

Overgeared 231

Chapter 231

The moment he locked eyes with Pagma.

Duguen!

Grid stiffened and his heart beat faster. His eyes shook as sweat started running down his body. It was a phenomenon of fear that transcended tension and agitation. Was he overwhelmed by the killing intent that Pagma was emitting?

No.

This was sheer instinct. The source of all his abilities was Pagma, so he couldn't help feeling awe and a sense of smallness when facing Pagma.

'Wake up.' Grid sobered up. 'This guy is just a doppelganger of Pagma. Don't be misled by appearances.'

The name that floated above his head wasn't Pagma, but 'Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest.' Grid confirmed this again and barely controlled his mind. After a moment, his composure was restored.

'It will be hard.' Who would've expected that the target of the raid would be Pagma's doppelganger? 'I never even imagined it.'

Looking back at it now, the features described by the Overgeared members resembled Pagma. But hadn't Pagma died more than 100 years ago? It was virtually impossible to imagine that the present doppelganger could copy a person from so long ago.

"..."

The staring battle between Grid and the doppelganger continued. There were all types of complex emotions and doubts in Grid's eyes, while the doppelganger only contained hostility towards the enemy.

It was clear that this situation couldn't be contained. The doppelganger attacked Grid first. He lightly swung a jade green greatsword in his hand.

Chaaeng!

"Kuk!"

Grid blocked the descending greatsword with Failure. The destructive power behind the blow was beyond imagination. The attack power was comparable to Hell Gao who was in a perfect condition.

"Laue! A doppelganger copies the appearance of the target. But can it completely copy their abilities as well?" He hurriedly asked.

Laue shook his head. "There are limits to a doppelganger's ability to copy. It can't fully copy the ability of a person stronger than itself."

It meant that the doppelganger wasn't as strong as Pagma, who was the greatest swordsman after Muller. In other words, the doppelganger in front of Grid was an unfinished product that couldn't completely copy Pagma's power.

However.

Jjejejeok!

“Crazy..!”

Bottom, side, top. The doppelganger showed off a dazzling skill with the greatsword, with barely a time difference in each strike. This drove Grid back.

[The durability of the +9 Failure has decreased by 3.]

[The durability of the +9 Failure has decreased by 8.]

‘What is this?’

Even the performance of the weapon was great. It was the first time he saw a weapon that could damage the durability of Failure so quickly. If the durability of Failure was compromised, it meant that the doppelganger’s weapon dealt twice the damage.

“Laue! What about the doppelganger’s ability to copy items?”

The material that made up a doppelganger was so flexible that it reproduced human hair and skin, even tears and blood.

“Depending on its strength, it can exert a strength comparable to orichalcum. Due to this, most items reproduced by doppelgangers are known to perform better than the original.”

It was impossible to completely copy the works of the legendary blacksmith, Pagma. The greatsword used by the doppelganger was obviously below the level of the original.

‘Nevertheless, it can deal such damage to Failure?’

Grid’s pride was crushed. He had been trying so hard for the two years since becoming Pagma’s Descendant, but he couldn’t even be compared to Pagma’s copy?

Chaaeng!Chaeng!

Grid’s sword became increasingly dull due to his agitation. On the other hand, the sword of the doppelganger was as sharp as ever, since his emotions never changed.

Chukak.

“...Uh!”

Grid finally started to become injured. Red blood stained his clothing. The flow of battle was heading towards Grid’s defeat.

“Quickly help Grid...!”

The Overgeared members were nervous. They wanted to go out and help Grid right away. But it was difficult to take a step because they were still caught by the feeling of helplessness. This helpless feeling was so strong that they wouldn’t be able to move their fingertips unless their survival instincts were invoked.

“We have to hope that Grid will survive until the doppelganger attacks us...”

“But look at this. Isn’t the doppelganger’s swordsmanship extremely similar to Grid’s swordsmanship?”

"That’s right. I wasn’t sure before, but now that they are side by side, the two sword styles look exactly the same.”

“It can’t be...”

The Overgeared members figured out the doppelganger’s identity. To be precise, it was the identity of the person that the doppelganger copied. However, the weight of that name wasn’t light, so they couldn’t express it with their mouths.

On the other hand, Lael had no such obstacles. “It seems to be Pagma, as everyone is thinking.”

"..."

Pagma. One of the nine legends and the source of Grid’s strength. But now. As a result of the golem invasion, Grid encountered Pagma’s doppelganger in the west.

What did this suggest?

"Through this raid, Grid will go through a big change. He will acquire new skills, quests or items and he will develop dramatically. The reason why the king appointed Grid as lord of Reiden is due to Satisfy’s arrangements for Pagma’s Descendant.”

Lael looked at it from a very positive perspective. It was the same for the other Overgeared members.

Teong!

Meanwhile, Grid defended against the onslaught of the doppelganger and he couldn’t retreat as the bamboo forest blocked the exit. There was no place to back off anymore, so he could only counterattack.

“Damn! Let’s try it once!”

How long was he going to be pushed by Pagma’s clone, who wasn’t even Pagma? The moment when Grid was about to use Pagma’s Swordsmanship.

"Stop!" The silent Piaro suddenly shouted. Grid was surprised and stopped.

"..."

The doppelganger’s sword had slashed through the spot where Grid was about to move to. If Grid had used Pagma’s Swordsmanship, his heart would’ve been pierced by that greatsword.

Gulp.

Grid swallowed his dry saliva as Piaro scolded him.

"Why aren’t you calm? Watch the opponent. The difference between him and you isn’t great. There is no reason for it to be so one-sided.”

The difference wasn't great? Wasn't his attack speed and attack power twice as high as Grid's? Piaro gave the confused Grid a hint. "Just as he knows your swordsmanship, don't you also know his swordsmanship? If so, can't you cope?"

"..."

If it was four months ago, Grid would've found it hard to understand Piaro's advice. But now it was different. Grid had steadily developed thinking skills in his everyday life. As a result, he was able to use Piaro's advice as perfect nourishment.

'That's right. That guy's swordsmanship is based on Pagma.' A stabbing attack contained the simplified footwork of Kill while a slash had the simplified footwork of Link. 'If I watch his foot movements, I can predict his next attack.'

Again, let's do it properly. Grid took a deep breath. In this gap, the doppelganger had taken two steps forward. It was the footwork of Link. A slashing attack. But would it be horizontal or vertical? If it was horizontal, would it come from the right or left side?

'Read the enemy's gaze and shoulder motions.'

He recalled Piaro's teachings. Then.

'The right!'

The movement was seen. Grid succeeded in detecting and avoiding the doppelganger's sword, despite it moving twice as fast as him. It was a very good move, impressing everyone watching.

'He listened to the advice of the farmer and...'

'He grew in real time?'

'What is going on?'

The eyes of the Overgeared members' widened. Their gazes turned towards Piaro. Piaro was standing with folded arms. It was the opposite of the members who were filled with the helpless feeling.

'It can't be...?'

He wasn't just a farmer? It was when the Overgeared members were starting to realize Piaro's identity.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship, Link!"

Pipit!Pipipipit!

Dozens of blue-white energy blades were created. Did it shatter the body of the doppelganger? It failed. The doppelganger completely blocked Grid's attack using the same technique.

Chaeeeeeng!

"Ohh!"

The blue-white blades and the jade blades collided together, causing the bamboo to shake from the force. The Overgeared members watched with amazement and awe.

“Kill!”

Grid used another skill to not lose his momentum. However, once again, the doppelganger reacted with the same technique to neutralize Grid’s attack.

Peeeeeeong!

The collision between Kill and Kill caused a powerful explosion. The center of the forest was destroyed because it couldn’t cope with the explosion. The rock where the doppelganger first sat was shattered and the fragments scattered everywhere, injuring the Overgeared members.

"How about this?"

Grid used a fusion skill. This skill was based on his own experience, so he thought the doppelganger wouldn’t have this skill.

“Transcended Link!”

A total of 20 strikes that dealt 180% physical damage was shot out with no time difference. It was a merciless bombardment that even turned an ancient weapon to rags, so Grid didn’t doubt its power. However, the doppelganger coped by using a skill that Grid didn’t know yet.

“Revolve.”

“...?!”

Grid and the Overgeared members’ eyes widened. The doppelganger moved the jade sword in a half moon and absorbed all the energy of Transcended Link, while a vortex appeared around the doppelganger? This wasn’t the end.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The energy of Transcended Link that was sucked into the vortex reappeared. At the same time, it reversed course and aimed for Grid. It was a perfect counterattack.

“Grid!”

"My Lord!"

The 20 energy blades moved through the bamboo forest in a zigzag, heading towards Grid. The Overgeared members were certain that Grid would die. But Piaro didn’t allow it. He suddenly appeared in front of Grid and pulled out his sword. Then he struck the blue-white energy blades one by one.

Kwang!

Two.

Kwang!

Three.

Kwa kwang!

Four.

Kwa kwa kwang!

In turn, he blocked all 20 blows.

"..."

The Overgeared members and Grid couldn't believe the sight that was in front of them.

'Blowing away my Transcended Link like hitting a baseball...? Was Piaro this strong?'

'No... What the hell is this farmer?'

As an awkward silence flowed, Piaro stepped back and urged Grid. "Fight again from the beginning. Absorb the techniques in Pagma's Swordsmanship that you don't know and make them your own. Then you will become stronger."

Piaro had figured out the identity of the doppelganger with the second blow that Grid and the doppelganger exchanged. However, he didn't step forward because he judged there was no value in it.

'This is a great stepping stone for Duke Grid.'

The private lessons of the continent's greatest swordsman, the second stage began.

Chapter 232

The doppelganger couldn't completely reproduce Pagma's power in its entirety. Nevertheless, its stats were equivalent to Hell Gao. Since Grid had a tendency to rely entirely on skills, it was natural that he was completely defeated in the first battle after Pagma's Swordsmanship was blocked.

This horrific monster...

'Fight again?'

Grid was unwilling. Wouldn't the result be the same even if they fought a few times? He would be much more comfortable if Piaro went out and took care of it. But he quickly fixed that idea.

'Piaro said to absorb Pagma's Swordsmanship. Yes, this is a chance to become stronger.'

More and more strength. He needed enough strength to do the things he had to do.

"Sigh..."

Grid hesitated before taking a deep breath.

Kuoooh!

The doppelganger stabbed forward. The attack was deafening, and despite being 5m away, seemed like it would reach his stomach.

Piaro exclaimed from behind him. "There are obviously limits to a greatsword. It's big, dull and hard to move on the fly. The stabbing of a greatsword is extremely simple, and can easily be seen. Don't worry about hidden weapons and block."

It was convincing advice. Grid's confidence was elevated and he moved calmly. Utilizing the footwork of Link to move left and right, he avoided the doppelganger's stab.

Kudududuk!

The jade greatsword passed by the side of the Holy Light Armor. Sparks scattered like firecrackers and the doppelganger could be seen beyond them.

"Once the stab misses, a gap will be exposed. This is an opportunity to hit back."

A greatsword was big and heavy. What if the greatsword was stabbed but didn't hit the target? The person holding the greatsword would lose their balance and their posture would collapse.

"Okay!"

Grid smiled with satisfaction as he counterattacked. His greatsword curved from the bottom up and aimed for the doppelganger's heart.

Seokeok!

It was avoided. The doppelganger demonstrated his agility by twisting his upper body to avoid being hit. However, the front of his clothing was loosened, clearing revealing the doppelganger's upper body.

"Kyaak!"

