

Overgeared 211

Chapter 211

Coke was confused.

'What is this?'

He lost more than a third of his health when hit by a bone thrown by a beggar?

'A bug?'

It was a reasonable guess. A bug made more sense than a high level user like him being so damaged by a bone.

Who was he?

Less than half a year after starting Satisfy, he reached level 109 and was one of the best known players in Patrian. He also had a chance to hunt one of the most notorious monsters near Patrian, the orc captain, alone.

'I will be a god in the future, so I can't be hurt by a bone...!'

Coke's goal was Grid. It was his desire to be called God Coke on the world stage, just like Grid. He had such a lofty goal that today's experience was even more humiliating.

"You hit me so, I'll hit you back!"

Coke rolled up his sleeves. Then he swung his hand at Piaro's head.

"Keok."

[You have suffered 3,140 damage.]

This time, it was a bean. It wasn't even a big kidney bean, but a small pea. He was shocked as a pea flew out and hit him.

'Unbelievable! It wasn't a bug?'

Jeurereuk.

Blood poured from Coke's mouth as he finally figured out the situation. He was able to realize that Piaro wasn't a beggar, but a tremendously high level NPC.

'I didn't understand the subject!'

Satisfy was famous for never having a bug since it opened. It was rumored that the creator, Lim Cheolho, was a god. Coke belatedly tried to change his attitude. He attempted to avoid a situation by apologizing to Piaro. But it was still a crisis because the other users didn't understand the atmosphere.

"That guy is throwing food! Coke! Smash him!"

"Teach that beginner and NPC a lesson!"

The users didn't know that Coke was already half dead!

“Coke! Coke! Coke!”

“Get rid of that beggar!”

Coke was upset because of their cheers and fighting atmosphere.

‘Please figure out the atmosphere!’

He didn’t want to be killed by bones and peas in front of Patrian’s users, who looked up to him. Coke nervously looked at Piaro, but Piaro had no interest in him. He dismissed Coke at the level of a flying insect.

Grid felt admiration.

“What did you just do? It looks like you dealt big damage with the bone and pea?”

The user with the ID of Coke, based on the items he wore, he had a minimum level of 100. In addition, his armor had at least a rare rating. It was amazing that Coke coughed up blood after being hit by a bean.

Piaro explained to Grid. “I used qi. I can maximize my power by injecting qi into an object. In my hands, even a feather can become a sharp sword.”

“It is like a wuxia master.”

“Wuxia? What is that?”

“Strong people like you who transform the world.”

Grid and Piaro didn’t care about the other people making a fuss. The users became increasingly furious.

“That beggar is ignoring us until the end...!”

Coke didn’t take action, so the level 78th monk called Pitu and the level 85 berserker Dais rose from their seats. As they were approaching Piaro, the door of the inn suddenly opened.

“Sir Dio is coming!”

Dozens of soldiers rushed into the narrow inn. They stood and saluted as a white armored knight entered. The young man had particularly noticeable blonde eyelashes. He looked around the inn with narrowed eyes.

“It stinks. Are people eating worse than pigs? It’s incredibly stinky.” Dio held a blue rose in one hand and raised it to his nose. He smelled it and asked. “Has anyone here seen Duke Grid?”

“Duke Grid?”

“Is he talking about God Grid?”

There were no high level monsters near Patrian. It was because the knights and soldiers of Patrian used the monsters to train.

“Why would they be looking for a high level user in Patrian?”

"No. Why would God Grid come to this type of place?"

"You really don't know." In the end, Dio started to examine the users' faces for Grid. "You're not it. You also aren't it. You as well. Um...?"

Dio's gaze went to a corner. There was a beginner adventurer sitting next to a beggar.

"Take your hat off. Heok?"

Dio approached Grid and commanded, only to become terrified. It was because of an enormous stench that spread.

"Dirty guy...!"

Dio was a noble and a knight, so he had an unusually obsessive temperament about being clean. He became furious at Piaro, who hadn't taken a bath for at least a month.

"How dare you go around in such a disgusting manner! What a shameless bastard! My nose will become paralyzed because of you! Don't make me nauseous and go away!"

"Ohh!"

The users annoyed by Piaro thought this was a cool remark.

"Let's go."

Grid rose from his seat. He judged that it would be better to leave because Earl Ashur seemed to have noticed him.

'I don't want to delay the time.'

The big city Reidan. He had tremendous expectations about his city. He wanted to arrive quickly and check how much taxes he would get. Dio caught up with Grid who was trying to leave.

"Didn't I tell you to take off your hat?"

"...The boat might've already sailed." Grid grinned at Dio and asked. "Do you really think that I am Duke Grid?"

Dio bluntly replied.

"That's right. I received a tip that Duke Grid was here."

Grid's face distorted. "Then why are you speaking like that?"

"Uh...?"

An enormous pressure was released. Dio, the soldiers and the users in the inn were overwhelmed by the pressure and hesitated. It was because Grid's dignity stat was comparable to the king of a nation. He threw off his hat.

"G-Grid...!"

"God Grid!"

Dio was astonished, while the other users cried out. Grid pressed his finger to Dio's forehead. "If you knew I was Duke Grid, why did you speak without using honorifics? Eh? What did you originally say? Did you call me a bastard? Eh? Are we friends?"

Grid had bad feelings towards Earl Ashur's knights as well. The one who killed Grid when he acquired Pagma's Rare Book wasn't Earl Ashur, but Earl Ashur's knights. And Dio was one of them.

"I tried to endure it, but this bastard is too arrogant."

Grid couldn't suppress his rage and slapped Dio. It was a terrible experience for Dio, who had never even been scolded by his parents.

"Y-You hit me...!"

He bit his lips as Grid hit Dio's cheeks again.

"You didn't even apologize for not bowing! This rude bastard!"

Grid had matured after several incidents, but the roots of a human didn't easily change. Grid's natural tendencies weren't good. Grid slapped Dio in front of all these people, without considering Dio's position at all.

Slap!Slap!Slap!

Dio's handsome face quickly swelled up like a toad. In the end, Dio's string of reason snapped. He grabbed his sword, forgetting Earl Ashur's order to 'graciously' bring Grid to him.

"Such humiliation...!"

"What? Do you dare to show disrespect to a duke? You want to be like this until the end?" Grid's eyes shone. It was the same as when he was called the Psychopath Butcher. "You are sentenced to death."

Jeeeong!

He swung Failure. Dio couldn't cope with a single strike and was thrown back into the wall.

"Cough! Cough!"

The soldiers panicked as they watched Dio coughing up blood. Should they protect their leader? But wasn't that considered a rebellion against the duke? As the soldiers were troubled, the cool blade was held to Dio's jaw.

"Do you remember that day?"

"That day...?"

"The day that I found Pagma's Rare Book."

"I clearly remember."

Dio couldn't forget, since it was the day that Earl Ashur's anger pierced the sky. Grid gritted his teeth, "On that day, I was killed by your swords. I will give you a chance to experience the same pain."

Unlike a user who would resurrect if they died, the life of a NPC was finite. In Satisfy, killing an NPC was equivalent to murder in reality. Grid was unwilling to harm an NPC. It was even more so after forming a relationship with Khan. Due to that, he didn't intend to kill Dio and was just planning to terrify him.

However, Dio became honestly scared and pissed himself. He started foaming at the mouth and lost consciousness. It was an event that would become a lifelong trauma for Dio, who had been an elite since childhood.

"It seems strange if you're the duke of the kingdom." Piaro remarked.

Grid shrugged. "This was a dirty case. I have a bad chemistry with this place."

"So that's why you hid your identity."

The two people left the inn and were moving to exit Patrian. Coke rushed after them.

"Grid! Grid!"

Grid frowned. "Can't you see that I am moving in secret? Why are you calling out the name of a person without thinking?"

"I-I'm really sorry. I was so excited that I wasn't thinking..." Coke took out a piece of paper and asked Grid. "Please sign this!"

"...Sign?" Grid's distorted expression disappeared. "Are you my fan?"

"You're my idol! I want to be just like you!"

"Hmm hmm."

He was an idol. Grid had been ignored by others for his whole life, so he had to be thrilled. He signed Coke's piece of paper.

"Thank you."

It was the moment when Coke, who would be included in the next 10 Rookies, became Grid's real fan.

Meanwhile, Earl Ashur received the news about Dio.

"I can't leave this alone."

The embarrassment of his subordinate was the embarrassment of the owner! Earl Ashur became more furious at Grid and grasped his exact position with the magic spheres. Then he used Mass Teleport on him and his knights.

Grid stopped as he was leaving Patrian. He saw the light from the sky and Ashur appeared in front of him.

"In the end, you came here. Do you really want to die? Are you crazy?" Earl Ashur angrily asked Grid.

"I'm not like I was in the past. I'm no longer to be trifled with. Can you afford to go against me?" Grid asked arrogantly, and Earl Ashur scoffed.

"I'm the only great magician in the Eternal Kingdom, and one of the 10 great magicians on the continent."

It wasn't an exaggeration. Earl Ashur was the strongest man in the kingdom. That's why he was appointed to the strategic point of Patrian.

"I'm not afraid of Pagma's power. You aren't Pagma. I have enough skills to get rid of you... Heok?"

Earl Ashur suddenly became shocked. It was because an overwhelming amount of energy was being emitted.

"I would like to compete with one of the 10 great magicians of the continent."

It was the moment when Piaro's competitive spirit was triggered.

"W-Who are you?"

Earl Ashur could no longer worry about Grid due to the unexpected emergence of a monster. It was putting the cart before the horse.

Chapter 212

The Eternal Kingdom and Gauss Kingdom didn't have a good relationship. Over the past decades, there had been countless disputes and frequent bloodshed. The Eternal Kingdom used the guise of being a neutral kingdom to monopolize some of the Gauss Kingdom's products.

But the Gauss Kingdom wasn't able to induce conflict with the Eternal Kingdom. It was because the great magician Ashur was present at the border. Earl Ashur's power was like a nuclear warhead in modern society, so it was enough to suppress any conflicts.

But Piaro was more than that.

"W-Who are you?"

In the beginning, Earl Ashur had no interest in the beggar. No, he hadn't even noticed. He only paid attention to Grid. Now the beggar was emitting an energy that could reverse the situation. At this moment, Earl Ashur's five senses were only concentrated on the beggar. His original purpose of taking care of Grid disappeared.

'Is this fear I'm feeling?' Goosebumps covered his entire body. 'There was a monster like this hiding in the kingdom?'

Earl Ashur gulped as Piaro asked for a duel.

"I want to experience the skills of one of the continent's 10 great magicians."

"I refuse. I have no reason to fight you, nor do I want to fight."

Earl Ashur was adamant. But Piaro just pulled out his sword.

He was still obsessed with revenge, but he was also thirsty to fight against the strong. He was filled with a desire to become a sword saint. In particular, he was obsessed with Earl Ashur, because he had no experience fighting great magicians.

“You have no choice.”

‘Crazy bastard!’

This was his only chance to get revenge on Grid, who stole Pagma’s Rare Book, as well as his son’s crush. Once Grid arrived at Reidan and solidified his position as a duke, Earl Ashur would no longer be able to act against him. Later, he would be forced to bow before Duke Grid.

But at this critical junction, someone interfered. Earl Ashur’s anger soared.

“Who the hell are you?”

Earl Ashur knew about the group with the strange name of Overgeared who were working with Grid. But there was no information about this beggar being part of Overgeared.

Where did this guy suddenly pop out from?

“Why are you with Grid? Are you his protector?”

“Protector? You’re mistaken. I don’t have anything to do with Duke Grid. This is my personal interest.”

In the first place, did Grid need his protection? It was clear that this person called Ashur didn’t know much about Grid.

“Anyway, you aren’t Duke Grid’s opponent. It is better for you to compete against me. Right now, I am in an incomplete condition.”

“This person!”

Earl Ashur sounded resentful towards Piaro, but his head was calm.

‘I must be calm. I shouldn’t turn him into my enemy.’

