

Overgeared 821

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The bones were the last bastion of an animal. The skin might be easily damaged by sharpness, but the bones were resistant. However, Overgeared Skeleton One destroyed the bone itself. It was a reaper.

'I need to make a rapier-type weapon suitable for it!'

Grid's eyes were full of affection as he looked at Overgeared Skeleton One, who disabled the bear-wolf that even threatened the elves. The affection Grid displayed was enough to make Noe feel jealous.

"Bah, I don't like skeletons. They can't compare to the best demonic beast of hell."

"Of course."

After all, his affection for Noe was already close to infinity! Grid stroked Noe's fur while trying hard to calm his heart.

'Permanent debuffs...!'

The system clearly said so. Overgeared Skeleton One paralyzed the bear-wolf by destroying the bones of its lower body. The reason was obvious. How could it move with broken bones?

'This is on the level of a scam.'

Of course, recovery wasn't impossible. It was a condition that could be restored immediately with a skill like Bone Sticking. However, how many monsters would have a skill like that? Boss monsters could restore broken bones when recovering, but regular monsters couldn't escape the Overgeared Skeletons. The players were also similar.

'Broken bone' wasn't a common condition, so the number of players who could endure their bones breaking was surprisingly small. Given that damaged bones cost 100 gold to restore, the use of Bone Cracking alone could cause serious damage.

'Well... the heals of a priest can restore it. So, this isn't a problem to worry about.'

Did Grid need help from Overgeared Skeleton One to deal with ordinary monsters and players? No, Grid alone could handle them. Overgeared Skeleton One was only worthy when going against a more transcendent being. For example...

'Agnus!' Grid thought of the mad dog. Agnus, Baal's Contractor, was a sun-grade player who pretended to be the king of the living and the dead, and had a large number of liches and death knights. Like Grid, Agnus far transcended the category of a player and was one of the few opponents who could cause Grid to tense up. Grid had felt both regret and relief when he hadn't met Agnus while hunting Immortal in the empire. Now, he would no longer feel any fear as long as he had Overgeared Skeleton One!

'Agnus, where are you hiding now?' Grid's anger toward Agnus, the head of Immortal and the source of Khan's death, revived again. The eternal war between Grid and Immortal had yet to end.

The Overgeared Skeletons continued hunting the bear-wolves. Of course, the speed of the hunt wasn't very different from before. Overgeared Skeleton One's Bone Cracking skill only had a low chance of activating. So, it was very rare for the Overgeared Skeletons to deal a fatal blow to the bear-wolves.

However, Grid wasn't worried. He had no doubt that the Overgeared Skeletons' level and skill levels would rise quickly with Mercedes as a bus.

'I have to give a reward to the bus driver.'

Before he knew it, the portable furnace reached the temperature he wanted. What material should he make Mercedes' armor out of...? Fortunately, there was no need for Grid to fret about that as he had the items he acquired when he went to support Valhalla!

[Red Knights' Red Armor]

[Rating: Unique

Durability: 599/599 Defense: 501

* Strength increased by 20%.

* Two of the wearer's highest stats will increase by 10%. If strength or intelligence increases at this time, there will be 200 additional attack power. Physical defense will increase by 200. An increase in agility will raise accuracy and evasion by 10%.

* Increases magic resistance in proportion to the wearer's intelligence.

* The wearer's highest level skill will increase by 20%.

* The cooldown of the wearer's two lowest level skills will decrease by 10%.

* Durability and defense will slightly increase when the wearer's level increases. However, this number is reset when the wearer changes.

* Unlocks a unique characteristic every time the level increases by 100. This characteristic is permanently maintained.

A heavy armor made of black mithril filled with the red energy of the Saharan emperor, ogre bones and rosar tin.

It increases the armor and strength of the wearer, as well as enhancing their unique ability.

As an armor given to the Red Knights ranging from 10-30, it is a treasure worthy of stimulating the Red Knights.

Weight: 1,000

Conditions of Use: A Red Knight.]

[Lorex's Red Armor]

[Rating: Legendary

Durability: 599/599 Defense: 501

- * Strength increased by 20%.
- * Two of the wearer's highest stats will increase by 10%. If strength or intelligence increases at this time, there will be 200 additional attack power. Physical defense will increase by 200. An increase in agility will raise accuracy and evasion by 10%.
- * Increases magic resistance in proportion to the wearer's intelligence.
- * The wearer's highest level skill will increase by 20%.
- * The cooldown of the wearer's two lowest level skills will decrease by 10%.
- * The power of all wide-range skills is increased by 20%.
- * When a large weapon is equipped, attack power will increase by 10% and attack speed will increase by 5%.
- * Durability and defense will slightly increase when the wearer's level increases. However, this number is reset when the wearer changes.
- * Unlocks a unique characteristic every time the level increases by 100. This characteristic is permanently maintained.

Red armor that has grown with Third Knight Lorex.

After Lorex's death, the growth figures for the durability and defense were reset. However, the other unique characteristics remain. The new Red Knight who inherits this armor will become stronger over time.

Weight: 1,000

Conditions of Use: A Red Knight.]

[Lorex's Large Axe]

[Durability: 1,000/1,000

Attack Power: 1,200~1,500

* 20% drop in attack speed.

* When attacking more than 10 enemies at once, weapon damage will increase by 3% for 10 seconds. This effect will accumulate up to 30%, and the duration is reset whenever a damage boost occurs.

* Every time more than 10 enemies are attacked at once, 5,000 health will be recovered.

A special axe made out of rosar tin, produced for Lorex due to his distinguished military service.

The more enemies the wearer faces, the more powerful they become.

Weight: 5,900

Conditions of Use: Lorex]

This was the list of items he had gotten from slaughtering Lorex and the Red Knights back when he became the Basic Attack King.

Grid's knowledge of these items were 100% due to constantly disassembling, assembling, and repairing them. However, he hadn't used them directly. He might be able to exert a high level of attack power if he used the armor, but its inherent defense was too low. Grid didn't regret this since he aimed for greater attack power with his swords. He would prefer the guaranteed high defense of Triple Layers over the red armor.

Mercedes was in a different position. As a legendary knight, she received a correction effect when wearing heavy armor. Rather than make something like Triple Layers which was classified as chain mail, it was better to boost her potential with the red armor.

'Moreover, Mercedes is familiar with the red armor since she has been using it until now.'

This was truly a big issue. Wouldn't Mercedes' red armor clearly be better than Lorex's red armor? It would've been perfect if she hadn't returned it to the empire...

'I don't know if the emperor is generous or stingy. If he is going to give her to me, he should give everything.' Grid thought too much!

He planned to recreate the red armor and axe all in one order. The higher the content of the ore, the higher the durability and defense of the armor would be. Of course, there was the problem of the increased weight. However, considering Mercedes' fighting method, it should be okay.

'Mercedes' battle style is similar to mine.'

Rather than avoiding the target's attack, she defended and fought back. Mercedes relied on weight for her sword attacks instead of speed. As such, Grid decided that Mercedes' armor should be in a form that could protect all of her without any gaps, even if her agility was somewhat limited.

The Overgeared King—a man who had skills that even the gods admired—started concentrating deeply.

The two sets of red armor and the large axe had already melted in the blast furnace.

"Let's start the production."

Inside the elven forest that humans hadn't entered for hundreds of years:

Kyak kyak! Skeletons were laughing as the cries of bear-wolves were continuing unabated...

"Vaintz' Swordsmanship 1st style!" The legendary knight was fighting...

"Hahaha! The air is clear!!" The legendary farmer was pruning branches...

Ttang!Ttang!Ttang! And the legendary blacksmith was hammering away.

It was an unusual sight that no one would believe.

"Why did the ward disappear?"

A group of people was entering the forest of the world tree. It was Merchant King Kir and his subordinates. The weighed-down donkeys and carriages made them seem like an ordinary merchant group, but that wasn't the truth. Among these hundreds of people, Kir was the only one classified as a merchant.

Kir spoke to the person who asked about the fully exposed forest, "They probably removed the ward because they knew it was time for me to come back. The stupid naive elves trust me completely."

Approximately 10 days ago, Kir had managed to infiltrate the elves' village thanks to his successful act, and he poured the Yatan Essence on the world tree. When the elves witnessed the sudden illness of the world tree, Kir turned the cause of the illness onto the other humans and declared he would retrieve healing medicine for the world tree.

Today was the day he had promised to come back, and it was currently at the three-hour mark before the Yatan Essence would lose its effect. Kir returned to the world tree. He was very excited about being able to exchange the elves' treasures for the fake medicine.

"What about after you get what you want?"

"The elves specialties are the branches, leaves, and fruit of the world tree. If they don't give all of it... Then isn't there only one choice?"

"Huhuhu, that is good news."

Kir smiled wickedly and disappeared deep into the forest with his procession.

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The shape of the red armor in the furnace was relatively intact, while the large axe started to melt as the melting point of the rosar tin was reached.

'Just a little bit more.' Grid gazed at the furnace, not even blinking because he was afraid he might lose the timing.

'Now!' He grasped the moment when the big axe was melted down and the shoulders and waist of the red armor started distorting. His tongs went into the blast furnace as the generated heat withered the grass and flowers around it.

"The precious flowers..." Some elves made a pained expression. Originally, elves hated human technology because most of the human technology that humans boasted about were damaging to nature.

Piaro came down from the 1,753rd tree and spoke some nonsense, "We humans are a weak species, unlike you. We can't survive naked like you and have to depend on technology. It is also nature's providence. Try to understand humans rather than hate us unconditionally."

"Nonsense," the elves expressed their resistance despite their affinity with Piaro. "Human technology evolved just for humans to survive? No, that isn't it. Didn't human technology progress to take away things from others and gain what they desire? We hate humans because they are fundamentally greedy. Their greed isn't the providence of nature. It opposes providence. You are speaking nonsense."

“Haha...” Piaro was forced to laugh bitterly as there was nothing wrong with the elves’ words. After all, Piaro had also lived a life of stealing from others and trampling on them. “I see. It was also greedy of me to ask you to understand us.”

“But...”

“Um...?”

“We also know that there are friendly humans. Like our young friend who is coming soon... I think we can trust a small number of humans.”

Beniyaru knew that Grid, Mercedes, and Piaro could hurt all the elves currently present. However, they didn’t hurt the elves. Despite the fact that the elves could have killed them, they forgave the elves. They were quite different from the old humans who had burned the elves’ wild land with their dirty desires, wanting the youth and beauty of the elves.

“Well... there are many types of people in this world. We might meet many people like you in the future. However, I wasn’t expecting much. We don’t have the capacity to deal with all the treachery and suffering we will face until we meet people like you.”

The events were hundreds of years old, but the wounds that humans had dealt to the elves were still prominent. They were still sore and painful. As such, the elves didn’t want to understand humans or to be understood by humans.

Ttang!Ttang!Ttang!

As darkness started to fall on the forest of the world tree, Grid’s hammering was the only thing heard in the awkward silence.

The sounds of Mercedes, Randy, and the Overgeared Skeletons fighting the bear-wolves served as background noise. However, it currently wasn’t as fierce as the first battle because there were only two bear-wolves. Once night approached, no more new bear-wolves appeared.

Beniyaru explained to the puzzled Mercedes, “The bear-wolves are weak at night. They fall asleep as soon as the sun sinks, and new bear-wolves won’t emerge again until dawn.”

“I’m glad.” The legendary knight was relieved. The continuous battle with the bear-wolves was a challenge for Mercedes. On the other hand, the Overgeared Skeletons were disappointed. Their eyes were like ‘△ △’ as they looked at the bear-wolves and stabbed. They were eager to continue fighting. After all, they were undead and didn’t have any restrictions on stamina, unlike living creatures.

‘Good!’ Meanwhile, Grid smiled brightly as he placed the two sets of red armor on the anvil and starting hammering. He succeeded in completely separating the black mithril from the ogre bones and the rosar tin, and the black iron plate flashed red. The raw material which made up the inner iron plates of the red armor was black mithril. A skilled craftsman had processed it into a fine form, but it wasn’t perfect.

Grid placed the iron plates on the anvil and started the full-scale tempering and forging.

Ttang!Ttang!