Laella, a member of the party, let out a sound of appreciation. The doppelganger copied Pagma's appearance and was so beautiful that he caught her heart instantly. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the sleek muscular body was the creation of a god. But the body wasn't an important factor in battle. Only the strong would win.

"Ohhhh!"

Failure passed over the doppelganger's head and once again descended.

Sukakak!

Heavy. Grid took full advantage of Grid's boots, so the weight at the end of his sword was incomparable to before. He could even easily disintegrate a rock. Could the doppelganger withstand it?

Of course, it was possible. This doppelganger had been a named boss of the Mysterious Forest for at least 100 years. Apart from its stats, its health would be in the millions.

[Critical!]

[You have dealt 17,790 damage to the target.]

'Indeed, there isn't a single scratch on him.'

Grid was dismayed when he saw that the doppelganger's health gauge didn't seem to decrease at all. Then the jade greatsword aimed at Grid's side.

'Ah!'

A chill went down Grid's spine.

Jeeeong!

The seven golden blades moved to protect Grid. They combined into one to form a barrier that defended against the greatsword. But they couldn't fully absorb the shock and became stuck in place.

Piario spoke again. "The biggest disadvantage of a greatsword is that it will take a long time to recover the weapon after an attack. You forgot this point and allowed a counterattack."

Then what should he do?

Jjejeong!Jjang!

As Grid was confused, the momentum of the doppelganger rose again. He started an endless onslaught and didn't allow time for Grid to take any countermeasures. The pavranium moved to protect Grid, but there was a limit since it stiffened every time.

"The opponent's behavior is correct. You should do it as well. If you take advantage of the recoil that occurs when you attack, you can link more strikes."

"Urgh...!"

Grid felt the need to stop the doppelganger's attacks. If so, he should evade rather than defend. In fact, Piario had advised 'don't play around when you have a sword in your hand.' However, the enemy's attack speed was much faster than Grid's attack speed, so it wasn't easy to react.

Then what should he do? Grid finally allowed an attack and the next blow aimed for his neck. Then.

Teong!

Piario stepped forward again. He blocked the doppelganger's sword and saved Grid's life once again.

"Why do you only use the golden blades as a defense tool? Optimize your control and use them as weapons if possible. Now fight again."

"..."

After that.

The same thing was repeated many times. Grid listened to Piario's advice, dealt with the doppelganger and when faced with death from an error, he was saved by Piario.

Grid felt like he was in a game room.

'Just when I think the game is over, the neighborhood boy will put in another coin.'

In fact, he had never met such a good person.

"If you have an opponent with higher health, you must go all out on attack instead of defense. Fight again."

"The technique of lifting from the bottom to the top is inevitably weaker because the force is countered by gravity. You might be using this technique to damage the enemy, but it is actually having an adverse effect. In the first place, is it possible with such a huge weapon? Fight again."

"Don't neglect the golden blades just because they can't kill the enemy. If you make them persevere to cover the enemy's view, they can be a bigger help than a few colleagues. Fight again."

"I explained why stabbing a greatsword is a simple technique, but I don't know why you are so obsessed with it. You should only stab in a situation where you can definitely knock your opponent away. You should know that the greatsword is designed for both stabbing and slashing. Don't forget to use the right greatsword technique when appropriate. Fight again."

"Again."

"Fight again!"

"Again! Again! Again!"

"...Pant pant."

How many times did he need to repeat this damn battle? It hadn't been dawn when they arrived here in the bamboo forest but now the sun was high in the sky. Grid was mentally and physically exhausted.

On the other hand, the Overgeared members...

"Yum yum. Grid is suffering a lot."

"The strongest NPC is teaching him swordsmanship and protecting his life, so how is he suffering? I would be excited."

"It's exciting, but hard."

"Is it easy to fight for over half a day?"

"Indeed... If I was continuously fighting against the enemy like Grid, my stamina would've reached its limit already."

The Overgeared members were already freed from the helpless feeling and were eating in front of a campfire. They baked and boiled the rainbow potatoes, relaxing as they watched Grid fight.

It wasn't because they were lazy. The Overgeared members also had a desire to join the raid. Growing through struggles was the joy they desired. But they couldn't move. Piaro was training Grid against Pagma's doppelganger, so there was no room for them to intervene.

"Anyway, Grid's growth rate is remarkable." Lael remarked.

The Overgeared members agreed.

"That's right. It's a tremendous growth."

The doppelganger had completely overwhelmed Grid in the first battle. He was attacked without being able to hit back once, and faced the crisis of death. In the second battle, Grid managed to strike once. The third battle, it was two attacks and the fourth battle, three attacks and so on. And in the 51st battle, Grid was exchanging blows at a level comparable to the doppelganger. It was especially impressive the way he avoided death every time.

"Grid is a blank slate. It's obvious if he grows even a little bit."

The synergy of the best teacher and best sparring partner (?) raised Grid's control. What user wouldn't want to experience something like this? The Overgeared members really envied Grid.

"I wish I had a mentor like that..."

"How did Grid obtain such a great NPC?"

"It's creepy that he was doing a farmer cosplay for a while."

What was Piaro's identity? And what circumstances were there that led him to teach Grid? It happened when the Overgeared members' questions were deepening.

"Sob...!"

Grid eventually collapsed. His stamina was completely depleted. On the other hand, the doppelganger was still fine. Grid had fought for half a day, but the doppelganger's health was still at 9/10ths.

Piario stopped him from finishing off Grid and turned his gaze to the Overgeared members. Then he pointed to Regas.

"You there."

"Huh? Me?"

Regas felt irritated when he saw that Grid was getting stronger and trained alone. He imagined Pagma's doppelganger as a virtual enemy in his mind, and started sparring against it. Therefore, he was stunned when Piario suddenly pointed him out.

Piario instructed. "You will deal with this enemy while Duke Grid is resting."

Regas' eyes shone like jewels. "Are you going to train me?"

Piario didn't deny it. "I have been watching your potential from a distance."

"Ohh...!"

Regas was jubilant. It was an opportunity to be trained by Piario, who was stronger than anyone he knew. Piario started the lesson as soon as he came running.

"Wow."

"What is this...? That NPC will teach anyone?"

"Amazing! We can receive his teachings?"

The Overgeared members were excited. They expected to become stronger after being taught by Piario. And that expectation became reality.

"Next."

Piario switched the members in turn and allowed them to spar against Pagma's doppelganger. He also developed the Overgeared members by pointing out the strengths and weaknesses that he had observed while staying in Reidan. It was in the hope that they would become stronger and make him stronger.

The great swordsman Piaro would be a great fortune to Grid and the Overgeared members.

Chapter 233

It was well into dawn.

The Mysterious Forest, which looked like the landscape of an Oriental painting, had long been devastated.

"..."

Dark blue paint smeared the sky. A man was standing with flames behind him. He had black hair that was thicker than silk and his white skin was dusty and scarred.

Suuk.

Dozens of of enemies were reflected in the lonely eyes. The humans fell down, got up, and fell down again. It wanted to kill them so they couldn't fight again, but it wasn't easy.

They were getting stronger over time, and there was an excellent human who protected them. He probably showed half the strength of my original master. I couldn't do anything because he easily overwhelmed me.

How long could I hold on?

In the past, a human army came. One day there were countless monsters. I had defended this forest from all types of beings for a long time, but this was my first moment of great crisis. But I soon calmed my mind.

'I...'

I had to defend it. She was on the hill beyond this forest. She was the only one who didn't hate me, when I could do nothing but imitate the image of others. I didn't remember the last time I saw her, but her warmth was still vivid. I wouldn't let these intruders make it through this forest to ruin her happiness.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship."

One of the humans spoke a familiar technique. It was the same technique used by my original master. It wasn't hard to cope with. I also used the same technique. I was much faster at using the technique than the human, so it was a simple matter.

However.

"...?"

The human's movements changed in the middle. The footwork suddenly changed from Kill to Link.

"Kill."

"Link!"

The man dodged Kill and fired dozens of energy blades.

Pit!Pipipipit!

I couldn't deal with the dozens of energy blades alone. In other words, blood spurted from the body of Pagma's doppelganger. One fifth of my health gauge was lost at once. The human was excited after succeeding in the attack.

"How is it? You were tricked? Isn't it amazing? Eh?"

Grid. It was his 83rd showdown with the doppelganger. He changed sword techniques in the middle, and had now become a clever warrior. A brave warrior.

"Wonderful." Piaro praised him. Piaro truly felt admiration.

'The journey from Patrian to Reidan...'

Piaro had seen that Grid's talent was already facing limitations. Grid was so clueless that he was deemed virtually impossible to teach. But now there was a good teaching material. That's right, it was Pagma's doppelganger. Pagma's abilities might not be completely copied, but the doppelganger was far superior to Grid.

Piaro gave directions to Grid. As the battle with the doppelganger continued, Grid gained enlightenment and grew.

'The mentor gives their student a glimpse of the bowl, a good opponent strips off the limits, and an ideal opponent makes them forget about the limits.'

Those were his master's words. An ideal opponent. Piaro also wanted to find it. Just like the current Grid.

"Grr...!"

Pagma's doppelganger made a sound. He emitted an immensely strong killing intent. He showed extreme survival instincts now that his life was in danger.

"From now on, it is the real battle. Duke Grid, I wish you the best."

"Yes."

After receiving Piaro's encouragement, Grid stepped forward with confidence. The doppelganger aimed an entirely new technique at him.

"Pinnacle."

Pagma's Swordsmanship, it was made up of skills that dealt additional damage in proportion to physical damage. In addition, most of them were non-targeted skills and often missed. But Pinnacle was different. It was a targeted skill and had an additional option of ignoring the enemy's defense. The range of movement was proportional to the length of the weapon.

Kwachak!

It was the culmination. It was an attack that was impossible for Grid to respond to.

"Kuaaaaak!"

Holy Light Armor. It was the ultimate armor made by the legendary blacksmith Pagma out of the god mineral, adamantium. But it couldn't boast a complete defense in front of Pinnacle. Grid fell down while Piaro was amazed by the manifestation of an amazing sword technique.

'Pagma! The more I see your swordsmanship, the more I want to meet you, not the fake ones...!'

A blacksmith, but also a master of the sword. The sword technique that could separate the sky and the mountains. Indeed, the best swordsman after Sword Saint Muller...

'They are stronger than my current self!'

Piario resented that he was born in this age. Why couldn't he be born in the same time as Muller and Pagma? If he had lived under the same sky as them, he would've been able to stand shoulder to shoulder with them eventually.

However, there were no such people in the present age. He was alone and stagnant. The moment that Piario was lamenting this,

"...Kuk, okay." A pale green light flashed around Grid's bloody body. "It was good that I managed to wear Doran's Ring in advance."

Grid said as he got up. His appearance was normal. The huge wound on Grid's chest disappeared without a trace, and there were no other signs of injuries. The power of items. The healing of Doran's Ring was amplified by the Holy Light Armor, completely restoring Grid's health.

"What...?"

Piario was shaken. Even a legendary Saintess couldn't completely heal a dying person all at once, let alone Grid, who wasn't a Saintess.

Ttuduk!Ttududuk!

Grid stretched his body. He prepared for a new strike.

"I can learn it as well."

Pagma's Swordsmanship usually consisted of three to seven steps of footwork. It was extremely simple, but it was possible to unfold the ultimate swordsmanship with this simplicity. It was difficult to imitate Pagma's Swordsmanship, and it was impossible to activate even if it was imitated.

But it was possible for Grid. He could make Pagma's Swordsmanship his own, just by looking. How was it possible when he had no talent?