The rumors might be exaggerated, but Grid’s strength that he showed in Reinhardt wasn’t negligible. Grid was praised as the kingdom’s hero, so Earl Ashur had to fight seriously. After fighting with a much stronger opponent, could he take care of Grid?

‘It is impossible.’

The wisest choice was to let Grid go. But.

‘I can’t miss the chance for revenge that will never come again.’ Earl Ashur made a decision. ‘Create a space where Grid and I can fight.’

In other words, create a three dimensional space. Space magic was different from other magic, so the consumption of magic power was very extreme. Even Earl Ashur had to consume half of his magic power to create a space ward. But he was willing to do this to handle Grid.

“Buy me some time.”

An earl was only supposed to have five knights, but Earl Ashur had dozens of knights as a commander of a fortified city. He not only had great individual power, but his forces surpassed that of his title.

The elite knights got into formation at once. In that gap, Earl Ashur chanted a spell.

"Shake hands."

Elite knights? They were nothing compared to the knights of the Saharan Empire, the strongest nation on the continent. Furthermore, Piaro was the captain of the Red Knights.

"It's a waste of manpower."

Piaro's missing sword shot straight ahead. A knight defended by raising his shield, but Piaro predicted this.

"Supreme Swordsmanship 3rd style."

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

It was comparable with the skill of a martial artist. Piaro's sword collided with the shield. The owner of the shield became a rag, while the other knights standing behind him spurted blood. It was the moment when the knights that Earl Ashur was proud of were knocked down by a single blow.

"Heok?"

"Defense is useless?"

The knights freaked out as it felt like they were hit by a tornado. Piaro leapt lightly. He didn't give the knights time to reform their formation.

"Kuaaaaak!"

He really was like a god. Piaro defied the laws of gravity as he stood in the air and wielded his sword. The vulnerable knights were unable to respond as the sword techniques fell from the sky. They couldn't use the advantage of numbers to threaten Piaro, so they could only defend.

However, Piaro's sword accelerated so quickly that it was difficult to chase with the eyes, making it virtually impossible to defend.

"Ugh!"

Jacks, the leader of the knights, swung his halberd and tried to counterattack in the gap when his men were being attacked. But it was difficult to hit, because Piaro rotated his body in the air at a dizzying speed.

"This monster!"

It was unbelievable. He completely avoided the large and wide attack of the halberd in the air? Was this old man a rumored assassin? Jacks continuously wielded his halberd. The opponent avoided it until the end. Then there was an unforgettable experience.

"What?"

The halberd started to be sucked into the rotating Piaro, as if it was attracted by a magnet. Jacks tried to withstand it with all his strength, but it was useless. He let go of the halberd.

Jjejejeok!

The halberd lost its master and shattered in the air.

“Keok.”

The falling fragments of the halberd aimed precisely at the knights on the ground. They were wearing expensive armor, but whether it was coincidence of Piaro’s intentions, the fragments only aimed at the gaps on the armor. The armor was useless and the knights instantly collapsed.

“M-Monster...!”

Jacks couldn’t close his mouth. Earl Ashur was even more surprised.

‘They couldn’t last?’

One minute. That was the amount of time required to generate the ward. The 23 knights couldn’t withstand that short amount of time.

Cheok.

At last, Piaro landed on the ground and stepped forward, ignoring Jacks. He neared Earl Ashur.

"In the end, we have to fight?" Earl Ashur screamed at Piaro. “That’s right! Okay! Let’s try it once!”

It seemed he couldn’t avoid the fight. Earl Ashur pulled out a staff that was 50 cm in length. Most magicians used orbs due to the versatility of the orb that could store magic. However, Earl Ashur was fast in magic casting, so he used a staff that amplified magic.

“Haste!”

One of the most important elements in a magic battle was speed. The opponent must hit before the magician finished casting a spell, and the magician must finish casting a spell before allowing an attack. Earl Ashur quickly increased his movement speed with Haste and widened the distance with Piaro.

He already finished casting the next spell.

"Orion’s Illusion!"

It was an illusion technique. Earl Ashur created five clones of himself and once again opened up the distance while Piaro was searching for the real body. Next was debuff magic.

“Soul Weakness!”

Piaro’s body became as sticky as oil and unpleasant magic power suppressed him.

"Disgusting."

Piaro’s body lost its swiftness, but he bent like a bow and shot forward like a thunderbolt. He maximized his body’s ability to increase speed, offsetting the effect of the debuff.

‘Did he resist? My magic? No, it’s impossible.’

Earl Ashur’s eyes widened as he faced Piaro. But he tried to remain calm and finished casting the magic spell.

“Ice Tornado!”

It was a mixture of two A-grade spells with different attributes, and exerted more power than an A-grade spell. It was still significantly less powerful than S-grade magic, so why did he use it?

Even a great magician couldn't cast S-grade spells in an instant. Using S-grade magic without precautionary measures against a person like Piaro was close to suicide.

Jjejejeok!

Piaro's body froze as he approached Earl Ashur. Earl Ashur's magic power exceeded common sense, so there was no one who wouldn't be frozen.

'This guy won't die like this.'

Earl Ashur believed that Piaro would recover within five seconds and started to chant a S-grade spell in that gap. However, he underestimated Piaro.

Chaaeng!

“...!”

Earl Ashur was shocked. An intangible energy was felt from the frost and it shattered before even a few words could be chanted?

“You've already recovered?”

It was too fast to use S-grade magic. He had to quickly accumulate more damage using A-grade spells. He belatedly responded to Piaro's sword that was flying.

"Shield!"

It was the manifestation of basic defensive magic that even beginners could use.

"Great magic power."

Piaro admired Ashur, who absorbed most of the damage with his shield. However, he continued to wield his sword. Earl Ashur stood firm. He tried to avoid as much damage as possible by relying on the previously activated Haste, while minimizing the actual damage using Shield.

Despite the continuous wounds he kept receiving, he used Shield while chanting S-grade magic in his head. Earl Ashur's concentration was truly worthy of respect.

“Yes!”

Piaro was swinging his sword when he suddenly felt alarmed. He detected a strong magic power and used the Supreme Swordsmanship 5th style, a defense technique.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Something intangible shot out of Earl Ashur the moment the spell was completed.

“Fluid Escape.”

Fluid Escape was a spell that separated the soul and body of the caster for three seconds. The caster could control the soul that emerged from the body, while the body became immune to all damage.

Jeeeong!

Earl Ashur's body wasn't damaged at all despite being hit.

'This is the power of Fluid Escape!'

Earl Ashur's soul passed through Piaro's body and dealt damage in proportion to his magic power.

"Kuk!"

Blood poured from Piaro.

"I can't tangle with this monster forever."

Earl Ashur's soul headed towards Grid, who was watching the battle with folded arms. He didn't give up on his original goal of aiming for Grid.

"Die!"

Kwaaaang!

Earl Ashur's soul went through the grid.

[You have suffered 40,985 damage.]

[You have received catastrophic damage all at once, and your spirit can't endure it.]

[You have resisted.]

Grid was unprepared for the damage and suffered. The soul's movement speed was so remarkable that the pavranium responded late. It was virtually impossible for a human to perceive it. Ashur's soul returned to his body.

"You deceived me!"

Piaro suffered great damage to his pride and wielded his sword, but there was a powerful shockwave as soon as the soul returned to the body. Piaro knew this fact, but he was confident that he could neutralize it with his blade.

However, Earl Ashur's magic power couldn't be pierced by the sword.

Peeng!

"This...!"

Piaro was pushed back by the shockwave. While he was upset, Earl Ashur aimed at Grid.

"This is the end!"

Finally, his grudge would be repaid. Earl Ashur was determined to kill Grid while Grid was suffering from great damage and not in the right mindset. But what was this? Grid moved smoothly and Earl Ashur's vision was covered with blue-white light.

"Kuaaaaak!"

Earl Ashur screamed at the unexpected attack. He suffered cumulative damage when reciting the S-grade magic, so he easily fell down.

Grid pointed Failure at him and said, "Beg me, Duke Grid, for your life."

"W-What...!"

Grid's sword damage was as powerful as Piaro's. No, maybe even more than that. Earl Ashur thought it was ridiculous.

Chapter 213

'He's this strong?'

Earl Ashur was exposed to news about Grid's actions in Reinhardt. The strongest golem army, that hundreds of thousands of troops couldn't go against, was cut like carrots. But weren't rumors always exaggerated?

During Grid's novice adventurer days. Earl Ashur remembered that he had no talent and was a fool, so he had no choice but to laugh at the rumors. Grid might have the ability of a legend, but it was dulled because he couldn't use it properly. The nobles must've intentionally inflated the rumors in order to boost the morale of the people.

But that wasn't it. Now Grid was the hero in the rumors. At that moment, Earl Ashur's memories of the beginner Grid were completely blown away. His narrow perception disappeared and he started to perceive the current Grid correctly.

'Indeed, this is an absolute presence.'

The two eyes reminiscent of rotten fish. The mean eyes when facing the weak now shone as they contemplated the world in a much stronger face. The weak body that always shrank back. The pathetic flesh that ran away when hunting orcs and was killed by the orc captain, it was now standing firmly like a mountain.

That disgusting face. He didn't care about how he looked and was always jealous of others. That horrible face now emitted a dignity that charmed all the people of the kingdom.

'Is it possible for a person to change this way...?'

"You want me to beg for my life?"

Earl Ashur quietly observed Grid and the blue sword in his hand. The sword gleaming with a white light was something that could only be seen in legends. Earl Ashur felt a fear of death. His instincts were shouting at him to succumb to Grid.

This was the effect of Grid's high dignity stat. However, Earl Ashur had the highest pride as the strongest person in the Eternal Kingdom and a great magician, so he didn't give in easily.

"I'd rather die."

He hadn't been sure Pagma's Rare Book actually existed.

Earl Ashur decided to use Grid, who was easy to take advantage of. However, he gave reasonable compensation and didn't put a time limit on the quest. It was a quest he seriously entrusted to Grid, because he believed in Grid's inherent tenacity. Did he give a novice adventurer the quest in an attempt to trick him?

No, it was Grid who abandoned the faith first. Grid was blinded by greed after discovering Pagma's Rare Book and broke the promise, trying to take the book for himself.

'That wasn't all.'

His precious son Bland had been in love with Irene for many years. The woman who seemed likely to marry Bland had been taken away by Grid. It was better to choose death than to submit to Grid, who wasn't just his enemy, but his son's enemy as well.

Grid was baffled as he watched Earl Ashur tightly close his eyes.

'He really wants me to kill him?'

Grid had hated Earl Ashur since he was killed. But it was his choice to quickly find Pagma's Rare Book without understanding the subject. He wasn't forced by Earl Ashur. Nevertheless, whenever he suffered a trial, he blamed everything on Earl Ashur.

His habit of blaming others was the problem. Strictly speaking, there was no reason for Grid to resent Earl Ashur. If Pagma's Rare Book hadn't existed, Grid wouldn't have found it or turned into Pagma's Descendant.

As a result, Earl Ashur was Grid's benefactor. Of course, that was just the result, and there was no need for Grid to feel gratitude. It was through Grid's willpower that he found Pagma's Rare Book and became Pagma's Descendant. It was due to Grid's own efforts that he could grow until now, and it wasn't thanks to Earl Ashur.

Anyway, this was the conclusion.

'I have overwhelmed him but... Looking at this, I don't need to kill him.'

Grid still didn't like Earl Ashur. In fact, he had the experience of being murdered by Earl Ashur's knights, and he had been directly threatened with death by Earl Ashur, so it wasn't easy to feel forgiveness.

But it wasn't enough to feel the urge to murder him. His conscience didn't allow him to.

"Sigh, okay. Forget it."

"...?" Earl Ashur was confused as Grid sighed and took back his sword. "I tried to kill you. But you will spare me?"

Earl Ashur's strength transcended his title, but he was still an earl. Grid was a duke, but Earl Ashur treated him badly and even tried to kill him because of a grudge of the past. Now that he discovered that Grid was really qualified to be a duke, Earl Ashur was aware that he committed a crime. He thought it was natural to be executed, so he couldn't accept this.

"Is there something you will demand separately of me?"