‘I can’t lose the unique characteristics of the red armor by damaging the red energy.’

The iron plates should be further strengthened and shaped to the ideal form. Grid thought this as he hammered repeatedly at constant intervals. Tens of minutes and then hours went by.

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

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

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

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Breath has been...]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Breath has risen to Lv. 7!]

.....

.....

Grid received a compensation effect comparable to when he produced the Enlightenment Sword. It wasn't an effect that could be achieved simply by raising his concentration. He also had to be lucky.

'Good!'

This was the best start. Grid was filled with joy as his concentration heightened.

[

The black mithril is filled with your fighting energy.]

"...!!" Grid's fighting energy had been kept at the maximum thanks to Mercedes, Piaro, and Beniyaru. Grid injected the solemn red and purple aura fiercely into the black mithril. This was the moment when the true value of the black mithril's characteristic of having 'a high affinity with any form of energy' was revealed. Now, the iron plate made of black mithril was blinking purple as well as red.

'Maybe?'

Would something beyond his expectations be born?

Ttang!Ttang!Ttang...His hammering became stronger as Grid entered a state of nothingness.

'Is that a human?'The elves' eyes were wide open as they watched Grid work steadily. They were amazed by Grid's dexterity and focused concentration. In particular, Beniyaru was greatly shocked. 'How can a human...?'

To think that Grid was able to enter a higher spiritual realm than the elves who had lived for hundreds of years and received the protection of nature and the elementals...?It was an area that couldn't be seen even by the 12 Te.

'No, won't it be difficult even for a high elf?'

What type of life had this human lived?How could he achieve this level in just decades?Beniyaru couldn't imagine it. Having been trapped in this forest due to old wounds, it was impossible for her to gauge the lives of the heroes living in the present.

Kyak kyak!

The last two remaining bear-wolves were hunted. Then suddenly, the Overgeared Skeletons that were sitting like puppies next to Grid came forward. They picked a flat rock and started to hit it with their swords. The Overgeared Skeletons seemed to be copying Grid's hammering.

"How lovely."

"Haha, these guys want to learn from their master."

Mercedes and Piaro watched the Overgeared Skeletons with warm smiles. The skeletons looked cute as they tried to copy their master. However, this was a desperate situation for Grid. If he hadn't entered this trance state... he would probably be yelling at the Overgeared Skeletons to stop once he realized that they were copying him. He didn't want to see 'blacksmith' appear in the list of second class advancement for the Overgeared Skeletons... But what could he do? The water had already been spilled.

The Overgeared Skeletons copied Grid's hammering, and their posture soon started to resemble his.

.....

The Overgeared Skeletons were silent for once. Now that they became accustomed to the blacksmithing itself, they were learning Grid's 'focus.'

[Overgeared Skeleton One has acquired the skill 'Skeleton's Patience'.]

[Overgeared Skeleton Two has acquired the skill 'Skeleton's Patience'.]

These notification windows passed through Grid's vision.

Ttang!

Ttang!

'Okay. A bit more, a bit more...!' Grid wasn't aware of them since he was busy hammering the black mithril filled with fighting energy. Meanwhile, an elf approached Beniyaru and whispered, "Kir has arrived at the village."

"Finally...!"

The world tree's illness could be cured! The excited Beniyaru told Piaro, "We have to go back to the village for a while. Will you come with me? I will set aside a place for you to take a break."

"I will stay here."

"Why? It is late at night. There is a possibility that ancient species more threatening than the bear-wolf will show up. It could be dangerous for you."

"I can't interfere with Master's work. I will stay here with him."

"...It seems like his work will continue until dawn."

"No, it could take a few days. But what does it matter?" Piaro would continue to protect Grid for one hundred years, one thousand years. After speaking, he looked at Mercedes. "Take a break."

"Then please excuse me. I will take the dawn shift."

She was once again standing vigil with Piaro...Mercedes was reminded of her training days and became cheerful. After the elves left, Noe and Randy fell asleep. Meanwhile, Piaro and Mercedes slept in shifts as Grid's work continued.

"Ohh...!"

In the elves' village, the elves' faces turned rosy as they gathered under the world tree—the ancient tree that sustained the world. It was because the world tree completely regained its health five minutes after Kir sprinkled on it some water, which he claimed was the only holy water that could cure the world tree.

Well, it was funny to say that the world tree had been in a bad state in the first place. After all, only a few leaves had turned yellow. However, when those few leaves became brighter again, it made Kir's claim of holy water seem real.

"Is it Goddess Rebecca's holy water?"

Elves didn't worship gods. The world tree was the only existence they regarded as great and precious. That didn't mean they denied the existence of the gods. In particular, they had a great liking for Rebecca, the goddess of light. As Kir explained to the questioning elves, his good appearance, soft voice, and smile gave them confidence.

'Talking with a merchant will make you bewitched.' One of the famous laws of Satisfy was being fully manifested at this moment.

"That's right. I rushed to the Vatican and poured out my life savings as a donation."

"Doing all of this for us..."

"You are my saviors. I will do anything for you. Now, everyone."

Kir felt the elves' attention focused on him. Were there no male elves today? How come men didn't show up last time either? Kir had these questions in mind as he brought a carriage full of jars toward the elves.

"I still have a lot of holy water left. Taking it will help your health. Please share a toast with me. Shouldn't we celebrate the recovery of the world tree?"

"Okay. Let's make a toast."

The elves' health wasn't a concern like it was for humans. Unlike humans, elves lived for a long time and maintained their youth. In that case, why should they drink the goddess' holy water? Some of the elves thought of this question, but there was no room for them to think about it.

Adept at leading the atmosphere, Kir had already gotten all the elves to hold glasses in their hands.

"To the eternal health of the world tree."

Kir drank the holy water, and most of the elves followed, causing all of them to get poisoned and experience a terrible pain. This was the moment when the merchant Kir, who had dealings with the Yatan Servants, showed off the power of the Yatan Essence he had secured in large quantities.

“Kukuk! Kukukuk! Kuhahahahat! Is there anything in the world as easy as deceiving old people who don’t know the world?”

Kir’s nice smile had disappeared. Instead, his evil laughter and the screams of the elves, who were now caught by his men, enveloped the village.

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Ttang...Ttang...Ttang...Amidst the smoky gray of dawn, a hammering sound rang out in the serene forest.

‘It isn’t a matter to worry about.’ Mercedes shook her head in an effort to shake off her thoughts as she watched Grid sweat at dawn.

Why did Grid have Lorex’s axe?Who dropped these sets of armor?

Yesterday, Mercedes witnessed Grid putting the red armor and the big axe into the furnace, and her imagination ran wild. The feelings in her heart became complicated. However, Mercedes knew that the doubts and anxiety stirring her mind were nothing.After all, the worst things she could imagine had all happened in the past.

Indeed, she wasn’t in a position to feel angry or betrayed even if Grid turned out to be the Undefeated King’s descendant, who had slaughtered the Red Knights during the war between the empire and Valhalla.

‘The empire is a potential enemy of the Overgeared Kingdom.’

After all, the empire had the greatest potential to threaten the survival of the Overgeared Kingdom.It was the same even now.Mercedes couldn’t blame Grid for his activities which caused enormous damage to the empire. From Grid’s perspective, they were natural actions. Even if he did deserve to be blamed for it, Mercedes was now Grid’s knight. She had to understand and embrace Grid’s past, rather than hold it against him.

There was only one regrettable thing.

‘If Lorex had known about the relationship between Grid and Piaro...’

Lorex might not have died. Maybe he would be serving Grid by Mercedes’ side right now. Of course, this theory was meaningless. There were no if’s in history.

‘...It isn’t a problem to raise a fuss about.’

Mercedes was trying to control her heart when her ears heard something.It was a strange sound that came from nearby.

‘What?’

Was it because she was too immersed in her thoughts? It was shameful that she had allowed something to approach in this empty area. The frustrated Mercedes jumped up while rotating at the same time, with her hand holding a sword naturally.Then her sword hit a solid barrier, and a sharp metallic sound entered Mercedes’ ears.

Sensing the turmoil, Piaro immediately rose from his seat and was startled as he witnessed the sight before him. A huge cave cricket the size of a house was attacking Mercedes.

It belonged to an ancient species, creatures that had existed since the beginning. Having lost their homes as human societies developed and expanded, they had long since disappeared from the history of humanity. However, they were alive in the world tree's forest.

"Urgh!" Mercedes was on the defensive.

The creature had a total of eight legs. Two of them were relatively short front legs, and there were four sharp side legs that were used as a shield and weapon. This gave the creature a combat style that was beyond human comprehension. The hunting instincts imprinted on the organism that had survived for tens of thousands of years were beyond measure.

In the end, Mercedes spread her silver wings and flew into the air in an attempt to free herself from the attacks of the cave cricket. However, the cave cricket's long and resilient antennae detected Mercedes' movements in real time. The cave cricket raised its legs and hit Mercedes, causing her to cough up blood as she was blown away.

"Ku...ock!"

How could a noble knight possibly be hit by an insect?

However, Mercedes didn't have such arrogant thoughts. After all, the giant cave cricket was a monster that couldn't be defined as an insect.

Its outer shell was harder than a wyvern's scales, and its strength was higher than that of the bear-wolves in the daytime. Furthermore, its irregular attacks were hard to figure out. Therefore, the difficulty of this confrontation felt like it was on a higher ground. Mercedes wasn't dealing with an enemy that acted thoughtlessly based on instincts.

The ground began to sink. It was a phenomenon caused by the giant cave cricket bending its hind legs. As this continued on, the ground caved in around the place where the cave cricket was bending down. However, at this point, the cave cricket had already jumped high into the sky.

"Mercedes! Wake up!"

What was this giant leap? Mercedes was staring blankly at the cave cricket high in the sky when Piaro's shouts entered her ears.

"Growth!"

The trees that Piaro had been pruning for a day grew rapidly. The branches which had been cut off were restored and covered with lush leaves. Thanks to the sudden growth of the huge trees, the cave cricket couldn't land on the ground and struggled among the trees. The giant branches were cut off by the front and side legs of the cave cricket and trampled on by its hind legs.

Mercedes quickly recovered from her blank state and focused sword energy on her swords, covering them with a white light that shook off the darkness. Meanwhile, Piaro was using Pounding Mortar without hesitation. Simultaneously, a huge object fell from the sky and landed on the body of the cave cricket.

“Pledge Sword!” Mercedes then rushed forward with her silver wings and stabbed the cave cricket’s bulging belly several times. It was a collaboration of two legends who had past experiences of destroying great demons.

However...

“Uh!”

“Ha!”

Their combined power wasn’t enough to destroy the cave cricket. The cave cricket’s weakness was that it was only active at night. Nevertheless, the strength of the cave cricket that had reigned as a supreme predator since the beginning was comparable to a monarch of hell.

“This thing...” Mercedes was stunned for a moment when she noticed the corpses of dozens of bear-wolves beyond the large trees that had been cut down due to the struggle. That was the cave cricket’s trail, and now it was planning to feast on the small and adorable creatures called ‘humans.’

As soon as she grasped the cave cricket’s pure desire, Mercedes’ insight started to detect its movements little by little. Piaro also thought of methods to deal with it. “Please restrain its actions fully. I have to clear a large field. Buy time for me while I am farming.”

“Understood!” Mercedes responded vigorously while avoiding the frontal attack of the cave cricket. The ground shook every time the cave cricket’s front legs struck it.

Meanwhile, the rock where Grid, the anvil, and the portable furnace were located shook like it was going to collapse. Nevertheless, Grid was solely focused on his work. From the moment of the cave cricket’s emergence to the present, he hadn’t shown a moment of agitation.

It might be an exaggeration to say that he didn’t seem aware of the battle taking place. However, the amazing thing was that it wasn’t an exaggeration. Grid was in a world of his own, one which consisted of him, his hammer, the anvil, the fire, and the metal.

‘I feel it.’

The ogre bones were tempered into their ideal form, and all their potential power was pulled out, causing the black mithril’s fighting energy to surge in response. Meanwhile, the rosar tin calmed down the ogre bones and the black mithril.

