

Overgeared 441

Chapter 441

[The production of the 'Longsword' has been complete!]

[The experience of the Advanced Blacksmithing Skill Lv. 6 has raised this item's stats by 9%!]

[The experience of the Intermediate Dwarf Skill Lv 1 has raised this item's stats by 3.2%!]

[The Intermediate Dwarf skill Lv 1 has tried to plant a feeble ego into this item!]

[Success!]

[The Intermediate Dwarf skill Lv 1 has tried to plant a small change function into this item!]

[Success!]

[A unique rated item is made and all stats will rise by 12!]

Ttiring~

[Powerful and Noble Long Sword]

Rating: Unique

Durability: 450/450 Attack Power: 451

* There is a very rare chance for the sword length to change when attacking.

* Normal attacks will deal an additional 15% damage.

* Accuracy will increase by 7%.

* The durability isn't easily damaged.

A longsword made with delicate workmanship by the renowned blacksmith Panmir, who has accumulated training in Talima.

The merits of a longsword are highlighted and it is very stable. There is an irregular aspect due to the changing qualities.

The dwarf technique has implanted the creator's high pride in the sword. It won't break easily and only the chosen ones can use it.

User Restriction: Level 300 or higher. Intermedia Sword Mastery level 7. 1,500 strength. The user will be selected by the sword.

'Unbelievable!'

His three and a half years as a blacksmith! According to Satisfy time, Panmir had produced at least 20,000 items over 10 years. Among them, more than 500 items had at least 6 hours invested in them. But despite producing so many items, there were few works that Panmir could proudly claim to be 'masterpieces.' This meant he was less likely to produce a top rated item with more efficient options.

But today! In front of the world that was watching, a masterpiece was born! It was perfect timing. He felt like the protagonist of a movie. It was the first time Panmir experienced such bliss in the 50 years he had lived.

“Good!”

Panmir forgot his age and cheered. He was so happy to prove that he was the best blacksmith against Grid, who was just luck to become a legend. He was thrilled that the past few years wasn't in vain.

‘I won!’

Panmir didn't doubt it. He was convinced that Grid couldn't defeat him, even if a legendary rated sword was made. Powerful and noble. He combined the blacksmith skill with the dwarf skill to make the best level 300 two-handed longsword. Then he heard the voice of the MC.

『L-Legendary blacksmith Grid was the only one who made a normal rated sword...? 』

“...!”

The host confirmed the items created by each participant and declared. Panmir and the other blacksmiths were stunned by the host's words.

The legendary blacksmith Grid made a normal rated item?

It was a situation they couldn't even imagine.

‘Even the advanced blacksmiths made at least rare rated items...’

‘A legendary blacksmith just needs to press the production button and a rare item will pop out.’

What crazy thing did Grid do to make a normal item? Did he have no luck? There was only one explanation.

‘Did he forget a few ingredients?’

‘The smelting process seemed perfect... Maybe he made a big mistake during the forging process.’

As the blacksmiths were speculating, Steng, who had made a unique sword like Panmir, cried out like he couldn't understand.

"It isn't possible for Grid to make a normal rated item!"

Steng had witnessed the skills and concentration of Grid next to him.

"Grid struck the steel three times in the time I took to strike it once. When I was breathing from exhaustion, Grid's posture was unchanged!"

It was a truth without any exaggeration. Steng believed that a normal rated item couldn't have been produced unless Grid was a villain who destroyed a galaxy in his previous life.

“Check the item information again! This is obviously a mistake...!”

It happened when Steng kept sticking up for Grid.

“...Shit.”

The deeply frowning Grid let out a curse. He felt tremendous anger. It looked like Grid really had made a normal rated item!

“S-Such a thing...”

A result that completely negated Grid’s skills and efforts was born? Was this the rumored manipulation of the game operators? Steng paused and stared at Grid.

‘Grid is really unlucky...’

Steng fully grasped Grid’s character after a few hours. Then Grid asked him.

“The ownership of the item created... We don’t keep it, do we?”

Grid’s voice was trembling. Steng was able to feel how angry he was and barely managed to nod.

“That’s correct... It was be permanently displayed in the National Competition’s Hall of Fame.”

It meant that a normal rated item produced by the legendary blacksmith would be displayed forward to the people of the world. From Grid’s position, it was embarrassing. There was nothing more disgraceful.

‘I would be ashamed and want to find a hole to hide in...’

Steng was sorry. He was worried that Grid would become frustrated and quit the game. Then Grid grumbled with a deep sigh.

“Hah, I have to return this. It’s ridiculous.”

“...?”

Steng soon realized that something was strange. Wasn’t Grid angry at the wrong thing? The host kept talking.

『 How many of you would expect a legendary blacksmith to produce a normal item? Yes, that’s right! I couldn’t even expect it! 』

The participants gathered in one place and looked at the sword made by Grid. Panmir and Steng’s eyes widened.

‘At first glance, it looks like a plain longsword without anything special, but...’

‘This is huger than anticipated!’

This was a normal rated longsword? In addition to Steng and Panmir, the other blacksmiths started to realize that Grid’s sword was unusual. But they were able to grasp this because they were excellent blacksmiths. The ordinary public was different.

-What type of legendary blacksmith makes normal items? It might be different if he made it in 10 minutes, but hasn’t he been hammering for 8 hours?

-Was he just hammering the air?

-Was he sleeping...? ㅋㅋㅋ

-I'm only a beginner blacksmith, but my analysis is that Grid seems to have very low dexterity. He doesn't have experience with manual work because he can easily make items with his class, thus not raising his dexterity.

-Is that why the result is so bad? No, there's no way. No matter how low his dexterity is, won't there be a compensation effect due to his legendary class? Then how did he make a normal rated item?

-It seems to be the result of his insufficient skills + worst luck.

-Insufficient skills ㅋㅋㅋ His combat skills have increased since last year, so he must've neglected his blacksmithing.

-Stop talking nonsense. What evidence is there that Grid's skills are lacking?

-That's right. Look at the items that Grid was wearing. He made it himself, so it doesn't make sense to say that Grid's skills are bad. This time, he was just unlucky.

-Is there any proof that the items worn were made by Grid? Maybe he obtained them from raids?

There was a thorough discussion on Grid's blacksmithing skills. To be honest, there was a lot of public criticism and ridicule. People hadn't forgotten that Grid spent the night with Yura and Jishuka, two of the world's most beautiful women. At this moment, Grid's anti-fans were in full active mode.

Meanwhile, South Korea was in an uproar.

(Breaking News) Shocking! The legendary blacksmith Grid made a normal rated item!

(Breaking News) South Korea missed the gold medal... It's virtually impossible to get 1st place now! Grid, he enjoyed a promiscuous private life and forgot his duties.

It was regrettable as a citizen of South Korea. South Korea, a country weak in Satisfy, could only dream about being ranked first due to Grid. But the media forgot this fact and wrote articles blaming Grid.

Grid, no, Shin Youngwoo's family were pained.

"This is disgusting...! They are scum!"

"Oh my, Honey. No matter how angry you are, don't use such words in front of Sehee!"

"Hum hum."

Youngwoo's parents felt sorry for their son who was on the TV. He was in a faraway land for the honor of their country, only to receive a massive outpouring of criticism due to one mistake!

"How resentful would he be!?"

"He paid off all his debt and cleared his father's debt as well."

"N-No, Honey... How many times have I told you that I will pay Youngwoo back? If you say that at this timing..."

Sehee, who had been watching TV silently beside her parents, smiled.

“Oppa is fine.”

Sehee was worried about his incompetent brother and took responsibility for him most of her life. She never outwardly expressed it, but she had been watching her brother closely. She saw her brother’s expression and knew what he was thinking.

‘He is frowning, but his left eyebrow is raised.’

Right now, her brother was feeling happiness and sadness at the same time. It was Sehee’s analysis that the worst thing hadn’t happened, and her insight was correct.

『 A legendary blacksmith made a normal rated item? I think there are countless people who are disappointed with the outcome! But let that disappointment go! This is why a legend is a legend! Grid proved to be in a different class from the other participants!! 』

The host spoke meaningful words, and at the same time, the options of Grid’s sword were revealed.

[Sealed Transcendent Sword]

Rating: Normal (Growth)

Durability: 360/360 Attack Power: 401

* One option is added every time the rating increases.

The legendary blacksmith Grid made a longsword with skills and a commitment beyond human limitations.

A blade of steel that was hammered more than 45,000 times in a short period of time, it is beyond ideal and has a transcendent power.

However, it is limited by the typical form, causing its power to be sealed.

It will gradually find the right form and release its true strength in the process of being cut, hit and reworked.

User Restriction: Level 300 or higher. Intermedia Sword Mastery level 7. 1,500 strength.

"Heok!"

“A growth type item?!”

Panmir, Steng, and the other blacksmiths realized it. The typical form that they believed to be ideal was actually a limit, and their mission was to break that limit. It wasn’t possible for them to belittle Grid’s abilities as just due to his luck or class. Just by looking at the longsword produced by Grid, they found out the difference between his skills and theirs.

‘Grid, I misunderstood you.’

Grid must have worked and trained like Panmir did to reach his current level.

‘...Respect.’

He couldn't see this person properly because he was overwhelmed by his own pride and bias. Feeling embarrassed by his foolish self, Panmir admitted his defeat in his heart and bowed his head. The other blacksmiths were the same.

This was the moment when Grid reigned over the world's finest blacksmiths. The ratings of the National Competition once again set a new record. There was one person who didn't care.

'Ah, shit. I became nervous when the Legendary Blacksmith's Breath appeared.'

Grid was sad.

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[You are extremely concentrated and the Legendary Blacksmith's Patience skill has been activated.]

[Vitality, defense, and dexterity will rise by 200% for one hour.]

[The production of the 'Longsword' has been complete!]

[The skill level of (Understanding of Gods' Weapons) Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill has increased from level 7 to level 8!.]

[The (Witness of God's Weapon) Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill Lv. 8 has increased the item's stats by 20%.]

From this point on, Grid was filled with great anxiety. The probability of the Legendary Blacksmith's Breath being activated was much less than the Legendary Blacksmith's Patience. There was still 0.2% left the Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship skill, so why did it level up?

'This, perhaps...'

Could it be that the item he had to give up would have a legendary rating? Grid shivered as the worst situation came to mind.

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Breath Lv. 6 has been activated.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Breath Skill Lv. 6 has increased the item's stats by 8%.]

[The growth type item, 'Sealed Transcendent Long Sword' has been successfully produced!]