The reason was simple. He was Pagma's Descendant. For that reason alone, Grid had managed to learn Pagma's Swordsmanship after looking at the murals. But now there was a person to teach him the forms of Pagma's Swordsmanship directly. It was optimal.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship!"

Teong!

The heavy weight of Grid's boots shook the ground. Grid expressed the essence of a warrior god with this sword technique.

"Pinnacle."

[You have learned a new skill.]

[Pinnacle Lv. 1]

A sword that expresses the essence of a warrior god.

Deals 700% of your attack power to a single target. This skill will ignore 60% of the target's armor.

Skill Usage Conditions: Have a sword type weapon equipped.

Skill Mana Cost: 750

Skill Cooldown Time: 3 minutes.

It was an intermediate skill between Kill and Link. It also consumed much less mana and had a shorter cooldown than Kill. The important thing was that it was a targeted skill, unlike Link or Kill. If this skill had been recorded in the murals at Loran Falls, the past Grid would've found it much easier to raise his level.

Kuoooh!

Failure moved in a half moon shape. The slash covered Pagma's doppelganger. But the doppelganger was already prepared.

"Revolve."

A counterattack used at the perfect timing. Pinnacle was caught by the vortex and returned to Grid. The energy blade faced Grid. Could he afford to endure this attack now that Doran's Ring was on cooldown?

No.

"Revolve."

[Revolve Lv. 1]

Like the eye of a storm, it is calm and powerful.

It will return all attacks that hit it within 0.5 seconds of casting with 100% of the power.

Skill Usage Conditions: Have a sword type weapon equipped.

Skill Mana Cost: 2,000

Skill Cooldown Time: 2 minutes.

"...!"

The Overgeared members were exhausted after fighting the doppelganger while Grid was resting. Their eyes watching the battlefield became wide with shock. Piaro was the same.

'This is impossible!'

Everyone was shocked. Yesterday and today, Grid's control abilities had made a breakthrough, but they didn't think it was at the level of counterattacking at the perfect timing.

Counterattacking was a difficult technique to do. It was necessary to use the technique in the right place and at the right time to neutralize the enemy's attack. It was a technique that wasn't easy to use without making a lot of effort.

But Grid had succeeded. He reacted to a counterattack with a counterattack. This meant he had predicted the behavior of the enemy. Grid's growth level exceeded everyone's predicted range.

Seokeok!

[The +9 Failure's option effect is activated, causing the skill 'Bisect' to be generated.]

[The +9 Failure's option effect is activated, causing the skill '5 Joint Attacks' to be generated.]

[The Holy Light Gloves's option effect is activated, causing the skill '5 Joint Attacks' to be generated.]

[Critical!]

[You have dealt 1,375,900 damage to the target.]

The doppelganger's right arm was cut off. The jade sword was separated from its master and fell to the ground. Grid's eyes became sharper than ever.

'If you catch a chance at victory, link the attack!'

Piaro's cry that he heard yesterday rang loudly in his ears.

"Ohhhhhh!"

As the doppelganger was struggling with losing one arm and his sword, Grid used a skill. It was a skill that surpassed Transcended Link. Linked Kill.

Kwachak!

A shark, the predator that ruled the world's oceans for 415 million years! Failure tore at the body of the doppelganger in succession. One time! Two times! Three times! Four times! Five times! Six times! Seven times!

[Critical!]

[Critical!]

[Critical!]

[Critical!]

[All of your stamina has been depleted due to the maximum number of Linked Kill blows being triggered.]

[Your stamina will fall to 0 and you can't move.]

"Ugh...!"

Grid's vision blurred. He tried to hold on but eventually collapsed like a puppet whose strings were cut. Then notification windows appeared in his vision.

[You have defeated the Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest that has existed for 153 years.]

[8,450,109 experience has been acquired.]

[The party leader 'Grid' has acquired 6,300 gold.]

[The party leader 'Grid' has acquired the Guardian's Necklace.]

[The party leader 'Grid' has acquired the Guardian's Bracelet.]

[The party leader 'Grid' has acquired the Doppelganger's Greatsword.]

[The party leader 'Grid' has acquired 13 weapon enhancement stones..]

[The party leader 'Grid' has acquired 15 armor enhancement stones..]

[The party leader 'Grid' has acquired 4 blessed weapon enhancement stones..]

[The party leader 'Grid' has acquired 6 blessed armor enhancement stones..]

[Your level has risen.]

"Hah... Haha..."

When he checked the time, he had been fighting for 23 hours and 21 minutes. In the meantime, Grid had been defeated 82 times and the Overgeared members had tasted at least 10 defeats. But in the end, the battle was their victory.

Grid laughed. He couldn't lift a finger, so he just lay on the cold dirt floor and laughed. He had gone beyond his limits, so an unexplained pleasure gripped him. The Overgeared members ran to him.

"My Lord! Great!"

"Grid! You were really cool!"

"Grid! You are such a great guy! Hahat! Puhahahat!"

Laughter echoed in the Mysterious Forest, which had been filled with screams for a long time. Pagma's doppelganger couldn't help smiling as he heard it.

Memories of the past came to mind. The pure laughter in her childhood. The sharp laughter when she was a girl. The tender laughter when she was a young lady...

"..."

His vision darkened. He couldn't think anymore. Then the voices of the humans were heard.

"Eh? He isn't dead? He's squirming?"

"He's lost the cloned appearance, but the nucleus of the body is still alive. However, it might as well be dead because there is a huge degeneration in both abilities and intelligence."

“Should we kill him?”

“Considering the tendencies of a doppelganger, I think it’s worth exploring him. Let him recover.”

The doppelganger became like a melted tire and didn’t move.

On the other hand, Piaro had the shivers. He once again realized after witnessing Grid’s power. He might not be born under the same sky as Muller or Pagma, but he was under the same sky as Pagma’s power.

‘It is you.’

The person who would lead him to the realm of a sword saint.

Chapter 234

After restoring the proper amount of stamina. Grid barely managed to sit up on a flat piece of rock. He noticed the eyes of the Overgeared members looking at him.

‘The atmosphere has changed.’

Was it because he overcame this big trial by surpassing his limit several times over? Grid felt like he had achieved excellent personal growth. Grid shared the item information with the Overgeared members.

[Guardian’s Necklace]

Rating: Unique (Set)

Durability: 23/23 Defense: 35

* Indomitable +30

* When the set is worn: Defense +100

* When the set is worn: Indomitable +50

A necklace manifested by the Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest.

It gives the wearer a strong willpower and defense.

User Restriction: Level 300 or higher.

Weight: 15

[Guardian’s Bracelet]

Rating: Unique (Set)

Durability: 21/21 Defense: 37

* Indomitable +30

* When the set is worn: Defense +100

* When the set is worn: Indomitable +50

A bracelet manifested by the Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest.

It gives the wearer a strong willpower and defense.

User Restriction: Level 300 or higher.

Weight: 11

"Oh, it' a magic accessory?"

"Yes. Defense is attached to an accessory?"

Most accessories didn't have much defense. For example, while Doran's Ring could exert tremendous healing ability equivalent to a legendary rating, it didn't give even one point of defense. On the other hand, the Guardian's Necklace and Bracelet both had extremely high defense.

'With the set effect, they increase defense by 172 points...'

It was comparable to a level 300 heavy gauntlets or heavy boots of the normal rating. It was amazing that these two accessories gave such high defense. However, the members weren't happy.

"Just high defense? They don't have any options."

"Yes. An accessory should at least have some attribute resistance."

"I need accessories that decrease cooldown time."

"It raises the indomitable stat, but the stat itself isn't all that great."

[Indomitable]

Has a certain probability of invalidating a portion of the incoming damage. The lower the health, the higher the probability.

* The higher the number, the higher the effect.

* Stat points can't be distributed to this stat.

According to the stated description, Indomitable was a very useful special stat. In particular, it was an essential stat for tankers. However, because the probability of the stat's effect being activated was extremely low, people treated 'indomitable' as a trash stat.

Grid was more familiar with this than anyone else.

'The indomitable stat really is trash.'

Grid currently had close to 900 points in Indomitable. Despite this fact, he never experienced the indomitable effect. These were the only accessories that a strong boss monster dropped? The Overgeared members were disappointed.

But Grid was different.

"If you guys don't mind, I would like to use these accessories."

After he became Pagma's Descendant. Grid had been self-sufficient regarding items through production and raids. However, accessories weren't an area that blacksmiths could produce and because boss monsters didn't often drop them, Grid didn't have any.

'I couldn't find someone who could handle the purple orichalcum...'

From Grid's perspective, he was grateful even for the Guardian accessory set. The Overgeared members unconditionally agreed to Grid's request.

"Grid, you should do what you want."

"You are the first place in this raid. It is natural for you to have what you want."

"Thank you."

Grid expressed his gratitude and shared the information of the greatsword.

[Doppelganger's Greatsword]

Rating: Legendary

Durability: 731/731 Attack Power: 780~1,516

Attack Speed: -6%

* Ignores 20% of the enemy's defense.

* Increases the power of attack skills by 20%.

A greatsword that the Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest copied.

It imitated the work of the legendary blacksmith Pagma, but the resemblance is only in the appearance. The power isn't comparable to Pagma's works.

User Restriction: Level 320 or higher. More than 2,010 strength. Advanced Sword Mastery level 2 or higher.

Weight: 3,955

"Wow...!"

"It is terrific!"

It was overwhelming performance. The Overgeared members let out sounds of admiration. Grid was also impressed.

'It is at this level, despite not being comparable to Pagma's work?'

The damage was slightly less than the unique rated Failure, but the options of the greatsword showed other advantages. In particular, the 20% increase in attack skills damage captivated Grid's heart.

'If I use this greatsword, Pagma's Swordsmanship will be greatly strengthened...'

Of course, it wasn't a weapon good enough to replace Failure. It meant it wasn't suitable for Grid to use. The Overgeared members were also similar.

"It is a pity that it's a greatsword."

"It would've been nice if it was a one-handed weapon..."

No one used the greatsword as a weapon among the Overgeared members. Beast Master Toon could handle a greatsword, but his primary weapon was a wrist blade. Both Grid and the Overgeared members felt regret.

"Why don't you try challenging the two sword style?" Lael suggested.

"Two sword style? Dual swordsmanship?"

"Yes."

Some swordsmen classes acquired a passive skill called the 'Two Sword Style', where they used two swords instead of a shield and boasted powerful attacks and dazzling attack orbits.

"He doesn't have the skill called Two Sword Style... But it shouldn't be a problem?"

As Pagma's Descendant, Grid could handle all weapons regardless of whether he had the required weapon mastery skill. The Overgeared members knew this fact. However, Grid thought negatively.

"How can I do dual swordsmanship with a greatsword..."

The weight wasn't a problem. Grid's strength stat was unrivaled. Failure was light by default, but he could swing the relatively heavy Doppelganger's Greatsword with one hand. But there was a problem. Both Failure and the Doppelganger's Greatsword had a length of 2m. It wouldn't be easy to wield two weapons longer than his height at the same time.

Lael persuaded Grid.

"Your control skills have increased by leaps and bounds during this raid. It is more than you can imagine yourself. I am confident that if you try hard and don't give up, I am convinced that you can do it. Besides, don't you have a great mentor?"

Lael pointed towards Piaro and said,

"Toon uses two wrist blades and Piaro is the strongest swordsman. If you study with them, won't you be able to master the Two Sword Style someday?"

"Umm..."

Certainly, it was a tempting suggestion. The Doppelganger's Greatsword increased basic damage and skills damage. By taking advantage of the two weapons and using Pagma's Swordsmanship, he would be able to achieve a much higher attack power.