Ttang!Ttang!Ttang! Grid’s hammering became more delicate as his concentration rose endlessly. The constant reoccurring effects of the Blacksmith’s Patience and Blacksmith’s Breath made Grid and the metal extremely robust. Finally...

‘Now!’

Grid saw the end.

[You have completed the item production!]

[The blacksmith god is very surprised. He says that his skill has once again been overtaken by a human.]

[The other gods are laughing at the nervousness of the blacksmith god.]

[Affinity with the blacksmith god has decreased by 1.]

[If affinity with the blacksmith god reaches -10, any items made (above legendary rating) will be cursed.]

[Current affinity with the blacksmith god is -2.]

The full plate armor, which could look red or purple depending on the refraction of light, was completed. Its name was Hero King's Armor.

Mercedes' swords were burning with a silver flame-like energy. She couldn't afford to hold back her strength in front of an ancient predator that couldn't be included in any category with a human's common sense.

The cave cricket fought with sheer force. With the transcendent leap from those hind legs and the strength of a mountain, the fast and irregular attacks from the hard but flexible front legs, and the antennae and side legs that removed any blind spots...The cave cricket was like a creature born for battle, while Mercedes was a small soldier striking against an impregnable fortress.

The difference in power was great. Mercedes' body was wounded as she confronted the cave cricket with White Tiger's Attitude. Meanwhile, Piaro was still farming. 'Just a little longer!'

He needed to perfectly restrain the cave cricket in order to beat it. Having made this judgment, Piaro spent a great deal of time clearing the field and using Free Farming. Mercedes only needed to hold on for three more minutes. No, he prayed earnestly that she could hold on for two more minutes.

However, in Mercedes' eyes, two minutes seemed like an eternity. Her White Tiger's Attitude collapsed when the cave cricket's side legs, which had been used for defense, suddenly switched to offense. They breached Mercedes' defense perfectly and stabbed her in the sides.

As Grid was making her a new set of armor, Mercedes' leather armor hadn't been repaired. Therefore, it hadn't been working properly from the very beginning. It wasn't a set of armor but a rag.

Mercedes shook as the cave cricket's four side legs and two front legs poured down toward her like rain. Cracks started to form on the silver wings wrapped around Mercedes' body. Dozens of sharp hooks at the tips of the cave cricket's legs broke through and tore at the surface of the silver wings.

Although Mercedes endured it, she couldn't shake off the despair in her heart. 'How fleeting is my existence?'

She had worshipped heroes and trained for all her life. Praised as the strongest knight on the continent, she had eventually become a legendary knight. However, it would all be in vain in the end. The legend of humanity was just prey for an ancient species. The passing years, the resolutions in her heart, and her hopes for the future were all wishful thinking.

'I'm sorry.'

In the end, her silver wings fell down like glass. Amidst the glittering remnants, Mercedes held onto the White Tiger's Sword. The last mission on her mind was to protect her master's treasure. In order to buy some more time, Mercedes' blue hair gradually turned white as she wrapped sword energy around the

sword. The white hair was like shimmering moonlight, and Mercedes boasted a radiant beauty in her last moments.

Then the cave cricket's front legs flew toward Mercedes' small face.

"XX monster," rough cursing that Mercedes was hearing for the first time filled the air. "Why is an insect as strong as a great demon?"

It was Grid. He wore Lantier's Cloak, which was strong against physical attacks, and used Revolve on the cave cricket. Then he handed armor to Mercedes. "Put it on. From now on, you'll be able to exert your real skills."

There was a wide smile on Grid's face. It was because the name of the cave cricket before him was flashing gold! Grid was expecting a huge reward now.

"Noe! Randy! C-Can you Become the King of the Dead?"

"Nyang!"

Kyak kyak! Kya kya kyak!

Grid's party appeared in full swing in the field that Piaro was clearing.

Simultaneously, at the operations team at the S.A Group's headquarters:

"Maybe he will hunt it?"

"...It is crazy. Really crazy."

Yoon Nahee and the operations team monitoring the dozens of monitors in real time quietly blurted out these lines.

The giant cave cricket was a disaster-type monster that was supposed to play a role in reducing the number of elves along with the launch of the multiple species episode. However, it couldn't play its role due to the variables of Overgeared King Grid and Merchant King Kir.

In the end, it had become a raid target. Mercedes' presence was too big. No matter how legendary a knight she was, for her to be able to fight against the cave cricket...

'In this situation, if Grid meets Kir...'

Grid's nature meant he might rescue the elves and maintain their numbers. In that case, the dark elves episode was likely to be lost.

'The survivors of the 12 Te were going to fall under the temptation of Yatan to balance the power...'

How many times had this happened? It was difficult to remember how many times the scheduled story had been changed by a player.

"Will it be okay?" Yoon Nahee let out a laugh at her team's worries. "Have you forgotten the chairman's message? Satisfy is a world where the history is made by players. We don't have to feel concerned over this."

Yes, they could only silently watch. Who would become the final winner of this long history?

[Chapter 824](#)

‘This is a monster I’m not meant to catch.’ Grid noticed it the moment he faced the giant cave cricket.

It had a disgusting appearance that couldn’t be endured by ordinary people, and it didn’t fall down despite being hit by two legendary NPCs. The cave cricket was at a level that players couldn’t reach. Once he combined all these factors, Grid knew the giant cave cricket wasn’t meant for players. There were no chances of winning if a player met this monster.

‘I’m certain. A normal person will be stunned just by looking at it.’

It was a super large version of a cave cricket. Grid thought about its eyes, stretched-out snout, long whiskers, bent antennae, translucent skin, and so on... These were features that were hard for humans to accept. It felt like a few people would faint when they saw the giant cave cricket and then try to sue the S.A Group.

Additionally, there was clear proof that the giant cave cricket was a monster not scheduled to meet players.

‘It appears to be an event monster related to a specific story.’

Grid had been playing Satisfy since the open beta test. Unlike the talented people in the game, he had experienced rock bottom. He didn’t have regular experiences, and it wasn’t difficult for him to understand the nature of certain monsters.

Behind Grid, Mercedes was changing into the new set of armor, and the leather armor she had been wearing since she left the empire fell to the ground. That was when Grid confirmed the information of the leather armor.

[Old Leather Armor]

[Durability: 15/140 Defense: 60

-The armor that Legendary Knight Mercedes wore during her days as Piaro’s aide. The performance of the armor isn’t bad, but it has long lost its original function because it can’t withstand the long years that have passed.

Weight: 290

User Restriction: Level 180 or higher.]

“Wow...” Grid was appalled. He had analyzed Mercedes’ worn equipment with a Legendary Blacksmith’s Eyes and thought it should have a level limitation of 200. However, he had no idea that the performance of the armor was such garbage. The usage condition was level 180, but the leather armor’s actual performance was like a set of level 20 armor.

“Fighting with something like this... Heok.” Grid turned his gaze toward Mercedes, only to close his eyes with horror. It was because he’d caught a peek at Mercedes’ body as she just started wearing the red

and purple full plate armor. Grid blushed while Mercedes was casual about showing her naked body. She wasn't embarrassed since this was the process that a knight used to wear equipment.

"It is shameful to blame the equipment." There was a determined expression on Mercedes' face as she adjusted the hinges of the armor. "However, I changed my mind since using the sword that I borrowed from Your Majesty."

The more formidable the equipment, the higher the strength would be. It was an undeniable truth. The newly enlightened Mercedes made a new chivalric code, "Overgeared... Is that what you called it? In the future, I will also be overgeared."

It happened at this moment.

[Legendary Knight Mercedes has created a new chivalric code.]

[Legendary Knight Mercedes' stats have increased by 10%. Every time she wears a high rated item, she will receive a compensation effect.]

[If the legendary knight Mercedes wears epic rated items, she will receive an additional 5% increase in the item stats (apart from the options). If she wears unique rated items, she will receive an additional 7% increase in the item stats (apart from the options). If she wears legendary rated items, she will receive an additional 10% increase in the item stats (apart from the options). If she wears myth rated items, she will receive an additional 20% increase in the item stats (apart from the options).]

[The legendary knight Mercedes has equipped the Hero King's Armor.]

[Due to the class bonus of wearing heavy armor, there is a 20% increase in defense.]

[A myth rated item has been worn. The stats of the Hero King's Armor that Mercedes is wearing have increased by 20%.]

"What?" Grid's eyes grew bigger and twitched as he realized the unique nature of a legendary knight's chivalric code was more than he'd imagined. In awe of Mercedes, Grid felt a greater liking toward her.

'Pagma's Descendant in the future...'

Grid was well aware of the fraudulent nature of Item Creation. He could mass produce a large number of high rated items. However, Grid's own stats didn't increase when he used Item Creation. On the other hand, Mercedes had overwhelming growth every time she made a chivalric code, while Sword Saint Kraugel was able to build his own skills based on Swordsmanship Creation.

It was evident that the attack power of Pagma's Descendant would fall over time compared to other classes. Just as Grid was feeling frustrated, a voice entered his ears.

"My strength is Master's strength." It was Mercedes' soft voice. Grid looked at her and once again admired her. She was so beautiful. The intense combination of white hair and transparent skin with the red and purple armor took Grid's breath away.

[Hero King's Armor]

[Rating: Myth]

Durability: 1,430/1,430 Defense: 1,190

* Strength increased by 200.

* Two of the wearer's highest stats will increase by 15%. If strength or intelligence increases at this time, there will be 300 additional attack power. Physical defense will increase by 300. An increase in agility will raise accuracy and evasion by 12%.

* Increases magic resistance in proportion to the wearer's intelligence.

* The effect of the wearer's highest level skill will increase by 25%.

* The cooldown of the wearer's two lowest level skills will decrease by 10%.

* Attack power will increase by five for every hit (Up to 500).

* The power of all wide-range skills will increase by 20%.

* When a large weapon is equipped, attack power will increase by 10% and attack speed by 5%.

* There is a low probability of accumulating 'incomplete fighting energy.' Stats will rise every time the incomplete fighting energy rises by 10 points.

-An armor that the legendary blacksmith Grid, who even the gods admire, made for the legendary knight Mercedes.

-A heavy armor made of black mithril filled with the red energy of the Saharan emperor, ogre bones and rosar tin, and the fighting energy that was given by Grid.

Due to the limitations of the rosar tin, there is less defense. However, it has the ability to give more aggression to the wearer as the battle continues.

Weight: 3,020

Conditions of Use: Grid or Mercedes.]

It was an armor that couldn't be sold. Who would buy it for an expensive price when Grid and Mercedes were the only ones who could wear it? Still, Grid wasn't worried.

After all, the Hero King's Armor was made only for Mercedes. Grid had no thoughts about commercializing an armor with such excellent performance in the first place. He wasn't certain that he could get another black mithril that contained the emperor's red energy.

'The defense is lower in exchange for offense.'

Step.Step.Step.

Mercedes wore the armor and steadily walked through the forest that was transforming into farmland. The giant cave cricket's antennae detected Mercedes as its aggro was still focused on her. Then it moved soundlessly. The cave cricket swung its legs through the air. The sharpness of its legs cut through the wind, air, and space in 0.1 seconds to reach Mercedes.

Mercedes' might've had a 10% increase in stats from making the chivalric code, but it was still impossible for her to avoid the cave cricket's attack completely. Not only was the cave cricket fast, but it also aimed at all types of gaps in her defense. Mercedes disregarded defense and took the offensive. This was a judgment that was different from before as when she wore the leather armor, she had tried to block some attacks.

The cave cricket made a confused sound. The small creature stuck to its legs. The sweet smell of blood disseminated and flew away, while the creature clung to it like a rock.

"It hurts." Mercedes gulped as blood flowed from her side and grasped the White Tiger Sword more firmly.

Step. Step. Her pace didn't stop. The distance between Mercedes and the cave cricket was now only four meters. The cave cricket's ability to detect danger was fast, just like an insect's instinct. Compared to the past, the number of Mercedes' offensive attacks had increased, and the cave cricket had no intention of allowing Mercedes to get close to it.

"Kuk...!"

The cave cricket had become faster...?

Mercedes was forced to use White Tiger's Attitude once the Hero King's Armor started to lose its durability. She maintained a slow pace as she advanced steadily. Suddenly, four golden hands flew in and started to assist. They were Grid's God Hands.

