'

It was unfortunate, but she would focus on damaging his status by beating him badly today. She would spread the sight of Grid falling down in a bloody pool through the angel's songs to the surface.

Gabriel was thinking this when she suddenly stiffened. Grid broke through her using Freely Move and appeared among the angels before she knew it. It was hard to believe he could move so swiftly under the oppression of the dimension. It was even powerful. He overpowered and shook off the angels and finally got a hold of the Great Robber.

"Angels are surprisingly insignificant..."

It was a heartfelt murmur. The sentiment that Grid expressed at the end sparked Gabriel's wrath, but it was already too late.

It was because the treasure of the Refractive Dragon consumed by the Great Robber allowed the group to escape from the scene.

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[The mysterious magic that is turning all restrictions into nothing is forcibly transferring you.]

[You have safely escaped from the world of the gods, 'Asgard.']

[Gourmet Dragon Raiders has noticed your return and has taken back 'Golden Protection.']

"Gasp... Gasp... Gasp..."

Grid arrived back at the surface and immediately sank to the ground. He struggled to calm down as he let out rough breaths. His heart was thumping like crazy. His intact body proved his safe return, but the fatigue felt by Grid was comparable to when he fought fiercely with Trauka.

Searching for the key in the middle of enemy lines, accidentally meeting Zeratul, being isolated in an army of angels, the Great Robber of the Red Night being taken prisoner, etc. Every crisis he experienced in Asgard was deadly.

Of course, Grid had survived all the crises unscathed. It even gave him the results he wanted. However, it was purely luck. What if there was no Zeratul in the Prison of Eternity? Additionally, what if Raiders hadn't given him Golden Protection? By now, Grid would've been in trouble in Asgard. It was clear that it would've been difficult to stay alive, let alone rescue Khan and Hexetia.

'Asgard...'

Just as the celestial gods couldn't invade the Overgeared World without permission, Asgard was perceived as an impregnable fortress by Grid. He didn't want to get involved with it again. It was to the point where he made up his mind not to even pee in the direction of Asgard.

Asgard might be in the sky, but... in any case, he really meant it.

"How is it? Wasn't it easily solved compared to what you were worried about?"

"...Do you have any shame?"

He calmed down as he criticized the Great Robber for making a joke. Grid thought positively. He didn't have to visit Asgard again in the future. Yes, he rescued Khan and Hexetia, so it was all over. He really crossed a huge hurdle. In the future, he only needed to focus on Baal's subjugation. Unravel the distortion of hell and allow the dead to find rest...

"You seem a bit angry, but most of what you went through in Asgard was consistent with my predictions."

"Weren't you almost killed by angels?"

"You obtained Golden Protection and safely broke through the siege of the angels."

"....."

"Communicating with dragons has a greater value beyond what you think."

Dragon Knight.

"Think about it. You are a being who is regarded as an equal to dragons and have an understanding with them. You are the 'only one in the world' who deserves the favor of a dragon. You must be special to the dragons."

It was the strength of an Only One title.

"Now do you understand why I described you and Raiders as an essential preparation for ascending to heaven?"

"...To be honest, I can't believe it. I am special to the dragons..."

"Do you have no conscience?"

The Great Robber frowned and clicked his tongue. This was a reaction that Lael often showed to Grid.

"Look back on it. How have the dragons you met so far treated you?"

"Ah..."

After Fire Dragon Ifrit, Grid had met many dragons and had a good ending with them, even if they quarreled at first.

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He had cooperated and communicated with the five dragons that invaded Reidan, including Xenon and Basque. Cranbel, the top dragon who made them cooperate, declared in a noble manner that he wouldn't deal any retribution to Grid and humans.

Insane Dragon Nevartan talked nonsense about welcoming Grid as his son-in-law and personally asked Grid for a reconciliation. In the end, Gourmet Dragon Raiders gave Golden Protection to Grid. Evil Dragon Bunhelier even carried Grid on his back. It was a choice for himself, but if he hadn't trusted Grid, he wouldn't have allowed Grid on his back in the first place.

"As you know, dragons are pretty pitiful creatures. Most of them live in hiding alone for all their lives because they are afraid they will be preyed upon by their own kind. They aren't in a position to trust anyone. But the dragons have relied on or expected things from you one time or another."

This was the result that Fire Dragon Ifrit created.

Making a horn.

She grasped at straws as she was about to die and Grid did his best to grant her request. The conveyed sincerity led to the connection between Ifrit and Grid. After that, all dragons came to know Grid. At first, they harbored resentment. Then gradually, they came to acknowledge and rely on him. It was with the feeling that they also wanted to become Ifrit in the end.

"Poor creatures... Humans... Do dragons sympathize with humans?"

Raiders had whispered it when they arrived in Asgard.

[Keep this in mind. From a human point of view, we are better than the gods of Asgard.]

Looking back now, it was a statement that made him think a lot.

"A disaster that can destroy a city with a single flap of their wings... it is one of the expressions always used when discussing dragons. However, there are few records of dragons destroying cities. At least, that is the case in 'this world.'"