[As the first player to produce a growth type item, the title 'Person who has Reached the Absolute Truth of Battle Gear' has been acquired.]

[The title effect 'increased item experience gain' passive will always apply!]

"Ah...!"

An item greater than a legendary item was lost. He felt sick. It was like a lottery winner losing his prize.

"...Ah!"

Grid was frustrated.

A growth type item.

It became stronger the more it was used. It could accumulate experience in PvE and PvP, increasing the rank. Their stats were high compared to items of the same rating, and their stats increase with every rating was also great. Growth type items were classified into two types.

First, an item that a specific soul belonged to. Every time the rank of an item rose, the skill or attributes that the soul possessed when it was alive blossomed. The number and power of the skills and stats varied according to the soul's rank, and it might not be compatible with the master. There was a special story related to the soul, meaning it was likely for there to be a hidden quest.

Elfin Stone's Ring and Iyarugt acquired after the Elfin Stone raid belonged to this category. Nobody knew the soul rating of Elfin Stone and Iyarugt yet.

Secondly, there were items without a soul. One option was added every time the rating increased. Since options were added to help the user rather than being random, the higher the rating, the better the compatibility with the user. In other words, it had similar characteristics to a class item. Its power was more stable compared to those with souls, but it also meant it was difficult to enjoy a dramatic effect.

Grid's Sealed Transcendent Sword belonged to this type.

'No matter what, the value is astronomical!'

The world was still.

"..."

The hundreds of thousands of spectators filling the Stade de France National Stadium and the millions of viewers watching the TV and Internet held their breaths. Out of these people, 99.99% were aware of the concept of growth type items. However, they had no experience with seeing them, so the impact of Grid's work was great.

'It is an item that most players probably can't get in their entire lives...'

'Grid made it directly!'

He wasn't just a legendary blacksmith. The footsteps that Grid was leaving were all legendary. The host opened his mouth while everyone was captivated.

『 As I announced in advance, the item screening criteria for this match is 'value.' 』

The list of 23 swords produced by the blacksmiths appeared on the screen.

『 The value is measured by the 'rating' and 'performance.' As you can see, Panmir and Steng's swords have the best rating, while Panmir has the best performance. 』

Grid's work wasn't mentioned. It was natural. For the performance to be good, it needed a higher rating. Grid made a growth type item, but the longsword had a normal rating, meaning the performance was inferior to Panmir's longsword. But that was only a story for now.

The 13 silent judges started to open their mouths.

『 We have to consider the potential value of the item. 』

『 The item with the highest potential is definitely Grid's longsword. 』

『 The performance will increase as the rating becomes higher 』

『 It's obvious that Grid's longsword will perform better than Panmir's longsword. 』

『 Moreover, Panmir's longsword has a disadvantage. A condition of use is added. 』

『 The performance is excellent, but the usefulness and value of the item will decrease if the conditions of use are increased. 』

『 Thus, the 13 judges have decided that Grid's work is the best. 』

『 We will award the gold medal to Grid. 』

There was no backlash against the judges' decision. There was no room to refute.

"Waaahhhhhhh!"

Thousands of people screamed and celebrated Grid's victory. Panmir also admitted defeat. But there was a problem. Grid wanted to reject the gold medal!

"I would rather have my sword than the gold medal."

Through this competition, Grid learned the principles behind making a growth type item. It was to follow the existing production method of an item, but to impose a power that couldn't be realized by the production method. However, it wasn't that easy to make. What would happen if he made an item according to the production method? Even if he made 1,000 or 10,000 items in the future, his luck meant it wasn't realistic for him to get the items he wanted.

"Dammit...! Give me my sword!"

Grid was desperate. He was determined to regain the Sealed Transcendent Sword that was in the hands of the host. Fortunately, Grid's words weren't passed onto the viewers. It was the power of the mute option.

"What is Grid saying?"

"Doesn't it look like he is angry at the host?"

"No, why can't we hear Grid's voice?"

The audience murmured as they started to detect the strange atmosphere. Director Yoon Sangmin of the S.A. Group and the French prime minister approached Grid. It was to place the gold medal around Grid's neck.

"Ohh, Grid. Nice to meet you. I watched your actions well~"

The French prime minister greeted Grid in poor Korean. There would probably be few people in the world who would refuse a handshake from a high ranking politician of another country. But Grid refused! No, he didn't even see the French prime minister.

Grid was only interested in his longsword. Grid started to form tight fists. He was about to lose his temper when Director Yoon Sangmin whispered to him.

"Grid, your work will be displayed forever in the Hall of Fame and receive numerous praise. Countless people will appreciate your work and honor your achievements, increasing your value. So don't get stuck on the immediate benefits and calm down."

The rules were the rules. Not sticking to them would just bring him damages. Grid identified Director Yoon Sangmin's warning and eventually controlled his temper, bowing his head.

"...Damn."

"..."

Snap!

Snap snap!

Photos were taking of the French prime minister, who barely managed to suppress his unpleasant feelings, placing a gold medal around the frowning Grid's neck. Shouldn't a gold medalist be rejoicing? Grid's current appearance was similar to Sohn Kichung at the Berlin Olympics.

It was terrible.

"I will go beyond you in the next National Competition."

"Grid, I really learned a lot today! It was a valuable experience! If I get a chance, I will see you again later!"

"..."

The words of the blacksmiths, including Panmir and Steng, didn't reach Grid's ears. He was locked in deep thought.

'Why am I so unlucky?'

He already realized that he wasn't a lucky person. But he never imagined that this bad luck would be holding onto his ankles for all his life.

'Why is it a top item when I can't keep it?'

Why didn't it appear usually? Dammit!

"...Wait."

Grid was walking down the corridor when he suddenly smiled. It was because he had an interesting idea.

'If I continue to resist and do my best, I will someday overcome even my bad luck.'

This was just a trial. That's right. At this moment, Grid perceived that he could overcome the ordeal from the sky.

'Yes, let's see who will win.'

As always, he would be the final winner. Grid vowed to go against the heavens as he started his mind control. Just look back at this National Competition.

'I got many things.'

He learned how to make growth type items and got gold medals. The sword was a small sacrifice to obtain these precious things, so his mind calmed.

"This is interesting."

The same fact could be seen from a different perspective. Most people naturally knew this, but Grid only discovered it when he matured. Someone came towards him as he started humming.

The long National Competition was now reaching its final stages.

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"Grid!"

The person who shouted Grid's name was Blood Warrior Katz. Grid was very surprised because he was an unexpected person.

'Why is he coming to see me?'

Grid had no connection to Katz. In the days when he was still a beginner. Grid enhanced the Ideal Dagger to +6 and went to the market to boast, only to witness Katz' +8 weapon by chance.

"What do you want?"

Katz spoke bluntly to the puzzled Grid.

"Make me a growth type item! I will give you as much money as you want!"

"..."

As expected from a diamond spoon. Grid shrugged as he was reminded that Katz was the son of a prominent conglomerate in Japan.

"Unfortunately, I'm not accepting production commissions."

To be precise, Grid wouldn't accept it from him. Grid wasn't in a position to always make growth type items, and even if he made one, the priority would be selling it to the Overgeared members.

"Kuoh...!"

Katz frowned as he received the negative answer. Katz was called rogue, trash, arrogant, and other words. Grid thought that Katz might take a threatening attitude. But reality was different. He might treat others with contempt, was selfish and said foolish things in public, but he wasn't a fool. He knew that his position was inferior to Grid, so he suppressed his nature and lowered his posture.

"Your... No, what do I have to do to qualify for your items?"

'Look at this guy.'

Grid was able to get a glimpse of Katz' desperation. He was a person prepared to do anything to get what he wanted.

'...Can I use him?'

Katz' value was very high, despite his nature. Grid considered it and made a decision.

"Go and ask Lauel."

"Your chief of staff?"

"Yes, if you want one of my items, try and fulfill Lauel's request. I will make you an item depending on Lauel's decision."

Grid was sure that Katz would be useful to Lauel.

"...I understand."

Katz nodded and left this place. Grid looked at him walking away and was filled with joy.

'A person who didn't acknowledge me two years ago is now bowing to me...'

It wasn't just Katz. Since his abilities as a blacksmith had been revealed, it was clear that many prominent figures would approach him in the future.

'I am a real big shot.'

He could assert that he already had a successful life. Pride boiled inside him. But Grid already knew that this pride shouldn't transform into arrogance.

'It isn't good to be too excited. I have to act more carefully.'

The attention on him was too high. He had to be careful of every action. Otherwise, there might be a backlash. Grid took a deep breath and moved to the waiting room.

"Congratulations."

"God Grid! I knew you would do it!!"

The Korean team's waiting room.

Yura and Peak Sword welcomed Grid. They were delighted by Grid's victory. Thanks to Grid's gold medal, South Korea now had a chance to take first place on the overall rankings, but that wasn't why they were happy. They were delighted solely due to their liking for Grid.

"Thank you for always encouraging me."

Grid replied in an unusual tone and sat on the couch. Peak Sword was confused.

'Why is God Grid acting like this? Did he eat something bad?'

Ah, he thought about it. It seemed like Grid's mental state was a mess because he was deprived of the growth type item he made. Would he be able to demonstrate his full ability in the pet marathon if he was in this state? The anxious Peak Sword started thinking up plans to fix Grid's mental state.

"I'm going to close my eyes for a while."

Grid lay back on the couch and closed his eyes. Grid wanted to go back into Satisfy and check Noe's status again, but he didn't have time.

Indeed. He had barely closed his eyes for 10 minutes when a call came. As a pet marathon participant, he was invited to attend the press conference.

"There are no breaks."

"Time is limited, so it can't be helped..."

This was why other players refrained from participating in two events a day.

'Will Grid's concentration and stamina last?'

Peak Sword couldn't hide his worries as he asked.

"You must be tired from hammering for eight hours. How about you take a break while I go to the press conference?"

"I don't know about Huroi, but making you my spokesperson..."

Grid was worried it would be a repeat of 'Do you know?'

'Still, I would rather it be Peak Sword than Huroi.'

Grid imagined Huroi cursing at the reporters, shook his head and got up.

"I'll go."

"Hoh... Grid said something like that?"

One of the audience seats in front of the pet marathon. Lauel heard the story about how Katz came to him and felt amazement. He realized that Grid was learning how to deal with people.

'Taking advantage of Katz' position to send him to me... He really is growing in many ways.'

Originally, Grid was a slow learning person. He experienced the same conditions as others, but was always behind. However, that changed the moment he visited the Behen Archipelago. His growth rate had accelerated.