Then what was Grid doing? A strong aura came from the sky. Grid had flown up there. He swung the Enlightenment Sword and shouted, "Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle!"

Kuwaaaaang! The storm of fighting energy descended. It was Grid's signal.

"Growth! Threshing! Polishing!!" After finishing the clearing, Piaro quickly spread all types of fast-growing grain and seeds, making them explode. The farmland received a lot of damage and collapsed. Mercedes was the only one who had access to the cave cricket.

"Ohhhhh!"

Thanks to the Hero King's Armor, Mercedes was able to exert more damage by accumulating damage. Her swords hadn't been able to penetrate the skin of the cave cricket earlier, but they entered easily now and caused great damage. The cave cricket struggled as some of its nerves were damaged. Its eight legs moved strangely in every direction, forming a sight that could induce someone to vomit.

However, Grid wasn't shaken at all. He had learned to control his emotions after seeing the boys and girls raised like cattle in the Tower of Eternity. Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle crushed the shell of the cave cricket.

"Fated to Perish!" Piaro ultimate attack dug into the cave cricket's inner flesh.

Kyak kyak! Kyak kyak kyak!

"Lightning Discharge! Discharge, nyong! Nyang nyang nyang!"

The Overgeared Skeletons, Randy, and Noe also attacked the cave cricket with all their might. The cave cricket's cries stirred up the forest at dawn. The effect of God's Command was activated, and Grid used a second Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

[Your level has risen!]

A really welcome notification window popped up in front of him. The growth of his pets and the items dropped were a bonus...

[Your memphis Noe's level has risen!] x8.

[Doppelganger Randy's level has risen!] x3.

[The level of Overgeared Skeletons One and Two have risen!] x15.

[3 ancient weapon enhancement scrolls have been acquired.]

[5 ancient armor enhancement scrolls have been acquired.]

[59 ancient steel have been acquired.]

[67 shells of an ancient species have been acquired.]

...This wasn't a bonus. It was too big to be called a bonus.

[Chapter 825](#)

A loud siren rang out, and the red lights installed all over the production team's offices flashed without interruption. The mechanical sounds rang out repeatedly.

[x;;72ZX987B19 has disappeared.]

[Three large episodes will be permanently deleted.]

[188,490 out of 390,112 related quests are now unlikely to occur.]

[Restoration of x;;72ZX987B19 is recommended.]

[Correction.]

[x;;72ZX987B19's dropped items have been acquired by a specific player. It is recommended to rollback the server.]

"What?"

Category x;; entities had a great influence on Satisfy's world view. Among the great demons, only eight were given the code 'x;:' and there were only five NPCs. It was extremely unlikely that contact with players would occur, so the ancient species were classified as 'secret monsters.' Among them, the giant cave cricket was classified with an x;;.

The dark elves episode, which was scheduled to take place, was meant to reduce the number of elves to one-tenth of their current population and darken the 12 Te. The 12 Te would then sell their souls to the great demons and become dark elves. As a result, players would be able to select from various types of species and create different power structures during the 'Great War' episode.

However, this all flew away at once. Why had this suddenly happened?

The leader of the third production team, Rahul, saw the warning messages on the monitor and shouted, "Convene an emergency meeting right now! It is the first bug in Satisfy's history! We have to respond quickly!"

Rahul's Korean was so perfect that it was hard to believe he was Indian.

Chatter chatter! The production team was upset and hesitant about where to start fixing this.

"It isn't a bug." The manager of the operations team, Yoon Nahee appeared. She handed paperwork to Rahul. "It is something that happened due to two players. There is no bug in the current situation."

"Did I learn Korean wrong?"

Rahul was a genius with an IQ of over 180, so it had been easy for him to learn Korean which had become more influential since the launch of Satisfy that now dominated the world market. He asserted himself that his listening and speaking abilities were perfect, yet he couldn't understand Yoon Nahee's remarks. It seemed like an alien language.

"Players encountered an x; code monster and raided it? Do you expect me to believe such nonsense?"

"It is true. Will it make sense if I say that the Overgeared King and Merchant King are involved?"

"The Overgeared King and Merchant King...!"

"Yes. This is how it happened. Merchant King Kir succeeded in discovering the forest of the world tree and simultaneously tried to obtain wealth from the elves."

Kir had briefly made the world tree sick and deceived the elves. Then he returned and captured them. As a result, the incident of some of the elves being eaten by the cave cricket was absent.

"...It prowled the area after losing its food and ended up meeting Grid?"

"Yes."

"..." Rahul could no longer deny reality. He knew the power of Overgeared King Grid better than anyone. How surprised was he when he saw the character details of Grid, the protagonist of the Fourth National Competition's Breaking the Hero? Rahul had almost fallen down. He could still feel the bruised bones from that time. Rahul thought that no one would be able to clear the Fourth National Competition's Breaking the Hero.

'It might be possible for the Five Miracles, including Kraugel. But...' Rahul shook his head.

"Was Mercedes with him?"

Mercedes' legendary knight story had caused a huge impact in the S.A Group. How many NPCs were there that had SSS potential stats? There were thousands. However, most of them were waiting for their talents to blossom. In the meantime, some NPCs sadly perished.

It meant that the expectations of the S.A Group toward the youngest of them, Mercedes, hadn't been high. Moreover, she had originally been scheduled to be killed by the insane dragon. The empire would

then fall on that day. However, this episode had been deleted due to Grid and Kraugel. Afterward, Grid saved Mercedes and she became his knight.

“You should remember the leader of the fourth team. Mercedes was supposed to be a short-lived character, so he designed her with greater affection.”

Keen insight—it was a passive skill that would show an overwhelming performance as time passed and the skill developed.

The leader of the fourth team, Chen, had said that if Mercedes could grow, then she would be able to develop ‘foresight.’ However, since she was a short-lived character that was unlikely to exert an influence on Satisfy’s subsequent world setting, she had been given a fraudulent skill.

“How can she stop that monster...? ...No?”Rahul was trying to convince himself when he suddenly cocked his head. He was reminded that the combat power of the giant cave cricket was equivalent to the 28th great demon.

“How can the cave cricket... Ah!”

It was due to Knights Summoning! A chill went down Rahul’s spine as he remembered the characters Grid had obtained from a long time ago. “I understand... Now I understand everything.”

Merchant King Kir had used his unique intelligence and resources to obtain the elves, while Grid had used his unique strength and people to handle the cave cricket. Rahul was convinced of the situation once he recalled all of their abilities. “Yes... In the end, a rollback won’t happen. We can’t reverse history written by the players themselves.”

“That’s right. Even if it was a bug, I wonder if he would’ve allowed a rollback.”

The water was already spilled, and there was no fault behind the water being spilled. It was a natural phenomenon. Rahul was able to calm his mind. “I’m glad it wasn’t a bug...”

Their chairman would be happy again. Rahul thought about Lim Cheolho’s interest and affection for the Five Miracles.

“Why aren’t you convening a meeting straight away?”An angry voice rang out from the office’s entrance. It was Chairman Lim Cheolho. Hadn’t he been enjoying the variables created by the Five Miracles over the past few years? Who would have imagined this...?

Lim Cheolho headed over to the confused Yoon Nahee and Rahul and explained the severity of the situation. First he asked, “How many players and NPCs have a myth rated item?”

“Well...”The production team leader, Rahul, couldn’t answer.

On the other hand, Yoon Nahee of the operations team replied immediately, “There are 17.”

“Have any of them succeeded in enhancing the myth rated item?”

“No.”

“What if someone strengthens multiple myth rated items by themselves?”

“...The balance will crumble.”

Enhancing an item increased its stats. The higher the basic stats of the item, the higher the increase would be. This was why the probability of enhancing a myth rated item was extremely low.

“This...!” Rahul made a dumbfounded expression and sighed. He was reminded of the items that the cave cricket dropped—the ancient weapon and armor enhancement scrolls! They were supposed to emerge when at least 20% of the players were armed with legendary items. What if Grid succeeded in enhancing a myth rated item that ordinary players didn’t even have access to?

“Not only the Five Miracles but most of the existing named NPCs won’t be able to resist.”

Lim Cheolho clearly remembered that the ancient scrolls definitely increased the item’s enhancement level by 1–3. Grid had three weapon and five armor scrolls, so it was possible for him to make a myth rated armor or weapon ranging from +4 to +7.

“What should we do? Should we shut down the server once?”

There was no concept of a pause in Satisfy. Having it formed a structure that would just drive players away from the game. Lim Cheolho smiled. “No. We can’t damage hundreds of millions of people just for one person. I will go and meet directly with Grid.”

“You will go and speak with him directly?”

There were rumors in the company that the chairman’s account would be a ‘god’ in Satisfy. Would they finally see a god? Yoon Nahee and Rahul gulped as their expectations rose to the extreme. Their expectations were huge enough for them to forget about the seriousness of the situation.

“I know that I can’t use my position to force anything upon Grid. But I am certain I will be able to persuade him as he also loves Satisfy sincerely.”

After all, it was a case where Grid’s life was changed by playing Satisfy. His affection for Satisfy had the potential to be greater than Lim Cheolho’s. Lim Cheolho felt hopeful as he logged into Satisfy.

[Name: S.A Group Chairman Lim Cheolho

Level: 29

Class: Fisherman

* The longer the fishing time, the greater the probability of catching good fish.

Strength: 29 Intelligence: 49

Stamina: 175 Agility: 21

Concentration: 75 Endurance: 19]

There were few environments as good as Satisfy to enjoy his hobby of fishing. As such, he raised his character only through fishing! Deeply concerned that someone would see his ID, Lim Cheolho immediately sent a whisper to Grid.

&S.A Group Chairman Lim Cheolho: I am Chairman Lim Cheolho of the S.A Group. This is the first time saying hello to you separately. It is very nice to meet you. I want to share a story with Youngwoo-ssi...

[The target has blocked you.]

“...?”

Was there something wrong? A chill went down Lim Cheolho’s spine.

“People are crazy. Now there is someone impersonating Lim Cheolho.”

It was after killing the cave cricket that Grid received a whisper while confirming the information the ancient scrolls, which definitely enhanced an item by 1–3 levels. The more famous a person was, the more whispers they received. It was a chance for Grid to see how many crazy people there were in the world.

“Did something happen?” Mercedes asked anxiously.

Grid shook his head and pulled out the Enlightenment Sword. ‘This is the final item.’

However, he was confident he wouldn’t regret using the ancient weapon scroll on the Enlightenment Sword!

“Please be +3!”

Grid was full of ambition as he used the ancient weapon scroll on the Enlightenment Sword without hesitation. He was filled with the expectation that the unique characteristic of Pagma’s Descendant would help the enhancement go straight to +3.

The result?

[You have successfully enhanced the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires!]

[The Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires has increased to +1!]

“Damn rotten luck XX system!”

There was a chance to get 1, 2, or 3, yet he got 1? Grid’s anger reached its peak, and he lost his temper. However, he stopped just as he was going to throw the +1 Enlightenment Sword to the ground.

[You have succeeded in enhancing a myth rated item, and a hidden piece of Pagma’s Descendant has opened!]

The newly emerged notification window relieved his anger and sadness.

Simultaneously, Lim Cheolho said, “I will go to Grid’s house.”

He hurried to his car after logging out.

Lim Cheolho was the best scientist, the greatest human in modern society, the world’s best... so on and so forth. This person that even the president found hard to invite was going to visit an ordinary (?)

young man's house. It was a big matter that would decorate the world's headlines if it were made known.

[Chapter 826](#)

A limited edition supercar, of which there were only three models released in the world, captured the attention of every driver on the road. Moreover, it was in an East Asian country! The other drivers made way in their lanes, and the owner of the supercar, Lim Cheolho, was able to make his journey faster than expected.

"Um..."

The late autumn landscape was filled with widespread foliage. Lim Cheolho was able to calm his mind as he headed into the suburbs.

'Isn't Grid supporting his family?'

Grid was someone who had succeeded at a young age and owned a building. Taking into account the nature of young people at this age, it wouldn't be strange if he enjoyed his own independent life. However, Grid looked after his family. He kept his original intentions by looking after his parents and sister while playing games.