Earl Ashur eyed Grid warily.

'I had mercy on him, yet he's still doubting me?' Grid's heart beat faster. The Grid of the past would've been swept away by his emotions and spoken nonsense. 'It's better to ask for something in exchange for saving him.'

Grid had learned to take advantage of certain situations. He had learned it by watching Lael for three months. What could he get from Earl Ashur?

Grid thought about it.

'Money? Jewelry? Land? Items?'

He was greedy. As Grid was deeply troubled about what he should ask for, Lael sent him a whisper.

-Grid, everyone has arrived in Reidan except for Euphemina. When are you going to arrive?

-I think it will take three more days.

-Three days? What is taking so long? Can't you come quickly if you use Fly? Come quickly. There is a mountain of work to do.

-I have a companion. But my companion doesn't want to ride a carriage, so we're walking. Just handle things for a few days.

-Companion...? Who are you talking about?

-You'll see when you meet him. It is good that you got in touch with me. I actually...

Grid briefly explained to Lael about the relationship between him and Earl Ashur, as well as the current situation.

-...In these circumstances, what should I ask from Earl Ashur?

-Earl Ashur...

As one of the 10 great magicians on the continent, Earl Ashur was a huge celebrity. Lael already knew about him, so he thought carefully before asking.

-There is a story I've heard from Vantner. I heard he caused a disturbance along with Earl Ashur's son on the day of your wedding to Irene?

-Really? I didn't know. I couldn't pay attention to anything else on that day.

-Pay attention to him. Ask Earl Ashur to give you his son.

-Eh? What are you saying?

Lael clearly predicted that Grid wouldn't understand and added a detailed explanation.

-Earl Ashur is famous for his love for his son. If you keep his son, he won't be able to go against you again and he will have to move according to your will. Earl Ashur's mighty power will surely help one day.

'What a great guy.'

Lauel looked at benefits rather than money, so Grid thought he was truly great. One day he would become smart like Lauel. A wicked smile appeared on Grid's face and Earl Ashur's anxiety was heightened.

Then Grid demanded, "Give me your son."

"What...?" It was like a bolt out of the blue to Earl Ashur. He absolutely couldn't accept it. "You mean to take my son hostage!"

The 48 year old Earl Ashur was still young and beautiful. His appearance was like the protagonist of a manhwa, and he had been very popular since childhood. When he was a young man and still active among the social circles, dozens of women clung to him.

But Earl Ashur only loved one woman. She wasn't beautiful, but Earl Ashur fell for her warm-heartedness. Their marriage was successful. They had two sons and lived happily.

It was a short moment of happiness.

Unfortunately, Earl Ashur's wife suffered from a terminal illness and died at a young age. Earl Ashur tasted the pain of his heart breaking. However, he didn't have time to mourn. He had an obligation to defend the kingdom and had to take care of his two young sons.

Earl Ashur was faithful to his duties and raised his sons at the same time. His first son became a royal mage, and his second son became a magic swordsman because he showed talent in both magic and swordsmanship. Earl Ashur was able to fill the blank spot left by his wife with his pride for his two sons.

But the heavens were too harsh on Earl Ashur.

Just two years ago. His first son went on a monster conquest and died. After that, Earl Ashur's nature became somewhat strange. His gentleness disappeared. However, he still cared about his remaining son. Bland was his only blood, and Earl Ashur cherished him more than his own life.

"My flesh and soul might burn, but I will never sell my son. Just kill me."

'Stubborn...'

What should he do? Grid wasn't smart, so the only method he could come up with was to use force. But this problem didn't need to be resolved with force.

"I will follow you."

A blond man appeared while Grid was feeling confused. The person was Bland.

"Why are you...!?"

Bland ignored the panicked Earl Ashur and bowed before Grid. "I, Bland de Ian, son of Earl Ashur, greet Duke Grid, the great hero of this kingdom."

Bland and Grid had duelled once over Irene. But in the end, Bland was defeated and kicked out from the wedding. After that, he lived in pain for a while, but now he was determined.

"I will go to Reidan according to Duke Grid's will."

It was the only way to save his father. Earl Ashur's face turned white.

"Bland! Why are you deciding this by yourself?"

Grid was the rival who deprived Bland of his beloved. Earl Ashur couldn't tolerate his son being Grid's hostage. He started to gather magic power in his pained body.

"I will kill you and give your soul to God Yatan if you touch one hair on my son!"

Bland came forward before Grid could frown. He fell to his knees.

"Duke Grid, my father lost his temper because he cares too much about me. Please show mercy one more time."

"B-Bland..."

He was begging to his rival because of his father! Earl Ashur was shocked by causing more humiliation to his son and fell silent. Then Bland reassured him. "Father, I will go and study under Duke Grid. Please trust in your son and wait for me to return. Don't skip any meals."

"Ugh..."

Earl Ashur was frustrated. His eyes had been clouded by his grudge, and now his son was taken as a hostage. Grid placed a hand on his shoulder.

"Earl Ashur, don't worry. I will look after your son."

Ssik.

Wasn't he a demon? He could smile brightly and enjoy the pain and sorrows of others. To Earl Ashur, Grid didn't look like a human. However, Grid was obviously a human.

'Please don't overdo it. I won't eat your son.'

Grid inwardly spoke before glancing at Piaro and Bland.

"Let's go."

After a few moments. The only thing left was a disastrous scene where Earl Ashur looked completely insane and the wounded knights looked wretched.

Chapter 214

Grid and Piaro walked alongside each other, while Bland awkwardly followed behind. Grid looked at Piaro to verify.

"How was it? The skills of one of the 10 great magicians on the continent?"

"It was more than I expected. He was mentally strong enough to withstand my oppression. If he used an orb as a weapon, it would've been a close fight."

For magicians, the staff was a weapon with the concept of high risk and high return. There was no magic storage function, so its stability was poor, but the magic amplification rate was so high that it was possible to use a powerful one-shot.

Most magicians were burdened by the high risk and turned away from the staff, but Earl Ashur had overpowering magic casting speed. Unlike regular magicians, he used a staff as a weapon, and that was a weakness when dealing with someone strong like Piaro today. He was defeated before he could use magic in front of Piaro.

'Ashur is really strong.'

Grid didn't show it, but he was terrified when hit by Ashur's Fluid Escape.

He wore the Armor of Holy Light made out of the god mineral adamantium by the legendary blacksmith Pagma. The legendary item had the effect of '50% reduction in magic damage,' so he was surprised that he suffered 40,000 damage from a single strike.

'Ashur showed a more powerful damage than the other boss monsters I have come against...'

It was overwhelming. Grid received so much damage, while Piaro survived Earl Ashur's attack without any damage.

'Did he temporarily raise his defense through the operation of qi?'

Grid was reminded of body protection qi from martial arts.

"How strong is Asmophel that you can't get revenge by yourself?"

Piario grimaced as he heard the dirty name. "It's difficult to reach him, rather than him being strong. There is nobody who doesn't know my face in the empire. If I step foot in the empire, I will die immediately."

"Stop complaining. Who can kill you so easily? Even if you're besieged, can't you use Fated to Perish to knock them down? You don't have to worry if you fought like you did against Ashur."

"If it was so simple, would I be hiding for the past two years? You have no idea of the power of the empire."

Piario suddenly stopped.

"What's going on?"

"A monster."

"Monster?"

After escaping from the thick forest, Grid turned his gaze in the direction Piario was indicating. An endless expanse of desert stretched out before them.

"I don't even see an ant, let alone a monster?"

Piario spoke briefly towards Grid, who was trying to see what was visible.

“Below.”

“Eh?”

There was a subtle vibration from the ground. Grid checked the sand and moved as he realized his mistake.

Kwaang!

In the place where Grid were just standing, a huge elongated creature came up. It was a centipede. An extra large centipede that had lived for thousands of years.

Kiyaaak!

“Ugh.”

The length of the body was well over 10m, and the hundreds of legs were as big as human limbs. They wriggled in a disgusting manner. Grid felt disgusted by the creature that had a yellow liquid pouring from it and blocked his nose.

“You’re squeamish like a girl.”

“What does being a man or woman have to do with anything? Dammit.”

This was an insect. It was the first time he saw such a big one. It was much bigger than the spiders in Kesan Canyon. Grid jumped and cut down at the centipede. The surface of the centipede was very hard. It wasn’t easily destroyed by the +9 Failure, an absolute weapon. It was a defense comparable to the ancient weapon.

‘Is it a monster that specializes in defense?’

The determined Grid didn’t consider a counterattack and kept striking. However, the centipede was surprisingly agile. It quickly moved its massive body and attacked.

[You have suffered 6,300 damage.]

“What?”

It was safe to say that this was the first time Grid suffered so much damage from a normal monster after wearing the Holy Light set, the strongest armor currently in existence. A very surprised Grid corrected his posture. He finally took the battle seriously.

But the desert terrain hindered him.

“Che.”

Grid’s stride was off due to the thick sand, leading to a weakening of his grip. A normal person would’ve suffered a great setback, but this was Grid.

“Fly!”

He used the magic possessed by Braham's Boots to fly into the sky and strike the centipede's head. However, the counterattack wasn't formidable enough. Grid was pushed back and winced. In the meantime, another centipede emerged from the ground and Grid was pincer attacked by two enemies.

Piaro tried to help, but suddenly stopped. He carefully observed and advised Grid.

"When attacking in any situation, place weight on the end of your sword. It is the basics even when flying through the air. Mobilize not just your limbs, but the muscles in your neck, and then transfer your weight to the end of your sword. You are too distracted to do the basic movements. Organic movements are needed to get the most out of your power. But before that, fix the habit of your head first..."

'What is he saying?'

Grid was disturbed by Piaro while fighting the two centipedes. It was impossible for him to understand what Piaro was talking about, so he was confused.

'I'm playing right now, so why is he acting like this is a sword dojo?'

In the first place, he didn't need it. He ignored the words of the best swordsman pouring into his ears and leaned on his skills, as he always did.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship, Link!"

The dozens of blue-white energy blades fell and shattered the two centipedes.

[The giant worm has been destroyed.]

[2,330,900 experience has been acquired.]

[The giant worm has been destroyed.]

[2,340,100 experience has been acquired.]

[The giant worm's leg has been acquired.]

The giant worms gave a huge amount of experience. Grid was surprised and confirmed the details of the giant worm.

[Giant Worm]

Level: 330

A worm that lives in the western part of the Eternal Kingdom. It dwells deep in the earth, and once it detects the presence of creatures, it will emerge through the ground and attack. It is a very common species in the western desert.

Some scholars speculate that they can be used as medicines, but in fact, they have no nutritional value.

'Level 330? A monster of this level is a common worm?'

There were such strong monsters in the western part of the Eternal Kingdom, but very few users knew about it. Most users weren't able to advance to the west because they couldn't break through the habitat of the twin ogres, so information was scarce.

'The western part is the most difficult area in the Eternal Kingdom. So when creating a character, there are no starting villages in the west.

This was good news. Wasn't Reidan located at the end of the western area? There was a possibility that it was inhabited by level 400 monsters. Grid and the Overgeared Guild could hunt the strongest monsters, which meant they could grow quickly.

But if he thought about it.

'No, wait. Then isn't it impossible for beginner or mid level users to come to Reidan?'

If there was no influx of users in Reidan, Grid would have to grow the economy solely based on NPCs. It was the worst. There was a setback in his plan to get rich from hundreds of thousands of people.

"Dammit..." Grid frowned and cursed. Then another giant worm popped up. "Ah, I don't know."

Grid didn't panic. He carelessly thought that Lauel would take care of everything and concentrated on the monsters in front of him.

'This is an opportunity to raise my level.'

After the reunion with Euphemina, Grid hadn't been able to hunt for a while due to large and small incidents. His level was stagnant at 270, so he was delighted to raise it by hunting these chunks of experience.

"I will begin in earnest."

Grid checked his status window. At the time of the National Competition, he was level 253 and had 230 stat points. Now he was level 270 and had 400 stat points.

"Invest all points in agility."

He referenced Piaro's stats.

[Agility has permanently increased by 400.]