"Kukukuk, this is interesting."

Katz' hands and feet shrivelled due to Lauel's unique laugh.

'Katz...'

Considering his power, financial strength, and position in Japan, Katz was an S-class person. He had many available things. The disadvantage was his personality, but most members of Overgeared were already strange, so it wasn't a problem.

'It's better to obtain him.'

Lauel decided and asked Katz.

"I know you have the power to join guilds, so why haven't you?"

"I don't like being interfered with. I dislike rules."

"Wow, you. You would've fainted if you were born a South Korean. You would've had to go to the army."

"...I would've gotten out of it. No, why are you suddenly asking this?"

"Join the Overgeared Guild."

"You want me in Overgeared?"

Katz' face distorted.

"I don't want to."

Katz refused without thinking about it. However, Lauel expected this and just laughed.

"You don't have to if you don't want to. You will never be able to obtain Grid's items."

"..."

Katz's eyes shook. He really coveted Grid's items.

'Well, it's natural.'

Katz was aiming for the top. He already declared two years ago that he would reach first in the rankings. However, he wasn't able to achieve his goal because of his lacking abilities and items.

'Anyway, there's nothing to lose.'

Lauel was overflowing with confidence. He made a wicked grin reminiscent of Grid and made the offer again to Katz.

"Join Overgeared."

He swallowed down the words, 'become Grid's slave.'

"However, if you want to join Overgeared, you have to beat Grid in PvP."

"Beat Grid?"

"Yes, you're able to defeat him. Your fighting style is a good match against Grid... How about it? If I tell you how to beat Grid, why don't you try it once?"

"..."

Wasn't Lauel the closest person to Grid? Why did he want Grid to be eliminated? Katz didn't question it. He grew up watching friendship be snuffed out like a candle in front of greed. Now Katz only felt one thing.

Anger!

"You will teach me how to win against Grid? Stop talking nonsense! I can beat Grid with my own power, even if you don't tell me!"

Katz's character had changed a lot compared to when he just became a Blood Warrior. He realized that everything in the world wasn't solved by money and there were a limit to his talent. From that time, he gave up on his arrogance. In other words, his declaration that he could beat Grid was a judgment based on reasonable grounds.

"Okay, I will beat Grid. In addition, I don't care how you use me. I will do anything if it means getting Grid's items. However, if you use me and then hit me in the back of the head, be prepared. I will put my whole power into killing you in the game."

"Huhuhut... Our agreement has been established."

"..."

Goose bumps formed on Katz' skin.

There were 53 people participating in the pet marathon. An average of 1.5 people from each country participated. They sat facing hundreds of reporters.

"Grid has hell's best demonic beast, a memphis. In last year's National Competition, the memphis showed its dominance by beating dozens of wyverns alone."

"It is the opinion of many people that the winner of the pet marathon this year will be Grid. What do you think about this?"

Did the other players have the power to fight against Grid? Most people around the world were curious about this part. The players answered easily.

"There is nothing perfect in Satisfy."

"We have already grasped Noe's weakness and figured out a strategy."

"Noe won't win a gold medal for Grid!"

"...Isn't this tiring?"

Grid looked tired as he watched the players shouting with confidence.

'Isn't the repertoire of every event the same?'

Before the start of the game, it was a pattern of confidence and then eventual defeat.

The pet marathon started 30 minutes after the press conference.

“Nyang!”

Noe appeared at Grid’s side. He had been eating well over the past year, meaning his black fur was shiny and his tongue was a vivid pink. The soles of his feet were softer.

“The best demonic beast of hell has emerged! Nyang!”

Noe shouted as his stomach protruded! The 人 shaped mouth opened with a complacent expression, making people realize.

“Fearsome guy... The level of cuteness has increased so much that his level must’ve risen tremendously!”

“He will be a tough opponent.”

The other players who summoned wyverns couldn’t help admiring Noe’s strength. But they still didn’t lose confidence. It was because in the last year, they gained a lot of information and fully understood the memphis’ weakness.

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Of the 53 players who participated in the pet marathon, 52 of them (except for Grid) were pet specialists. Since their classes were in the monster tamer series, their understanding of pets and their ability to collect information was unmatched. It was no wonder that they studied the memphis and came up with a strategy against it.

‘Even if it’s called the best demonic beast of hell...’

‘In the end, a memphis is just a cat monster.’

‘A cat monster has many weaknesses!’

They made confident expressions and started summoning more pets after the wyverns. Surprisingly, the pets they summoned weren’t strong like wyverns. Rather, they were insect-like monsters such as giant glow worms, gold cockroaches, and light butterflies. They had weak combat ability and low intelligence, so they generally weren’t used.

“What?”

“Aren’t they going to try their best?”

In order to win the pet marathon, the pet’s combat ability, agility, and endurance were the key. They had to reach the destination first while keeping other pets in check. Then why did they summon weak insect type monsters? The viewers were confused by the unexpected situation.

On the other hand, the experts immediately understood the players’ intentions.

『 The players are well aware of the weaknesses of cat monsters. 』

『 For viewers who are unfamiliar with it, there is one thing that the summoned pets have in common. They produce light by themselves. 』

『 And cats are creatures sensitive to light. In particular, they have the habit of chasing light when they see it moving. 』

『 In that sense, the giant glow worms, gold cockroaches, and light butterflies will act as counters to the memphis. 』

Giant glow worms, gold cockroaches, and light butterflies. These three monsters had the ability to emit their own light. The worm-like 2 meter long giant glow worm emitted a gentle light from its tail, the gold cockroach flashed an intense gold, while the wings of the light butterfly emitted light. They were all beautiful lights used to dazzle their target.

Noe's mouth twitched as he saw them.

"Nyong. Nyong nyong."

His pupils became bigger. He made a strange sound and lay flat on the floor, his chubby butt up in the air. He shook his butt to the left and right as the glowing light from the monsters caught his eyes. He looked like a cat trying to hunt a mouse.

"What are you doing?"

Grid was perplexed by Noe's strange behavior and urgently checked his status.

Status: Committed

(I must catch these shiny things! Nyang! I was born into this world to hunt them! Nyang nyang!)

"This is..."

The only weakness Grid knew was Noe's tail. He had made a tail guard to thoroughly prepare for this. But he was hit by an unexpected weakness. The moment Grid made an absurd expression.

『 Then the match will start! 』

The referee shouted! A magic bead exploded. The explosion was the signal as the wyverns at the starting line immediately unfolded their wings. The other players approached Grid as they looked at the wyverns flying away.

"How about it Grid?"

"Aren't we different from the last National Competition?"

Last year's National Competition was very different from this year's. Simply put, this year was much more professional. The common denominator with last year's participants was that they had wyverns. However, this year the participants were pet professionals. Unlike last year's contestants, they had the ability to fight back against Noe.

"..."

The players comforted the silent Grid.

"Well, you don't have to be ashamed. We're the best in our field."

"Yes Grid. Don't bear bad feelings towards us. In the first place, you couldn't beat us in this event. No one will criticize you."

"..."

Grid was silent to the end.

"Nyong nyong. Nyong."

He just quietly watched as Noe sneaked up in order to chase the lights. The players shrugged.

"Don't even think about resisting. Can't you only have three pets without a skill, and you can only summon two pets at a time?"

"On the other hand, we can summon up to five pets simultaneously. Even if you summon a wyvern-class pet, we can summon a new pet and neutralize it."

"Haha, you probably want to hold a sword and fight directly, but how can you? This is the pet marathon stage. You can't move directly. Just watch silently."

"Five at a time..."

Grid finally opened his mouth. Then he smiled meaningfully.

"Isn't it strange? If you can summon five pets, why are you only summoning two?"

As if it was a tacit rule, none of the players summoned another pet apart from the wyvern and one to keep Noe in check. Grid looked at the players preparing to pursue the drakes that disappeared beyond the horizon.

"If you summon several pets at a time, isn't it harder to control? It is similar to how your control weakens when your wyvern gets further away."

"..."

The players were inwardly embarrassed. It was because Grid spoke as if he had just realized something that was common sense to everyone else.

"Well, I guess you learned that by yourself..."

The players decided to ignore Grid and move quickly. Noe had been neutralized by now. They no longer perceived Grid as an enemy and were planning to focus on victory.

At that moment.

"Kyong!"

Noe, who had ran towards the giant glow worm, screamed in pain. He was hurt due to the invisible thread spread like a fortress around the glow worm's body. The players saw Noe and smiled with satisfaction.

'That's it. Grid is now completely contained.'

'From now on, the game will truly begin!'

The players were happy about blocking the only variable. But they didn't know one thing. The fact that Grid had a hidden hand!

"Come out, Randy."

Jeurereuk.

Grid gave a command and black liquid poured out of Grid's pet inventory.

'Slime?'

The players were confused by Grid's new pet.

"What can you do with a slime?"

"This is too shabby for a last hurrah."

Grid wasn't an expert in the field of pets. He might've luckily obtained a memphis through a raid or quest, but it would be very difficult to tame the new pet afterwards. Thus, he brought out this slime. The players smiled like it was cute.

"Turn into me."

Grid gave a bizarre command to the black liquid. Then the liquid wriggled and did something surprising. It transformed into Grid!

"It wasn't a slime, but a doppelganger?"

"I've never heard of a black doppelganger."

The players were impressed. A doppelganger could be used in many ways, but they were hard to tame because they were A-grade. It was difficult unless the person was a high quality pet trainer. Grid's doppelganger seemed different from usual doppelgangers, so they felt wary.

"He has talent at scaring people."

"He truly deserves to be called God Grid. He's very versatile."

The players clapped. They were curious, but didn't feel a large amount of tension. It was because doppelgangers didn't have high combat skills. A doppelganger dominated into a pet had very weak abilities. It could only copy 10% of its master's stats. It was clear that Grid's doppelganger was a named monster, but it couldn't copy more than 15% of his stats.

'This isn't worth watching.'

The insect monsters they summoned could easily handle the doppelganger. Randy gave despair to the confident players.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship."

"...What?!"

The doppelganger could copy skills? It was also a legendary rated skill? The players finally realized the seriousness of the situation and urgently tried to summon new pets.

"Wave."

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Waves of energy spread out, hitting the dozens of giant glow worms, gold cockroaches, and light butterflies...

"The level of those hastily obtained as a countermeasure for Noe wouldn't be high."

Grid declared as he watched the dozens of ash pillars rising towards the sky.

"I'm sorry, but I'm going to take the gold medal."