'I can't arrive empty-handed.'

Lim Cheolho was going to ask Grid for a favor, and it was also a place where Grid's other family members lived. So, he had to prepare a gift... But what gift? When had he ever needed to worry about this? Lim Cheolho called the name of his most trusted friend, "Morpheus."

[Yes.]

It was the best supercomputer! The world's top supercomputer that maintained Satisfy immediately responded to Lim Cheolho's call.

Lim Cheolho asked, "What type of gift would be most appropriate for a high school girl a few months away from entering university and a couple in their mid-50s?"

[The first place gift for a high school girl who wants to go to university is a full-body plastic surgery certificate while the top gift for the couple in the mid-50s is divorce papers.] Morpheus took no more than one second to answer. Its analysis combined various data embedded in its many servers and was both fast and perfect.

"I see... Um." Lim Cheolho made a surprised expression. As humanity's top scientist, he trusted data, but he also had common sense. He understood the plastic surgery certificate, but it didn't make sense to show up as a guest and give divorce papers as a gift.

"What are the second place and third place gifts for a couple in the mid-50s?"

[Skin care gifts and travel abroad vouchers.]

“Okay. That’s it.” Chairman Lim Cheolho showed a satisfied response. Then Morpheus asked for confirmation, [I will order a plastic surgery certificate, which has the most experience with high school girls and the highest patient satisfaction, through the cheapest site. Will that be okay?]

“Yes. Please order the cheapest and best skincare vouchers and overseas travel vouchers as well.”

[Yes.]

These gifts were perfect. Lim Cheolho’s burden was relieved, and he smiled with satisfaction as the many gift certificates arrived on his phone. The supercar increased in speed after reaching the suburbs and soon arrived in front of Grid’s building.

“It is a bit out of Seoul, but the air is good.”

[The fine dust density is good.]

“It is a nice neighborhood.” Chairman Lim Cheolho looked around as he got out of the car. The area around Grid’s building was filled with flower gardens. It was so peaceful that couples sat side by side in the flower garden while drinking coffee. Then he saw some buildings across the road from Grid’s.

“Do those buildings belong to the Overgeared members?”

[Yes. These buildings belong to Yura, Jishuka, Regas, and Pon. Jishuka, Regas, and Pon are expected to move to South Korea within the next few months.]

“Haha...” Chairman Lim Cheolho’s heart was moved. He was proud to see that bonds that had been built up in Satisfy transferred to reality. “The young people who love Satisfy are a blessing...”

Chairman Lim Cheolho was once again convinced. He was certain that Grid’s affection toward Satisfy was no less than his own as the creator. Grid had obtained a new life from Satisfy, so Lim Cheolho was sure that Grid would be praying for Satisfy’s infinite success.

‘He will definitely understand and listen to my request.’

Chairman Lim Cheolho’s steps were light. He took the elevator to the top floor and encountered Toon—a Satisfy high ranker who had been part of the Italian Mafia. In recent years, Toon had been a main member of Overgeared who was active as Grid’s bodyguard. He was also someone whose life had changed due to Satisfy.

“I’m really glad to see you.” Chairman Lim Cheolho looked at him with a proud expression.

However, Toon was puzzled. “Have we met?”

“...”

“From here on, you can’t enter unless you have a prior appointment,” Toon spoke firmly as he stood in the hallway and brushed his teeth. It seemed that he had just woken up.

Lim Cheolho smiled at Toon. “You must be lacking sleep.”

After all, this person was Lim Cheolho. He had been in the newspapers every day since Satisfy was released, and he was always in the top Internet search rankings. Lim Cheolho was a person who was welcomed anywhere and at any time.

How could a Satisfy player, let alone a high ranker, not recognize him? Lim Cheolho thought that Toon made a mistake due to sleepiness. However, he was mistaken as Toon was a man who had little interest in the world. His life had been too hard for him to pay attention to people living in other worlds.

“Who are you?”

“...”

Wasn't this too absurd? Lim Cheolho was at a loss for words for a moment before recovering his spirit. Then he whispered to Morpheus, “Please call Grid's parents.”

[His mother or his father?]

“...Connect me to the one who responds faster.”

[I understand.]

A man was blocking the hallway to the front door. His sleek and strong muscles had a threatening appearance while his eyes resembled those of a wolf. Lim Cheolho gulped as he faced someone who saw him as an ‘enemy’ for the first time in years.

In the meantime, Morpheus succeeded in calling Grid's parents.

(Hello?)

“Is this Shin Youngwoo's father?”

(That's right...)

“Hello. I am S.A Group's chairman, Lim Cheolho. I am glad to greet you this way...”

Dududu...

“...”

Chairman Lim Cheolho had been dedicated to in-company activities and official activities for the past few years. He had been cut off from ordinary lives and belatedly realized that the weight of his name was now too big. That's right. The reason why Grid had blocked his whisper and why Grid's father had cut off the phone call was due to the weight of the name, Lim Cheolho, carried.

‘They think I am an impersonator!’

This was a complete impasse! It was a big deal to suffer something like this in such a desperate situation. Lim Cheolho felt upset.

Dding~

Then a girl showed up in the elevator behind Lim Cheolho. It was Sehee dressed in a uniform.

“Uh...?”

Lim Cheolho and Sehee saw each other and were surprised.

'She didn't add any compensation effects to her profile picture and game character?' Lim Cheolho was surprised that Sehee's face, body, and skin tone all matched up perfectly with what she looked like inside the game.

'Why is he here at our home?' Sehee was shocked to see Chairman Lim Cheolho.

"H-Hello?" Unlike her brother, Sehee was polite and gave a greeting despite her confusion.

Lim Cheolho made a gentle expression as he saw her bow her head. "Hello. Hahah! This is a surprise. I prepared a gift for nothing."

He would have to refund the full-body plastic surgery certificate as soon as possible. Sehee looked at the deep in thought Lim Cheolho and smiled brightly. "Did you come to celebrate Oppa's birthday?"

"...Huh?"

The cake in Sehee's hands captured Chairman Lim Cheolho's gaze. Morpheus analyzed the situation and whispered, [The top birthday present for a male in his late 20s is a Satisfy exclusive luxury capsule. The second-ranked gift is an epic rated or higher Satisfy item.]

"...He already has a lot better."

Lim Cheolho had come to get back an item rather than to give one. Well, it wasn't bad. He was looking forward to meeting Grid.

"Ah, what is it?" Shin Youngwoo complained as he was forced to log out due to Sehee's continuous calls. He still had one hour and a half left of his daily connection time. There were many things he could do in this time, so he didn't like that his sister was urging him to log out.

However, as expected from the Comet Group's diamond capsule...! Grid didn't have a bird's nest for hair despite having lain in the capsule for more than 12 hours. He didn't even need to stretch his body to make sure that he wasn't stiff. It was the convenience of a luxury capsule that ordinary people couldn't get a glimpse of.

"Where did she go after calling me?"

Shin Youngwoo was in a spacious room which contained only a capsule and a fridge. He quickly realized he was alone in this game room he called his 'office' and headed out to the living room. Then he was surprised.

"Congratulations on your birthday!"

"Happy birthday!"

Sehee and Yerim smiled while setting off firecrackers.

Youngwoo's expression went blank. A birthday message and pretty decorations covered the living room walls. There was also a table set up for a birthday party. Shin Youngwoo saw the unexpected scene and asked, "Is it my birthday today?"

"I knew this would happen," Sehee pouted. "I didn't call you to eat in the morning, so did you have lunch? The seaweed soup was still the way I left it."

Youngwoo's parents spoke up as well.

"So what if you are working hard to earn money? You should take care of your nutrition! Is there any point in Korean people not eating rice?"

"It is good that you don't smoke, but you should take care of your meals, just as your sister and mother said."

"Yes..." Youngwoo smiled bitterly and nodded. He was touched by the sight of his parents, Sehee, Yerim, and Toon, who was now like a family member, sitting before his birthday party table. Despite forgetting about his own birthday, Youngwoo was glad that they had prepared for this day. In particular, Toon's eyes were red with tears. He was an orphan, so holding a birthday party gave him a great deal of pleasure.

However, in the midst of this friendly atmosphere...

"By the way...why is Chairman-nim here?" Youngwoo took his seat and asked this to Chairman Lim Cheolho. Both Youngwoo and Lim Cheolho had awkward expressions on their faces. Who would've expected this development?

[Chapter 827](#)

Shin Youngwoo was in a very uncomfortable state.

Due to his enhancement failure, he had gotten so angry that he almost lost his sight. The ancient enhancement scrolls enhanced items from +1 to +3, but both the Enlightenment Sword and Valhalla of Infinite Affection had only increased to +1. Wasn't that the lowest value possible? His luck was truly bad.

As such, Shin Youngwoo had been forced to stop the enhancement. He wanted to be cautious with the remaining ancient scrolls and would use them when his luck was high.

It was natural to be cautious. One enhancement level increased the basic stats of the item by 5%. This value was very important when looking at myth rated items with basic stats exceeding 1,000. He would be able to secure a difference of dozens or hundreds in attack and defense with just one enhancement level.

'Furthermore, it is likely to be hard to obtain the ancient scrolls again in the future.'

Shin Youngwoo had noticed from the beginning that the giant cave cricket wasn't a monster meant for players to hunt. It hadn't used any special magic or skills, but its basic stats were simply too high.

How could a player beat the cave cricket when Piaro and Mercedes had failed and suffered serious injuries? It was likely that Shin Youngwoo would've experienced death if he had attracted the cave

cricket's aggro. This made it understandable that such a strong monster dropped the fraudulent ancient enhancement scrolls.

"Umm..." So when Shin Youngwoo sat facing Lim Cheolho at his birthday party, he muttered, "Why is such a big person...?"

The VIP guest, Chairman Lim Cheolho of the S.A Group, had come to celebrate Shin Youngwoo's birthday! What was the title of this new hidden camera broadcast program? There was no other explanation for this. Chairman Lim Cheolho, who only appeared in magazines or on TV, was actually sitting in front of Shin Youngwoo on his birthday? Was this a normal scene?

Shin Youngwoo tapped his fingers before coming to a conclusion and asking, "Is this a hidden camera TV show?"

Shin Youngwoo started to feel excited. He was looking forward to the gift that the S.A Group had prepared for him after he contributed to the National Competition. Maybe it would be enough to make up for the two wasted ancient enhancement scrolls?

Unable to hide his expectations, Shin Youngwoo looked like an excited child. His family was the same.

As he met the burdensome gazes of the family members, Lim Cheolho was very stressed. He was used to meeting the presidents of the United States and China, yet now he was uncomfortable when facing these ordinary family members. It was difficult for him to disappoint them.

"Hum hum." There was a moment of awkward silence. "First of all, happy birthday. I am very happy to personally meet a great player like you, Grid. I am a huge fan." He was being sincere.

Lim Cheolho respected all of Satisfy's players, but he felt greater liking for certain players. In particular, he felt great respect for the five people called the Five Miracles. The supercomputer Morpheus couldn't predict their actions, and the pleasure that gave Lim Cheolho couldn't be converted into money.

"Ah..." Youngwoo's face reddened. His heart was pounding as he felt Lim Cheolho's sincerity. He couldn't help being moved. After living a life at the bottom, Youngwoo had grown up, succeeded, and become someone who was acknowledged by one of the greatest people in the world. A joy that was difficult to describe filled him, blanking out his mind.

It was the same with Youngwoo's parents. Chairman Lim Cheolho, who was a famous person, a great scientist, and an entrepreneur, had come to congratulate their son on his birthday and profess to being a big fan. This was a sight that seemed like a dream.

"Hehe."

"Hum hum."

Sexy Schoolgirl Yerim and Beast Master Toon looked at Lim Cheolho and Youngwoo's family with warm expressions. This was a heartwarming sight, yet it was an atmosphere that made Lim Cheolho feel increasingly burdened!

"Hum hum." Lim Cheolho pulled out a handkerchief and wiped the sweat flowing down his face. It had become hard for him to tell Youngwoo to return the ancient scrolls. While he was feeling embarrassed about that, Youngwoo's mother gave him some rice and said, "Please eat."