His agility rose by 400. In other words, Grid had elevated his agility by 40 levels and his body felt completely lighter. He started to hunt the giant worms at a quick pace compared to the past.

Piario remained on the ground and constantly advised Grid in the sky.

"If you concentrate more strength in your thighs and buttocks, then your upper body's forward speed will increase. This means that the speed of your sword will increase. In addition, it is better not to think about the direction of the swing and just do it naturally."

'Who cares about my thighs? And what is this nonsense about telling me not to think? Am I Jude?'

The teachings of a great swordsman could increase even the level of a useless knight. In particular, Piario was able to teach because he mastered the Empire's Military Tactics and had experience commanding the Red Knights. There were many people who would pay money to receive his teachings.

Grid was receiving it for free, so it was like winning the lottery. It was an opportunity to dramatically increase his so-called 'control.' But he didn't know how to appreciate it and found the advice jarring.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship, Kill!”

Kiyaaaaak!

[The giant worm has been destroyed.]

[2,339,500 experience has been acquired.]

“Puhahat! I hope I will level up today?”

Grid’s experience gauge had accumulated a lot before the golem invasion, so it was already over 70%. He used his skills and enthusiastically killed the giant worm. On the other hand, Piaro was curious. It was because Grid’s abilities didn’t improve, despite his teachings.

‘Why?’

Piario thought that Grid was an extraordinary and clever person. The evidence was that he didn’t immediately execute Earl Ashur, taking his son as hostage instead in order to set foot on the political stage.

‘A person that smart should be able to understand my teachings.’

So why didn’t his skills improve? Piario was puzzled and came to a conclusion.

‘Pride.’

As Pagma’s Descendant, Grid wanted to refuse the teachings of people other than Pagma.

‘He would be much stronger if he could take advantage of his physical abilities.’

If Grid’s basics were tightened up, he would be a great sparring opponent. But it wasn’t easy.

‘Hmm?’

Piario’s gaze suddenly shifted to Bland. Bland was struggling alone in the distance against a giant worm. However, his skills had risen dramatically compared to when he hunted the horned goblins a few hours ago. He had absorbed Piario’s teachings towards Grid.

‘Indeed, a lion’s cub.’

A rare talent. He was a genius who inherited his father’s magic power and a talent in swordsmanship. Piario thought that he should teach Bland well in the several days before they arrived in Reidan.

[Unified Rankings]

1st. Kraugel - White Swordsman.

2nd. Zibal - Debirion’s Envoy

3rd. Chris - Destruction Warrior

‘Chris finally got his third advancement class. Destruction Warrior, he chose the class that fit his alignment the best. He would’ve received it a little quicker if it wasn’t for the golem army.’

It was Kraugel's habit to check the rankings from time to time. Looking at the trends of those pursuing him was the basics.

"Now then."

He had been hunting for 15 hours without stopping, so he started sorting the items in his full inventory. He calculated the items that weren't priced yet, the items needed for production and quests, the remaining junk items, and if he could get more from selling them to an NPC or user.

After a while.

Kraugel finished organizing his items and rose from this spot. Then he went through his skills list and made plans.

'I have raised the skill level of the two sword style to intermediate, so I should challenge it again.'

Kraugel, who chose the third class of White Swordsman, had crossed from the West to the East Continent, but he couldn't fully capture it. He struggled against the high barrier of the East Continent for a while, and got new titles and steadily raised his level, becoming even stronger.

His next goal was to attack the eastern and southern parts of the Saharan Empire, as well as the labyrinths in Orias, and the western part of the Eternal Kingdom. After staying in the West Continent for awhile, he would once again challenge the uncharted land of the East Continent.

Kraugel was a true gamer and the 1st ranked user, playing the game with joy and thorough planning.

It was a lot different from someone else.

Chapter 215

Reidan was a three or four days' walk away from Patrian. However, Grid's party encountered monsters all the time. They didn't avoid it, so their journey was delayed several times.

'The experience is really good.'

It had been six days since leaving Patrian.

Meanwhile, Grid hunted the strongest monsters in the west and reached level 273. In addition, his experience gauge was at 60%. It was a stunning level-up speed that users couldn't dream of matching, simply due to the fact that he leveled up every two days.

Grid didn't know this, but even Kraugel wasn't able to level up as quickly as Grid currently was when he was level 270.

'I will be level 275 by the time I reach Reidan,' Grid excitedly thought to himself. Even the top rankers would find it hard to hunt these western monsters, so he was proud of his items and his skills.

'This game is truly about items. Control? That was something that only losers who didn't have good items worried about. Puhahat!'

In the first place, control was a means used by the weak to try and win against the strong. He didn't need control if he had overwhelming power. Grid had such a narrow mindset ever since his success in the Malacus raid. He had no doubts that items were the best.

But that firm belief of Grid's was about to be shaken.

"Pant pant... Wow, this is really dirty. The giant worms before were just exercise."

Grid was exhausted as he walked through the vast desert towards Reidan. Thanks to his passive resistance, he didn't get heat stroke. However, the heat was enough to make his stamina fall faster than usual. Moreover, he couldn't adapt to the desert terrain.

On the other hand, the monsters kept becoming stronger and stronger. Four basilisks, monsters that were treated as boss-grade monsters in the north, appeared before Grid. Grid succeeded in unleashing all sorts of skills against the basilisks, but he was pincer attacked by the monsters and faced a crisis.

"Ah, really! Let me take a break!"

He was at his wit's end. His control was immature so he constantly allowed the monsters to attack him, so even the best armor couldn't endure and he lost health. In the situation, it wouldn't be strange if his invincible passive was activated.

'Even Braham's golem army wouldn't be able to exert much power against the monsters here.'

The western monsters were strong and numerous. It was the reason why the kingdom chose to let the giant worms spread instead of subjugating them.

'It is impossible for the kingdom to manage the west properly. So the king sent me here.'

It was a correct guess. King Wiesbaden wished for Grid to cleanse the west that had become barren because of the mighty monsters, giving him Reidan. It showed absolute confidence in Grid. However, Grid thought he was used by the king and couldn't help cursing.

Kiyaaaaak!

As Grid cursed the king, a massive desert toad stretched out its tongue, its sticky mucus flopping out from its mouth and covering Grid's body. This mucus was a type of poison that paralyzed the target in an instant. However...

[You have resisted.]

Grid resisted and fought back. The +9 Failure passed through the toad's fat belly. However, the western monsters were so weak to die from one of Grid's blows. The toad moved its tongue like a whip for a counterattack.

'Damn!'

Grid's reaction was too late as he was buried deep in the toad's stomach. Ku tang tang tang!

Grid was stronger than steel and full of resilience, but he was struck in the head and fell. Other monsters swarmed to his fallen body.

“Kuak...! Transcend and Transcended Link’s cooldown time isn’t over!” Grid tended to depend on skills as he lacked control, but there was a fatal weakness. If the skills weren’t available due to the cooldown time, he couldn’t help being weak. “Piaro! Help me... Eh?”

In the end, Grid tried to rely on Piaro. However, he was surprised. It was because Bland started moving. Grid hadn’t been paying any attention during the last six days, but Bland had become extremely strong during that short period.

‘What is this all of a sudden?’

This was the person who struggled against the level 280 horned goblins only six days ago. But now he was fighting one-on-one with the western monsters that were at least 50 levels higher than him, so he had truly developed.

‘Surely, it isn’t a bug...’

What was the secret behind this sudden growth? Grid questioned as he moved to the rear after Bland pulled aggro. Then he equipped the Great Lord’s Sword and examined Bland.

Name: Bland

Age: 25 Gender: Male

Occupation: Magic Swordsman

Title: Great Magician’s Son

He has inherited the magical talents of his father, Earl Ashur. Receive a bonus to his magic casting speed and mana regeneration speed. Every time his level increased, his intelligence will increase significantly.

Title: Marquis Steim’s Disciple

He once learned swordsmanship from Marquis Steim, a swordsman of the north. When a blade type weapon is equipped, attack power will increase by 20% and attack speed by 10%.

Level: 255

Strength: 1,331/1,990 Stamina: 420/1,030

Agility: 519/1,401 Intelligence: 2,540/4,550

Charm: 212/800

Skills: Northern Swordsmanship (B), Spell Casting Acceleration (S), Magic Power Concentration (S), 9 C-grade Spells, 5 B-grade spells, 2 A-grade spells.

* Click on the details to examine the spells that the target has currently acquired.

Bland. In his childhood and adolescence, he studied magic under his father and swordsmanship under Marquis Steim. He followed the typical elite course, and was a young genius considered to be the cornerstone of the Eternal Kingdom in the future.

'There is nothing special?'

Grid had observed Bland's details shortly after obtaining him as a hostage. The difference between then and now was only five levels, and a small rise in stats.

'Then why did he become so much stronger?'

Grid was curious.

"That's it. You understood correctly. You shouldn't play around when holding a sword in your hand. Rather than avoiding the enemy's attacks, it is better to aim for defense or a counterattack. Even if your opponent is stronger than you, they will be easier to defeat if you keep moving your sword."

Piaro was talking to Bland. Then Grid realized.

'It is thanks to Piaro's teachings!'

He might be a great swordsman, but was it possible for a person to grow so quickly just from his advice? Grid started to observe Piaro and Bland. Unlike before, he didn't go ahead alone and hunted monsters near them.

"You are too tied up with being a magic swordsman. Magic casting and swordsmanship can't be done at the same time, so a gap will occur. However, this doesn't mean you should throw away magic. You have more talent in magic than in the sword, so if you are facing a stronger enemy, you should concentrate on your magic. Your swordsmanship is ideal for minimal defense.

Piaro would give advice and Bland would apply the teachings in real time whenever a monster appeared. Bland's rapid growth had a big impact on Grid. Learning how to fight properly. In other words, the power of control was more than he thought possible.

'...If I combine control with items, how much stronger can I become?'

Grid finally became aware of it. He was able to understand that he would reach his limits in the future if he just relied on his items. In the end, he asked Piaro, "Please teach me as well."

"Didn't you say that there was no need before?"

"Originally, a person's mind is flexible. Now I want to learn from you."

'Is he because he can no longer sit back and watch Bland grow alone? Did he lose his confidence as Pagma's Descendant?'

Piaro was able to understand that Grid was an unprincipled person. He was the type of person that Piaro disliked. But Piaro readily accepted Grid's request. It was in the hope that he could enhance his strength by raising Grid's.

Piaro's frozen mind that was obsessed with revenge was slowly reviving as he met Grid and Bland. It was a small but significant change.

After that.

"Don't move your head. How many times do I have to tell you?"

"Isn't it natural to shake my head every time I move? How can I control my body?"

"Try to make an effort. Think while you are fighting. And don't rely on Fly. Warriors must become accustomed to various terrains, so fighting in the desert will be a valuable experience for you."

"How can I wield my sword when my feet are buried in the sand?"

"Put your weight on the tip of your sword, not your feet."

"So how do I do that?"

"... How many times do I need to explain that you have to move your muscles well?"

"No, how do I move my muscles?"

"..."

The reason why Bland could grow rapidly was that he was a genius. The best teacher and best disciple met, so the synergy exploded. But Grid was a stupid person. It wasn't easy for even a great swordsman to teach him.

Piaro suffered as he taught Grid, who lacked comprehension and was slow to learn. He started to feel pain.

'I thought he was a smart person, but that isn't it...'

How could such a stupid person have gained Pagma's power and inheritance? Piaro wondered. He honestly wanted to give up on teaching Grid. However, he couldn't take back his words so he kept teaching Grid.

Grid grumbled that it was difficult and complex, but he did his best to follow the teachings. Grid repeated this in the three days before arrived at Reidan and finally improved.

"He is a little bit ordinary now."

Grid was able to build up the basic skills of a swordsman. This was the limit of his capabilities and of a great swordsman's teaching ability.

'I don't think it is possible for Grid to grow beyond this.'

Piaro was overwhelmed with a sense of defeat. Then Grid's party arrived at Reidan.

Chapter 216

Nine days ago.