Grid had been aware from a long time ago. He had to be careful of his words in order to not lost his prestige as master of Overgeared and lord of Reidan. That's why he didn't speak lightly. That's right. Since the press conference at the beginning of the National Competition, Grid was already convinced that he would win the pet marathon when he declared that 'South Korea would win at least five gold medals.'

"Catch them, Noe."

"Nyang!"

Noe regained his spirit and energetically moved. His speed completely exceeded the speed of the wyverns as he followed their path.

"Shit! Stop him!"

The players summoned all their battle pets at once and tried to stop Noe. For this moment, they were allied.

Grid spoke in a calm voice.

"I'll leave it to you, Randy."

"Believe in me."

Clink!

Randy had copied Pagma's appearance and defeated Grid 82 times. Once he reached level 240, the 'Copy' skill was strengthened and the strongest doppelganger slowly regained the power of the past. Now he faced the dozens of pets alone. It was enough to thrill the world.

Grid's legend was written down.

Chapter 445

Randy's original Copy skill. He could copy 30% of his master's stats and two random skills. But now things were different. Randy evolved the moment he reached level 240, being able to copy 35% of the master's stats and three skills! It didn't matter if the skills were only level 1.

'Won't he be able to copy me perfectly someday?'

Grid appreciated the possibilities of Randy's development. It wasn't a baseless overestimation. Grid later found out that ordinary doppelgangers couldn't copy legendary skills. In other words, Randy was different from ordinary doppelgangers the first time he copied Pagma's appearance.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship."

A pet was classified as a monster. The effect of the Efficient Hunting Sword inflicted additional damage on monsters, so Grid armed himself with it before calling Randy. Thanks to that, Randy was running wild.

"Link."

Pit!

Pipipipipit!

"Kyaak!"

"Kuwek!"

Randy copied Grid's appearance. With the Efficient Hunting Sword (Copy) in his hand, he slaughtered dozens of pets. The pets were much weaker than wyverns and couldn't stand up to Randy.

"Kuwaaaah~!"

A big monster, the two-headed hippopotamus, didn't lose its momentum and tied up Randy's feet. It withstood Randy's attack with its very thick skin and then threw him back using its 3.5 ton weight.

Kuuong!

"Uh...!"

Blood emerged from Randy's mouth. Despite the fact that he was wearing Triple Layers (Copy), his health was reduced by a quarter and his face distorted from the pain.

'I'm sorry.'

Grid knew Randy's heartbreaking story. He sincerely sympathized with Randy. He wanted Randy to be happy, unlike the past. But how could things in the world be easy? Grid always faced a major crisis and every time it happened, Randy experienced pain. In particular, ever since Randy learned the swapping locations skill, the number of times he was used as a bullet had increased.

Grid felt sorry. However, there was no guilt. Why?

'Happiness is victory!'

Randy had to be strong in order to fight and win. That's right. Grid wanted Randy to become stronger and obtain happiness with his own strength. In fact, Randy was a pet, so being strong was an important factor.

'I will keep pushing you.'

Did Randy happen to feel Grid's scary heart? Randy felt a chill as he avoided the second round of attacks from the two-headed hippo and used Revolve. A counterattack triggered at the perfect timing. The master of the two-headed hippo, the American Beletra was shocked.

"Piercing my Jeep's leather with a blow...!"

The two-headed hippo had one of the top three defensive power among the big monsters. They were classified as tank-type pets and Jeep was over level 210. It was the pet that Beletra focused on the most after the wyvern. The food was top quality and Beletra really raised Jeep with a lot of pampering. Yet Jeep lost one-third of its health despite the hard work and love poured into it.

"What the hell is this doppelganger...?"

As Beletra was in shock, Randy discovered that the weakness was its long body and short legs and linked attacks. It was difficult and slow to cope with the attack because Randy had moved to a place where the two-headed hippo couldn't easily see.

"Kuwaaang!"

The two-headed hippo started to cry and the commentators spoke words of admiration towards Randy.

『 A pet using a counterattack...! It's clear that Grid's doppelganger must be equipped with the same level of artificial intelligence as an NPC! 』

『 It's certain. Grid isn't just overgeared, his pets are over... No, they are really amazing.. 』

『 It's truly a top presence! 』

In the last National Competition, Grid won three gold medals alone and made South Korea ranked second. This was a tremendous feat and most people predicted that Grid couldn't do it again. But at this moment! Grid was going to break his record!

The little demon wings spread open as the chubby legs and tails moved. The commentators guessed that Noe was flying at a speed faster than any monster in the pet marathon and would catch up with the wyverns.

『 Don't tell me... Grid might really become a myth? 』

Everyone believed it was impossible. But now it didn't seem impossible. Grid was likely to win a gold medal in this pet marathon, and if so, Grid would've won four gold medals alone. South Korea's current third place ranking would rise to the top, making Grid the unprecedented person who made a country number one through individual effort.

This was a solid record worthy of praise.

『 Um... Maybe Grid can even win gold in PvP? 』

『 Haha... Then Korea's 1st rank will be confirmed? 』

『 Haha, it's impossible. Isn't Kraugel participating in PvP? 』

『 Indeed, even Grid can't beat the sky above the sky. 』

The commentators laughed while Randy and the pets continued fighting.

"Shit! We're using up all our power!"

Despite the fact that they had formed an alliance, the other players were unable to defeat Randy. They became nervous and summoned new pets in order to attack Randy. Randy's momentum shrunk after he consumed skills and stamina to defeat the two-headed hippo.

The monster tamers tamed monsters that were usually difficult to hunt. Randy was Grid's pet and had a high level, but he couldn't face all of them.

Chaaeng!Chaeng!

Randy was pushed to the defensive and couldn't attack. The crowd and viewers booed as Randy gradually slowed from the wounds on his body.

"All players were working together!! Why isn't the referee stopping this?"

"It's really too much. No matter how great Grid is, 52 people concentrating on him..."

"Grid and the Overgeared members fought fairly when they met each other in the competition. What about these bastards? Don't they have a conscience?"

"Wow, Grid and the Overgeared members are trying their best for the purpose of the National Competition. They are a guild with a very high level of awareness."

"They are different from the Seven Guilds."

"Hey, you bastards! Do it properly! This isn't a pet marathon but a Grid raid!"

The anger of the crowd and public opinion on the Internet became the worst. The referee couldn't overlook it anymore and was about to restrain the 52 players.

"It doesn't mean anything now."

Grid muttered while the whole world was in turmoil. The commentators were talking like madmen.

『 Noe has caught up to the wyverns! 』

『 This is despite departing five minutes late...! Indeed, a memphis is the best demonic beast of hell! 』

『 The players made a mistake. They summoned several pets because they were obsessed with Randy. Due to this, they couldn't control the wyverns in the distance and the wyverns became confused. 』

『 Noe didn't miss this chance! 』

『 Ah! Noe just devoured the souls of the wyverns! Wow! Look at that acceleration! It's faster than earlier!! 』

There was no need to argue anymore. Grid won the pet marathon. Grid overwhelmed 52 pet specialists with just two pets. Grid's pets were just incredible.

- 1st. South Korea (5 gold)
- 2nd. United States (4 gold, 4 silver, 5 bronze)
- 3rd. Russia (4 gold, 3 silver, 2 bronze)
- 4th. Canada (3 gold, 3 silver, 3 bronze)
- 5th. Spain (1 gold, 2 silver, 1 bronze)
- 6th. Japan (1 gold, 3 bronze)
- 7th. Brazil (1 gold)
- 8th. United Kingdom (4 silver)
- 9th. France (3 silver)
- Joint 10th place. Argentina, China (2 bronze)
- 12th. Turkey (1 bronze)

"..."

Kraugel was thrilled when he checked the rankings after the pet marathon. It was surprising that Grid alone could sweep up the blacksmith game and pet marathon, where the US had been expected to win gold medals.

'Grid, you are certainly great.'

How many people could prove they were the best in several fields? In that sense, Grid was special. He was unique in many ways, including his combat abilities, blacksmithing skills, ability to use items, and his pets.

Kraugel felt a lot of respect. It was the fourth time that Kraugel had such feelings towards another player. But he couldn't get lost in his appreciation. Kraugel had to be composed. He was now in the position to make Russia first and obtain the medicine for his mother. To do that, he had to win the gold medal in PvP. Even if he respected Grid, he couldn't show this when they met in PvP.

"...I must win this time."

There were only two events left in the National Competition. The individual 'carriage transporting' event and PvP. There were no more events where the US could aim for a gold medal. On the other hand, South Korea and Russia were in a position to win a gold medal in PvP, making it likely that one of them would be ranked first in the overall rankings.

"Sigh."

Kraugel let out a deep breath and started to examine everything Grid showed in this National Competition. In a survey, 92.3% of respondents predicted that it would be Kraugel's overwhelming victory in the PvP that was three days away.

Chapter 446

"Dammit!"

Ku tang tang tang!

After confirming the updated rankings, Zibal couldn't contain his anger and kicked the table. As his body that had been trained through exercising, his strength was incredible. The table flew into the door and shattered.

"The United States...! The US has missed the first ranking!"

The US had been a leader in all areas for nearly two centuries. For example, in the case of sports, the US Olympics had been first in the rankings 25 times. It was natural for the US to win the Satisfy National Competition, so neither the American people or the players doubted the result.

But the result changed. It was due to only one person! Grid!

"That crazy monster...!"

Zibal was truly going crazy. He couldn't discount Grid's abilities anymore and had to acknowledge his skills, but this was too much.

"This is pure luck..."

He tried to argue, but it was too much. Zibal was convinced and eventually admitted it with a deep sigh.

"What has he been doing over the past year to become such a monster?"

Grid had overcome all the weak points that were pointed out in the last National Competition and highlighted his strengths. It was virtually impossible for a person to grow to such a degree in one year.

"That guy... Was he originally a genius?"

He lived roughly until last year, so his skills couldn't show up properly? Lauel thought it was a ludicrous question.

'Other people are misunderstanding Grid as a genius...'

Strictly speaking, Grid was a genius of hard work. Anyway, Lauel felt good about Grid's evaluation. Zibal's rage was redirected to Panmir while Lauel was inwardly laughing happily.

'This is all because of him.'

If only Panmir hadn't provoked Grid. Grid wouldn't have played in the blacksmith production game and the US would've solidified the number one spot. The US was placed in the worst situation because of Panmir. Zibal wanted to pour out all the blame onto Panmir. But he wasn't in a position to do so. Panmir was a blacksmith that the Snake Guild couldn't lose before he was the US representative.

“...Hah.”