She was aware that Chairman Lim Cheolho was a busy person, so she would cut her son's birthday cake right after Chairman Lim Cheolho ate something. Chairman Lim Cheolho was surprised when he saw her dark nails. "Are you still doing work in the fields these days?"

"Yes, of course."

Everyone in South Korea knew that Youngwoo's parents personally farmed the vegetables they sold. Even Chairman Lim Cheolho was aware of it.

"Why do you need to suffer when your son is enjoying great success? Isn't it enough for you to hire people or to stop working?"

"The successes of a son is separate from his parents' lives. How can we spend our son's hard-earned money? We aren't old enough to retire, so we should work too."

That wasn't all. Youngwoo's parents thought about the past. The real reason they worked even harder than before was for Youngwoo's sake. Their son was currently experiencing great success. Therefore, they constantly gave to charity in their son's name out of fear that people would feel jealous of him. They personally sent their vegetables to orphanages and nursing homes.

It was also meant as a repayment of their debt. As parents, they hadn't been able to believe in their son and hadn't given him any strength back when he was having a hard time. Youngwoo's parents couldn't get rid of their feelings of guilt toward their son. However, this caused Youngwoo pain. As their son, he had always gotten involved in incidents and had never been praised. He had gone to university thanks to his parents, yet he hadn't studied and had ended up in debt.

Nevertheless, his mother had prepared breakfast for her son every day, and his father hadn't turned against him. They had done enough for him and had been waiting a long time for him to find success. Yet now they were sorry toward their son? Youngwoo felt like a sinner. He was the son who broke their hearts in the first place. If he had even half resembled Sehee, then his parents wouldn't have a shadow in their hearts now.

"..." The previously harmonious atmosphere sank, and an awkward silence flowed. Lim Cheolho felt like he was sitting on a cushion of thorns. Yerim and Toon were staring at him. They seemed to be saying, 'Why did you make the atmosphere like this by saying unnecessary things?'

"Hum hum." How long had it been since he last felt someone's blatant resentment? Lim Cheolho was embarrassed for a while before smiling in an attempt to recover the atmosphere. He took a spoonful of food. Was there a need for other people to say so much? In the end, as parents and children, they would be able to understand each other, care for each other, and find greater happiness.

"It is delicious." Lim Cheolho couldn't remember how long it had been since he last ate a homemade meal. It was probably 33 years ago when he lost his parents.

Lim Cheolho had a gentle expression as he ate the rice and seaweed soup. 'I was treated to warm rice, so I must repay them.'

Recalling the original intentions he'd had when he made Satisfy, he had dreamt of everyone being happy. He wanted Satisfy to be a world beyond a game and for it to give people joy they couldn't feel in their harsh realities. Yet, now, he had come here to put a constraint on a person just because of the

game balance? Would he forcibly take away the happiness a person had obtained after suffering? What was this unscrupulous act?

'I have become too rigid.'

Chairman Lim Cheolho put down the cutlery and said, "Overgeared King Grid."

"Yes?"

"I will give you a small hint. The reason why you've grown so much isn't because you are Pagma's Descendant."

"...?"

It was hard to understand what Lim Cheolho meant since Youngwoo had reached his current position due to becoming Pagma's Descendant. Lim Cheolho explained to the confused Youngwoo, "NPCs... The act of treating the people who live in Satisfy as if they are people is the thing that has made you what you are now."

Could the Overgeared Kingdom have been born if there had been no talents beside Grid? That was impossible as Grid wasn't versatile enough to have done it all by himself. It was because he had been able to support Khan's wounds, rejuvenate Piaro, and meet Rabbit that allowed him to be reborn as the Overgeared King.

"I hope you don't lose your foundations," Chairman Lim Cheolho spoke meaningful words and rose from his seat. He had no intention of interfering with the family's birthday party any longer. So, he put on his coat and gave a large present to Shin Youngwoo. There were travel vouchers for his parents and a hint. "You have become angry due to the blacksmith god a few times."

"...?"

"Please be aware that there is a big relation with Pagma's Descendant's class quests."

It was a big hint. This was a huge hint for Shin Youngwoo who was afraid to use the 'Divinity' skill due to the blacksmith god's curse, and it eased some of his mental burdens. Shin Youngwoo asked excitedly, "Isn't it too much to be called a birthday present? Can you give this privilege to a specific player?"

"Privilege? Did I give any to you? I was just speaking to myself."

There was no doubt that problems would arise from Grid hunting the cave cricket and obtaining the ancient enhancement scrolls. However, Lim Cheolho regained his original thoughts and decided to leave the flow of Satisfy to the players.

"Let me say a few more words to myself," Lim Cheolho said while putting on his shoes at the front door. While nodding to Youngwoo's parents and Sehee, he whispered, "Even if you are a few times stronger than you are now, there are countless strong enemies that you can't face alone. Don't be so overconfident that you lose the things precious to you."

The catastrophic episodes designed to deal despair upon all of humanity had largely been deleted. From the players' standpoint, the various variables caused by this were a poison.

One example was the empire's grand master. This person, who originally should've been killed by the insane dragon, was currently still alive. Like Mercedes, he was an NPC with one of the highest growth potentials. Unlike Mercedes, there was no one to put a brake on his growth since he was a grand master.

How could the players handle the vicious NPCs who would continue to reign, unlike the insane dragon that would just go crazy for 'a while' before leaving? Lim Cheolho wondered this as he left Shin Youngwoo's house.

After that...

"Do you acknowledge me now after the S.A Group's chairman came personally to celebrate my birthday?" Youngwoo asked Toon while shrugging.

"Uh. I acknowledge you." Toon was perfectly accustomed to life in South Korea and raised his thumb.

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"The richest person in the world is stingy." Yerim, who had become more bewitching as the years passed, clung to Youngwoo's forearm and looked at him with shiny, teary eyes that captured a person's soul. "Didn't he come to celebrate Oppa's birthday? Why did he just leave without giving Oppa a gift?"

"No, I got a great gift." Youngwoo patted Yerim's head in a familiar manner. No matter the type of offensive she took toward him, Youngwoo only recognized her a sister. This was natural as Yerim was Sehee's best friend after all!

"A great gift?"

When would this person see her as a woman? Yerim sulked when she saw that Youngwoo wasn't shaken no matter how close she was to him. As she wondered when the seal on her would be released, Youngwoo gave her a meaningful smile and said, "Yes. It is a gift that is too big to be valued."

He wasn't exaggerating.

[The blacksmith god is closely related to the class quest of Pagma's Descendant.]

Chairman Lim Cheolho's hint was more precious than gold. If Grid's affinity with the lightning god fell to -10, he would receive a curse. The thought of this curse made Youngwoo feel uneasy and placed great restrictions on his behavior. However, he could now feel expectant rather than afraid.

'Will an event occur when I receive the curse?' Youngwoo's heart beat faster in anticipation. He wanted to access the game quickly. His family members and friends noticed this.

"Don't you have an hour and a half left of connection time? We can have the birthday party after that."

"Sehee..." Youngwoo was touched. Where in the world could you find a sister who would know and give consideration for her brother's Satisfy access time? He hugged Sehee firmly before heading straight to the capsule.

In the midst of the calm morning forest, a quiet wind blew through the leaves. Mercedes was sitting alone on a large rock. She closed her eyes and recreated the battle with the giant cave cricket in her mind.

'In conclusion...'

She was convinced that she would've been able to withstand the cave cricket's barrage if she had a sturdy shield. Mercedes judged that a shield would be more efficient than double swords when dealing with enemies stronger than herself.

'The swordsmanship of my family isn't that good.'

Mercedes used double swords because her swordsmanship was based on the Vaintz swordsmanship. She had always believed that the sword techniques she learned since childhood were the most suitable for her. However, she realized she was mistaken after becoming a legend. The Vaintz swordsmanship might be useful for killing many enemies but it exposed too many gaps to strong enemies. This was a clear limitation of the Vaintz swordsmanship.

In fact, hadn't she ultimately relied on the Supreme Swordsmanship during the Astaroth raid?

'So, there is no reason to be obsessed with the double swords.'

King Grid had known this from the beginning, which was why he had said he would make her armor and a shield.

"..." While Mercedes was thinking about her new armor, she suddenly opened her eyes. Her keen insight pierced deep into the forest, and she could feel the presence of thousands. They couldn't just be the elves coming back with companions from the village. Some of these presences were clearly human. Moreover...

'The elves have lost the strength of the elementals.'

It was unusual. This was just shortly after the giant cave cricket raid. Grid had left to go 'rest' while Piaro finished pruning and then returned to the vampire cities. As such, Mercedes was currently alone in this place. "..."

Her task was to wait until Grid finished his rest and came back. She thought for a moment before climbing up a tree and hiding her body. It wasn't comparable to how an assassin would have done it, but it was still a sufficiently stealthy act. Soon after...

"Why are you trying to call the elementals? Don't be silly and just walk quickly."

A procession of humans and elves appeared. Thousands of elves were tied up together in a line, while hundreds of humans mocked as they watched over them.

'What...?' Mercedes was confused. Hadn't Beniylaru said that her 'friend' had arrived in the village and that she would come back after meeting her friends? Then what was this situation? Mercedes gritted her teeth. She had a vague idea of what Beniylaru and the elves had been through. The elves had lost the light in their eyes, and the wounds on their slender bodies incited Mercedes' anger.

However, she thought inwardly, 'I'm not qualified to be angry.'

Mercedes' heart cooled down as she thought this.

After all, who was she? She was a knight of the empire who had invaded countless nations and destroyed numerous immigrants. Of course, she hadn't done those things because of her own will as a person but because of the emperor's commands. Although she might not have enslaved them or mocked them, she had still taken their lives.

'...I was also like them.'

She didn't deserve to criticize them. As Mercedes realized this, she closed her eyes, wanting to turn off this horrible sight. In the first place, she was in a position where she had to ignore it. She didn't have the right to act freely and save the elves without Grid's command. So, Mercedes sat on the branch and clenched her fists.

However, someone on the ground sensed her presence.

"Hrmm." It was Knight. He was someone who had won a small PvP tournament in Russia.

Knight had even beat Alexander, who was known to be the strongest player in Russia so far. However, his identity was close to obscure at the moment as there was a high level of awareness of him only in Russia. This was because Knight was a person who didn't want to be influential.

Still, his skills were undoubtedly excellent. This was the reason why Merchant King Kir had squeezed out a lot of money to hire him. Discovering that Knight had stopped his horse, Kir approached him. "What is it?"

Knight thought for a moment before shaking his head. "It isn't a big deal."

Of course, that was a lie. His passive skill, Death God's Sixth Sense, told him that the presence he sensed from the top of the tree was classified as the 'highest risk.' Fortunately, she didn't seem to have the will to fight. It would be nice if they didn't encounter each other and just passed by.

Knight judged this would be the best situation and rushed Kir. "Don't we have to arrive at the nearby temple before the duration of the Yatan Essence finishes? We should hurry."

"Ah, yes." Kir listened to Knight's opinion and sped up the speed of the march. He whipped the elves' backs and urged them to walk faster. A few players acted like they were having fun as the sound of whips rang through the forest constantly.

Beniyaru ground her teeth together. Why had she believed in humans? Her foolishness had once again placed the elves in a great crisis. She wanted to bite her tongue and die. However, she couldn't die. Beniyaru pledged that she would survive and someday save all the people who suffered today because of her. She had to persevere through this shame and pain.

Kir noticed her mindset. "That is a good expression. No matter where you are, try as hard as you can. I look forward to the moment when your will is broken. Kukukuk."

"Dirty human!" Beniyaru's anger reached its peak. She lost her temper and made another attempt to gather her mana and call the elementals. However, it was just an act of giving pain to herself. "Kuaaack!"

The Yatan Essence had penetrated deep into her body, burning Beniyaru's mana and blood. Beniyaru's eyes turned white, and she struggled with the terrible pain. Kir's eyes became like crescent moons as he watched her spew out blood from every orifice in her body.

"Money is truly the best. The more expensive the goods, the better they are. Isn't that right?"