The Overgeared members utilized the excellent transportation method of carriages and arrived in Reidan ahead of Grid, but they tasted huge disappointment.

The best city in the west, Reidan! According to the map, it was the second largest city of the Eternal Kingdom. The Overgeared members were full of expectations, but they were baffled because it looked more like a ruin.

“What happened here?”

“Wow, there is nothing big in the city.”

“The shops are closed, the doors broken and the poor are on the street...”

“The rice fields are like a wasteland.”

“In the first place, doesn’t the population seem too small?”

Huroi, Lauel, and Faker remained calm while the guild members were making a disturbance. They looked over Reidan because bringing up its information.

Name: Reidan

Size: Big City

Ruler: Grid (Duke of the Eternal Kingdom. Master of the Overgeared Guild)

Administrator: Arik (C-grade administrative ability)

* The higher the administrative ability of the administrator, the higher the overall development of the estate.

Affiliation: The Eternal Kingdom

Population: NPCs - 20,551. Players - 0.

Troops: Knights - 2 (Huroi, Lauel).

Soldiers - 141

Security: 5/100

* The state of security is the worst. It isn’t unusual if the people turn into a mob straight away. Gangsters and monsters will often pop up near the village.

* Security will increase hourly in proportion to the number of soldiers.

* People jobs and food for a policing activity is not available, even if the police do not rise.

Internal Affairs: 169/4,500

* Increasing the number of shopping malls, public cultural facilities and buildings will increase the internal affairs number.

Foreign Affairs: The Butin Barony in the Saharan Empire.

Forces hostile to the ruler: Yatan Church.

Forces hostile to your affiliated groups: Gauss Kingdom, Luvia Principality.

Specialties: None.

Distinguished Figure: None.

"The situation isn't as good as I expected."

"It seems like it."

While moving from Winston to Reidan, the guild members were attracted to the monsters of the west and devoted themselves to hunting. They waited for monsters to attack the moving carriage, then quickly hunted them for experience. Therefore, they thought the west was a blessed land.

But Huroi, Lauel, and Faker thought that the strong monsters in the west were a negative point. The monsters were so strong that the accessibility of general users was low, and the area would be difficult to manage. Now the reality they faced was worse than their expectations.

"A city that can accommodate over 500,000 people only has a population of 20,000..."

"Furthermore, there are no users."

"The biggest priority right now is to pay the people raise the security level."

The Overgeared Guild currently had 5 million gold in funds. 5 million gold. While that amount of gold might sound large for a single person, it wasn't enough to fund a big city. Not only that, 5 million gold didn't even seem like enough to develop an empty, desolate city.

Now they had to pay expenses to raise the goodwill of the people? Was it even possible to produce food in this city in the first place? It wasn't possible to even make barley bread. It was inevitable that they would have to import ingredients, but merchants were aware of the situation and wouldn't come to Reidan.

'Considering the transportation cost...'

Lauel calculated that he had to set a minimum of 3 silver for one meal. If it was 20,000 people, he would have to pay 600 gold. This was one meal. It was ridiculous to spend hundreds of thousands of gold on meals until a fundamental solution was set up.

But Lauel couldn't alienate the people. Did he feel compassion when seeing their skinny selves? No. That was irrelevant. People were the national power. He needed to restore them first, then there would be a rise in security and labor. There was no other choice.

"After making the people useful, set them to clearing the fields."

"But doesn't the lord have to give permission?"

Huroi was cautious. He knew that restoring the people was the most pressing issue, but he wondered if Grid would understand. Grid would wonder why they were wasting money on people's meals.

Huroi spoke to the worried Lauel,

"South Korean doesn't give up on making hot pepper paste just because of worms. That is a saying in South Korea."

This was the right choice, even if it was against Grid's will. This was Chief Lauel's conviction to grow the Overgeared Guild. However, the saying was too provocative.

Huroi thought about the saying that Lauel mentioned and became indignant, "Don't compare My Lord to measly worms!"

"Ah no, that's not what I meant."

Lauel sweated profusely as he tried to soothe Huroi. On the other hand, Faker disappeared from next to the two men, moving through the yellow dust before arriving at the castle.

"Why didn't you move quickly after hearing that the new lord's men had arrived? Your greeting is late!"

"T-That... I was afraid that I would be stoned by the people if I left the castle and that made me late."

"Pathetic guy. You are armed with sword and armor, but are afraid of rocks? What a worthless person. Tsk tsk."

A fat, middle-aged man hurried to the entrance of the castle with his soldiers. This greasy man's name was Arik, the administrator of Reidan. He was a baronet and often received treatment as a noble.

Faker pointed his dagger at Arik without hesitation.

"Hiik!"

Arik exclaimed as he saw the shadows in the yellow dust.

"W-Who are you?"

Faker replied in a cold voice, "A person with a lot of questions for you."

"W-What...? Kiyaaack~!"

It was in an instant. Faker and Arik disappeared into the yellow dust like they weren't there in the first place.

"Administrator Arik?"

The stunned soldiers looked around, but they couldn't find any traces of Arik.

'This is a normal level?'

Bland had watched Grid training under Piaro for the past three days. Bland originally saw Grid as very strong. Grid would become much stronger under Piaro's teachings and would have no education.

However, Piaro evaluated Grid as ordinary. Grid was satisfied that he wasn't worse compared to others.

Bland couldn't believe it. 'Why are his skills so bad and dull? Doesn't he have great skills?'

It was the difference in perspective. From Bland's point of view, Earl Steim and Phoenix were the strongest swordsmen until he met Piaro, but Grid seemed to have a lot of talent. On the other hand, Grid compared his abilities to the top rankers and boss monsters, and decided this was good.

Then what about Piaro? He evaluated Grid's ability as 'poor in comparison to his amount of power.'

The conclusion.

"Puhahat! Now I can easily hunt monsters in the west without having to rely on skills!"

"This is just the basics. Only the lousy people rely solely on skills. You still have a long way to go."

"Wouldn't it be better to keep practicing steadily? Continue teaching me in the future."

"I refuse. It is unlikely that your skills will improve, even if I keep teaching you."

"Don't give up so easily. It isn't that hard, is it?"

"This is a realistic analysis, not one based on any emotions."

Grid was strong. It was true that he was lacking control skills compared to top rankers, but from a normal point of view, he was beyond the average level. However, the monsters in the west were so strong that his limits started to show.

"Hap!"

Now Grid had perfectly adapted to the strange terrain of the desert. He ran on the sand with light footsteps and freely wielded Failure, causing the monsters of the west to collapse. As a result, Grid reached level 275 and finally arrived in Reidan.

"This is your city?"

The scale of Reidan that came into view was huge. The exterior walls weren't very high or well-maintained, but they spectacularly stretched out along the horizon.

"This is a huge city comparable to the capital of a kingdom."

Grid smiled at Piaro's admiring words.

"It is the second biggest city in the Eternal Kingdom after Reinhardt."

Grid was filled with anticipation. He imagined hundreds of thousands of people in Reidan greeting him with confetti.

"Let's go."

Grid prompted Bland and Piaro and increased the pace. Then he was confused as he found people working on clearing the land.

'Are they refugees?'

The people were skinny, dressed in poor clothes and looked like refugees. Grid wondered why they were doing field work in Reidan.

'They seem to be slaves.'

He wondered if the people of Reidan hired slaves to work on the farmland. Grid tsked at the thought. 'They might be slaves but they should be properly fed. What unscrupulous employers.'

The people of Reidan didn't seem to have a good mentality. However, their mentality had nothing to do with Grid.

'They are just my taxes.'

Lululula.

Grid looked at the nearest entrance to the city and hummed with a happy heart. He imagined a fanfare and hundreds of thousands of people welcoming him. However.

"Eh?"

Grid witnessed a bizarre sight and stopped walking. The Overgeared members were working among the tens of thousands of slaves?

'W-What?'

Grid saw the Overgeared members sweating hard as they worked and stopped humming. An ominous thought struck him before Regas saw him and ran over with a bright smile.

"You finally came!"

Regas' solid upper body was stained with sweat and dust. He looked like a worker in a coal mine so Grid asked him.

"What are you doing right now?"

"As you can see, we are clearing the fields with the people."

"... With the people?"

Where were the people? Grid only saw the Overgeared members and the slaves.

"I greet My Lord."

Huroi came running. He was also sweaty. Grid saw the rake in his hand and asked again, "What are you doing right now?"

Huroi had the same answer as Regas, "We are clearing the fields with the people."

"No, that isn't it. The people..."

Lauel rushed over at that time. "Why were you so late?"

Lauel berated with a scruffy appearance as well. He also held farming equipment in his hands.

"You didn't respond to my whispers, so I had to start the guild members on the urgent tasks. First of all, we are joining forces with the people to connect the waterways and plant the fields, so we will be able to produce simple food in a few months."

Grid finally perceived reality. Then he desperately asked. "Where are the people?"

"Can't you see them?" Lauel turned his gaze to the fields. Lauel's finger was pointing to the people on the fields, the thin ones who Grid thought were slaves. "They are your people."

“... Ah, why me?”

It was the moment when Grid’s expectations collapsed.

Chapter 217

“Damn! What is this? I knew things were going too well!”

His fate changed after becoming Pagma’s Descendant. In the past, he lived an unlucky life. After becoming Pagma’s Descendant, most of the results were positive, no matter what hardship he went through. But why did he have to go through hardship everywhere he went? Did he have to accept it just because things worked out well?

Grid suppressed his anger. He looked around at all the people before asking, “Isn’t this the kingdom’s second largest city? Doesn’t that mean it’s rich? So why are the people in this state? Eh? Were they robbed by a group of thieves or something?”

“In the past, it was the richest city in the kingdom; however, everything changed 10 years ago when the giant worms appeared.”

“The giant worms? What do those monsters have to do with Reidan?”

Lauel explained to Grid, “This is what Faker found out after questioning the administrator and the people here.”

10 years ago. Reidan was the second largest city after Reinhardt and was called the second capital of the kingdom. However, this situation changed once the giant worms appeared on a large scale.

The giant worms ravaging the land were so strong that they couldn’t be subjugated with a regular army. They quickly turned the western part of the kingdom into a desert, leading to a shortage in resources and supplies, including water.

To make matters worse, all types of desert monsters started to appear. This situation got so bad that it Reidan was eventually isolated from the kingdom around it, falling into a food shortage.

“Large-scale support from the kingdom became impossible so the former lord of Reidan gave up. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their home.”

But some people didn’t leave. It was due to the circumstances of each people. 40,000 people remained behind in Reidan.

“They had to prioritize protecting the rivers and lakes that hadn’t been dried up yet. But with their strength, they couldn’t protect the rivers and lakes from monsters.”

King Wiesbaden tried to help by searching for talent to rebuild the west. However, there was no one good except for Earl Ashur, and Earl Ashur couldn’t leave Patrian.

“In the end, people were unable to get help from the kingdom and chose the empire. They asked the empire to be saved and the empire readily accepted. It was a chance to absorb part of the land of the Eternal Kingdom.”

The empire dispatched the Black Knights. The Black Knights were the second strongest knights after the Red Knights. But it was impossible for them to completely get rid of all the monsters in the west.

"At this point, the empire had to make a decision. In order to obtain the west, they would have to commit a large force. And that is a big burden from the position of the empire."

Finally, the empire made a choice.

"They will protect the Heben River directly connected to Reidan from the monsters. In return, the people of Reiden will have to make an offering to the empire every year. They offered that deal."

"It is a reasonable proposal. The people of Reidan would've had to accept."

"That's right. But the problem was that the amount of wealth the empire asked for grew every year."

Thanks to the protection of the empire, the people of Reidan were able to relieve the food shortage through farming. The economy was slowly revived, but so what? They became poor again after giving their wealth to the empire every year. Finally, there was a food crisis again.

"In the end, the people of Reidan reached the point where they couldn't listen to the demands of the empire anymore. The empire withdrew their forces and as a result, there were only 20,000 people left in Reidan. They were on the brink of starvation. This was the situation when we arrived."

Grid couldn't believe it. "Why did the kingdom abandon Reidan? It might be impossible to get rid of the monsters in the west, but isn't it possible to give them the minimum of supplies?"