Zibal was also at fault for losing the gold medal in the raid event. He took deep breaths and calmed his mind. Then he desperately asked Lauel.

"Do we have any possibility of winning a gold medal in the carriage transporting?"

"As you know, the carriage transporting participants needs high eloquence or the charm stat to prevent the mercenary NPCs from having dark intentions. Zephyr might be a master of deception, but there is a limit to the sustainability, so he can only win a silver medal."

In the end, the winner of the carriage transporting was a country with a merchant or orator. If Grid had participated in it, he would've easily won the event with his transcendent charm.

"Hrmm... Then PvP?"

Lauel shrugged at Zibal's question.

"I'm well aware of Skull's strength. It's why I entrusted Skull with the most important role every time during the siege. But he can't be compared to Grid and Kraugel."

"..."

Zibal felt wronged. Look at the current medals status! The 1st place South Korean had 5 gold, while the third place Russia had 4 gold, 3 silver and 3 bronze. On the other hand, the United States had 4 gold, four silver and 5 bronze medals. If they simply looked at the medal count, the United States was overwhelming.

He was sincerely angry that they couldn't aim for first place because of one gold medal.

"If only we could win one gold medal..."

Wouldn't there be an endless number of criticism from the people of their country and the media? Last year, Zibal had been criticized despite leading the US to the number one position in the National Competition. It was because he lost several gold medals to Grid. However, this time the first spot would be taken away, so it was obvious that the criticism would be incomparable to last year.

Skull watched Zibal sigh and opened his mouth.

"PvP has yet to be determined. Grid and Kraugel might face each other in the beginning and I might break one of them. Already giving up on the championship, I frankly don't like it."

Yes, the United States was the strongest. The representatives were the best in their field. Skull's power might seem lacking compared to Grid and Kraugel, but he had never thought of himself as weak.

"I'm sorry Skull. I will trust you."

Zibal regained his composure and asked Skull for a handshake. But Skull refused to shake hands and walked away.

"..."

The nickname of the 2nd ranked Zibal was punching bag.

『 ...For this reason, the winner of the carriage transporting event is likely to be Spain. The 1st place on the overall rankings will be determined by PvP. 』

The schedule for the National Competition had already been disclosed to the public three months ago. Based on this, after the end of the pet marathon, there would be another three days of rest. The reason for such a break to be included in the competition?

It was to give the players time to recoup, but who would believe that? It was actually so that the French government, the host country of the 2nd National Competition, could attract tourists for a longer time, while the broadcasters could attract more advertising fees.

This was the age of capitalism. And the monstrous Grid, who led this capitalist era, was talking with Yook Shihyun of the Comet Group.

-Then I will ask you to act well in your next event.

“Only if you make the deposit.”

-Huhu, we have thoroughly calculated it. Then I will be going.

Yook Shihyun gave a charming laugh and hung up the phone. She was young, influential, and thought it would be nice to have a lover like Grid, who was wealthy. She worked extra hard, calling Grid and meeting him for no reason, but it was wishful thinking.

She couldn't gain Grid's attention with just the specs of 'pretty charming and good ability!' There were much more attractive and talented people around Grid! Yura, Jishuka, and Irene. Due to environmental factors, Grid's eyes for women were misled and they needed at least a D... Omitted.

Grid connected to Satisfy and first looked at the state of Assimilation.

[Assimilation]

Will awaken Braham's sleeping consciousness in your body and become one.

At this time, your class will be converted to Great Magician' and control of the flesh will be transferred to Braham.

Skill Duration: 3 minutes

Skill Cooldown Time: 9 days, 13 hours, 7 minutes and 5 seconds.

The reuse time of Assimilation was 10 days. But Braham was hit hard by closing the door to hell, making the skill reuse time increase by more than 80 days. It was why Grid didn't use Assimilation throughout the National Competition...

'If the speed of the carriage transporting or PvP is slow, I can use Assimilation in the finals.'

Please don't let him meet Kraugel until the finals. It was doubtful if his earnest prayer would work as he wished. In addition, even if he reached the finals, he couldn't be sure that the cooldown time of

Assimilation would be over. Grid took out his hammer and repaired his equipment perfectly, then he left the smithy.

Unlike usual, he headed straight for the fields without looking for Irene. Piaro and thousands of farmers were seen.

“What do you get when you plant beans in the field?”

“Beans!”

“So pathetic! You still haven’t seen the peak of agriculture yet! How many times have I told you that a real farmer would make beans and red beans grow at the same time!?”

“No... Piaro, how can we achieve the peak of agriculture?”

“You want us to grow both beans and red beans?”

"Huhu, you have moved a hand plow 100,000 times a day and still haven’t received enlightenment... It reminds me of someone."

"..."

Grid tried to ignore the conversation and checked the status of the farmers. They had sleek muscles wrapped in something like thin armor and their skin was a healthy bronze. Their eyes were also fierce. They looked more like warriors rather than farmers. In particular, the former soldiers of Prince Ren that Piaro picked up in the Altes Mountains had grown to become knights.

‘Crazy.’

How did Piaro abuse the farmers to create this? Grid admired Reidan’s farmers who were much more powerful than the empire’s elite soldiers, before approaching Piaro. Piaro already noticed Grid and greeted him politely.

"You are busier than anyone, so why did you come to this place?"

Grid bluntly asked him a question.

"Am I still weaker than Kraugel?"

“Yes.”

Piaro replied without thinking about it. It was as Grid expected.

‘I am foolish.’

Despite establishing a master and subordinate relationship, Piaro hadn’t changed. He was always honest and loyal. He didn’t butter up to the master in the guise of mocking.

“Dammit... Okay, I understand.”

The reason Grid visited Piaro before the PvP event was to gain some courage. But it just backfired. Instead of courage, Grid was only able to obtain the painful reality, making him leave the fields with weak steps. Piaro continued bowing until Grid disappeared, then he muttered.

"However, if the both of you fight, My Lord can win."

Kraugel was strong because of his extraordinary mind and senses. During a battle, he kept in mind everything that could happen and anticipated the enemy's behavior, allowing him to respond quickly. But what if he couldn't predict Grid? Grid's battle style started to take advantage of his items and there were parts that even Piaro couldn't understand.

Why didn't Piaro tell this to Grid?

The reason was simple. Grid didn't ask who would win if he fought Kraugel, only who was stronger. Except for items, Kraugel's strength was much higher than Grid's.

"Let's go to the rice paddies."

Piario held his farming equipment and started to farm again. He was now Piario, who was a farmer.

Chapter 447

"Kieeeeeek!"

[A junior vampire was destroyed.]

[4,901,000 experience has been acquired.]

[An intermediate vampire was destroyed.]

[6,954,300 experience has been acquired.]

[One deluxe magic stone has been acquired.]

Three days until the PvP. It was nine days in Satisfy time, which Grid was going to spend hunting. It was to stimulate his combat senses while raising Iyarugt's experience at the same time. But it wasn't easy.

[Iyarugt]

Rating: Unique (Growth)

Experience: 85.98%

"The experience gain isn't very good."

He'd killed 40 junior vampires and 25 intermediate vampires, but the rate of experience increase was only 0.01%. The vampire cities were limited in the number of monsters, the vampires had excellent survival ability, and the speed of hunting was slower, making Grid feel nervous. He wondered if he could raise Iyarugt's rating in nine days.

'I would rather fight against other rankers in order to quickly gain experience. Um... Are there any better hunting grounds around here?'

He missed the islands in the 50's on the Behen Archipelago where high level monsters were scattered. But Grid's current save point was the 60th island. It was pointless to go to the Behen Archipelago because he couldn't move past the 61st island.

"...Information is really important."

He would've been able to overcome this shortage of hunting grounds if he had excellent information. If he knew this, he would've made efforts to gather information.

"Ah?"

Grid was smacking his lips together with regret when he recalled a conversation he had with Lauel a few months ago.

'Now that Reidan has the basic facilities, we are planning to install special facilities.'

'Special facilities?'

'Now that we have the minimum of infrastructure and an army by raising agriculture, industrial, and academic facilities to a certain level, we must focus on collecting and exchanging information. First of all, we are going to set up a foreign department and assassin organization. In addition, there will be an adventurer's guild where we can buy information from adventurer NPCs and players.'

'Um, I see... You are quite busy. I believe you will do it well.'

"This is really..."

At the time, he didn't know the importance of information and laughed at Lauel's words. But now he realized the importance of information, allowing him to know how excellent Lauel's foresight was.

'Lauel, if it wasn't for you, I would've given up by now.'

He wouldn't have been able to lead Reidan properly, making it decay and eventually giving up. Grid, who was once again grateful for Lauel's existence, deliberately allowed the vampire to attack his side and counterattacked with Iyarugt.

[Critical!]

[You have dealt 79,900 damage to the target.]

[You have absorbed 9,588 health due to the option effect of Elfin Stone's Ring (Epic).]

What was one of the most important things in hunting? Was it the overwhelming attack power that could deal with the monsters? Was it the defense that could withstand the monsters' onslaught? No. No matter how high these two were, it was meaningless if the duration was short.

One of the most important parts of hunting was the endurance in combat. It was easier to hunt for a long time because of this endurance. Potions were a necessity for hunting. In general, players had to hunt while waiting for the cooldown of the potions, making it very tiring.

However, Grid was different. Grid had Doran's Ring that could restore damage, as well as Elfin Stone's Ring which had a bloodsucking effect every 12 seconds! He also had the most efficient potions from Reidan's alchemy facility, giving him the battle duration of a healer. No, he was probably as good as someone else. It was comparable to Blood Warrior Katz.

'I would like to raise the rating of Elfin Stone's Ring.'

Elfin Stone's ring didn't gain as much experience as Iyarugt. The effect only occurred once every 12 seconds, so the experience was limited. Similarly, Tiramet's Belt only accumulated experience when it was attacked, due to the nature of armor.

'Still, if I compare the item experience rate to the rate before getting the buff, it's definitely faster.'

It felt 1.5 times faster? But it was still lacking. Grid was immersed in hunting and eventually left the vampire city. Then he sent a whisper to Lauel.

-Do you have information about any good hunting grounds?

-No.

Lauel answered emphatically.

...I see. Well, getting new information isn't that easy. I understand.

In the end, Grid was forced back into the vampire city. Meanwhile, Lauel apologized several times to Grid in his heart.

'In fact, I got a new update about a hunting ground that is better than the vampire cities a while ago...'

He couldn't say it yet. Lauel didn't want Grid to grow. Why? Lauel was hoping Kraugel would win in PvP!

