

Overgeared 871

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[Dantalian's Knowledge Fragment]

[★Fighting Knowledge ★]

-A fragment containing the fighting knowledge of the 25th great demon, Dantalian.

Most of the knowledge is lost, but it is far beyond the knowledge of an ordinary human.

Martial arts will evolve one step further.

Knowledge Acquisition Conditions: A martial artist type profession.

Knowledge Acquired: All skill level +1. 10% increase in attack speed, 20% increase in evasion.]

'This is a great demon's ability?'

Four years after becoming Pagma's Descendant, none of Grid's skills had reached the master level. It was extremely difficult to raise skill levels, which meant that the value of the Dantalian's Knowledge Fragment was unreasonably high. This wasn't even all of the knowledge.

Despite the two levels he gained from killing Hill, Grid had been disappointed when only one old booklet dropped. Then his thoughts changed after reading the description of the booklet. Rather than disappointed, he was now satisfied, and his admiration for it was far beyond his satisfaction.

'Is there something like a blacksmith's knowledge fragment? In any case, this knowledge would be a great help to Regas.'

Grid didn't think about how much it could be sold for and the people it could be sold to. He had no intention of taking anything from his colleagues. Right now, he wasn't frantic about immediate gains. It wasn't because he had become a pushover who easily gave things to others. Instead, it was because he was certain that the stronger his colleagues and friends became, the more they could be of great help to him and his precious ones.

Grid judged that the benefits gained from Regas acquiring Dantalian's Knowledge Fragment were much higher than the value of a few coins. In the first place, he could get money easily.

'Regas will pay me back like Jishuka and Yura.'

That's right. Grid was unconsciously making a project where the Overgeared members would be indebted to him.

[The duration of Item Combination is over.]

[Belial's Staff and the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires have been separated.]

[The cooldown time of Item Combination is reset by the effect of the skill 'Divinity'.]

The spear reverted back to the form of a sword and a staff. Aliburn was stunned as he watched Grid kill Hill and return the staff to his inventory. It was due to the familiar earrings hanging from the black-haired man's ears. Aliburn was sure that the tasteful ivory earrings were Dark Bus' earrings—the ones he'd worn during the mission to infiltrate the Saharan Empire. It was the strongest artifact with the Blackening ability, which turned the wearer into a half-demonkin once every 12 hours...

'Is it him?' Aliburn had heard the name of the Overgeared King.

It was impossible not to know the famous person who built up a new kingdom. Yet he was also the person who killed Dark Bus...?

'No, it is strange to think that he killed Dark Bus. Dark Bus was performing a mission to drive the empire into chaos. There was no reason for him to be killed. It doesn't add up...'

Aliburn denied it only to be surprised again. He noticed the ring that Grid was wearing on his finger. It was a thin black ring. This was Dark Bus' Ring, which consumed the wearer's mana and exploited the dispel function. Aliburn could no longer deny it. Dark Bus' killer... He had to acknowledge that the Overgeared King was the Yatan's Servants' Slaughterer that he had been searching for.

'He is a more famous person than I expected!' Aliburn was ready to chew on Grid's skull.

Simultaneously, some people cheered after seeing Grid kill Hill while others felt desperate.

"Overgeared King! The Hero King and Yatan's Servants' Slaughterer!" Aliburn's scream soared into the sky.

It had only been two minutes. Despite seeing Grid take care of Hill in that short amount of time that the items were combined, Aliburn didn't shrink back. Grid was able to sense that Aliburn was a tough opponent.

'He knows that I'm tired.'

Grid had already exhausted skills like Blackening on the way to the Vatican and then shortly after arriving there. Having placed Irene and Lord's safety as the top priority, he had used most of his trump cards at the beginning. It also meant that Hill was strong and Grid wanted to get rid of some of the enemy's overwhelming numbers.

In fact, the battle was going as he intended. Pope Damian's appearance had demoralized the black magicians earlier, and now they were on the verge of losing their fighting spirit after witnessing Hill's death. Currently, the black magicians attack power and defense were lowered.

However, Aliburn's momentum had risen. He wasn't weak enough to be shaken by Hill's death, and he was aware that Grid had consumed a lot of power.

"You just caught me off guard with your divinity skill. But even the Hero King can't exert divine skills consecutively."

Aliburn didn't care about the power of a divine skill because he was familiar with them. He pointed a finger at Grid. The tips of Aliburn's long fingernails were blackened, but it wasn't nail polish. His fingernails had been stained by the blood of countless humans. Just like most of Yatan's Servants,

Aliburn was a terrible murderer. He could slaughter innocent children for his own ambitions and for the church.