For the sake of this day, Kir had traded with the Yatan Servants and spent as much as 40 million gold, which was around 48 billion won. Why did he pour so much money into a game? Ordinary people couldn't understand Kir's behavior. However, this expenditure was an obvious investment from Kir's point of view. It was also a successful investment.

Kir thought that 40 million gold was a cheap price for obtaining a whole species.

'Once sold into slavery, the elves I captured today will earn me more than 40 million gold.'

However, the real profit that Kir gained from this incident wasn't the elf slaves. It was the right to the world tree. If he continued collecting and selling the fruit, branches, leaves, and bark of the world tree, Kir estimated that his income would be equal to that of a country.

'Father, are you watching? Your son was able to grow brilliantly, unlike you who met a miserable and humiliating end.'

He would live differently from his father. There was only one step left in the oath Kir made at the miserable funeral.

"Sigh." Kir took a deep breath. He stepped forward to hasten the speed of the march when he saw something. A pale red pillar of light was formed right before his eyes. It was the effect that occurred when a player logged in.

"...?"

Had someone else discovered the forest of the world tree? Kir's group was confused, but they weren't very wary. After all, they knew that the stupid elves had removed the ward to welcome them. That's right. The forest was now a place where any dogs could enter. It was no longer a place that only special people could visit. Moreover, there was only one opponent, so there was no reason to be vigilant.

"Let's go." Kir's group planned to ignore the player who had just logged in. However, they couldn't ignore the person.

[Grid].

"...?!"

It was because the person who logged in was a huge player. This wasn't an illusion, this was real.

"What is this situation?" Grid faced the thousands of people as soon as he logged in. His eyes gradually narrowed as his confusion grew because he was witnessing thousands of elves being captured by unidentified players.

Kir hurriedly approached on his horse to shake Grid's hand. "Are you Grid? It is an honor to meet you. I am the 1st ranked merchant, Kir."

As usual, Kir displayed a smile that made people feel good. However, Grid didn't respond to Kir's handshake. Grid was reminded of the 3rd ranked Muto's words as he looked at the elves and opened his mouth, "Beniyaru, can you hear me?"

"Grid?" Kir stood in front of Grid to block his view because Grid's eyebrows twitched when he looked at the elves. "Aren't you busy?"

Grid showed him an indifferent attitude! Kir's eyebrows twitched, but he made an effort to maintain his smile. "Your attitude isn't very good. You are the king of a nation and one of the top players. Don't you know the basic manners?"

"Hah." Grid was no longer a fool and became aware of the situation. He knew clearly the terrible treatment that the thousands of wounded female elves would receive in the future. As such, Grid's expression hardened.

Then Kir said to him, "Isn't this frankly none of your business? I think it would be good if we just pass each other by."

Kir was also a ranker who was called the best. His sense of rivalry toward Grid was much greater than he had expected, and he unknowingly spat out those provocative words. Grid asked, "Good for each other? Isn't it only good for you?"

As he scoffed at Kir, Grid scouted the elves with his high insight.

"..."He soon discovered the wounded Beniyaru. Grid suppressed his boiling anger and asked, "Can I help you?"

"...Why...?" All types of things were implied with that question. Grid stared at the shaky Beniyaru and gave her his first gentle smile since their initial meeting. "I have received a lot of help from the high elf called Sticks. I want to help you to repay him."

"Do you think I will let you act as you like?" Kir smiled and raised his killing intent. It was a signal.

"Look at this dirty jerk! Do you think you are so great just because you won once against Kraugel?"

"Why are you interfering with others in the first place?"

Kir's colleagues cried out and pulled out their weapons. Grid was still staring at Beniyaru as he waited for an answer.

"..."Beniyaru's eyes shook. In her despair, she had just made a promise not to trust another human. Now she wasn't convinced that she could once again believe in a human. However, Grid had pulled out the name Sticks. Furthermore, Grid hadn't hurt her in the past despite having the opportunity to do so. In the end...

"...Help us," Beniyaru begged. "Please! Help us!"

Her eager cries struck Grid in the heart. "Yes. I will act as the apostle of justice."

"...?!"

A fist quickly hit them...? The faces of the Kir's Company members distorted as they were hit by Unbreakable Justice.

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Unbreakable Justice was an area of effect skill that dealt 300% of his attack power. The members of Kir's group that were around level 250 couldn't respond to Grid's immediate skill and were struck by his fist.

[You have suffered 2,900 damage.]

[You have suffered 3,150 damage.]

"Kuk!"

Fast. It was an attack that they couldn't see. However, it was bearable. While Grid might've been ranked first in PvP, it would still be difficult for him to kill them instantly while they were equipped with unique rated equipment. The five players attacked by Grid relied on the items that were available to them since joining Kir's Company and attempted a counterattack. The narrow field of view of an ordinary player didn't notice the threat coming from behind them.

[You have suffered 11,290 damage.]

[You have suffered 9,870 damage.]

"What?"

Someone else's blade flew towards them? The players were astonished as they looked behind them and saw the spinning blade before belatedly discovering the silver thread hanging from the end of the blade. The blade flashed red and headed towards the sword in Grid's hand as if it were being sucked into the sword, forming the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires.

Thanks to the ancient scroll, Grid succeeded in enhancing it to +1 and the Enlightenment Sword was 5% stronger than before.

5% was an ambiguous value. If a weapon with 100 attack power was increased by 5%, wasn't it just an increase of 5 damage? 5% wasn't much when applied to rare-epic rated items. Despite this fact, however, people were still obsessed with this 5% figure.

There were many cases where victory in a fight was determined by a small difference in stats, let alone an attack power that was 3,780+189. The figure of 5% was too big to ignore for high-rated items with high basic stats. The additional level in enhancement for the Enlightenment Sword raised its attack power by 189 damage.

This was why Grid was very sad. 'Shit! If I succeeded in getting it to +3 then the additional damage would be over 567!'

Why was it only +1? Grid used Quick Movements to raise his agility and speed before rushing into enemy territory without hesitation. He either avoided or blocked all attacks coming towards him with the God Hands and fought back with the Enlightenment Sword.

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[You have died.]

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[You have died.]

“What...?”

The faces of Kir’s group lost their color, stunned at Grid’s brutal attack power that killed their colleagues with one blow.

‘It’s different from what I saw in the video!’

It was rare for there to be any Satisfy user who hadn’t watched the videos of the National Competition. Those who missed the live broadcast would watch the reruns, and the high-profile PvP videos were watched countless times by any one person.

Kir’s Company wasn’t any different. They obtained money and items while serving Kir and dreamt about becoming rankers someday. For them, the National Competition’s PvP videos were a means for them to live vicariously, while also serving as a textbook.

From the 1st National Competition to the 3rd National Competition, they watched dozens of videos of Grid fighting and sometimes defeating famous powerhouses. They had felt confident that they saw through Grid’s way of fighting. They had the audacity to say that they could defeat Grid as long as they watched out for the black state and white state (Assimilation), as well as his ‘quick attack skill’ that instantly killed most enemies.

But what was the reality?

“Cough!”

They were gravely mistaken. Grid’s movements, which they could easily track in the video thanks to the help of high-speed cameras, were actually so fast that they couldn’t be followed with the naked eye. His attack patterns, which seemed so simple compared to Kraugel’s, were actually hard to predict in person.

Grid’s battle style of being hit and counterattacking was only expressed against opponents whose control was superior to his own.

Kir’s members couldn’t go against Grid’s ‘relatively normal control.’ They couldn’t even determine where Grid would come from and at what timing. More than anything else, though...

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[You have died.]

His attack power was too strong, and they all died in a single blow.

“This is ridiculous!”

It was only 30 seconds. The faces of Kir’s Company all blanched in shock as they witnessed more than 10 of their colleagues die in a short period of time. One of them even became a frightened puppy and cowered back in fear.

Furthermore, Grid's face didn't show any excitement. Merchant King Kir, who was the most likely to build a kingdom after Grid and Ares. His trusty subordinates and colleagues that he was so prideful of, they were all just ordinary people to Grid as he continued the absolute slaughter without stopping.

"What should we do?"

"Give me a command."

The magician 'Boutian' and the female scimitar user 'Arisa' approached Kir and asked.

They were colleagues who had been with Kir ever since he first discovered the forest of the world tree. They were very strong, with their levels at 349 and 351 respectively. On top of that, they were also armed with legendary items, all thanks to Kir.

"I'm still thinking."

Kir couldn't easily move. The two groups led by Boutian and Arisa had a total of 30 people. While they were all third advancement rankers, it was still questionable if they could go against Grid. This was due to Grid's Knights Summoning.

'It is also possible to summon my knights, but...'

He had left three named NPCs in his city, who should be able to handle the Overgeared members that Grid summoned. However, Piaro was the real problem at hand. Piaro was Grid's right hand man who played an overwhelming role during the great demon raid. They couldn't go against a named NPC who had probably already completed his growth.

'Knights Summoning isn't the only thing I have to be careful about.'

Kir might've met Grid for the first time today, but he was very impressed with Grid. Was it due to Grid's strength? No. Kir was already familiar with Grid's strength. He foresaw from the beginning that Knight would have to expose himself to stop Grid. Unlike this rabble, Merchant King Kir's discerning eyes were real.

Then what caused Kir to feel surprised? It was Grid's 'intelligence.'

'His brain works very quickly.'

If Grid wasn't smart, he would've chosen to not save the elves. He would've tried to build a good relationship with the 1st ranked merchant rather than become hostile to Kir. However, Grid had saved the elves, and directly had the elves ask for his help in order to build a foundation for the future.

'Grid saw it instantly.'

Right now he was taking a big risk, but choosing to save the elves would be a much bigger benefit for him in the long run. Grid was the first player king for a reason. The ignorant look that he exposed in the media over the years was just paltry acting.

'Damn snake.'

Grid must have something else besides the Knights Summoning. Otherwise, he wouldn't have moved to deal with 400 enemies alone. Arisa spoke confidently to Kir, who was unable to make a choice.

"What if it is just simple arrogance?"

"...?"

"He is the best in the world. It is likely that his sense of pride from beating Kraugel has ruined him. Think about it: assuming that he can even manage to summon 10 knights, that is just the maximum number of people he can summon. Would the Overgeared members be on standby 24 hours a day? Is that even possible?"

"..."

"Maybe the number of knights he can summon right now is similar to what you can summon. Even if he can call upon more people than expected, we have a lot of people here right now. Thinking too much can be poisonous."

"..."

Kir was silent as his brain worked on overdrive. Finally, Boutian used Magic Detection and opened his mouth, "Kir, it is as you expected. Grid seems to have something else besides the Knights Summoning."

"What is it?"

"There is a rodent hiding above our heads."

"Just one? Are you certain?"

"Yes. In the first place, our position is too favorable. Look, Grid isn't using any wide-area skills despite us having superior numbers."

Why?

"He is concerned about the elves being swept away."

"It's meaningless even if he uses Knights Summoning. And as for the burning rain of arrows created by Jishuka? We can just use the elves as a meat shield."

Arisa clapped her hands in excitement as she exclaimed, "Right! If Kir threatens to kill the elves, then we can fight more thoroughly."

Trying to keep their current status would just be a disadvantage for Kir. If Kir was willing to take some damage, he would be able to win this battle that started somewhat abruptly.

"...Okay." Kir finally made a decision and proclaimed, "I will smash Grid using our numbers advantage. Let's show the power of Kir's Company to the prideful Overgeared King."

"Good!"

The flow of battle would change from now on as Boutian, Arisa, and the other top members took the stage. The high-level company members' morale skyrocketed as they witnessed Grid running wild.

-Knight: Do you intend to give up on the elves?

Kir received a whisper from Knight, who had been watching the situation from one step away. Kir frowned. He had invested a whopping 40 million gold into this operation. The damage would be hard to recover from if he gave up on the elves.

-Kir: That is impossible.

-Knight: Then I won't stop you. I will do my best to fight as much as I am paid. Just.

Knight wore a black robe that covered his body and pulled out a giant scythe befitting his 'Death God' class. He added,

-Knight: I won't risk my life, as it isn't worth a bit of gold. I will retreat if I feel threatened.

-Kir: ...Is Grid that strong?