'I can create any variables that will stop Kraugel from joining our team. Grid, this result is for you. Please forgive me.'

It was justified, but deceiving his master weighed on his heart.

Sigh.

Lauel sighed heavily, covered half of his face with his hand and leaned against the wall.

"Alas, the greed of the loyalist is a terrible and beautiful thing...! But the tears of blood that I am shedding are for Grid. I can tolerate this pain forever...!"

The hands and feet of the maids passing by Lauel curled in disgust. The road to the production of Lauel's 'Reidan Female NPCs strategy' was long and tough.

『 Today I'll take a look at the top candidates to win the National Competition. First, the United States. They have the largest number of medals and there are two events remaining. Unfortunately, it will be difficult for them to obtain a gold medal. 』

『 It's a pity. If they could just win one more gold medal, the US obtaining 1st on the rankings would become a fact. But this isn't possible... 』

『 Still, I think they have shown the dignity of the champion of the 1st National Competition. The United States is the only one out of the 32 participating countries to reach the top in all events. 』

『 But it isn't meaningful. Isn't a gold medal the best result? Look at South Korea. 』

『 They have five medals... All five are gold medals... 』

『 It's truly an unusual record. It's a country specialized in some events. 』

『 Isn't it more appropriate to see it as 'Grid' rather than a country? Grid alone won four of the five gold medals. 』

『 Yura picked up a gold medal in hell running, but she tends to be overshadowed by Grid. To be honest, I can call it a one-man team. 』

『 Grid is really great. He's full of surprises every time he appears in public. But can he play an active role in PvP? 』

『 It isn't possible because there is Kraugel, who is first in the overall rankings. 』

『 Grid is more versatile than Kraugel, but in the end, he's evaluated as weaker than Kraugel. Let's look at the survey on the Satisfy website. 92.3% of the 280 million respondents stated that Kraugel would win. 』

『 Of the 280 million people, around 260 million are expecting Grid to lose? 』

『 That's right. Kraugel is the peak of two billion users and is called the sky above the sky. It's natural for him to overwhelm Grid. 』

『 Invited experts, do you think that Grid will be defeated by Kraugel? 』

『 Grid is difficult to predict, making me reluctant to say anything, but I'm also expecting Kraugel's victory. 』

『 Looking at the two people's combat records in this competition, it's obvious that Kraugel is far superior. 』

『 Grid dominates in attack, defense, and health, but Kraugel can neutralize most of that. Meanwhile, Grid can't neutralize Kraugel's advantages... 』

『 Um... You will see why Kraugel is called a god. 』

The players, including Grid, were connected to Satisfy to prepare for the last event. The international stations broadcasted special programs every day talking about the confrontation between Grid and Kraugel. Indeed, numerous broadcasters and experts analyzed Grid and Kraugel. Based on this, the likelihood of Kraugel winning in a confrontation between the two people was over 90%.

Did this indicate that Grid was weak? No, that wasn't it. Grid's strength had been well proven and everyone in the world admitted this. However, the opponent was too bad.

The sky above the sky, Kraugel. A unique presence that was like an insurmountable mountain. Even the Overgeared members determined that it would be hard for Grid to win.

'In the Reidan match, Kraugel was tired and not at full strength.'

'His ultimate skill was on cooldown.'

But.

'We couldn't have won against the weakened Kraugel.'

'It was only Grid who could win.'

'Grid, have strength.'

'Beat everyone's predictions!'

Grid, who wanted to raise Iyarugt's rating. Kraugel analyzed Grid's power and prepared dozens of strategies in order to block all variables. In addition to them, strong users such as Damian, Pon, Regas, Seuron, Chris, Katz, Hao, and Tarma thoroughly prepared for the PvP.

As expected, the winner of the carriage transportation was Spain and the PvP opening ceremony was held afterwards.

『 First, the lots will be draw! The 64 participants of PvP are going on the stage! 』

Just like the siege, the opponents they would be facing was decided by drawing lots. This was for the sake of fairness, but Grid couldn't help feeling anxiety.

'What if I face Kraugel in round one?'

Grid feared his own bad luck! He nervously gulped and firmed up his heart. He vowed to overcome his own bad luck.

'...Go.'

Grid's eyes sharpened and he climbed onto the stage with the other players.

"Why didn't you participate in the carriage transportation? You should have high charm as a duke, and then you would've won the gold medal in that event."

Kraugel asked Grid. Grid's answer was simple.

"I wanted to fight you again. This time, in equal conditions."

There was a reason Grid declared that 'South Korea' would win at least five gold medals in the press conference before the National Competition. He didn't mention six gold medals because he thought he would be defeated in PvP. That's right. Grid planned to participate in PvP from the beginning.

He intended to lead South Korea to the championship, win gold medals and receive big rewards.

"The fight with you is enough to sacrifice them."

Fighting with someone superior. Grid believed that this would be a stepping stone to help him grow leaps and bounds from the past. No, it didn't matter. Grid just wanted to compete with Kraugel.

"I am also dreaming high. How high is the sky that I am going to break?"

"..."

The flower of the National Competition, the PvP event. With hundreds of millions of viewers watching in real time, Grid and Kraugel faced each other on the stage.

“Waaaaaaaaah!”

“Grid! Grid!”

“The sky above the sky! The sky above the sky! The sky above the sky!”

The two people were driving the entire world into a crucible of excitement.

Chapter 448

“I will challenge the best, Kraugel.”

Grid’s eyes were burning with passion. Prior to victory and defeat, he was enjoying this moment.

Kraugel’s conscience was smashed.

‘I’m sorry.’

Grid didn’t know it, but he had already made an unfair deal with Lael.

‘I don’t deserve to answer your pure heart.’

Kkuok.

Kraugel’s face was disgusted and saddened as he formed a fist. Satisfy was no longer a game to him. He couldn’t enjoy it. It was merely a means of achieving his purpose. He felt ashamed and sorry towards the many players aiming for him, including Grid. But there was no reason to collapse from the guilt.

“...I will only fight to win.”

Kraugel swallowed down the poison in his heart. People didn’t noticed the shade that covered his face as he stepped onto the stage, each step with the hope of fixing his mother’s illness.

Except for one person.

“...”

A hospital on the outskirts of Moscow, Russia. Kraugel’s sick mother was lying in a room for a long time. She shed tears as she saw her son on the TV.

『 The lots will be drawn according to the country’s ranking. 』

Grid received the instructions of the host and was the first of 64 players to approach the glass barrel. Then he grabbed one of the colorful balls inside it without hesitation. He would drive away the bad luck that plagued him all his life! The host identified the number on the ball Grid picked up and shouted.

『 Number 32. Grid has been assigned the 32 group. The next person is Skull of the United States.』

『 Skull has been assigned number 12. 』

『 Kraugel’s turn is next. .』

A lot of attention! The viewers focused on the TV as Kraugel approached the glass barrel. Then...

『 Number 1! Kraugel is number 1! 』

『 Huhu, this is very dramatic. 』

『 Indeed. The best candidates to win, Grid and Kraugel, won't meet until the finals. 』

『 If the two players meet in the finals, won't the audience ratings exceed imagination? 』

『 Maybe most of the world's roads will be empty? 』

"Waaaaahhhh!"

The commentators were excited, while the audience and viewers were enthusiastic. The international broadcasters cheered. The biggest and best match was likely to happen, giving them record advertising rates! But the person who was even more joyful...

It was Grid.

'Yes!'

Grid inwardly cheered with delight. He couldn't believe that he wouldn't meet Kraugel until the finals and thought he had finally shaken off his bad luck. But he soon realized his mistake.

『 Hah... Another strong winning candidate, Hao of China, was assigned to group 32 with Grid. 』

『 It will be a fierce battle from the first round. 』

『 Chris, 3rd on the unified rankings, and Soul Predator Seuron will compete in the 31st group. 』

『 The winner will fight the winner of group 32. 』

『 Four winning candidates on one side of the draw... It's a complete group of death. 』

『 Hah, Damian has drawn number 29. 』

"..."

Grid couldn't shut his mouth as he saw the completed tournament table.

'No, does this make sense?'

Hao, Chris, Seuron, Pon, Regas, Damian, and Katz. The winning candidates were assigned close to Grid. Grid would have to fight someone strong in every match! Reaching the finals wouldn't be easy.

"...This is too mentally exhausting."

It was impossible to shake off his bad luck.

Grid shook as he once again realized it.

"Well, it's good to build up experience."

'This is an opportunity.'

The miracle of the continent, Hao. He had no doubt that Kraugel was the only one stronger than him and now he stared at Grid.

'I will break him.'

His strength would surely be proven and Kraugel would become aware of him. Hao burned with motivation as he looked between Kraugel and Grid.

'Kraugel, I will make you look at me.'

The only one Hao acknowledged as strong was Kraugel. Hao had always been conscious of Kraugel and aimed for him. He wanted to be recognized and appreciated by Kraugel. Grid was a good scapegoat for this.

'I will completely smash him.'

Hao promised. Lauel looked at Hao with a dark smile from where he was sitting on the stands.

"It doesn't look like Grid will be able to make the finals."

"Being matched with Hao in the first game..."

"Drawing the 32nd number and fighting four consecutive winning candidates, it's ridiculous."

"One moment of weakness will cause him to be eliminated."

"What is this table...?"

The expressions of the Korean people were dull. South Korea for number one! The dream that they would be able to see due to Grid was going to crumble!

"Isn't this manipulation?"

"It is 100% manipulated. Otherwise, it wouldn't be so hard for Grid alone."

"Look at Kraugel's path. Isn't his luck ridiculously good? The only one who can face Kraugel on that side is Skull."

"Bubat or Blood Carnival's Tarma were brilliant when they first appeared, but they died against Grid."

"Russia must've paid the organizers. They want to win."

The Korean people couldn't imagine. The reason why Grid's draw was the worst. It wasn't due to manipulation, but purely the result of Grid's bad luck.

'This worked out well.'

Tarma. Even the 2nd ranked user was assassinated by him. He had been ignored by people since dying to Grid, but he didn't care. No, he viewed the situation positively. It meant his assassination target, Kraugel, wouldn't be paying attention to him.

'A 10 billion won neck.'

He was confident.

Pisik!

Tarma smiled as he checked the tournament table. The 1st match of the round of 64. Kraugel vs Tarma.

"Kuk...! Kukukuk! Good, this is very good!"

The worst dark gamers group, Blood Carnival! Tarma would show his abilities that allowed him to be ranked in the top five! Tarma was filled with killing intent as he climbed onto the stage.