“Warning Cannon.”

It took only 0.5 seconds for the black magic power to focus on his fingertips. Then took him another 0.5 seconds to fire it. It was one second in total. The focused magic power gun that Aliburn fired destroyed all the Rebecca paladins in its path. Its ultimate target was Grid.

Warning Cannon, Warning Curtain, Warning Sphere, and so on—this transcendent black magic had been presented to Aliburn by the true First Servant, Amora. It allowed Aliburn to overflow with confidence.

“This is a treasure that I kept as a means to harm Rebecca’s Daughters! It is an absolute power that can’t be sustained even by the Hero King!” Aliburn shouted even before it hit.

Soon after, Grid was swept up in the explosion. The wall of the banquet hall where Grid was standing couldn’t withstand the shock and collapsed. The ground was broken, and dust filled the whole area, hiding everyone from view.

“Grid!”

“Your Majesty!”

Shouts rang out from all over the place. They witnessed the power of Aliburn’s magic cannon and thought it was unlikely that Grid was safe. Pope Damian and Lord were the same even though they were people who knew Grid’s skill and trusted him more than anyone else in the world.

“Father!” Lord yelled in a trembling voice while feelings of anxiety rose within him. The child wanted to run over to his father.

“He is okay,” Irene said as she grabbed onto Lord. Her hands were no longer trembling. All her fears from the past had been wiped out the moment Grid appeared. Her trust in Grid was absolute, and Damian and Lord were unable to argue against it.

“Phew.” As if rewarding them for their faith, Grid emerged safe and sound. His ring shone red as soon as he escaped from the dust. It was Dark Bus’ Ring, which dispelled the attack and became hotter as it devoured Grid’s mana. This was the sign of an explosion that was soon to occur. Once the ring absorbed 5,000 of the wearer’s mana, Skill Dispel had to be used two times in 10 minutes or it would cause enormous damage to the wearer.

‘I need to dispel another attack,’ Grid grumbled inwardly and sent a provocative gaze to Aliburn. He was planning to fight back after neutralizing Aliburn’s next round of attack. However, Aliburn was unexpectedly calm and just stared at Grid silently without using any magic. It gave off a creepy feeling.

‘Since when?’

The other black magicians had also stopped using magic. They remained silent and were being hit one-sidedly by the Rebecca members and their knights. The momentum of the Rebecca members rose, but Grid’s spine was cold.

‘Do they know about Dark Bus’ Ring?’

That's right. The members of the Yatan Church knew the characteristics of Dark Bus' Ring and were inducing it to explode. So, of course, they wouldn't give Grid a chance to dispel a skill.

[The amount of magic power accumulated in Dark Bus' Ring is too high. Dark Bus' Ring can't endure it.]

[Warning. There are 30 seconds left until Dark Bus' Ring explodes. The explosion will permanently destroy Dark Bus' Ring, and the wearer will lose their life.]

"F...!" It was a terrible situation! Grid barely contained the curse when he thought about Lord and Irene's presence and shouted urgently, "Damian! Attack me with a skill!"

The Skill Dispel attached to Dark Bus' Ring was difficult to use. He had to directly block the skill by making the ring come into contact with it. Dark Bus' Ring rating was not legendary but unique because its utilization was low and the penalty was high.

"Hah? U-Understood!"

Grid suddenly wanted Damian to attack him...? Damian found it hard to understand, but he followed Grid's orders anyway. However, he failed to activate the skill.

"Warning Curtain."

It was due to Aliburn's intervention. He created an enchantment that made all living things in it unable to use skills.

[Warning. There are 20 seconds left until Dark Bus' Ring explodes.]

"Damn!"

In the end, Grid was forced to take special measures. He had to give up the ring. Although the ring was definitely a valuable item, Irene and Lord would be in danger if he were too greedy. He had no choice, but avoiding the penalty wasn't that easy.

[You can't take Dark Bus' Ring off.]

There were 15 seconds left until the ring would explode, yet he couldn't remove it from his finger. 10 seconds, 9 seconds, 8 seconds...

"Shit!" Grid's nervousness reached the peak. Then a skeleton emerged from beyond the collapsed outer wall and used magic. A total of six magic power pillars sprang up, sweeping through the black magicians surrounding Irene and Lord. Grid instinctively reached out toward a pillar.

[The Skill Dispel option of Dark Bus' Ring has been activated!]

[Dark Bus' Ring has removed the target skill. All the mana accumulated in Dark Bus' Ring has been consumed, and it has entered the resting state.]