'I want to challenge it.'

His blood was boiling. But there was a problem. The Doppelganger's Greatsword was an item obtained in a raid group with the Overgeared members. He couldn't take all the items alone.

Grid hesitated.

“Do as Lauel says.”

"That's right. It is a good idea. Grid, can't you use any weapon without limit? You should take advantage of this advantage."

"You will raise your defense with the accessories, so it's ideal if you can increase your attack power."

“Everyone...”

They were generously giving it to me. Were they doing him a favor? The Grid in the past would've giggled and accepted it without any conflicts. But now he was different. He had something called a conscience.

The Overgeared members encouraged him when he hesitated.

"In the first place, you are the only one who can use a greatsword. Should we sell it to others for money? Absolutely not. I don't want a ranker getting their hands on a powerful weapon."

"That's right, should we raise a rival with our own hands?"

“In addition, we owe a lot to Grid.”

After he became the master of the Overgeared Guild. Grid produced the guild members' items for free. He thought it was something he should do as the guild master. He was always thankful to the Overgeared members.

Now that favor was returning to him.

“Thank you...!”

The Doppelganger's Greatsword was worth at least three million gold. Grid was thrilled by the Overgeared members' actions.

“It is extremely difficult to adapt to using two swords in a short period of time. In particular, it is theoretically impossible to master dual wielding with greatswords.

“Do you mean I should give up?”

“No, that isn't it. It is possible to overcome it with Pagma's power. But it will take time. First of all, don't fret. I will try to train you so that you can use dual swords with Pagma's Swordsmanship.”

Grid and the Overgeared members passed through the Mysterious Forest and climbed the mountain. It was to search for the presence of a mine. While they were moving, Grid discussed how to dual wield with Piaro.

Huroi was walking ahead and he shouted.

“There is a small cabin on the slopes of the mountain.”

“A cabin?”

A person lived in a dangerous area where no one could enter because of the doppelganger? Grid and the Overgeared members were curious but didn't forget their boundaries. They knocked on the door of the cabin.

"Is anyone here?"

"..."

There was no answer. There were also no sounds.

"Should we enter?"

Vantner wasn't sure if there was a landlord present, but he opened the old door. Then the smell of mold tormented the group.

"This house has been neglected for at least a decade."

Grid's group started to search the house. However, there was nothing in the house except for a small bed and desk.

"Huh? What is this?"

Vantner discovered an old storage box. It was made of birch and locked like a treasure chest. What was inside? Vantner was curious and tried to break the box. But the system rejected it.

[Nothing happened.]

"This... It looks like we need a key to open the box?"

"Leave it to me."

Grid came forward. He pulled out his 'Master Key.'

Clink.

The rusty lock was opened with no resistance.

"This...?"

There was a small book in the storage box. Grid opened it.

Chapter 235

Summer, Year 259 of the Kingdom.

I met a child who looked exactly like me in the forest on the way out of the village.

The person said hello! I also smiled and greeted the child.

"Year 259..."

"146 years ago."

It was a diary from a long time ago. It was remarkably well preserved without anything being erased.

Winter, Year 259 of the Kingdom.

I went to the forest for the first time in a while.

The child who looked exactly like me was wearing summer clothes. I took off my hat and scarf and gave it to the child, who laughed.

Winter, Year 259 of the Kingdom.

I told my dad about the child in the forest.

My dad became angry. He said the child was a dangerous monster. He told me not to meet the child again.

"The child in this diary is the doppelganger?"

"Indeed."

Not all monsters were aggressive. There were monsters that attacked humans first, and those that didn't. The Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest seemed to be a gentle monster in the past.

'If this guy was like this, why did he attack us first?'

Grid and the Overgeared members had questions.

Spring, Year 260 of the Kingdom.

Dad said that child in the forest was dangerous, but he didn't know.

I went to see her again.

The child treasured the hat and scarf that I gave her.

"Hello!" I greeted her. She replied with those words.

We promised to be friends.

Spring, Year 260 of the Kingdom.

I named my friend Randy. My name is Wendy and together, we'll look like sisters.

Autumn, Year 260 of the Kingdom.

Randy now speaks very well. She can follow everything that I say.

My good friend is smart.

Winter, Year 260 of the Kingdom.

I played with Randy every day and was caught by my dad. Dad took out his bow, stating that he was going to kick Randy out.

I was scared and followed.

My dad saw Randy's greeting and couldn't shoot the bow. Thank god.

Summer, Year 261 of the Kingdom.

My dad taught Randy how to use the bow. Now Randy is better at hunting than Dad.

Thanks to Randy, my family never goes hungry.

Thank you Randy.

But I like rabbit meat more than boar meat.

The days in the diary flowed quickly. The young girl called Wendy spent her days pleasantly. Her father and her friend Randy gave her new experiences every day. The feelings conveyed from the diary were happy, so the hearts of Grid and the Overgeared members became warm.

Unfortunately, the contents of the diary started to enter a new phase. It was when Wendy's handwriting started to mature.

Spring, Year 270 of the Kingdom.

There seems to be an amazing mine behind our house. The villagers gathered together to check it, before saying that they should report it to the lord of Reidan.

Spring, Year 270 of the Kingdom.

The lord visited with dozens of knights. He told my dad to guide him to the mine.

The sight of the lord watching me was somewhat unpleasant.

Summer, Year 270 of the Kingdom.

Oh my god!

A gentleman more beautiful than me came to the mine. His dignified manner and fine skin was like a prince from a fairy tale.

The prince was concerned.

"The minds of humans are still too immature to bear this mineral."

"Is she talking about Pagma?"

"I was thinking the same thing."

Grid was sure of it after reading the contents of the diary. As Rabbit guessed, there was a mine in this mountain, and the mineral there was so huge that Pagma had to pay attention to it.

'Yellow mithril.'

Grid kept reading the diary.

Autumn, Year 270 of the Kingdom.

The lord declared that he would develop the mine. Then he ordered me to pour him a drink.

As I was serving him, the lord kept touching my hips.

I was uncomfortable, but refrained because he was the lord.

Autumn, Year 270 of the Kingdom.

The lord said he would make me his concubine.

What is a concubine?

When I asked my father what that meant, he just shed tears.

Autumn, Year 270 of the Kingdom.

The villagers told me. There were one or two women who went to become the lord's concubines, but they were all treated as playthings.

Everyone is worried about me.

Scary...

Winter, Year 270 of the Kingdom.

I explained the matter to Randy, stating that I would need to leave home soon to become the lord's concubine.

I don't want to leave my father and Randy.

I cried loudly and Randy patted my back.

Randy is always nice. Winter with Randy wasn't too cold.

Winter, Year 270 of the Kingdom.

It's serious.

The lord tried to visit the mine, but was attacked by a monster in the Mysterious Forest.

The identity of a monster is a doppelganger.

Randy...

Spring, Year 271 of the Kingdom.

I heard that the angry lord organized an army to kill Randy.

I'm worried about Randy and can't sleep.

Spring, Year 271 of the Kingdom.

As soon as dawn came, I went to Randy.

Randy's appearance was different.

She looked exactly the same as one of the lord's knights.

"I don't like it. I will protect Wendy."

Randy shouted at me to run away.

No matter how I tried to persuade her, Randy wouldn't step back.

What if Randy was hurt?

I was afraid and sad.

"Since then..."

In order to defend the girl called Wendy, the gentle doppelganger started attacking anyone who invaded the forest. He had been fighting for 100 years.

"The Guardian accessories were made by the doppelganger for this."

What happened to Wendy in the end? Then how did the doppelganger take on Pagma's appearance? Grid and the Overgeared members became immersed in the diary.

Spring, Year 271 of the Kingdom.

It's said that Randy defeated the army sent by the lord by herself.

It's scary that many people died. But Randy was unharmed, so I was happy.

I went to Randy.

"Don't worry. I'll protect Wendy. Don't worry, Wendy, don't worry."

Randy repeatedly said the same thing while bleeding.

She was seriously injured and couldn't get up properly.

I had been saving up herbs to treat Randy.

But Randy was impervious to the effects of the herbs.

I will be with Randy tonight to look after her.

Spring, Year 271 of the Kingdom.

A few days later, Randy's wounds haven't healed.

According to rumors, the lord is preparing a new army.

Please... Somebody please help Randy.

Summer, Year 271 of the Kingdom.

I was leaning on Randy's shoulders.

"Your killing originates from a noble heart."

The prince I saw last year appeared.

Despite Randy swinging the sword, the prince hammered at her.

No!

I yelled, but the prince didn't stop. Randy's body kept being hit.

Then something strange happened.

Randy's wounds became better.

"Is this the concept of repair? The material that makes up the body of a doppelganger can be called a metal." Lauel asked.

Grid nodded.

"It seems so."

Summer, Year 271 of the Kingdom.

"This world is full of danger. Humans are threatened by monsters and are busy fighting among themselves, while the demons underground are helped by the Yatan Church."

The prince who called himself Pagma said difficult words.

He smiled at me while patting Randy's head.

"There is a balance to be kept. If the present day Eternal Kingdom has the power to threaten the empire, it would cause great confusion. I will give you the right to use some of my strength, so you must defend this forest thoroughly. The consequence of that will result in Wendy's safety."

"..."

Randy was smarter than me. Unlike me, Randy understood the words and nodded.

Then on this day. Randy's appearance changed into that of the beautiful prince.

Summer, Year 271 of the Kingdom.

Randy defeated the lord's army.

This time, Randy wasn't seriously injured.

Thank god. But I was worried.

Randy's atmosphere changed.

The warmth of his eyes felt a bit cold.

Winter, Year 271 of the Kingdom.

Randy continued to fight for the last few months. The lord hired mercenaries after the army couldn't defeat Randy.

Randy warned me when I visited him.

"Don't come here anymore. Wendy should stay with your dad."

'Why...?'

"Aren't we friends? Why are you rejecting me?"

I asked him and Randy explained.

"I'm able to easily kill humans. And Wendy is a human. I... I'm scared."

Randy looked lonely. My heart hurts.

Spring, Year 272 of the Kingdom.

I visited Randy today.

Randy acted as usual.

He told me to 'Go back' and then fell silent. He didn't respond to any of my stories.

I'm sorry and scared. More than anything, I am sorry.

Summer, Year 272 of the Kingdom.

Randy has killed many people.

'Are you okay?'

There was no answer from Randy. Now he didn't even look at me. He just looked into the distance. He's changing more and more.

Because of me...

Winter, Year 272 of the Kingdom.

My dad went to the village to sell leather and hasn't returned for several days. I tried to visit the village, but Randy blocked my way.

He still didn't speak.

Winter, Year 272 of the Kingdom.

I have to go to the village today!

I yelled at Randy.

I spoke harshly when I said it wasn't necessary for him to protect me.

Then Randy opened the way.

In retrospect, Randy looked very sad.

Winter, Year 272 of the Kingdom.

I arrived in the village and heard shocking news.

My dad was arrested by the lord.

His crime was conspiring with the doppelganger.

The lord found out that my dad and I were close to Randy.

It's all my fault.

The sweet and pure Randy became covered in blood and my dad was suffering...

All my fault.

Winter, Year 272 of the Kingdom.

The lord promised to release my father. Instead, I would become his concubine.

I have no other options.

Spring, Year 273 of the Kingdom.

I met Randy last night.

I couldn't bear to tell him, who was trying to protect me, that I was leaving.

Thank you, I'm sorry. And I can only say that I love you.

Now I am leaving this house. I will never be able to come back. However, I lied and told Randy I would be back after a while.