"There was no merit. They didn't feel the value of helping the foolish people who won't abandon a land that can't be rebuilt."

It was cold but the right decision. At least, Grid thought so. "Yes, I understand the position of the kingdom. So in the end, aren't the people of the kingdom the real issue at hand? Why would they insist on staying in Reidan, in spite the circumstances? Isn't it a simple fix if they just leave?"

"It is unfortunate... 10 years ago, the lord recruited troops to raid the vampire lair. Most of the people who didn't leave Reidan are the families of the young men conscripted to the vampire raid."

"They don't know when their sons or husbands will return so they remained in Reidan?"

"That's right. As you know, this world is different from modern society and the reunion of separated families is almost impossible..."

10 years ago. The giant worms emerged soon after the vampire raid began. And Reidan fell in just five months. The vampire subjugation troops were scheduled to return in half a year, so the families of the soldiers had to wait until then.

They waited one year, two years, three years, four years, etc, but the vampire subjugation team didn't return. However, the family members kept staying in Reidan. The result was that 10 years passed. 40,000 people waited for the vampire subjugation team, but half of them gave up or starved to death.

"They have been waiting 10 years for the vampire subjugation team's return, despite the fact that the troops have probably been annihilated... Blood relationships are scary."

Grid thought that the people of Reiden were stupid, but he also felt compassion. It was because his family probably would've made the same choice if they were in the same position as the people of Reidan.

"The conclusion is that the former lord is a stupid jerk? Why did he try to clear the vampire lairs?"

"Until the giant worms appeared, the vampires were the only threat to Reidan. The vampire lairs are somewhere in the west and the vampires often used the people of Reidan as their food. The former lord made an unavoidable decision."

Vampire Duke Marie Rose. Grid recalled the vampire that he met in the past on the way to the pope and shuddered.

"...Are the vampires still active these days?"

"No. Vampires haven't appeared since monsters emerged in the west. Considering the strength of the vampires, they wouldn't have been wiped out by the monsters. So it is possible that they turned the monsters into their food source."

"That is lucky. Um... So? What should I do next?"

Lauel answered instantly as if it were obvious, "We need to focus on clearing the fields."

"..."

In the nine days of Grid's absence, the Overgeared members defeated the monsters around Heband River and connected the waterways to the fields. Now it was a beautiful sight because they worked hard with the people to clear the fields.

"Labor is good. The sight of the people sweating while working is beautiful." But Grid hated doing it. "I am the duke yet I have to work in the fields with the people? Isn't this too much?"

Lauel shrugged at Grid's obvious dislike.

"You don't have to. You have a different workspace."

Lauel received Grid's command and brought Khan to this place. As soon as they got here, he gave support staff to Khan to build a facility. That's right, it was a smithy.

"Please do your duties as a legendary blacksmith. There is a limit to the amount of farming equipment that can be produced by Khan alone. Please help him produce a large quantity of farming equipment."

"What?"

A legendary blacksmith needed to make farmer's tools?

"Hey, what's with that look you're giving me?" Lauel scolded Grid. "We need your strength to revive Reidan, and you want to refuse? Don't you feel any sense of responsibility as the Lord?"

Grid acquiesced and no longer complained loudly,

"...I was lacking in understanding."

'I became too arrogant after I became a duke.'

Only farming equipment? A blacksmith couldn't afford to have the word 'only' in their minds. Grid regained his pride as a blacksmith. In his mind, he threw away his futile bravado and rolled up his sleeves. Then he pulled out his blacksmith's hammer and declared, "Believe in me."

"..."

Lauel's face twisted as he heard the ominous words. But he thought about it and became relieved.

'In the first place, farming equipment with a rating other than normal doesn't exist, so I don't have to worry.'

Combat class users had no idea about production and production items. They weren't interested because there were few opportunities to use it. A hammer was just a hammer, a pickaxe was just a pickaxe, a hoe was just a hoe etc. Moreover, most of the production items distributed had a normal rating.

Blacksmiths aimed for mass production so it was less likely for a production class item to have a high-rating. But who was Grid? He always invested at least 20 hours, no matter what item he was making, and had already produced a legendary rated hammer and pickaxe.

"Then I'm going. I'll go to work."

He would produce the best farming equipment that could be used easily, even by those who were starving and had no strength! Grid pledged as he entered the city.

Lauel shouted after him. "By the way Grid, who are these two people?"

"Ah." Grid was reminded of Piaro and Bland and told the two people. "This is what happened, so I'll have to stay in the smithy for a while. In the meantime, you will be bored. Right? Shouldn't you move your body to avoid being bored? Right?"

"If I look around the city and train Bland some more, I won't be bored."

Piaro gave his opinion. But Grid responded like he didn't hear.

"I will tell you how to relieve your boredom."

Grid's finger pointed to the fields.

Piaro and Bland were always in the best position because of their noble family and their natural talents, so they couldn't grasp Grid's intentions at first. They never imagined that there would be a person who assigned them to work in the fields.

"Help me clear the fields. Please."

"W-What?"

Bland was astonished. He was an elite of the kingdom with the best bloodline flowing through him! A cornerstone of the kingdom was made to do field work?

No, he could understand since he was a hostage. But wasn't Piaro a former captain of a troop of knights, and also one of the best swordsmen on the continent? Despite his great achievements, he was still forced to work in the fields?

Bland thought that Grid was crazy. But what was this?

"Physical training is good to increase the body's stamina. Moreover, since I've never had experience working in the field, it is an opportunity to develop muscles I haven't used very well or to experience new movements. I understand."

Piaro readily accepted? Great Swordsman. The one closest to becoming a sword saint positively evaluated the field work and started stretching, so Bland fell silent and also started loosening up his body.

"Are you really working in the fields?"

Grid was surprised. He hadn't expected Piaro to accept his request.

"Why so easily?"

Piaro saw Grid's confused face and said. "I have regained my motivation after being with you and Bland for the past nine days. I don't want revenge to be my whole life. You will get revenge for me sooner or later, so I have to shake off the past and try to live in the future. I'm not a noble anymore, so it is a good idea to learn about the lives of the common people in advance."

"...Thank you."

Grid bowed respectfully to him not only to thank him for his help in the fields but also for his willingness to live.

'A person like that was affected by me...'

Grid had enough influence to change someone's life. He realized this thanks to Piaro and thought deeply.

'A lord is a person who rules over tens of thousands of people. He was also a guild master who led the Overgeared members. He should never forget. My thoughts and actions can change the fate of a large number of people.'

Grid vowed to become more mature every time he experienced certain events. However, he couldn't abandon his inherent nature and was prone to losing his prudence whenever he was in a hurry. So he thought that he should manage himself more thoroughly.

He left Winston for the west. This was the moment that Grid's heart once again grew in response to Piaro's words.

Chapter 218

"Lael, Piaro, and Bland will help in the fields while I am in the smithy. Thank them for their help."

"No, who are they?"

Lauel wanted Grid to introduce the two men. But rather than introducing them, Grid spoke to the two men and asked them to work. Lauel thought it was absurd.

“Then I’m going.”

“Grid!”

Lauel called again, but Grid didn’t look back and left. It was because it wouldn’t be fun to reveal Piaro’s identity immediately.

‘He will experience it directly. He will feel astonishment, admiration, and reverence. There are only a few name-grade NPCs in Satisfy.’

Grid imagined Lauel and the Overgeared members’ reactions after grasping Piaro’s identity as a great swordsman. Piaro would teach the Overgeared members and they would become more powerful.

‘So insensitive.’

Lauel faced Piaro and Bland after Grid left. He started awkwardly for a moment before observing the two people. He looked at the middle-aged Piaro standing next to Bland. Piaro was wearing dirty clothes that couldn’t even be used as rags, and a horrible stench came from him.

‘He was called Bland so he must be Earl Ashur’s son...’ Lauel easily understood Bland’s identity, but the problem was Piaro. ‘Who is this person? His physique is good but his condition is too bad.’

Grid had mentioned that he was accompanied by someone when he took Earl Ashur’s son as a hostage. However, he didn’t say who it was.

‘Disappointing.’

Lauel hoped that Grid would bring someone with enormous talent to help, but did he just bring a slave over?

‘He wasted nine days to bring someone like this here...’

Lauel was deeply disappointed. He wanted to make Grid aware of his position. Then he smiled. Lauel didn’t let his inner emotions show as he greeted the two people.

"I am Lauel, Grid’s chief of staff. I’m proficient in handling people. Can I hear your introductions?"

Lauel was active in the golem invasion and grew further on his way to the west, so he was now level 287. He was first in the qigong master rankings, but he introduced himself as ‘proficient in handling people.’

"I am Bland de Ian, the youngest son of Earl Ashur. I know a bit of magic and have some skill in the sword."

He had poor magic ability compared to his father. In addition, his swordsmanship was at a baby’s level compared to Grid and Piaro. Therefore, Bland introduced himself as a beginner despite having a high level.

Piario was even worse, "I am Piario. I have nothing to introduce other than my name. I know how to use the sword, but I am still lacking."

He hadn't achieved the level of a sword saint yet, and thus, Piario introduced himself as an average swordsman.

'There is a reason why Grid gave them field work: they just aren't useful anywhere else.'

Lauel had no expectations of Piario and Bland's fighting power.

'Well, a beggar is better than a freeloader.'

He wasn't very inspired, but Lauel nodded and handed rakes to the two men.

"Use this to get rid of foreign matter in the ground such as stones, then prepare the land for planting seeds."

Lauel was sure that they wouldn't do the work properly. Bland was a noble and wouldn't want to work hard in the fields, while the slave Piario was probably just hoping for a meal.

"Um, this is the farming equipment used by the common people."

"I never thought that I would hold a tool like this in my entire life."

"This is also an experience."

"I will keep that in mind."

Piario and Bland talked amongst themselves, but Lauel showed no interest in their conversation. Lauel pointed to the vast land as they marvelled over the rakes.

"Clear this piece of land by the end of the day. If you don't know how to do it, please ask the people nearby. If you can't do it, then take a break. I don't intend to force you to work."

Most of the 20,551 people of Reiden were engaged in clearing the wilderness. It was safe to assume that all those with the physical strength, regardless of age and sex, were working. But the efficiency fell too much, due to the lack of farming equipment.

Putting together the farming equipment owned by the people and the ones currently produced by Khan, there was only around 3,000 tools. It meant that among the thousands of people working, only 3,000 were actually efficient. The rest of the people could only pick up the stones by hand.

In this situation, Lauel wasn't certain that he should give the tools to Bland and Piario. He deliberately gave an absurd quota to Piario and Bland. He wanted them to give up quickly so that the precious farming equipment wasn't wasted.

'I gave them 10 times more work than the others, so they will give up quickly.'

Lauel left the two people and got to work.

"Dragon Claws."

Once Lael used his skill, five sharp pillars rose from the ground before disappearing. Then around 50 pyeong of land was overturned at once (1 pyeong= around 32 square feet). Lael scraped all the foreign matter that emerged from the ground with the rake, before laying down the ground again.

"This is enough."

Lael was pleased. Clearing 50 pyeong in an instant. He immediately moved to another place and repeated the same thing. He was doing the job of hundreds alone. Bland watched him silently before exclaiming.

"Magic can be applied to clear the land quickly. I should give it a try."

Bland was about to use magic when Piaro restrained him.

"Why use magic for something that doesn't need it? Do you want to miss this golden opportunity to do physical exercise?"

Bland realized his mistake and said, "I was too short-sighted."

"Look over there." Piaro pointed to the people working hard and sweating. "We must learn from them. New movements will be acquired and this will nourish your swordsmanship."

"Yes."

Piario and Bland started to observe the common people. They thoroughly grasped how to clear the ground. After a while.

"How about it? Isn't this training?"

"That's right. It places a severe burden on the waist, shoulders and knees. This was the first time my body has been so overworked."

This wasn't exercise but labor. It was new for Piario and Bland, who were nobles. They repeatedly moved their rakes with their disciplined bodies. It was an incredibly fast speed. Both of them had good physical skills and picked up the tricks from the ordinary people, so they finished Lael's ridiculous quota in just one and a half hours.