The ring fell silent four seconds before it was going to explode.

"Pant... Pant... Pant..." Feeling like he had regained 10 years, Grid looked away. He held a killing intent toward the lich who suddenly appeared and shot magic toward Irene and Lord.

"Mumud!" Agnus was hiding somewhere and watching the situation...?

“Crazy jerk!” Grid’s mind was filled with anger when he heard another voice.

“Warning Sphere.” Aliburn used new magic. He was upset about losing a great opportunity to get rid of Grid. Dozens of black spheres formed around Aliburn. The number of spheres wasn’t something that the Overgeared Knights, the God Hands assisting Kasim, and the already summoned Noe, Randy, and the Overgeared Skeletons could handle.

“Get out of the way!” Aliburn’s purpose was to destroy the Rebecca Church and increase the influence of the Yatan Church. It was a bonus to warn the kingdoms all over the continent by killing their royal families. Yet the king of a small nation was grabbing at his ankles? The spheres of darkness, which were flying in all directions, threatened not only Grid’s group but all the other royalty as well. Aliburn planned to accomplish his purpose after cleaning up everyone around him.

He still had power. The new power that Amoract had given him prior to the invasion could achieve his purpose. The Hero King? The Overgeared King? Hill had already weakened this unexpected variable—Grid. So, Aliburn judged that Grid wasn’t a big threat.

‘It is the end.’ Rose smiled.

Agnus’ sudden betrayal, the little prince’s unexpected skills, the imperial prince’s ability, Damian’s escape, Grid’s appearance, and so on—she had felt uneasy about these unexpected variables which occurred in succession but not anymore. She believed that Yatan’s Third Servant, Aliburn—the powerful and clever NPC who planned out this Vatican raid—would trample on Grid, Damian, and Agnus like they were insects.

In fact, Grid felt a serious crisis.

‘There are too many!’

The number of dark spheres reached several hundred. He used Freely Move to reach Aliburn, but Aliburn didn’t stop casting. Instead, he endured Grid’s swordsmanship with his high health and defense and continued to create more spheres. Once the spheres—which contained magic power—exploded, the whole area would be devastated.

Grid could somehow survive with his various titles, item effects, and passive skills, but Irene, Lord, and the young Overgeared knights were the problem. He might lose all of them.

‘I can’t summon any knights because of the ward blocking outside summoning. What should I do?’

The enemy was too strong, and the situation was the worst. Grid was at a disadvantage since he had to protect everyone.

‘Maybe...’

From beginning to end, had the Yatan Church’s victory already been decided? The players couldn’t put up a resistance anymore, and it was the worst ending...

‘Am I destined to lose Irene and Lord?’

Grid turned pale at the thought and looked around. His gaze fell on the hilt that suddenly showed up through Aliburn’s robe.

[Sword Stuck in the Rock]

A quest arrow appeared above the item with the golden name. It looked exactly like the arrow which had floated above Lifael's Spear the first time he saw it a few years ago... Grid instinctively grabbed the hilt. Aliburn had been watching the dark spheres with satisfied eyes when he suddenly panicked. "You, what are you...?"

"Legendary Blacksmith's Appraisal!"

[The blacksmith who became a legend can appraise items with an excellent discerning eye. If a hidden feature exists in the target item, it will be found.]

Ttiring~

[You have discovered a hidden feature in the item!]

[!!!! The first holy sword of humanity. It was sealed in the stone by the original seven malignant saints!]

[★Hidden Quest★ Crossroad of Good and Evil has occurred!]

[The power of God's Command has shattered the Stone of Original Sin!]

[The quest item First Incomplete Holy Sword has been obtained!]

"What?"

Light exploded, and the darkness was cleared. The hundreds of black spheres floating in the air vanished like they were a lie. Aliburn's face filled with consternation for the first time.

"Grid!"

"I..."

Grid's and Damian's gazes met in the air as Grid confirmed the contents of the hidden quest while Damian confirmed the contents of the newly updated Recapture the Holy Sword quest.

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It was a quest that could be cleared. Damian was convinced about it. His confidence hadn't changed even when he was trapped in the barrier, when he was caught by Hill, or when Aliburn summoned hundreds of black spheres.

'Based on the worldview, this crisis must be passed.'

He was sure it would be maintained even if Grid hadn't shown up. In fact, Rebecca's Daughters weren't using White Transformation as promised. If they did, the momentum was likely to change. Thus, Damian had been waiting for the story to reach a specific section—the moment when Rebecca's Daughters would go out with all their strength.