Today will be my last diary entry.

"...Poor Randy!"

Vantner burst into tears. Unlike his rough appearance, he was very sensitive. Therefore, tears and snot were running down his face.

"Shit! Poor Randy! He struggled to protect Wendy, but in the end he couldn't protect her! He didn't even know that he couldn't protect Wendy. Until now! For over 100 years, he has been waiting for Wendy to come back!"

"..."

The Overgeared members were solemn. They didn't know the circumstances of the doppelganger and just thought he was a bad guy. Grid saw their depressed expressions and smiled.

"Even if it wasn't us, someday someone else would've done the same thing. It's fortunate that we know how Randy was feeling due to this book."

It was a mature comment that they couldn't believe.

"Grid..."

"My Lord..."

The Overgeared members comforted by Grid were impressed. They felt genuine respect for the ever-changing and growing Grid. Grid turned to the 'real last

Summer, Year 286 of the Kingdom.

The lord abandoned me.

My soul and body that have become rags have finally found freedom.

The Mysterious Forest that I hadn't returned to in 13 years.

Randy was waiting for me, looking just like he did in the past.

Randy...

There were so many words I wanted to say. I wanted to express my pain. But I didn't want Randy's heart to hurt, so I smiled as brightly as possible.

I'm back.

small traces of blood could be seen. It seemed like Wendy became sick while living the lonely life of the lord's concubine.

"She died shortly after returning home. The doppelganger must not understand that humans have a different life-span and had been waiting until this day."

"Um..."

Grid closed the diary.

Then a notification window popped up.

[You have learned a little more about the person called Pagma.]

[There is a bond with Pagma. The growth rate of your skills will increase.]

'What?'

The legendary skills had the disadvantage that their effect and power were excellent, but the growth speed was slow. This would overcome that shortcoming. Grid was delighted by the unexpected harvest when the notification windows were renewed.

[You have discovered the story of the Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest.]

[The Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest that fell by your hands is now different from the past. Its intelligence, physical abilities and most of its memories have been degraded. But if you call it Randy, it will be delighted and follow you.]

This was an opportunity to get a new pet. Grid couldn't resist.

'I will be your new friend.'

Ttalkak.

Grid decided to put the diary back in its place. Then he ordered the Overgeared members.

"After confirming the mine, I will collect the doppelganger and return."

It was an expedition where he could obtain many things.

Chapter 236

Grid and the Overgeared members returned.

It took four days, which was twice as long as the planned schedule. Rabbit came out and met them.

"I was worried since you were late."

Vantner grumbled, "As part of training, we defeated all of the monsters on the way and back from the destination."

Grid received the grumbles and laughed. "We've become a lot stronger thanks to that."

It was true.

During the past four days, they constantly hunted as well as raided the doppelganger. Therefore, the Overgeared members made tremendous progress. It wasn't just increasing their levels and items. Their control and ability to cooperate with each other had increased dramatically. It was thanks to Piaro's teachings, who was an expert in tactics as well as swordsmanship.

Rabbit spoke bitterly, "Please stick to the schedule in the future. There will be a big loss if the schedule is out of order."

Grid listened to him. He and the Overgeared members all had important positions in Reidan. It was too much to delay them with him. Grid carved that advice into himself.

"I will be careful."

'He has become more mature.'

Rabbit smiled as he perceived the new changes in Grid. "Anyway, I'm glad that you're fine. What was the result?"

Did a mine really exist in Alzar Mountain?

If there was a mine, was it really a yellow mithril mine? Rabbit was full of expectations, and Grid didn't disappoint him.

"The mine was secured. As you guessed, it's a yellow mithril mine."

"Ohh...!"

Yellow mithril had appeared in the history of alchemy hundreds of years ago. None of the present day people had witnessed yellow mithril. Now Reidan obtained a monopoly on yellow mithril. It was a feat that even the empire, which occupied more than half of the territory on the continent, had failed at.

The resulting ripple effect would be huge.

"You did a great job. Reidan's future has been obtained."

It wasn't an exaggeration. Reidan would be able to establish a unique position with alchemy. It was expected that there would be an explosive synergy with alchemy and the legendary blacksmith.

As a result, Reidan would become the Talima of the human world.

"Let's go to the meeting room. We need to discuss mine development and the alchemy investment funds." Rabbit said excitedly, but Grid shook his head.

"I'm okay. Discuss it with the Overgeared members and proceed on your own."

"I understand."

Rabbit already knew that Grid was deliberately avoiding his duties as a lord and didn't panic. He just felt relief for being trusted, and a burning motivation.

'I will do my best to make both of us rich.'

The decisive Rabbit moved to the meeting room with the Overgeared members. A small woman was left alone with Grid. A female with twin tailed blonde hair, it was Euphemina.

"You seem to have completed all the work well. Congratulations."

Euphemina was tired. It was natural, since she had been working without a break since returning from Frontier with Rabbit.

"Why did you call me? Do you have something else for me to do?"

There were sharp points in Euphemina's words. It seemed that she wanted to hit him.

Then Grid spoke some surprising words.

"Rest for the moment."

"...Huh?"

Euphemina's eyes widened. She was confused by Grid's unexpected words.

"I know that you've been working harder than anyone else over the past few months. Haven't you gone through a lot since joining the guild? Take some time to recharge and get a good night's sleep. You can also raise your level, which you have been postponing."

"Is it okay?"

Reidan was short-handed compared to the size of the city. In such a situation, it would be a big blow if an elite like Euphemina was to leave. Grid laughed at her hesitance.

"Yes, Reidan is quite stable thanks to your work. The experts in each field have been trained, so don't worry too much."

"Grid..."

Euphemina was moved.

In retrospect, this was the first time Grid had been so kind to her. He was always chilly and awkward, so this attitude change felt like a reward for her hard work. But that good atmosphere didn't last for long.

"I recommend the Siren Kingdom as the hunting ground. While you are there, you should get some of the Water Clan King's tears."

"..."

It was the moment when Grid's intentions were revealed. Euphemina's expression cooled.

"You want me to go to the Siren Kingdom and get the tears of the water clan king?"

The effect of the Water Clan King's Tears was unrivaled. It was a rare material that permanently gave magic to an item. But it was hard to find. Grid once again gave her a mission under the guise of a vacation.

'How long must I be abused?'

Euphemina sighed. She was treated as a princess everywhere she went, but now she was just a worker? She felt skeptical about whether she really should've joined the Overgeared Guild. Then Grid handed an item to her. It wasn't a robe or a cloak. It was a hooded zip up that could be seen in modern society.

"What's this?" Euphemina was puzzled by the unfamiliar item and asked Grid.

"A gift."

"What...?"

Euphemina didn't show much of a response. She saw the Hooded Zip Up as just a decorative item. But she was shocked as soon as she confirmed the item information.

"I-Invisibility cloak?"

Around 200 years ago, the legendary tailor Kruger made five invisibility cloaks, two of which still reportedly existed. But no one knew where to obtain them. Invisibility cloaks were a super rare system. Euphemina was thrilled by the gift.

"I will go to the Siren Kingdom!"

Euphemina once again thought it was good that she joined Overgeared. Grid's mood improved as he saw her happiness.

Give and take. The joy of a colleague was his joy. The growth of a colleague was his growth.

Grid honestly thought so.

Khan's smithy.

Grid opened the pet inventory and pulled out the 'Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest.'

Crash.

The liquid was reminiscent of molten metal and stretched over the floor without much effort. Grid pulled out his hammer.

'Repair it.'

In Wendy's diary, Pagma had repaired the doppelganger. On the basis of that, Pagma's Descendant should also be able to repair the doppelganger. Grid didn't doubt it. Then he started to repair the doppelganger with the Legendary Blacksmith's Repair skill Lv. 3.

Ttang!Ttang!

It wasn't easy to repair the doppelganger. He didn't know the repair method because he had no understanding of the structure of the body. He had no choice but to study it. Grid believed in himself. To be precise, he believed in the Legendary Blacksmith's Repair skill. He was sure the skill would lead him correctly.

Then one hour later. Grid finally determined the core and hammered quickly.

[Your dexterity has risen by 5.]

[Your persistence has risen by 3.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Repair skill has reached level 4.]

[The Doppelganger of the Mysterious Forest has been restored!]

The welcome notification windows popped up as the doppelganger started to move. Now it had a slime like appearance. Grid confirmed the information window.

Name: Not Set

Species: Doppelganger

Level: 1 (0/200)

Affinity: 0/100

Health: 1,200/1,200

Physical Attack Power: 15 Magic Attack Power: 2

Defense: 30 Magic Resistance: 6

Attributes: Nothing

Status: Confusion

(Who am I...?)

* A doppelganger that existed for over 150 years in the Mysterious Forest. It has accumulated wisdom through human relations and has a lot of combat experience.

Above all, there is the power to copy the appearance and abilities of the legendary blacksmith Pagma, so it isn't comparable to normal doppelgangers.

-Current Skills List-

[Copy Lv. 10 (Mastered)]

Can perfectly copy the appearance of a target with a lower level than it. The stats are only 80% copied. Only some skills (random) will be copied.

It can completely copy the appearance of a target on the same level as it. The stats are only 50% copied. Only some skills (random) will be copied.

Can perfectly copy the appearance of a target with a higher level. The stats are only 20% copied. Only a small number of skills (random) will be copied.

Perfectly copies the owner's appearance. The stats are only 30% copied. Only some skills (selected) will be copied.

[Language Ability Lv. 1]

The language ability is at the level of a five year old child.

[Half Immortality (Passive)]

Somewhere in the doppelganger's body, there is a core of life energy. The doppelganger won't die unless this core is completely destroyed.

'Wonderful.'

Grid was thrilled. The basic stats of the doppelganger at level one were very low compared to Noe, but the Copy skill was excellent. Grid could use it as a clone that demonstrated 30% of his stats.

'I have to take care to raise its level.'

Grid set a policy to treat the doppelganger differently from Noe. If Noe knew, he would be jealous.

"Wh...o?" The doppelganger was confused. "Who am I...? You... Who?"

Grid kindly explained to the doppelganger who was asking questions. "Your name is Randy. And I am Grid. We are friends."

"Ran...dy. Frie...nds."

Was it a remainder of the lost memories? The doppelganger slowly changed to look like a five or six year old girl. She had orange hair and was very cute. She would be beautiful when she was older.

'This child is Wendy.'

Grid's expression darkened. He felt compassion for Randy and Wendy's unhappy life.

"Randy. Good name. Friend. Good."

"I'm glad that you like it."

Randy smiled very brightly. Grid couldn't help stroking her hair.

'There might've been a sad ending in your past life, but this life will be different.'

Grid decided. He aimed to give Randy happiness.

"Next..."

He needed to strengthen the Doppelganger's Greatsword and Grid's Boots in turn. Grid took out a large amount of enhancement stones that the Overgeared members had conceded to him.

'After this preparation, I'll get revenge for Piaro.'

It was the moment when a new legend in the history of the Saharan Empire would soon be recorded.

Chapter 237

Grid had a lot of experience with items enhancement. Grid had done a lot of enhancement compared to the other users of Satisfy. Grid took advantage of his passive skill that 'increased the probability of enhancement' to enhance the guild members' items.

'There's no trick to enhancement.'

Enhancement wasn't affected by stats such as dexterity. Superstitions such as enhancing at certain times, or repairing the item first before enhancement were useless. The success was purely based on luck. It was a truth he had learned from countless enhancements.

"Umm."

Grid looked at the dozens of enhancement stones in his inventory. He was extremely nervous. He was more nervous than when he went to see his first love, Ahyoung.