"Lael."

'They are finally here.'

Lael had been working hard using his skill and rake, so he was satisfied when he heard Piario's voice,

"Was it tough? You must've suffered a lot. Then, go rest. Oh, please return the rakes as well."

Piario spoke to Lael who didn't look back at him,

"Why should we rest? I am here to report that we have finished our work. Is there anything more we can do?"

"...Huh?"

Lael doubted his ears and turned towards Piaro. Piaro was now completely covered in dirt. It was proof that he had been working hard. But clearing a 500 pyeong sized land in just two hours?

Lael couldn't believe it as he asked,

"If you don't mind, can I go and check it myself?"

"Yes."

Piaro wasn't offended. It was natural since this was the first time he did it.

"Heok."

The usually calm Lael let out a cry of surprise. The 500 pyeong sized land that he entrusted to both Piaro and Bland really had been cleared.

'What type of magic was used?'

Lael couldn't close his mouth and Piaro prompted him, "Then, please give us the next task."

"Ah, yes..."

There was a lot of wilderness that needed to be cleared. Lael entrusted Piaro and Bland with another piece of land that was 500 pyeong. Then he watched both of them.

Buzz buzz.

The other Overgeared members quickly gathered in Lael's vicinity, all interested in the turmoil. They folded their arms and watched Bland and Piaro. The person who started work first was Bland.

"Ohh."

"Isn't he quite good?"

The Overgeared members let out sounds of admiration. Bland cleared the field 10 times faster than an average person, a speed comparable to when the Overgeared members used their skills. The Overgeared members were able to predict that Bland's strength and stamina were comparable to theirs.

Then what about the other person? The Overgeared members focused on Piaro, who belatedly started after sufficient stretching. Then they were shocked.

"W-What?"

"A professional farmer...!"

The speed at which Piaro cleared the field was 10 times faster than Bland. It wasn't just a matter of good stamina. He had a perfect grasp of how to use the rake to overturn the ground more effectively. His exquisite movements made the rake move through the ground like it was water. It was a godly skill that allowed all the foreign substances in the ground to be piled up in a corner.

"Hah...! Grid brought someone huge!"

"Yes. He brought a master of farming. With those skills, he is almost like a legendary farmer. We can't be fooled by his appearance..."

"But how did Grid know that we needed a farmer for Reidan?"

"This Huroi! I am impressed with My Lord's foresight!"

At that moment.

"Hmm?"

Piaro's transcendent senses detected the flow of water deep in the earth. He asked Lael, "Does this place not have enough water connected to it right now?"

"That's right. We plan to connect more channels in the future."

"I'll take care of it."

"...?"

No matter how clever Lael was, he couldn't immediately understand Piaro's remark. Lael and the Overgeared members were feeling puzzled as Piaro pushed his rake deep into the ground. Suddenly, the earth started to shake as an intangible wave of energy was released.

"An earthquake all of a sudden...!"

Lael and the Overgeared members thought that a giant worm might pop up, while the residents were confused.

At that moment.

Kuwaaaaaang!

A sound echoed out from where Piaro was standing before a pillar of water exploded upwards, seemingly piercing the sky.

"Wahhhh!"

The people cheered at the unbelievable sight while Lael and the Overgeared members were shocked. There was the gurgle of water as Piaro wiped the water and dirt off his face before saying,

"This is a good plot of land."

"..."

Piaro was clever and talented, so he was the best at whatever he did. It was the moment when the great swordsman became known as a legendary farmer and legendary feng shui person. On this day, there was a festive atmosphere in Reidan. A precious source of water had been found in the land that had been turned into a wilderness, so the people laughed, cried, and wept.

At the same time.

Ttang!Ttang!

"How sad, I can't even rest and have to work immediately after being overworked in a week-long monster hunt..."

Grid, Duke of the Eternal Kingdom and Lord of Reidan, was fiercely hammering in front of the roaring blast furnace. His rank was the highest, but he was also the busiest.

This was normal.

Chapter 219

“Khan!”

Three hours before Piaro was misunderstood as a legendary farmer and feng shui expert.

Grid came to the smithy where Khan was working alone.

“Ohh! You came!”

“I missed you!”

“I haven’t been able to eat, because I wanted to see you!”

“Eh? Should I have missed meals as well?”

“Hahaha!”

Grid and Khan hugged as they reunited after a long time. It was a friendship that transcended identity and age, so they welcomed each other enthusiastically.

“I was worried that you wouldn’t be able to adapt to the warm weather of the west, but you seem fine. Rather, you look healthier.”

Khan was in the latter half of his 60’s. He had passed the average life expectancy of the people of the Eternal Kingdom, so it was safe to say that he was at the end of his life. But after returning to being a blacksmith thanks to Grid, Khan worked all day and looked like he was in his 40’s or 50’s.

“You don’t have to worry. I have been working with fire all my life, so how can I be threatened by this heat?”

“You’re a great inspiration.”

Grid smiled. However, he knew that the lifespan of an NPC was finite so he couldn’t suppress the uneasiness in his life.

‘Please live for a long time.’

The first friend in his life, Khan. Grid wouldn’t be able to bear the sadness that would come when he needed to say farewell to the person who opened up his heart. Khan noticed the sad emotions in Grid’s smile and became slightly teary.

‘He reminds me of my son.’

His late son. If he hadn’t become sick and died early, he would’ve been Duke Grid’s age right now.

‘Originally, my son should be the one worrying about me...’

He wanted to see his son. But he could appease that longing with Duke Grid beside him. Khan was thankful for Duke Grid filling his vacancy. Khan swallowed back his tears and bowed his head.

"Thank you."

"Huh? What?"

Grid didn't understand the intentions behind Khan's sudden action. Khan smiled at his puzzled expression.

"Didn't you come here to help me? So I wanted to thank you! Hahaha!"

"What...? This is originally my work." Grid brought Khan to Reidan so that Khan wouldn't be lonely, not for the manpower. "But the situation of the city is a little inconvenient right now, so I am grateful for your help. Let's work together to solve the problem."

Grid took off the Holy Light set and changed into old clothing. The dirty novice clothing was what Grid wore when he worked as a blacksmith. The efficiency increased because it was easy to move in the clothing. The only downside was that Grid looked like a complete beggar when he wore it.

"Ohh! You can't hide your dignity with these shabby clothes!"

Grid's current dignity and charm stats were comparable to the king of a kingdom, so he was always brimming with elegance.

Grid swept away his hair and revealed his great forehead. He tied a cloth around his head so that his hair wouldn't flow down, and looked around the smithy.

'It is unbelievably large.'

A general smithy only had one or two small or medium sized furnaces installed. Usually only three to five people could work at the same time in a smithy.

However, the Overgeared members looked at the future and invested in Reidan's smithy, giving it a total of eight large furnaces. The sight of eight large furnaces lined up in a row was impressive.

'Isn't this at the level of a factory? Dozens of blacksmiths can work at the same time and produce a large quantity of items.'

But that was a story for later, when they had many blacksmiths. Currently, there was only Grid and Khan, so the big size of the smithy couldn't be taken advantage of.

'I should look into inviting blacksmith users.'

Grid looked at the smithy before deciding to start working. However, he didn't have the method to make a rake.

'I don't know how to make any farming equipment.'

It was because he never needed to make farming equipment before. But that wasn't a problem. Grid had the Legendary Blacksmith's Appraisal skill. Grid held one of the rakes made by Khan and used appraisal.

[Sturdy Rake]

Rating: Normal

Durability: 20/20 Attack Power: 3~7

A farming equipment suitable for digging at the ground.

It is made by Blacksmith Khan who can represent a region, so it is a rake with excellent durability.

Weight: 60

[A hidden function doesn't exist.]

[You have grasped the materials that make up Sturdy Rake, the production method, and the intentions of its creator.]

[Your understanding of the Sturdy Rake is now at 100%. You will be able to use the Sturdy Rake perfectly.]

[You have learned how to make a rake.]

The rake production method was added. Grid was satisfied and started work.

Ttang!Ttang!

He bent the structure at the end to resemble a trident. It was a simple structure, so Khan was able to produce one rake in just 20 minutes. Yet Grid was different. Just like when raiding boss monsters, Grid was extremely focused as he devoted himself to making one rake.

He carefully shaped the ends like he was making a sword, then he combined it with the handle part. Grid had over 2,000 dexterity, so his hands delicately handled the rake like he was touching Irene's pale body.

Two hours later.

"Ah, I should take a rest."

Age didn't lie. The weary Khan stopped working. On the other hand, Grid had superhuman stamina and wasn't exhausted. Khan looked closely at his work and was shocked.

"No, what are you doing right now?"

"Huh? What's the problem?"

Grid looked like he didn't understand, so Khan asked.

"Why are you spending two hours making a rake? I've already finished six rakes in two hours... Isn't this a waste of time?"

"Hrmm." Grid identified the six rakes made by Khan. Of course, they were all normal rated. The degree of completion wasn't satisfactory, considering Khan's skill. "Khan."

Grid stared straight at Khan. Khan flinched at the sight. Grid's eyes were as deep as the ocean, like a wise man. It was quite different from the usual Grid.

'Grid can also look like this...!'

Then Grid asked the astounded Khan. "Shouldn't you always do your best when making equipment? So why are you roughly making the farming equipment?"

"That... Produce as much as possible. Lael said to mass produce as much farming equipment as possible so that he could put more manpower into the rehabilitation project."

"Mass production? Even lowly blacksmiths can do something like that."

Grid emanated a huge pressure. Right now, he wasn't a greedy young man or Khan's valued friend. There was no doubt that he was a legendary blacksmith, Pagma's Descendant.

"Your role isn't to produce average farming equipment for ordinary farmers."

"Then what is my role?"

Grid replied firmly to Khan's question. "It's to make the best farming equipment that will help ordinary farmers become the best. That is your mission as an advanced blacksmith. Please don't forget your pride as an advanced blacksmith, no matter the situation."

"Ah...!"

Khan had worked with Grid for a long time and accumulated experience. Thanks to the skill Blacksmith's Affection, his blacksmithing skill reached advanced level 7. He was one of the best blacksmiths that currently existed, and he realized the truth of Grid's words.

"You're absolutely right!"

Khan was highly motivated. Grid handed the rake that he'd just completed to Khan.

"Look at what I created."

"Truly brilliant...!"

[Ideal Rake]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 50/50 Attack Power: 25~31

* Stamina +7.

* Dexterity +12.

* It will slightly improve the quality of the soil.

A farming equipment suitable for digging at the ground.

An item made by the blacksmith 'G' who has a reputation close to a legend. Despite the use of bad quality iron and wood as the material, its function is outstanding.

The three delicate prongs will make the soil finer, improving soil quality.

Weight: 51

'The one rake that Grid made in two hours is much more valuable than the six rakes that I made!'

He also wanted to make a good rake. Khan pledged before standing in front of the furnace again.

Ttang!Ttang!

"Don't overdo it."

Grid was concerned about Khan's health, but the highly concentrated Khan could no longer hear his voice.

'Yes, this is like him.'

Grid smiled warmly before starting to make his second rake.

Two hours later.

Grid and Khan both completed a rare rated rake. But once again, two hours later...

"Yes! It can't be compared to your work, but I have also produced a satisfactory rake!"

Khan succeeded in making an epic rated rake. The performance was less than Grid's, but it was clearly an excellent rake. Indeed, this was the dignity of an Advanced Blacksmith level 7. Then what about Grid?

"Damn..."

It was a normal rating. Grid was embarrassed. He didn't know that a normal rating would emerge when he was making such a simple item.

"Are you trying to deceive me with a rake?"

Grid's pride as a legendary blacksmith was once again wounded. Once again, two hours later. Grid and Khan both completed a rare rated rake.

"Not bad."

Khan was happy. But Grid was boiling with anger.

"Ugh, dammit...!"

A legendary blacksmith was having such a hard time making farming equipment? This wasn't normal.

"Are you tricking me again? These damn scum!"