In the center of the huge stage, Kraugel was already waiting. His eyes were sunken as his black hair fluttered in the wind. Deep and dull eyes. His atmosphere seemed different from the past, but Tarma didn't care. The atmosphere meant nothing.

"The sky above the sky! The sky above the sky! The sky above the sky!"

The crowd yelled. No, the world didn't doubt Kraugel's victory and cheered enthusiastically for him. But Tarma wasn't shaken. Not only did the crowd's voices not enter the world of Satisfy, he was already accustomed to being blamed.

'Kraugel, I will knock you down.'

Then he would go to the finals and get revenge on Grid.

"Kilkil."

Tarma laughed before putting on a mask. This wasn't an ordinary mask, but an item that strengthened his Stealth skill. The host identified Kraugel and Tarma and shouted.

『 The 2nd National Competition's closing ceremony, the PvP event! This is now the first match! Start!! 』

The PvP had an environment where participants could fight at will. A flat and wide stage. The skill cooldowns and item durability would be reset at the end of each match. In the case of Grid's Assimilation, it was on cooldown before the match and didn't get the benefits of this system. In any case, the participants could do their best without worrying, allowing Tarma to open up his hidden power.

Pahat!

Tarma created shadows in all directions and hid himself in the shadows. The viewers were nervous when they saw him disappearing on stage.

『 Tarma's shadow technique has been invoked! 』

『Shadow hiding is easier to hide in than Stealth and the emergence area can't be predicted. 』

『 Viewers, please focus. Tarma will probably emerge soon from the shadows near Kraugel... 』

The commentators worked hard to explain the situation.

Puok!

Kraugel suddenly put his hand on the ground and said calmly.

"Heaven and Earth Rupture."

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

It was truly an overwhelming sight. A destructive power that couldn't be compared to an earthquake shattered the ground and sky with intense force.

"Kuaaaack!"

Tarma became wounded from the blast and emerged near Kraugel with a scream. But it was from Kraugel's rear side. In the midst of the terrible pain, he tried to stab Kraugel without losing his coolness. However, his powerful dagger with the additional PvP damage and poisoning option didn't reach Kraugel. Kraugel predicted how Tarma would respond with his natural acumen and sharp senses, easily avoiding it and striking back.

"Cough...!"

Tarma had his heart pierced by White Fang and realized it as he looked into Kraugel's hollow eyes.

'This man is a monster...!'

The only one worthy of being the first ranked user. The sky above the sky! Someone on an entirely different dimension from Zibal.

"The sky above the sky...!"

Dozens of shadows spread around the moaning Tarma, surrounding Kraugel. Who could've predicted that the shadows would be used as a direct means of attack? Tarma believed that Kraugel wouldn't be able to cope. In fact, Kraugel was upset by the number of Tarma's clones.

His intuition told him it would be dangerous to allow an attack. Thus, he used Super Sensitivity. He completely surpassed the human realm as he avoided Tarma's shadow attacks and struck Tarma.

『 Tarma! Logout! 』

The match was over in a flash. Some techniques might be very flashy, but they were also meaningless.

"...A scam."

"He's almost invincible."

The audience was startled. Super Sensitivity was a fraudulent scam that allowed Kraugel to have a 100% evasion rate and accuracy. It was amazing because no matter how many times they watched, they couldn't get a sense of Kraugel at all. It was the same with the PvP participants.

Apart from the few people called the winning candidates, the participants were very wary of Kraugel's Super Sensitivity. Then Grid...

"Hrmm."

He yawned with boredom. It seemed like he had no interest in this match in the first place. There was no proof that he recognized Tarma as someone strong just a few weeks ago.

Chapter 449

'He also used hiding as a means of attack when fighting against me. The specs are excellent. He can't escape from the innate limitations of an assassin?'

Surprisingly, Grid was appreciating this battle between Kraugel and Tarma. It was testament to the fact that Grid's thinking ability had evolved to another level after competition with the high rankers and elites during the National Competition.

'I don't know about assassination, but using stealth as a means of attack isn't advisable in an all-out war. It was obvious that the assassin would eventually reappear, and if they could predict where he would reappear depending on the situation, the strength of the hiding ability would become meaningless. It can be dealt with using a wide range attack.'

Tarma was a shadow assassin. Since he could use shadows as a means of attack and defense, it was better to leave it as a hidden card than to use it to attack. Just like the shadow assassin Grid once met in Winston. Wasn't he called the king of shadows, Kasim? He utilized not just his own shadow, but all the shadows from the NPCs around him.

'His ability to utilize stealth was also great...'

When he first heard the name 'King of Shadows,' he thought it was a bluff. Now that he thought about it, Kasim was a really strong man.

'...A named NPC.'

What if Kasim at that time had pointed a knife at him?

'There is a 100% probability I would've died. He didn't run away because he was afraid.'

He let Grid off. It was questionable.

'Why?'

Grid thought deeply, but he had no way of knowing the truth. That's right. Despite how high his stats and insight rose compared to the past, Grid still didn't know. The great king of shadows was guarding his son, Lord!

PvP.

The area of one-on-one matches where no one was allowed to intervene. Only an individual's ability controlled the game. The victors of PvP could enjoy the feelings of joy and pride, while the losers felt the shame of defeat. A scene where hearts intersected.

"Waaahhhhhhh!"

The crowd shouted loudly. The spectacular battles of the greatest representatives of each country was making the crowd excited.

"Hey, who is this? Isn't it the 3rd ranked user who ran away from me with his tail between his legs the other day?"

The 31st match that occurred after dozens of matches.

Chris vs Seuron. Two men who were the masters of one of the seven guilds stood on stage. Soul Predator Seuron started talking.

"Watching your weak self, I once again realized that the concept of ranking is pointless. Isn't that right? No matter how high your level, your skills are weak."

The meeting of the seven guilds that occurred a few months ago. Seuron and Chris had fought after an argument. The result was Seuron's one-sided victory. Chris was defeated without being about to strike back at Seuron. Was Seuron stronger than Chris?

No. It was because Chris hid his power. At the time, Chris had refused to join the alliance of guilds and they were suspicious that he was allied with Grid, leaving him isolated in the middle of enemy territory. He was in danger of being killed, and accepted the shameful defeat because of that.

But now the situation had changed. This was one-on-one, not the middle of enemy territory. No one could intervene in the battle.

"As you said, rankings aren't an absolute measure of strength. Otherwise, Zibal wouldn't be ranked second right now. However, I'm different."

"Kukk kuk, you have already been one-sidedly crushed by me. What are you going on about?"

"Then take a look."

Clink!

Chris pulled out Grid's Greatsword, which he used 1.2 billion won to strengthen to +9. The blue-black sword was covered in a white fog, looking overbearing, yet beautiful. Seuron frowned at the sight.

"You're using the same weapon as Grid! The rumor that you're allied with Grid is true!"

"Who says my weapon is the same as Grid's? It isn't. Isn't it completely different?"

Chris spoke a lie that seemed absurd. Seuron raised his voice.

"Nonsense! The greatsword you are holding right now looks exactly the same as Grid's greatsword! It is the same weapon!!"

Chris shrugged.

"It's different. Grid's Greatsword is only +8, while mine is +9."

"..."

Grid bowed his head with a grim expression as he watched the match from the standby seat.

"Hah."

Grid could only sigh. The legendary blacksmith, Pagma's Descendant, had a passive that increased the chances of item enhancement. Grid should have more highly enhanced items than anyone else. But Grid had only been able to enhance items up to +8 around 15 times. In particular, he only enhanced 3 items to +9.

Reaching the maximum enhancement that was +10? It was a product of his imagination.

"...There is no chance with my bad luck."

Grid couldn't lift his head because he was ashamed. The other players looked at him with sympathy, while Chris and Seuron pointed swords at each other.

"I will show you the power of a unique rated combat class!"

Seuron had already trampled on Chris once, but he couldn't help shouting angrily at Chris. On the other hand, Chris was calm.

"It's useless if you don't support your class with skills."

No more words were necessary.

Peeng!

The moment the host called the start of the match, Seuron used Soul Explosion as a driving force to narrow the distance between him and Chris. At the same time, his sword moved at a fast speed. The number of people who could react to Seuron's sudden attack could probably be counted on one hand.

But Chris was 3rd on the rankings. He didn't raise his level quickly because he got a special class optimized in hunting like Zibal. Chris was comparable to Kraugel, not Zibal. He was a man who came to his present position with his swordsmanship and skills!

Peeeeeeong!

"...!"

Seuron's eyes widened with surprise.

'He blocked it?'

Setting aside Grid, the majority of people who used greatswords had slow attack speeds. It was the same for Chris, who was at the peak of greatsword users. He distributed stats based on strength and stamina rather than agility, and the greatsword itself caused a decrease in attack speed.

But for Chris, the concept of attack speed was meaningless. He overcame the disadvantages by extracting maximum efficiency for minimal movements. It wasn't enough to stop Seuron's sword, so

once the two swords collided, Chris concentrated his strength and threw Seuron's body back before counterattacking.

'Using attack and defense at the same time...!'

Seuron was amazed as he summoned Soul Armor to minimize the damage caused by Chris' counterattack. Then he fired Soul Arrows.

Pepepepeong!

Using a ranged attack while moving backwards was a very effective way to keep an enemy in check. Especially if an attack motion wasn't used. Seuron's attack skills used souls, so he was able to use them without any motions and his casting time was also fast. This was the tremendous ability of a combat specific class!

"Hup!"

Chris couldn't catch up and stopped the Soul Arrows with his greatsword. Seuron secured the desired distance and used Soul Transformation to strengthen the Brutal Heavy Sword.

Wuuuung...

Just like Chris, the Brutal Heavy Sword had been enhanced to +9 and it was wrapped in a strong blue light. Then the light shot out.

Swaeeeeek!

Grid was convinced.

'It should unconditionally be avoided.'

It was a powerful attack where the damage couldn't be completely adsorbed, even if a tanker blocked with a shield. If Chris blocked with the greatsword, he would receive a heavy blow and his greatsword would be damaged. Grid would unconditionally avoid it instead of facing it head on. The attack was so sharp and quick that it would be hard to use Revolve.

But Chris thought differently. In the first place, for a greatsword user with low agility, avoiding was something they were bad at! He boldly gave up on defense and swung the greatsword to counterattack!

Seokeok!

Puok!

"Ack...!"

"Hup!"

Chris and Seuron groaned at the same time. However, the one who suffered greater damage was Chris. Chris' greatsword had struck Seuron's shoulder, while Seuron's sword was pushed deep into Chris' heart. At this moment, Seuron was sure of his victory.