Kir knew about Knight's Death God's Sixth Sense. It was something he had to take into account. Knight replied, "It is a question mark."

"...???"

A question mark? Kir made a confused expression.

"It means I can't measure him. For example, there is the skill called Blackening. Grid still has room to increase his combat power, so the system can't measure him properly. Well, he is the person who beat Kraugel. He is certainly strong. However, haven't you determined that you can handle him? I will leave Grid to you."

Knight thought the real problem was something else. The problem was the 'highest risk' rodent hidden in the trees. The giant scythe dug into the tree, smoothly felling it in one quick motion. As the tree trunk crashed onto the ground, a woman with white hair appeared: Mercedes. She ruthlessly swung her sword at Knight as soon as she fell from the tree.

Kir's eyes widened in shock as he shouted, "The First Knight?! Why is she here?!!"

"The First Knight?"

Knight was also upset, but he didn't retreat just yet. He believed that he should act according to what he was paid. The power of the Death God that exerted power over all targets with a finite life exploded outwards. The bushes and trees in the area wilted as a new 'soul gauge' was created at the bottom of Mercedes' health bar.

"Shouldn't you hurry if you don't want your soul to be eaten away?"

The huge image of a death god appeared behind Knight's back. It was something that Alexander hadn't seen when he was easily knocked down by Knight. That's right, Alexander was defeated without being able to bring out Knight's entire strength.

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It was obvious by his name, but Knight was a player who originally dreamed about becoming a knight. Since the opening of Satisfy, he had devoted himself only to training and quests to become a knight. However, that dream was unfulfilled. He even received a curse.

The knights division Knight had an apprenticeship with met an unexpected enemy and were then wiped out. He moved cities and kingdoms, but things always turned out the same way. Knight's companions always died. This was the result.

[You have opened the power of a death god.]

[The spirit of life is perceived as an enemy.]

[The energy of death covets the soul of the target.]

Knight obtained the growth type hidden class, Death God. Compared to his original target of being a knight, this was a class with an unparalleled power. Yet Knight wasn't pleased. It felt like the stigma of a death god was mocking him.

"12 minutes... The reputation of the First Knight is real after all. This is the first time I've seen such a solid soul."

"..."

"You will die if you don't hurt me in 12 minutes," Knight warned Mercedes, smiling bitterly as he saw her soul gauge being consumed slowly. The dark curtain that fell over the area veiled his appearance.

'These dogs aren't strong like Immortal.'

Almost half of Immortal's members had endured Grid's basic blow. He had to hit them two or three times for them to die. This was despite the fact that they were necromancers. It was estimated that their high rated items and the increase in stats given by their titles were quite high. They were truly a group made of rankers.

Then what about Kir's Company?

"Keok!"

"Ugh!"

They were one shot one kills! The members of Kir's Company turned to gray with just one blow from Grid. They were incredibly weak compared to the Overgeared members, Valhalla, and Immortal.

'It's funny.'

Why did so many players nurture their characters carefully? It was because they wanted to become stronger than other people. They felt the greatest joy when boasting absolute invincibility... just like the current Grid.

[The target has died!]

[The target has died...]

[The target has...]

Grid drew a sharp line with the Enlightenment Sword, and three members of Kir's Company turned gray simultaneously. There were also members who couldn't approach due to the Magic Missiles being fired from the God Hands floating to the left and right of Grid.

'The hands are good.'

Grid's joy kept rising as he overwhelmed hundreds of enemies alone, and a smile spread across his face. However, even so...

"Now!"

"These dogs."

He didn't become careless. Grid maintained his extreme concentration and swung his sword without leaving a gap for the enemy to strike. So, why did he bother wasting power to defend against the trivial attacks? It was in order to hide his hidden card. Grid wanted to conceal the poison being emitted by the +1 Valhalla of Infinite Affection as much as possible.

'There will be rankers present.'

The top rankers were like hyenas seeking the right time to aim at him. It was inevitable that Grid would be wounded when they started to act, so he was certain the poison fog would be a significant variable at that time.

"Kuaaaack!"

Grid's fighting energy increased gradually. Then as he became stronger during the fight, his red and purple aura rose up. His basic attacks wreaked greater havoc, and his improved agility made the cooperation between level 250 players meaningless.

"Hup!"

"Hiik!"

His flashing eyes caused the hearts of the Kir members to freeze. Grid smiled throughout the battle and realized the gap that existed between those with high strength and those with low strength.

'It isn't enough...'

This was beyond their imagination. The Kir members had watched Grid fight against the giants of other worlds and Great Demon Belial dozens of times on the TV and Internet, but he hadn't been this strong. To think there was a gap of over 100 levels...?

They had thought they would be able to overcome the gap somewhat with their control skills. Now, they realized the control skills they were so proud of was at the level of an elementary school student. What about the difference in items? They had thought they would be able to overcome the gap with the various unique items they'd received after joining Kir's Company. Now, they clearly realized that Grid's strength wasn't just in his items.

What about their numerical superiority? A confrontation of one person against hundreds would naturally be advantageous for them. However, now they were experiencing it. There was a limitation of

having a great number of people. Hundreds of people couldn't attack a single person at the same time. The space was too limited.

'This won't do.'

'Who can win against that monster?'

It was admirable that Kraugel had been able to compete with this monster for a short time.

"What are you doing?" Grid said, suddenly appearing right in front of their noses. The members of Kir's Company flinched.

"Why are you so absent-minded? Should I beat you like you did the elves?"

"T-That..."

There were few people who could resist the mob mentality. Once one member started to step back from Grid, the other members around him started to retreat as well. Grid took one step forward, while they took three steps back. Then he took one more step, and they fell over each other's feet.

The pride they'd felt about belonging to the huge Kir's Company had long been lost. Just as the Kir members sank into despair, a voice entered their ears, "Use the elves as a shield!"

It was the call of Merchant King Kir.

"Swap to ranged weapons! Those who know how to use magic, don't save your mana potions! Push at Grid without resting! Don't shrink back! You will be safe if you use the elves as shields!"

'Safe.' This one word raised the morale of the Kir members.

The members of the company hid among the thousands of elves and pulled out weapons like bows and throwing daggers. The magicians, who hadn't been able to perform their roles due to the Magic Missiles fired by the God Hands, also started to cast magic.

A total of 32 rankers, including Boutian and Arisa, started to act as well.

"Stone Shower." Boutian's magic dumped a pile of stones onto Grid. Meanwhile, Arisa reached Grid's side and swung her scimitar.

"Heh, I didn't expect you to block it. Did you get better after the National Competition?" Arisa smiled with admiration as Grid blocked her attack. "But won't this be more difficult?"

Quick Movements—it was the buff skill that Grid or the God Hands developed using a specific 'dagger' as a medium. Due to watching hundreds of Grid's battles, Arisa knew that its duration was about to end, and it was just as she expected. While avoiding Boutian's continuous spells, Grid avoided Arisa's second and third attacks before being hit by her fourth one. Arisa's scimitar fell like lightning and cut Grid's chest as Arisa's subordinates joined her belatedly.

"The timing is perfect." Grid laughed with ridicule as he faced Arisa's colleagues.

"...?" Arisa's eyes widened in confusion after hearing Grid's murmur.

[You have become affected by poison!]

[It is an irresistible poison!]

[You will receive 4,300 damage per second!]

‘What?’

Where had this poison fog suddenly come from? The poisoned Arisa began to panic. Her subordinates joined her one step late and bombarded Grid. The swords and spears stabbed at Grid’s body. Every time it happened, a dark green fog was released from Grid’s armor.

“Cough!”

A crazy situation unfolded as the health gauges of the dozens of people attacking Grid simultaneously started to decrease significantly.

“Isn’t this a scam? What type of reflexes is this?”

There was poison in addition to the high defense? Arisa moved backward with a frown and hurriedly drank an antidote. However, it was a foolish act. Taking a potion in front of the target without restraining their actions was no different from committing suicide.

Grid asked, “Don’t you have experience dealing with enemies much stronger than you?”

He mocked Arisa’s stupidity as his sword pierced Arisa’s chest. This was the moment when the health gauge of the level 352 ranker, Arisa, was reduced by one-fifth with a single strike.

[You have suffered 14,900 damage.]

[The durability of the Organ Armor has decreased by 20.]

“Huh?”

Why did a basic attack contain so much power? Arisa’s face hardened as she suffered great damage despite the legendary armor she wore. She sensed her impending death and closed her eyes, expecting the black flames that killed Tarma in the National Competition to engulf her.

However, the flames didn’t explode. Instead, Grid recovered his sword and quickly left this place to avoid the Earthquake spell that Boutian had used. The other rankers chased Grid. During the time in which Arisa had been taking an antidote, the rankers used all types of buffs that increased their power by 200%.

No matter how strong Grid was, the power of 30 rankers at level 300 wouldn’t be easy to handle. Therefore, he used a skill for the first time. “Pagma’s Swordsmanship.”

That’s right. So far, Grid had only been using basic attacks, and no one in Kir’s Company had noticed this until now.

“Wave.”

“Avoid it!”

Link, Kill, Wave, Pinnacle, Transcend, and so on—most of Pagma’s Swordsmanship had been exposed to the world. As such, all the talented rankers were prepared to cope with Pagma’s Swordsmanship and were quick to respond. They hurriedly moved their bodies away from the range of Wave’s sword energy.

“Over here!” Boutian cried out as he hid among the elves like a rat and continued using magic. Arisa and the rankers rushed to his side and hid among the elves, grabbing and threatening them with blades to their necks.

“There is a limit to the power of an individual, no matter how strong.”

“I don’t know how you happened to be with the First Knight, but can you rescue all the elves?”

“Stop fighting right now. Then we will give you a few elves as gifts. Let’s leave each other on good terms.”

The selfish members of Kir’s Company deluded themselves.

“XXX.” Grid wasn’t greatly concerned about the elves. The reason Grid didn’t use a wide area skill wasn’t because he was afraid of harming the elves. He just didn’t feel the need to use skills to handle these small fries. “Now it is annoying.”

The Kir members ignited Grid’s rage again by taking the elves as hostages, and the cost for it was disastrous. The Enlightenment Sword was filled with a red and purple energy as the Hero King’s fighting energy sublimated the power of the Undefeated King. Grid used 100,000 Army Massacre Sword—a skill which had been used against the dragon that had suddenly emerged in the National Competition.

“You—!”

The company members were astonished that such a ruthless skill was being used. Arisa hurriedly shouted, “Are you insane? Are you planning to kill all the elves?”

“What?” Grid jeered but his eyes weren’t smiling. “The elves won’t die from this.”

His sword tilted, and the intense aura around his body shone like a sun shortly before exploding.

“100,000 Army.”

Boutian was the person Grid viewed as the strongest in Kir’s Company, and that’s why he was the target. Grid’s sharp sword aimed at Boutian.

“Wait! Wouldn’t you rather use that power to help the First Knight?” Kir’s voice suddenly rang out. “I don’t know what the story is but isn’t the First Knight accompanying you right now? Her life is being threatened by the Death God.”

Grid paused the activation of the skill and spoke in a tone that was as calm as possible, “Death God?”

Then Grid’s gaze shifted and saw that Mercedes’ bright hair had lost its pigments as she was trapped in the dark curtain. A scythe held by a bone-white hand aimed for her neck.

“That player is a master of defense and has the power to deal a definitive death to the target. I am convinced that his special way of fighting is beyond the most powerful NPC...” Kir looked at Mercedes and Knight while explaining, only to close his mouth before finishing.

Mercedes suddenly unfolded bright wings of light and raised her sword. The darkness surrounding her on all sides was broken, and a pillar of gray soared up.

[Your party member Knight has died.]

“...What?” Kir approximately knew what Mercedes’ and Knight’s skills were like, so he hadn’t expected such results. Unlike what he bragged, he hadn’t thought that Knight would win, just that he would buy more time. However, what was this result?

Kir couldn’t shut his mouth as the landscape turned red. It was the aftermath of the massacre.

“100,000 Army Massacre Sword.”

There were 30 strikes in one second. The strongest energy blades poured down at a speed that couldn’t be pursued by the eyes, damaging Boutian and everyone in the area. Blood soaked the forest.