'I need either the greatsword or the boots to reach at least +7...'

Would he be successful? Would his hair loss return if he received damage from this? It was a matter of money, so he was bound to be more sensitive. God, Buddha, goddess Rebecca, etc. Grid prayed earnestly to the gods that existed in the game and reality, then started the enhancement with trembling hands.

The discussion on the mine development and alchemy investment funding was over. The results were positive because Lauel and Rabbit were in agreement. However, the Overgeared members who left the meeting room weren't happy.

"We're going to suffer over the next few months." Vantner grumbled.

He had a mission to destroy the monsters around the path from Reidan to Alzar Mountain. Wouldn't the monsters just respawn if they were killed? At least 10 giant worm nests needed to be destroyed.

The 17 Overgeared members working with Vantner sighed. But Pon envied them.

'It's better than me...'

Pon was commanded to identify all the dungeons and boss monsters in the west. It was a mission to investigate which hunting ground would give them the most money. He was in charge, since it was a highly difficult mission.

Regas, who received the mission with him, smiled and spoke. "It's interesting. Let's take this opportunity to challenge a two person raid." It was Regas' dream to grow stronger through struggling. Pon had to be with this ignorant guy whose brain was made up of muscles. He could see a rocky path in front of him.

LaueI encouraged them.

"Our roles are important while Grid is away. Let's take responsibility by raising our levels and developing the city."

"Grid is going to the Saharan Empire?"

"Yes, he says there is an important quest from Piaro."

"The empire... I hope that Grid doesn't encounter any bumps in the road."

The world was wide and there were a lot of monsters. And most of the monsters were in the empire.

The spacious fields of Reidan.

Piario was standing where wheat had started to grow. Looking at his sweaty appearance, he really was like a farmer. Then Bland and the workers saw a welcome face.

"Duke Grid is coming here."

"...!"

The eyes of all the workers turned to one side at once. It was really the lord.

People cheered.

"Hooray Duke Grid! Hooray Duke Grid!"

The people of Reidan had one mindset. They cheered every time they saw Grid. It wasn't because someone forced them. The people were just absolutely loyal to Grid.

"The enhancement was good."

A blue energy was rising like a haze from Grid's boots. Grid's smile wasn't because Piario noticed quickly. He was able to strengthen both the Doppelganger's Greatsword and Grid's Boots to +8.

He was lucky. In this event, his knowledge of Pagma's Swordsmanship increased, he got a doppelganger for a pet, and he found a yellow mithril mine. Everything was going well.

Grid wanted to maintain this momentum.

"I think that now is the time to get your revenge. I will head to the empire."

His eyes were determined. Piario felt a strong trust in Grid.

"I believe you can get the job done."

[A quest has been created.]

[The True Traitor of the Red Knights]

Difficulty Level: SS

Asmophel dared to rendezvous with the empress and was caught by Piaro. Piaro and his men were framed and branded as traitors.

Due to that, he lost his men and had to flee. Now Piaro has no intention of forgiving Asmophel.

However, it is virtually impossible for Piaro to get revenge himself.

Piaro has made you his agent of revenge.

Quest Clear Conditions: Kill Asmophel, the former vice captain of the Red Knights.

Quest Reward: Piaro's affinity will reach the peak.

Quest Failure: Level -6.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

'It has changed in many ways.'

In the past when Grid was a beginner, the level of difficulty for this quest was S-grade. And the quest rewards were the title of 'Agent of Revenge' and Piaro's sword. Now the difficulty had been raised and the rewards changed.

It was a phenomenon that occurred when his relationship with Piaro improved and Piaro's heart stabilized.

'What will happen if my affinity with Piaro reaches the maximum?'

Was it possible he would teach Grid his sword techniques?

'That won't happen.'

Piaro's swordsmanship belonged to his family. It wouldn't be easy to teach others. Grid thought about it differently.

'Will he become my subordinate?'

Piaro's power was beyond imagination. If Grid could obtain Piaro as a subordinate, it would be like obtaining a group of men. Grid was filled with great expectations and accepted the quest.

"Believe in me."

Piaro saw his confidence and warned him. "I've said it before, but the empire is full of strong people. The process to approach Asmophel was difficult, so be cautious."

"I understand."

Grid answered well, but he wasn't particularly nervous. Piaro spoke again. "Don't trust your techniques. The two sword technique isn't something that can be completely handled with such a short amount of training."

Grid had practiced dual wielding on the way back from the doppelganger raid. Grid nodded. "Don't worry, I know."

Grid replied like this, but his inner intentions were different.

'Right now I'm lacking, but that will change over time.'

His destination was the capital of the empire, Titan. It would take at least 20 days to arrive. If he practiced steadily on the way, he would be able to use the two sword style sufficiently. It was possible because Piaro trained him well in the basics.

The empire was the center of the world. It was natural for the empire to be the master of the continent, and it was right for kingdoms outside the empire to obey them. It was a very arrogant and selfish thought.

But no kingdom could condemn them. The power of the Saharan Empire was overwhelming.

"This is the village of the UI Clan."

The master of the White Wolf Guild, Veradin, was a baron of the empire. He received an order from Earl Zebra to subjugate the immigrants, and he finally found the base of the enemy. It was the accomplishment at the end of a one week journey.

Veradin was cautious. "How many enemies?"

Kiki, a sniper used the Hawk's Eyes skill and reported. "1,050 people. More than half of them are women and young children."

It meant that less than 500 people could fight properly. Veradin was relieved.

"There's no need for tactics. Rush from the front and wipe them out."

Kiki's reaction was unsure. "No matter how I think about it, this isn't something that people should do."

The UI Clan were ordinary humans rather than monsters. They were a poor clan because they weren't designated as citizens of the empire. It was a pity, because they were once a flourishing nation until they were deprived of their land by the empire. The few remaining people chose to hide in the most remote areas.

Kiki was unwilling to kill them.

Veradin rebuked her. "They're just NPCs. Don't be shaken by unnecessary sentiments."

If they killed the UI Clan, their contribution to the empire would increase by 12 per person. Veradin wanted to build a foundation to become a viscount by performing this quest perfectly.

Kiki sighed.

"Sigh... I wish a golem army would arrive."

This was the story about the golem invasion that took place in the Eternal Kingdom several months ago. Naturally, Grid's name emerged.

"That Grid brat was really lucky."

"That's right. He happened to become a duke in one shot by killing the golem army that invaded the kingdom by chance."

"Ah! I'm envious! If we belonged to the Eternal Kingdom, we would've been able to defeat the golems and occupied a duke's seat!"

As the guild members started talking about unnecessary things, Veradin scolded them.

"Focus on the mission."

"Yes!"

The guild members restored their posture. Unlike Kiki, they didn't show any resistance to hunting the UI Clan. Weren't NPCs just a lump of graphics and artificial intelligence? They resembled people, but weren't actually people.

It was easy to kill them. It was nothing. Veradin confirmed that the guild members were emanating a fighting spirit and ordered.

"Trample them."

"Waaaaahhhhh!"

Except for Kiki, 24 guild members went down the mountain together.

It was a tremendous speed. They didn't slow down despite the rugged rocks. The UI Clan discovered them along the way and fired arrows and magic from the watchtower. However, it was useless. They avoided or defended against all attacks and quickly reached the goal.

"Get lost!"

"Thanks for the contribution~"

"Kuaack!"

It was an unbelievable situation where only 24 people wiped out 1,000 people. The small village soon turned into a hell. It was a one-sided massacre.

"P-Please, my only daughter..."

"Just die quietly."

People begged, but the White Wolf guild members had no mercy. The women, children, and elderly were murdered. But the cruel killing didn't last long.

"I'm not the boy detective, so why do incidents happen everywhere I go? Well, I got a quest and it isn't too bad..."

The White Wolf members were confused. It was because a user, not an NPC, emerged from one corner of the village.

'Who is that person?'

He was wearing a broad-brimmed hat so his appearance and ID couldn't be determined. The White Wolf members asked the man.

"Who are you?"

"Me?" The man held a jade greatsword in his hand and replied, "This time I am the Apostle of Justice."

Puok!

"What?!"

Veradin's eyes widened. The same man appeared behind Veradin's ally and stabbed him?

"A clone...!"

It wasn't a normal clone. It was the first time he saw a clone that could exert such power.

'A high level user!'

Chapter 238

Most clones were illusions. They were merely a gimmick that couldn't exert substantial force. However, the unidentified man's clone dealt a real blow. The guild member Elvo screamed as he was hit.

The White Wolf guild members became frightened.

'I heard that a third advancement assassin can have a perfect clone.'

'What? Then this man is an assassin over level 300?'

'Is that Faker...?'

Faker was the number one assassin and 14th ranked monster on the unified rankings. It was rare for him to reveal himself in public, but there were many rumors. It was said that the number of users assassinated was over 10,000, and rankers were always attacked by him.

There was a rumor that even the first ranked Kraugel suffered a level decrease after being assassinated by Faker. Of course, they were lies. Faker wasn't a player killer. He was like Regas and liked personal training.

But rumors were always distorted and exaggerated. The White Wolf Guild misunderstood Faker as a murderer. Was the man in front of them really Faker?

'We are inferior.'

'Today is my day to die!'

The White Wolf members started to shake. They gulped and shivered. Veradin spoke a few words to calm them down. "Assassins don't use a greatsword. In addition, they are covert. If he was Faker, we would already be dead."

"Ah...!"

They were confused and overlooked the obvious facts. The guild members regained their calm as Veradin explained.

"That person is likely to have a hidden class."

It was a reasonable guess. Hidden classes existed in Satisfy. It wasn't strange if there was a hidden class specialized in clones. The guild members were relieved.

"Phew... I'm glad. I don't want to go against Faker."

"Dealing with a hidden class is easier than dealing with a third advancement ranker."

"Those people are too scary."

It showed how much the dignity of hidden classes had been lost since the third advancement classes. Veradin was alarmed at the guild members' relaxation and warned them.

"It's still difficult to gauge the opponent's ability. Don't act hastily and step back."

The White Wolf members had strong loyalty. They stepped back without a fuss as soon as Veradin commanded them.

Step step.

The unidentified man walked through the streets.

"You aren't fighting back? Are you scared?"

As a guild master, Veradin was always cautious. He didn't fall for the taunts. He closely watched the man and the clone as he asked. "What is your relationship with the UI Clan? Why are you helping them?"

The answer was concise. "I got a quest."

That person was Grid. During his journey, he accidentally visited the UI Clan's village and got a quest when the village was attacked by the enemy. He couldn't help wondering if he was cursed to get involved in incidents wherever he went.

[UI Clan's Rescue]

Difficulty: A

The UI Clan have been deprived of their kingdom by the Saharan Empire, and the survivors are hiding in remote areas. However, they couldn't escape from the empire's surveillance and an invasion is once again occurring.

Free them from the clutches of the empire.

Then you will be their sun.

Quest Clear Conditions: Repel the invaders.

Quest Reward: Your affinity with the UI Clan will reach the maximum.

Quest Failure: The UI Clan will perish.

Four days ago.

Prior to leaving Reidan, Grid had studied the empire and found that it carried out a policy of genocide. Minorities who didn't serve the emperor were slaughtered in various parts of the empire. Indeed, it was a brutal oppression. If they wanted to try and oppose it?

It was futile. Grid hadn't accepted the UI Clan's quest for a noble reason. He just coveted the reward.

'If they don't have a place to go to and their affinity is at the maximum...'