Grid yelled at the operators who were watching from somewhere. Then Khan sent him a pitiful look.

"It has been a long time since I've seen this..."

It was a frequent phenomenon when they worked together. Khan left Grid shouting alone and started making a new rake.

“Grid!”

Now it was time for dinner. Lauel finished today’s work and ran to the smithy.

“Let’s go eat. Then we need to consult with the guild about the estate management plans... Eh?”

Lauel’s expressions twisted. He wondered how much Grid and Khan would’ve made in half a day, but there was less than 20 tools.

"Surely you weren’t playing around?”

Lauel expected a legendary blacksmith to work like a machine. He was feeling disappointed when Grid threw him a rake.

“I wasn’t playing around. Look at this.”

“...?”

Why did he need to look at the details of a rake? Lauel felt doubts and examined the rake.

“Heok.”

Lauel was beyond shocked.

[Perfect Rake]

Rating: Unique

Durability: 71/71 Attack Power: 49~61

* Stamina +15

* Dexterity +28

* Greatly improves the soil quality.

A farming equipment suitable for digging at the ground.

An item made by the blacksmith ‘G’ who has a reputation close to a legend. Despite the use of bad quality iron and wood as the material, its function is outstanding.

The three delicate prongs will make the soil finer, improving soil quality. The three prongs are bent at the ideal angle to work the soil. Even a child can use this rake to turn a wasteland into an excellent garden.

Weight: 45

The rake was a tool that helped adult males clear a 1,000 pyeong size land in one day. However, the people of Reidan were starving for a long time and their physical condition wasn’t good, so each person could only clear 100 pyeong a day.

‘The people of Reidan will be able to do more than that if they have this rake. The soil improvement means that the land will give a good harvest.’

This game was truly about items. Grid was the truth. Lael once again thought that it was a good idea to follow Grid. He didn't doubt that one day, the people of Reidan would be armed with the power of items.

Then he suddenly got an ominous feeling.

'Don't tell me that when he becomes a king...'

Surely he wouldn't name it Overgeared Kingdom? Lael made a tearful face.

Chapter 220

The central spire of Reidan Castle was a huge 11 stories. It was nearly twice as high as the spire of the lord's castle in common cities.

"Is the height of the central spire important?"

"In a sense, it symbolizes the power of the lord. The greater the prestige and power of the lord, the higher the height of the spires."

"In other words, the former lord of Reidan enjoyed the same authority as the king."

"That is the correct interpretation."

In fact, the size of Reidan Castle was comparable to the king's palace.

"The castle has a total of 127 rooms. In addition, there are six other outbuildings. There are five gardens, three parade grounds, and a barracks that can accommodate 8,000 troops."

There were no small decorations or basic furniture left. It was left untouched for a long time, so there were many rusty places and it was desolate. But the form itself was completely preserved, so Grid was amazed.

"It's surprising. I thought the castle would be completely ruined like the city."

"The people of Reidan sacrificed themselves to protect it."

The days when the empire defended the Hebed River. The people of Reidan had to give a certain amount as tribute to the empire, and it came to the point where they had to dismantle the city's buildings. However, they couldn't touch the castle, which was the symbol of Reiden, and their last remaining pride. As a result, the entire scenery around Reidan Castle was a ruin.

Grid was deeply impressed by Lael's explanation.

'The people of Reidan might be dying of starvation, but they protected their pride...'

Grid was a selfish person, but at least he had patriotism. It was the result of the forceful education during military service. Thanks to that, he was able to understand the hearts of the Reidan people without laughing at them.

'The people really love the place where they grew up.' Grid had a positive observation.

"It will be a big help to me to save the people of Reidan. Then the people of Reidan will be loyal and follow any orders. Isn't that right? Lael."

Lael was impressed. "I can't believe you thought that deeply."

Anyone could think about it. But he thought that Grid couldn't.

Grid spoke to the astonished Lael. "Don't exploit the people or give unreasonable commands."

"...Yes?"

Lael was shocked. He was more surprised than when he observed the unique rated rake several hours ago.

'What's wrong?'

Wasn't Grid the type of person to use others for his own sake? It was unbelievable to Lael that he would make such a statement about the people. He was at a loss when Grid whispered to him.

"I am the lord of the people, so I can't act childish. Just do it properly."

The people were the cash flow. Grid still thought so. He wanted to do the minimum amount to protect them. This was the least he could do for the people who sacrificed themselves to protect the symbol of the lord.

"In the first place, people must live here. Isn't that right?"

Grid was the lord of Reidan and leader of the Overgeared Guild, so he decided to act in a manner that wouldn't shame them. Now he was trying to act according to that determination. Lael smiled with satisfaction at Grid's growth.

"I will keep it in mind."

"I know."

Grid went ahead. After a few hours, he grasped the structure of the castle.

"It's really big. This great castle is mine?"

"It isn't just this castle. You're the master of everything in Reidan. In addition, you're eligible to get your hands on something greater. The spires of Reidan will become higher than the royal palace." Huroi remarked as he appeared.

Grid smiled. "Welcome Huroi. Your words always make me feel better. Thank you."

Thank you? Huroi was baffled. The original Grid wasn't someone who would express appreciation for anything.

'Reciprocating the goodwill of others...'

The selfish Grid was starting to fill up his lacking spots. It was gratifying. He noticed things that weren't pointed out.

'He grows every time I see him.'

Huroi and Lael were impressed.

Thump thump.

Grid moved to the great hall that could accommodate around 500 people. Apart from the old throne, it was just a room full of dust. However, Grid didn't doubt that this would soon shine a brilliant gold. He sat on the throne and quietly closed his eyes.

"Now it feels real."

He was a duke of the Eternal Kingdom. Next to the king, he had the highest status and held the greatest power in his hand. He represented Huroi, Lael, Jishuka and the other Overgeared members.

But.

'Am I qualified?'

Many memories went through Grid's mind. At a young age, he learned to be anxious around others. As an adolescent, he had many limitations. In his 20's, he experienced a lot of frustration. Hardships came to mind.

His memories before Satisfy were the worst. But everything changed after he started Satisfy and became Pagma's Descendant. He used the abilities he obtained to overcome his limitations, as well as the trials that he received.

'Is this purely the result of good luck?'

Grid wondered. After a long moment of thinking, he came up with an answer.

'No.'

There was a lot of luck, but in the end, it was his own strength and efforts that led to this result. It was unclear if the Northern End Cave even existed, but he had found it after several months of exploration.

'I am qualified. I was able to climb up to this point because I'm qualified.'

Sururuk.

Grid was filled with joyful emotions and slowly opened his eyes. Was this the influence of his higher charm stat? Or was it the effect of the true pride that he realized at this moment? Grid's eyes were deeper than ever, like the sea.

"Huroi, Lael."

"Yes."

Grid called out and Huroi bowed with a sincere heart. Lael followed as well. The two of them prostrated before him. It was a common action. Grid didn't feel awkward because of their exaggerated behavior.

"Both of you said that I'm destined to be the best. Was that false or exaggerated?"

Huroi and Lael responded in unshakable voices.

"My Lord is already the best."

"You are the only person I acknowledge. So you are a qualified person."

They were sincere. Grid's power, stats and abilities were among the top out of the two billion users in Satisfy. The only flaw was that he was lacking financial power, but he could overcome it if Reidan developed.

Defects in personality and intelligence? Grid was developing, so that wasn't a problem.

"...Yes, I will believe you and take pride in myself."

At this moment, Grid developed some self-pride. This was pure pride, not arrogance or egotism.

"Sigh..."

He let out a deep exhale. The victim mentality and inferiority complex was deeply rooted because of his experiences in the past. He hadn't fully shed it yet, but this was the moment his heart cleared. His jealousy towards others disappeared. His heart was light. His head became clear and his vision widened.

"This feels much better."

Grid said with a bright smile.

Now he was reaching the end of his steady internal growth process.

Reidan was a very large city that could accommodate 430,000 people, but it was currently impossible to increase the population. It was because Reidan didn't have any charms to attract people from other parts of the world to it.

Lauel believed that they should make good use of the 20,551 people currently living in Reidan.

"We have addressed the food shortage. The pace of the farmland clearing has increased exponentially thanks to the discovery of water by Piaro, the legendary farmer and feng shui expert. It's easy to spread drinking water."

'Legendary farmer? Feng shui expert?'

Grid and the Overgeared members were in the meeting room. How did Piaro become a legendary farmer and feng shui expert? Grid questioned this while Lauel laid out policies for the future.

Developing agriculture would encourage the birth of the people, promote consumption and attract external resources. In addition, there was a plan to grow the smithy on a large scale, centering on Grid and Khan. This would build up a foothold to become a commercial city.

"At this time, the role of the Overgeared members is to subjugate the monsters. We need to reduce the power of the monsters occupying the west. In particular, the ultimate goal is to destroy all the giant worms."

As with most online games, Satisfy's monsters respawned after a certain period of time from their deaths. But monsters that caused certain episodes, such as the giant worms, were in the special category.

"There is probably the home of the giant worms somewhere underground. If we find and destroy it, I'm sure that the giant worms will no longer respawn."

The giant worms had to be destroyed. Then the west could develop and the episode would move to the next stage. Lauel's words stirred the enthusiasm of the Overgeared members.

"Levels are guaranteed."

"Yes. The monsters in the west give a lot of experience."

"In return, they are too strong."

"We have the power of our items. Have you forgotten? We fortunately have Grid."

"Lauel, are there no longer any villages or cities in the west where people live? If it's possible to find a place where people are still living, can't we bring them to Reidan to increase the population?"

This was the opinion of Toban, the former chief of staff of the Tzedakah Guild. The Overgeared members responded positively to his words, but Lauel expressed concern.

"For the time being, I don't plan to search for other villages or cities. We should ignore the cities and villages found in the middle of the desert. There is likely to be a vampire lair."

Vampires had a minimum level of 250. However, this was the case of the young vampires. Vampires who lived for over 300 years were likely to have levels over 400. The possibility of being wiped out was high if they stepped into a vampire lair, so Lauel wanted to avoid such a situation.

Grid rose from his seat.

"I'll go now. There's a mountain of work piled up in the smithy."

Grid's word was far from being a lord. In fact, Lauel was taking the role of the lord while Grid acted like a blacksmith. At first glance, the situations should be reversed, but this was actually right.

Grid wasn't smart enough to lead a big city. It was Grid himself who appointed Lauel to this role.

After that.

The Overgeared members were able to level up and secure resources by hunting the monsters. The desertification of Reidan meant that timber was lacking, so securing timber was the first priority.

Piario and Bland immersed themselves in farming with the people, while Jude was tasked with training the strong people who Grid discovered through the Great Lord's Sword.

"Jump. Roll. Gear up. Spear...? Stab and swing your spear."

Jude's reckless training caused many soldiers to leave. However, a handful endured and were gradually reborn into elite soldiers. Unfortunately, their Weapons Mastery skill didn't grow, but the speed of their strength and stamina rise was abnormally fast.

“Anyway, my soldiers don’t need a high Weapons Mastery skill.”

Grid made weapons with low usage conditions and high attack power and spread them to the soldiers. Even the farm equipment was powerful, so the soldiers armed with his items were different from other soldiers in the region.

Ttang!Ttang!

Grid worked in the smithy around the clock. He was now working on construction tools instead of farming tools. Agriculture was stable now, so they were focusing on constructing facilities with the resources secured by the Overgeared members.

‘I feel like I’m dying, but my persistence and dexterity stats are rapidly growing.’

Grid wasn’t bored. Obtaining a different outcome every time from his production work was a different type of fun from hunting and boss raids. In any case, he was a blacksmith and needed to do it for the rest of his life.

‘Irene will like it.’

His dexterity stat kept rising, so he would be able to make Irene even happier. Grid laughed while thinking about it.

On the other hand, Khan was busy nurturing young blacksmiths.

“Hey! That forging quality isn’t great! Hey! If you put the firewood in now, your control of the fire will fall!”

Khan’s voice seemed to become more vigorous as the days passed. Khan’s passion made Grid smile.

Then after a while.

“It’s been a long time.”

Rabbit finally arrived.