He recovered his shield, summoned Soul Spear to block Chris' movements and cause additional damage, and tried to stab forward again. However, Chris' toughness was beyond imagination due to the unique

rated second class, Tyrant. He overcame the stiffness that occurred due to the deadly blow. Then he ignored the soul bombardment and sent more power into the hands gripping the greatsword.

Ttududuk!

"Kuaaaaak!"

Chris' greatsword dug further into Seuron's shoulder, causing him to scream and bend his knees. Due to this, the orbit of his sword was twisted and he couldn't reach Chris. The battlefield sharply tilted. Chris used the oppression of a Tyrant to deal a fatal combo. Seuron deployed Soul Prison to block Chris and try to fix the situation. However, his health quickly became depleted because of Chris' strong power.

『Victory! Chris!! 』

"Wahhhhh!"

"This is a high ranker!"

"Different from Zibal!"

The fierce battle heated up the atmosphere of the Stade de France.

『 Now! Let's introduce the players who will be fighting in the next round! 』

『 The miracle of the continent! The dragon of China! 'Genius at fighting' Hao!! 』

『 A monster who won four gold medals and raised South Korea to the top of the overall rankings! The first legendary class! Pagma's Descendant, Grid!! 』

"The protagonist appears."

Grid climbed up on stage. The beautiful sword Iyarugt dazzled the spectators as it scattered jewel-like blood red light. Hao declared in front of everyone.

"10 minutes. I will knock you down in 10 minutes."

Grid wanted to be the new sky? It wasn't even funny. Kraugel was the only sky and someday, Hao would break him.

Grid replied to Hao, who was burning with fighting spirit.

"I will take one hour. I will knock you out shortly before the time limit."

"...?"

Why did it feel like the two people had changed? Grid always took down his opponents in a short amount of time, so his declaration made the commentators and crowd feel bewildered.

Chapter 450

"I will take one hour. I will knock you out shortly before the time limit."

"...?"

It was strange since Grid always declared that he would suppress his enemies in an instant. The bewildered commentators and viewers realized at once.

‘Grid has a high appreciation for Hao’s skills.’

‘Indeed, it’s natural. Hao’s control skills have received the ultimate evaluation of society.’

Wasn’t he called the miracle of the continent, the genius of fighting?

‘He’s one of the people mentioned outside of Kraugel. Recently, Grid’s control skills have grown to be comparable to a high ranker, but it is still less than Hao’s.’

‘Moreover, Hao has a skill to take off weapons and armor. Grid’s biggest strength isn’t available against Hao.’

‘In other words, it’s the worst... Grid has no luck.’

People didn’t forget that Grid was a strong champion. But the word champion didn’t mean invincibility. Candidates for winning had their own weaknesses. Unfortunately, Hao was the counter for Grid. Grid was an unlucky person who met Hao in the first round. The viewers watched Grid with compassion, while Hao expressed his confidence.

"Do you think you can hold onto me for one hour? You will even knock me down? Don’t speak impossible words. You will soon realize the reality."

"Eh?"

Grid suddenly looked surprised at Hao’s provocative remark. He tried to make his eyes as big as possible, but his facial muscles seemed stiff.

‘What?’

Hao and the audience were confused by Grid’s surprised and awkward manner.

"Hey! Just released by the Comet Group! A diamond studded top of the line sound system installed on the capsule! Wonderful! I can clearly hear Hao’s voice and the sound of his breathing! It is just like talking in real life! Hey! This is amazing! I must buy it!"

"..."

Grid used PPL. He stuttered and blushed while shouting, but recited the script to the end. It was an image to show children and teenagers watching the National Competition how hard it was to make money.

"...Grabbing some advertising fees because it’s obvious you are going to lose."

Hao frowned. This shameful guy who only cared about money was going to beat Kraugel? Lauel’s crazy words circled around his brain, making Hao angry.

‘I will step on him.’

Hao also knew that Grid was strong. But it wasn’t at a level comparable to Kraugel or Hao. Hao was qualified to have such high pride. Who was Hao? In the past, he was the monster that tied up 15

members of Overgeared alone for 5 minutes. Lael had been amazed by his strength and wanted to recruit Hao.

“You absolutely can’t crack the sky. I will smash you before you reach the sky!”

Hao declared. Then...

『 The last match of the 1st round! Grid vs Hao, the match will start now! It has started! 』

The host shouted. That was the signal.

Taack!

Hao rushed as soon as the match started. He simply moved straight ahead, so it was easy for Grid to deal with. The Slaughterer’s Eye Patch, Iyarugt, and his high insight meant he could anticipate Hao’s point of attack and respond with Iyarugt. But at that moment, something amazing happened. Hao’s sword suddenly split into three!

‘What?’

Which of the three swords were real? Grid was confused.

Seokeok!

Hao’s sword slashed at Grid’s waist.

‘Unbelievable!’

Hao had a passive that ignored some of the opponent’s defense. Grid was amazed when he saw the rising notification window. Hao read his expression and smiled.

“It must be bad.”

“...”

Grid didn’t say anything. He just gazed at the notification windows in front of him. The shock was too great. Was it because the attack damage was too big? No.

[You have suffered 2,900 damage.]

3,000 damage. It was high, despite the fact that Triple Layers and his helmet reduced physical damage. However, this damage wasn’t enough to threaten Grid, whose health was as high as 70,000. To be honest, Grid could express it as a tickle. Why was Grid so surprised? There was a reason.

[The experience of Tiramet’s Belt has increased by 0.1%!]

‘Jackpot!’

Grid trembled with joy. The growth type item, Tiramet’s Belt. This epic rated item, which increased its experience whenever it was attacked, only increased by 0.1% whenever it was struck 100 times by a vampire. Yet Hao’s one attack raised the experience! It was comparable to when Grid fought the drake!

‘Doesn’t this mean that Hao’s attack power is high?’

Grid was thrilled by Hao's work. Maybe...

'I might be able to increase the rating of Tiramet's belt in this round!'

There were two main reasons why Grid planned to fight Hao for an hour. First of all, he wanted to buy as much time as possible for the cooldown of Assimilation to end. Secondly, he wanted to maximize the experience of Iyarugt, Elfin Stone's Ring, and Tiramet's Belt. But he had no idea the experience would increase so much.

'The class is different.'

Grid acknowledged it. This much experience hadn't accumulated when he allowed hits from Bondre and Alexander. Certainly, Hao seemed to be different from them. In fact, Iyarugt was also nervous. He spoke for the first time in ages since the Piaro and Kraugel duel.

[This person's attacks are very good. They are difficult to predict.]

'I feel it every time. You are really useless when fighting strong opponents.'

[Eek...! It can't be helped! I can't exert my power in this sealed form!]

Iyarugt had a strong pride as hell's best swordsman, so his sword kept emitting petals of a bloody light as he protested. The beautiful effect dazzled Hao and the viewers.

"That sword is too much for you."

"This guy is so cool because of me."

He invested a huge amount of money into the alchemy facilities, but the option that was added was 'Coolness.' Grid shuddered as he recalled the terrible result and said to Hao.

"How long are you going to rest? Come..."

Shortly before his words finished. Hao moved in a zigzag to approach Grid and stabbed. In contrast to the earlier attack, this path was simple and easily blocked by Grid.

Chaaeng!

The moment the two swords collided.

Chwaruruk!

Hao's chain wrapped around Grid's waist with the aim of temporarily stopping Grid's actions.

"...!"

The resistance to abnormal statuses didn't work with physical restraints. Grid's body was pulled forward and Hao stabbed with his sword. It was two attacks.

[You have suffered 2,830 damage.]

[You have suffered 2,910 damage.]

[The experience of Tiramet's Belt has increased by 0.2%!]

"Kuah! It's true."

It was good that his item experience was rising, but it was uncomfortable to be hit so one-sidedly. In addition, the accumulation of damage was burdensome.

'Very strong.'

The passive that ignored defense reduced the effect of Triple Layers. No, maybe Hao had a passive that dealt extra damage in PvP. Grid frowned as he released the chains and tried to counterattack. He launched a straight and narrow attack to prevent Hao from avoiding it. The sword with the shortest orbit threatened Hao, but he easily blocked it.

But there was a problem. It was Grid's ridiculously high strength.

Kkirik!Kkikikik!

'What is this...?'

Was this the feeling of being trampled on by an ogre? Grid's strong power started to crush Hao, who couldn't bear the weight of Iyarugt.

Chwaruruk!

Hao winced, stepped back and once again threw his chain. However, Grid had rich battle experience and was unlikely to be hit by the same pattern. The moment that Hao threw the chain, he narrowly moved to the left, avoiding the chain. At this point, Hao didn't try to hit back because he was off balance. This gave Grid the change to use Pagma's Swordsmanship, Kill.

'Let's increase Yakult's experience!'

Kuoooooh!

The extreme sword filled with killing intent! Hao gulped at the fearsome energy and hurriedly moved.

'I can't allow it to happen!'

Half draconian Hao didn't have too many active skills, but he had a variety of passive skills. Increase in PvP attack power and defense, ignore some of the target's defense, neutralize some of the damage received, fast recovery etc. It was easy to say that he had a body optimized for combat. In a battle between players, it was possible for him to deal more than 10,000 damage. Depending on the situation, he would deliberately allow the enemy to attack and then use it to counterattack.

However, Grid's attack power was too burdensome. Hao thought of other rankers dying in one blow and desperately moved his hands.

Teook!

It was perfect timing. Hao grabbed Iyarugt with his hand and twisted it slightly.

[Iyarugt has been unequipped!]

[This is the result of a skill. You won't lose ownership of the item. In 12 seconds, the item will return to your inventory.]

It was the usage of Weapon Shed. A secret technique that needed to be used at the perfect spot that was marked! It was a skill with the highest difficulty, much harder to use than a counterattack, and it made Iyarugt drop to the ground.

“Haaap!”

Hao used Dragon’s Breath and stabbed his sword at Grid’s heart. Grid was empty handed and couldn’t block the attack, but it was too fast to be avoided. Hao was convinced that he would deal a deadly blow to Grid.

‘It doesn’t matter if he uses the God Hands.’

Hao was ready to throw chains to constrain them. In this situation, the only way for Grid to resist was with Magic Missile. Hao just needed to avoid that and...

“What?”

Hao, who was smiling confidently, became shocked.

Jeeeong!

What gap did he pull it out of? Grid equipped himself with a blue black sword in lieu of the lost Iyarugt. The camera zoomed in on Hao’s shaky gaze as the attack was blocked.