Couldn't he accept them as his people? The UI Clan's quest was a chance to increase the population of Reidan. It would be ideal if he could bring all the persecuted minorities in the empire to Reidan. Grid was starting to think and act in the manner of a lord. Lauel would be impressed if he knew.

"You have two choices."

Grid's eyes shone with killing intent. He was inwardly furious after witnessing the brutality of the White Wolf Guild. Grid had high respect for NPCs due to the influence of Khan and Irene.

"You can die easily, or you can get beaten up first before you die. Choose."

"Crazy bastard!"

The White Wolf members were furious. What was this damn arrogant guy saying?

"Veradin! How long are you going to let that brat's mouth run wild? We should attack him right now! Anyway, he's alone!"

Elvo was particularly furious. He was surprise attacked by the clone and suffered damage. Veradin checked Elvo's health gauge.

'Well, it isn't bad.'

Elvo was a berserker, so his defense was very low. However, he only lost one-fifth of his health after the surprise attack.

'The clone isn't very strong.'

The unknown man's clone was much weaker than he was. This evidence clearly showed that it wasn't very strong. 'Maybe he can produce a lot of clones. But it's easy to deal with clones at this level.'

Veradin made a judgment call and ordered the guild members.

"We won't be able to avoid this fight. Do it."

"Okay!"

Elvo was in the lead. At level 179, he was the lowest among the White Wolf members, but he liked being in the vanguard. He was very courageous and not afraid of others.

"I'll kill you!"

Elvo was full of killing intent. He wanted to deal a nasty blow to the clone.

"Dash!"

Teong!

A distance of 3m was narrowed in an instant. Elvo smiled with satisfaction at his own dashing ability. Then he used the 'Madness Vortex' skill. This was the manifestation of five powerful blows that could even cause great damage to an ogre.

However, it met the wrong opponent.

[The target has resisted the damage.]

"Eh?"

It wasn't defense but resistance. The skill apparently hit. Then what the hell was the resistance to damage? Grid stared at the stunned Elvo.

"You want me to die?"

"Heok?"

The prideful Elvo was now like a terrified rodent. It was because of the dignity stat, which had a low chance of making the enemy yield. Grid had over 1,500 dignity, so it was hard for low or medium ranked users to endure his greatness.

[You have become lost in front of an immeasurable existence. Your head involuntarily bows. Your body is shaky and head begins to move.]

'W-What...!'

He was stunned just because he met the person's gaze? Was this guy a medusa boss? Elvo couldn't believe the situation right now. It was a dream. The other guild members didn't know the situation and were rushing around, like moths to a flame.

"Magic Transmission!"

"Atra's Poison!"

"Fire Spear!"

"Lower Cut!"

"This is a kick! Abyooo~!"

All types of CC, physical attacks and magic attacks were used. 20 enemies used skills at the same time, so Grid seemed to be in danger. The silent clone came out. It was the doppelganger Randy.

“Revolve.”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The counterattack skill was activated at the perfect timing. The White Wolf members were attacked by their own skills.

"Kuaaaak!"

“What is this absurd thing?”

The White Wolf Guild members were agitated. What was with this clone’s skill? Furthermore, it was a counterattack skill that even a person found difficult to use? The one who was most surprised was Veradin.

‘He didn’t show his skills in the first surprise attack!’

He realized it right away. Randy had 30% of Grid’s current combat power. To be honest, he was equivalent to level 200. If he wanted, he couldn’t cut the guild member in half with the first attack.

But Randy refrained. He deliberately pretended to be weak to make the enemies less vigilant. This was Randy’s instinctive judgment, not Grid’s orders. He lost his memories of the past, but the battle experience accumulated for more than 100 years was firmly engraved in him.

Grid admired Randy’s strategy.

“Look at those facial expressions. I was surprised as well. Isn’t my friend really great?”

‘Friend?’

Wasn’t it a clone? Then what was it? The White Wolf members fell into the black hole of confusion.

Puok!

Then the jade greatsword penetrated Elvo’s chest.

[You have been hit by a lethal blow!]

[The enemy has attacked five times using an unknown ability.]

[You have suffered 103,900 damage.]

‘Over 100,000? Not 10,000, but 100,000? I don’t even have 20,000 health!’

Elvo’s vision turned grey.

‘Is this a dream?’

[Your party member Elvo has died.]

Silence filled the area. A monster beyond imagination had appeared in front of the White Wolf members.

But Veradin kept calm. He was part of the 10 Rookies along with Lauel and Ibellin, and he was now level 281. He didn't feel frustrated when meeting a strong opponent. Moreover, he had a hidden card. There was a sniper who remained in the mountain.

-Now.

Veradin whispered and gave the signal. There was a small flash from the low mountain 300m in the rear, then an arrow came flying.

Peeeeeeong!

Kiki was also part of the 10 Rookies. The White Wolf Guild's number two person. Her sniper skill was comparable to Jishuka, the expert archer. She precisely fired an arrow at Grid's head. Veradin had no doubt that the person would experience great damage or confusion, and took out his staff. He was trying to raise the corpses of the Ul and Elvo with magic when he suddenly froze.

"T-This...?"

Cries of shock burst out everywhere. They saw it. The famous golden blades.

"I am surprised."

The man's voice was heard from behind the golden blades that protected their master from the arrow. The voice was filled with a powerful anger that could stop the heart of the person who heard it.

Sururuk.

Was it due to the shock wave caused by the arrow and blades colliding? The hat the man was wearing fell off. The ID that most people in the world knew was exposed.

"Grid...!"

The first legendary class, three gold medal holder in the National Competition, the hero of the golem invasion, the first user to become a duke, GOD, etc. He had countless nicknames attached to him.

Then he pulled out the blue greatsword that he used to defeat Hurent in five seconds. The people present felt frightened at Grid holding two huge swords in each of his hands.

"Don't use surprise attacks!"

'You did it first!'

The White Wolf members wanted to cry out. But they couldn't grumble. Grid's eyes fixed to the top of the mountain 300m away.

"You first of all. Transcended Link."

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Blue-white and jade energy blades emerged at the same time. It was the moment when one small mountain permanently vanished from the map of the Saharan Empire.

[Your party member Kiki has died.]

"...I would've rather met Faker."

The White Wolf members complained. Veradin couldn't keep his composure anymore. This was the worst catastrophe since the guild's launch. The result was a complete annihilation.

"Huh? The size of the desert is less than it was a year ago?"

A black-haired man dressed in white stepped foot in the western part of the Eternal Kingdom.

Chapter 239

'An A-grade quest was surprisingly tough.'

Grid's power was unique: ever since he had obtained it, he had almost easily solved all A-grade quests. But this time was different. He lost more than one-sixth of his stamina and health at the cost of hunting 25 enemies.

"It was an unexpected melee."

Anybody who heard that statement would cry out, as there was no such thing. It was more accurate to say that it was a slaughter of 25 people without a conscience. However, Grid thought differently. This was shocking for him, the one who had overwhelmed the top rankers in the National Competition!

'The average level of the enemy was only around 200. Yet I couldn't succeed in an instant...' This was because Veradin was a necromancer. 'That bastard was too strong.'

A necromancer was a nuisance as an opponent. They didn't distinguish between friend or foe, as corpses were unconditionally revived and used as soldiers. It was a class that consumed the enemy's resources (health, mana, stamina etc.) because it was so easy to make.

In the case of Veradin, his level was high and knew how to fight. The undead soldiers were skilled in offense and defense, so they harassed him. Veradin's combat ability was no less than that of the Overgeared members.

'It would be nice to create an item that could easily kill the undead.'

Indeed, experience was very important. Grid gained insight from his new combat experience. He was able to make more advanced plans by adding items to fight the undead in the future. Grid was quickly evolving in real time.

He touched the Guardian's Bracelet with a gentle expression.

'The more I use this, the more I like it.'

Originally, Grid's indomitable stat was 900. Now, however, it was over 1,000 after wearing the Guardian accessories set. As a result, the effect of the indomitable stat was often triggered. He completely resisted the attacks of lower-levelled enemies.

It was the result of his abnormally high defense and indomitable stat.

'Randy was more than I expected.'

Grid had no doubts about Randy's fighting skills. Randy copied 30% Grid's stats and items, so he was around a level 180 swordsman. However, the legendary-rated Pagma's Swordsmanship gave Randy wings.

Randy copied Pinnacle and Link, as well as the highly usable Revolve. He was able to beat quite a few level 200 users, and was a really good colleague. Grid praised him as Randy returned to the shape of a little girl.

"You fought well."

Randy's buggy eyes shone like stars.

"Praise! Happy!"

It was a lovely smiling face with a flush.

'Sehee was once cute like this.'

Grid patted her head and said,

"I also want to fight with Master! Nyang! Why don't you let me fight? Nyang! Why is the best demonic beast being treated like this? Kyang!"

Noe had been hunting alone around Reidan and was now level 143. He was hoping to grow with his master while traveling together this time, but Master was too busy with the doppelganger and not looking at Noe. He didn't like it.

Grid soothed the jealous Noe, "You are my precious secret weapon. I don't need to borrow the strength of my great secret weapon for something minor like this."

"Ohh...! Ohhhh!"

The words 'secret weapon', 'precious' and 'great' were attached to him, so Noe really liked it. He danced with his short limbs. It was cute and ridiculous since Noe's chubby body was shaking. Grid observed Noe's appearance. The horns that rose from the forehead were slightly bigger and the fangs were sharper.

'He is becoming increasingly like a demonic beast.' Grid's demonic power rose by one every time he PKed. 'Surely I won't become a demon if my demonic power stat increases?'

The higher the demonic power, the more likely he was to go to hell. However, at present, there was no way of going in and out of hell so he couldn't help imagining bad things.

Then the UI Clan survivors came running.

"Hero!"

The village mayor, Buda greeted him on behalf of everyone.

"If you didn't help us, our people would've been lost in the backdrops of history! I don't know how to express our gratitude!"

[The quest 'UI Clan's Rescue' has been complete.]

[Affinity with the UI Clan has risen to the maximum. The UI Clan will jump over a cliff for you.]

The UI Clan bowed to Grid. Grid took out the Great Lord's Sword and looked at their abilities.

'Their intelligence stat is very high?'

General NPCs had an intelligence around 100. But the average of the UI Clan was 300. In particular, a girl called Hwarin stood out.

Name: Hwarin.

Age: 11 Gender: Female

Occupation: Refugee

Title: Last of the UI Clan's Royal Family.

Level: 7

Strength: 3/70 Stamina: 12/249

Agility: 14/398 Intelligence: 120/1,890

Charm: 155/1,503 Dignity: 30/550

Skills: Haven't learnt any yet.

A survivor of the UI Kingdom that the Saharan Empire destroyed. Her identity might be hidden but she actually has the noble lineage of the UI Clan.

'This is good.'

The UI Clan was an excellent race. They would be useful in many ways. Among them, it was possible to train some as magicians. Grid asked them, "The empire isn't a place where you can live. Would you consider moving to the Eternal Kingdom?"

"The Eternal Kingdom...?" The Eternal Kingdom was one of the great powers among the 17 nations of the continent. But these kingdoms weren't in the same position as the empire. "Will the Eternal Kingdom accept us, who are hunted by the empire? It might provide grounds for the empire to...?"

"If you move in secret then the empire won't notice."

"But the royal family won't be happy."

"Don't worry, go to Reidan. Even the royal family can't intervene in the administration of a duchy."

"Who are you?"

"I am the master of Reidan. I promise the people there will treat you without discrimination."

"Heok...! That means you are a duke!"

The UI Clan were perplexed. Why was the duke of another kingdom in the empire? They couldn't understand it with their common sense.