Reidan had to go through something that was so rare that it could be counted on one hand twice. Anger suddenly flared up in Grid, but he calmed down.

"Of course, I know this is the result of the hard work of Hayate and the tower members. Yet it is too few even taking into account the existence of the tower. I always thought it was because of the dragon's indifference, but... in fact, it isn't that dragons don't care about humans. It is that they actually feel sympathetic and considerate of humans?"

"That is a ridiculous guess."

The Great Robber of the Red Night immediately shook his head.

"Do you feel a sense of sympathy for ephemeral dust? The reason dragons are harmless to humans compared to their power is due to sheer indifference. Didn't I already say it? You are respected by the dragons as an 'equal.' Only you are special. You and ordinary humans shouldn't be considered in the same category."

"...I see." Grid, who had almost developed a liking toward dragons, shook his head. He shook off his premature speculation and asked for the most important facts.

"So... what treasure did you steal from Asgard this time?"

If he thought about it a bit more deeply, it was highly likely that today's Great Robber of the Red Night was close to his aspiration.

A treasure that was kept in Asgard—it was like getting the last hidden piece that he wouldn't have been able to get in a world without Grid.

"It is the object that contains the most divine power of the Refractive Dragon. I have to figure out the exact usage."

In a natural manner, the Great Robber of the Red Night didn't hide the identity of the treasure from Grid. The problem was that the information of the treasure was marked with all question marks to Grid.

'It seems to be an area that players can't access.'

It felt like he was blocked by the system. It was related to the secrets of the world, so it wasn't a riddle that players could somehow solve. It was an attitude that was saying that players didn't need to be interested.

'In the first place, the Great Robber of the Red Night said it. The dragon god isn't something for me to care about.'

The dragon god, the Refractive Dragon—an object that humans who were nearing the end of the world relied on as a last resort. It had nothing to do with players preventing the apocalypse on their own.

"May this treasure be of great strength to you."

"It should be humanity's strength, not mine. Anyway, thank you... it is all thanks to you."

[Affinity with the Great Robber of the Red Night has reached the maximum.]

[On blue days, cloudy days, or dark nights. Every time you need it, he will run to your side.]

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Then he wouldn't be called the Great Robber of the Red Night, right? Grid smiled and his eyes fell on Khan.

Khan had been standing silently ever since arriving on the surface. He was examining his surroundings slowly and intently, like a photographer trying to imprint a landscape that he treasured dearly. All types of emotions flashed in his eyes that were filled with water.

Grid didn't bother to interrupt. He stood and waited silently for Khan to resolve it. Then after a while—

"Your hometown... would you like to go there?"

Grid saw Khan wiping the tears from his eyes as if he finished recalling his memories and carefully asked a question.

Hometown—it was a word that had a special resonance for most people. However, it was especially special for Khan. There was the smithy Khan ran that had passed for generations through his family, as well as the tombstones where Khan's family, especially his son, was buried. It was also where he first met Grid. It was also one of the places with the most memories for Grid.

Surprisingly, Khan shook his head. "I would like to go to Reinhardt first."

"You will be staying in Reinhardt from now on, so there is no need to hurry..."

"Isn't there where you have been living since I left? I've always been curious about it. There are so many people I can't wait to meet."

"Khan!!"

"Khan!"

"Grandfather!"

Each person should live their own lives. This was the expression that was most suitable for the Overgeared Guild. The current Overgeared members, who pretended to be invincible everywhere, scattered all over the nation. They did their best so people didn't have time to feel Grid's absence as he was busy dealing with gods, demons, and dragons.

However, they all came together.

Khan—the members of the Overgeared Guild also had precious memories with him. Ruby's reaction was particularly fierce.

It was when she had just stepped into this world. As Grid's sister, Khan had taken care of her like a granddaughter.

"I wanted to see you! I missed you so much, Grandfather!"

"The same goes for me. I am happy to see you become a beautiful woman. Huhu."

Khan patted Ruby, who was crying as she hugged him. Sniffles were heard everywhere. The people who joined the Overgeared Guild after Khan's death knew the story of Khan well, so they were also thrilled.

Only one person.

"I'm sorry... I'm really sorry..."

Only Faker greeted Khan with the heart of a sinner. He still couldn't shake off the memory of that day when he couldn't protect Khan from Veradin. He had been plagued with intense guilt even though no one had blamed him. Not once had he ever forgotten the incompetence of that day.

Faker fell to his knees and Khan hugged his trembling body.

"Thank you. I am really thankful. Thanks to you who fought desperately to protect me, I was neither afraid nor lonely. Thanks to you, I was able to hold on until I said my last goodbye to Grid."

".....!"

Faker's body collapsed in Khan's arms. The burden on his mind had been bothering him for a long time and now it was melted away by the hot body temperature of the blacksmith who returned. It was the moment when the dagger, which had been worn out after being sharpened, was re-tempered.

Everyone present had a hunch. In the future, the Overgeared Guild would become more and more united. It would become uncontrollably powerful.

"Hum hum..."

This was until Hexetia's impatience revealed itself.

Grid and the Overgeared members hugged Khan while laughing and crying.