Grid whispered to Lauel.

-I need someone who can lead 930 people from Earl Zebra's territory in the empire to Reidan.

-Yes?

Grid explained the situation to the confused Lauel. The joyful Lauel then recommended Faker. Grid responded with surprise.

-Faker? Is it okay?

Faker always moved in the darkness. He didn't show himself in public, and wasn't a suitable figure to lead people. But Lauel gave a different opinion.

-Faker's trap installation ability and situational judgment abilities are unique. If there are pursuers, he can install traps as quickly as possible as well as secretly lead the UI Clan.

-I know his abilities but... Isn't there someone better than Faker?

-There is a lot of work piled up in Reidan. It is impossible to send more than two people, so please trust Faker.

It was decided. Then Grid used a skill.

"Summon Knight."

[Summon a knight. Currently you have Huroi, Lauel, Jude, Jishuka, Euphemina, Faker, Pon and Regas. Which knight would you like to summon?]

"Faker."

[The target has accepted the summons.]

Sururuk.

A man wrapped in a black cloak rose from Grid's shadow. He spoke to Grid with a nonchalant expression.

"You worked hard."

"Yes."

Suuk.

Faker observed the UI Clan with emotional eyes. The UI Clan felt like crying as they saw him.

'Those eyes feel like they are penetrating me to the bone.'

'I-I'm scared.'

The UI Clan felt fear. They were affected by Faker's killing intent stat. That's why Faker normally acted in secret. He had to consume his mental power to hide this killing intent. For an assassin, the killing intent stat was like a type of penalty.

"Go."

Faker didn't delay. He instructed the frightened UI Clan to grab their luggage and immediately left the village.

After a few days with Faker, the UI Clan felt like they were sitting on a thorny cushion. Faker didn't say a single word, but they became increasingly frightened of him. They felt like they would die if they touched him, and couldn't even breathe.

On the other hand, Grid changed his schedule and was busy hunting. It was an inevitable choice because his infamy went up due to PKing. It was impossible to enter a village or city if his infamy figure was high. It might be okay to move freely in the Eternal Kingdom, regardless of his infamy figure, but this was the empire. It was necessary to lower his infamy by hunting monsters.

However, the monsters in Zebra were only level 180~220. They gave less experience and it wasn't easy to decrease his infamy. Grid was nervous because he was delaying more than he wanted, but he still remained calm. He bought time by practicing dual swordsmanship and raising the experience of Randy and Noe.

Then a homing pigeon arrived.

It was the letter from Irene that regularly arrived once a week. Normally the letters expressed a desire to see him, but today's one was special.

"This letter?"

Grid was astonished.

Irene was always stating that she wanted to get pregnant, but he didn't think it was really capable to get pregnant from a relationship between a user and NPC.

Around a month ago, my stomach has started hurting. I didn't think much of it, but then I started experiencing pregnancy symptoms. Somehow, I feel like my belly has... Happy tears are flowing. I would like to have a son that resembles Dear Husband.

"Heok..."

A child?

Grid was more baffled than glad. It was confusing because it was a totally unexpected and unfamiliar experience. Then a notification window popped up.

[Do you want to honor the news of your wife's pregnancy?]

[The birth of a new life should be congratulated, but those with no sense of responsibility should keep in mind that they don't deserve to be a parent. Think carefully.]

Chapter 240

Satisfy had some areas that were completely different from reality. If a user had a child in Satisfy, there could be various problems.

There were too many risk factors, such as neglecting reality by being too immersed in the child in the game or ignoring the child in the game because they were too busy playing. Only those who had established mature values were eligible to enjoy Satisfy's parenting system.

'Can I really do well?'

The Grid of the past would've said okay without thinking about it. But the current Grid realized the seriousness of the situation. He thought carefully about it.

'I...'

He was still too immature to be a parent. But he wanted Irene to be happy. She was one of the most precious people to him, despite being a person in virtual reality. Thanks to her, he learned how to love. Grid wanted to make her dream come true. He didn't want her to be disappointed.

'I also want the result of the love that I share with Irene.'

After a few hours of deliberation, Grid made a decision.

"I am grateful for the news of the pregnancy."

The notification windows immediately blinked and responded.

[Congratulations on your wife's pregnancy!]

[The preferences and abilities of the child will be affected from prenatal development.]

[What type of child do you want? The child you want and the child your wife wants will affect prenatal development. Work hard to communicate with your wife.]

"I wish my child..."

It wasn't that hard to imagine.

'Someone different from me.'

He didn't want them to be petty or stupid. Grid had no talent and was narrow-minded, so he hoped that his own child wouldn't experience such an unfortunate life.

'I want someone who resembles my wife, a child who is bright, generous, and pretty. First of all, I wish for a clever child to be born. Congratulations on your pregnancy. And thank you.'

Grid wrote it in the letter to Irene. It was difficult to find traces of his childhood in his careful expression. Grid would turn 28 years old in five months in real time. He was becoming a true adult with this pregnancy.

"Taemyeong means 'fortune' in the sense of a jackpot..."

There was no question that he still had no naming sense. Even so, it was fortunate that he only thought about Taemyeong.

A regular board meeting held at the head office of the S.A. Group.

The main agenda of the meeting was to set the budget for the Second National Competition to be held in Paris next year. At the end of the meeting, one member was brought up. Grid.

"It's actually Grid again!"

"Isn't the parenting system only activated for mature players?"

The executives heard the report from the operations team leader and expressed their anxiety. Recently, Grid was conducting himself as a legendary class, but the prejudice didn't easily disappear.

The executives had been watching Grid from the beginning and still saw him as that. Now he would have a child with an NPC? Just imagining it was terrible. They were worried about the worst situation.

"He will raise a child? This is ridiculous!"

Games had implemented a parenting system many times in the past. There was even a separate child raising simulation game. A typical example was Princess Mama. Such games didn't make users feel any responsibility. Users could delete their child or neglect them. Such an act didn't cause any moral issues either. The characters in a typical game were nothing more than 2D characters that acted and talked according to a given scenario.

Then what about the characters in Satisfy? The supercomputer Morpheus gave all Satisfy NPCs the perfect artificial intelligence. As a result, NPCs had thoughts and emotions. They were no different from humans.

It was only a matter of time until an immature user experienced the parenting system. If the users neglected or abused their children in the game, the creators couldn't rule out the possibility of social problems.

The parenting system was a double-edged sword. Satisfy's game would be better if used well, but public opinion would take a hit if it was exploited.

The development team arranged the parenting system so that only a very small number of users could experience it. It was based on the fact that the married couple's liking was at the maximum, and the parenting system was designed to be activated only for users who had maximum respect for NPCs.

But Grid? The person who sent malicious emails to the group when he couldn't make legendary items was selected for the parenting system! The executives were convinced that there was clearly an error. They couldn't tolerate it.

A surprising figure emerged to defend Grid. It was Director Yoon Sangmin. In the past, he had a tendency to hate Grid more than anyone else.

"Don't you know about the recent Grid? He has grown. He's different from the past. So don't worry."

"We all know that his abilities have grown. Didn't he win three gold medals and save the kingdom from the golem army? What we are pointing out is a personality matter."

"He has grown up personally."

It was Director Yoon Sangmin.

The executives frowned.

"How do you know that?"

"You will quickly notice if you show a little interest and watch him." Grid's inner growth was something that could be seen just from his actions. "In the first place, the system chooses. This means that Grid is qualified, so there is no room to negotiate."

"Cough..."

The executives stared dumbly. Director Yoon Sangmin, who calmed the turmoil, was very interested in Grid.

'A human who learns and develops through the game.'

A typical human became an adult by learning and experiencing society. Then they had a tendency to spill out all their stress in games. There were many reasons why good humans in society would become notorious villains in games.

But Grid was a special case. He lacked social skills, but was growing through the game. He was a good example of a Satisfy user and could be used as a means of publicity. Of course, that was under the assumption that Grid accepted.

"Shit!"

The atmosphere of the White Wolf guild wasn't great. They failed their quest because of an unexpected person, and their pride was hurt because one person wiped out the whole guild. Veradin encouraged the resentful and frustrated guild members.

"Don't mind it. Grid is the best. It isn't a shame to be defeated by him."

That's right. As the first ranked Kraugel maintained an air of mystery around him, Grid had to be rated as the strongest for the moment. He was underestimated by the public because of his lacking control, but that wasn't necessarily true. No, it was great.

As Veradin said, it wasn't shameful for their small guild to be defeated by Grid, who was at the top. This was the obvious result.

However, the guild members were worried about Veradin. A month ago, Veradin had cleared a S+ grade quest and acquired the bones of the high ranking demonkin, Dantalian. In the battle against Grid, he had summoned the undead Dantalian using the bones.

It was his trump card. Even Grid showed worry.

Veradin was strong as long as he had Dantalian. It was amazing that he managed to annoy Grid for a while, despite not reaching level 300 yet. Veradin clearly demonstrated his abilities that were above his ranking.

The problem was that the guild members were weak. They weren't a help to Veradin at all. They were sorry to see Veradin dragged down because of useless subordinates. They couldn't lift their heads.

In this sober atmosphere, Kiki threw out a question.

"But Veradin, why didn't you report Grid to Earl Zebra?"

Grid was a duke of the Eternal Kingdom. It was a big problem if he was in the territory of the empire. If this was reported to the upper ranks, Grid would surely experience large problems. Veradin held a key for revenge, so Kiki wondered why he didn't use it.

"It isn't time yet."

Veradin answered vaguely and Kiki realized that he was thinking about a bigger picture.

The last time that Kraugel visited the western part of the Eternal Kingdom was eight months ago.

At that time, the west was completely a desert and it was infested with monsters. If he took a step, he would be confronted with monsters. If he moved a little bit, he would be completely isolated.

But now the situation had changed. The scale of the desert was reduced and there were less monsters than before. It had turned into more ideal hunting grounds. Kraugel speculated that Grid had destroyed several giant worm nests after becoming lord of Reidan.

Kraugel had to admire it.

'Grid is greater than the rumors say. After absorbing the Tzedakah Guild, he's quickly growing his power.'

Kraugel also knew about Grid. He was a celebrity that most people in the world knew. However, he hadn't paid Grid any special attention. Kraugel devoted himself entirely to adventuring and hunting, while Grid participated in external events and was judged to be a completely different style of user.

He didn't care because he didn't think he would become involved with Grid in Satisfy.

'My inventory weight is at its limit. Is Reidan the only well-equipped city or village near here?'

In the last 10 days, Kraugel had killed the western monsters while heading for Reidan. It wasn't to meet Grid, but to dispose of his loot.

"It's an agricultural city." Kraugel arrived at REidan and admired the cast fields of wheat stretching out. He never imagined that a city in the middle of the desert would've developed agriculture. 'He was successful in clearing the desert and has an excellent ability in managing affairs.'

Grid showed great strength in the National Competition and in the golem army, but he was skilled in other areas as well. He was a legendary blacksmith, had top rankers as subordinates and even had great skills as a lord? He was truly a near-perfect figure.

'Zibal isn't equipped with things like this. The first user to become king might be Grid, not Zibal.'

Did Kraugel have any regrets? No. Kraugel was the type of person who enjoyed playing the game alone. He perceived that his areas of activities were completely different from Grid's. Therefore, he didn't have a sense of crisis or competitiveness towards Grid.

Step, step.

Kraugel was crossing the fields to enter Reidan. At that time, an NPC holding a rake in one hand and a hoe in the other appeared and asked him.

"Who are you?"

"...?"