However, the situation went differently from Damian's expectations. Before Rebecca's Daughters could move, Grid changed things dramatically. Something happened the moment Grid touched the sword in Aliburn's arms. It was the sword that was sealed into the rock.

A brilliant light exploded, and the image of the sword Grid had drawn out didn't fade away. Instead, it became complete.

"What?"

Pagma's Descendant was interfering with the symbol of the Rebecca Church?

'What are his qualifications?'

The keepsakes of Fifth Pope Franz—the Holy Light Set—were made by Pagma, so it wasn't strange for them to be associated with Grid.

'Did Pagma have anything to do with the first holy sword?'

Ttiring~

Damian was feeling confused when a notification window popped up.

[The Recapture the Holy Sword quest has been updated to Recapture the Holy Sword (2)!]

[Recapture the Holy Sword (2)]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

The sealed holy sword, which was in the Yatan Church's hands, has been liberated with the power of the seven malignant saints.

The seven malignant saints, who wanted to move away from being half-gods and become true gods, sought the sword in the past.

The Holy Sword is the symbol of Rebecca and proof of the pope!

You must retrieve it!

Be wary of the evil person seeking the throne of a god!

Quest Clear Conditions: Take back the Sealed Holy Sword.

Quest Clear Reward: The blessing of Goddess Rebecca, God Judar, and God Dominion. Affinity with the elders will reach the peak, and you will be respected by all believers.

Quest Failure: Many believers will be disillusioned with the ineffective church leadership and will leave the church. You won't be eligible to serve as the pope. Goddess Rebecca will be disappointed in you. Level -10.]

'The seven malignant saints? Where did this suddenly come from?'

For the majority of ordinary players, the seven malignant saints episode was still uncharted territory. Even Overgeared King Grid had only recently learned about this story. Additionally, he only knew because Kraugel told him. However, Damian wasn't an ordinary player. He was a ranked who had a formerly hidden class, and he was the pope of the Rebecca Church. Just like Kraugel, he had dominated many quests. No, perhaps Damian was a player with even more knowledge and information sources than Kraugel. He knew that the malignant saints were absolutely evil.

'They became half-gods due to the gods' favor, but they weren't satisfied and aimed for the gods' position...'

He had heard that one of them had inherited the power of light from Goddess Rebecca. Just thinking about the seven malignant saints made Damian angry. How dare they betray Goddess Rebecca who cared for humanity with love and compassion? From the time he became the Goddess' Agent until the day he became a pope, Damian had learned many things about Rebecca's work. He admired Rebecca and didn't like the seven villains who had tried to hurt her by betraying her.

'Wait...' Damian was astonished. Weren't the quest's contents updated the moment Grid touched the holy sword? Then that meant the mention of the 'evil person' who used the power of the seven malignant saints was referring to Grid.

"Grid!" Damian felt a chill as his voice entered Grid's ears. Grid was also looking at a new quest. It contained a powerful temptation that was causing him to feel conflicted.

[Crossroad of Good and Evil]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

After all sorts of adventures, you have won the power, God's Command, that the fourth malignant saint, Taren, left for later generations.

You can hear Taren's voice, "The light was so bright that I couldn't see the darkness hidden beyond it."

The voice of the War God Zeratul is also heard, "Human. This isn't Taren's arrangement. It is Dominion's and my arrangement. Don't listen to the voice of the corrupted one."

The Incomplete Holy Sword is starting to be eroded by the power of God's Command.

The Incomplete Holy Sword is a symbol of Rebecca.

Please make a choice.

Will you rely on the power of the seven malignant saints to make the Incomplete Holy Sword yours or return it to the Rebecca Church?

Pioneer your own path!

Rewards for Gaining the Incomplete Holy Sword:

The 'Holy Sword of the 4th Evil' will be acquired.

* Your race will evolve from a human into a half-god. A half-god is a race that transcends humanity and approaches being a god. There will be room for great increases of all abilities.

* The passive skill God's Command is strengthened. The probability of activating God's Command will become 100%. However, a critical hit won't be applied to skills that God's Command is used on.

* The skill, Corrupted Holy Sword, will unlock.

* You will be cursed by Goddess Rebecca, God Dominion, God Judar, and God Zeratul.

* Affinity with the Rebecca Church, Dominion Church, and Judar Church will fall to minus values.

* Followers of the Warrior God will chase you.

Rewards for Returning the Incomplete Holy Sword:

Goddess Rebecca's blessing. Affinity with the Rebecca Church will rise to the maximum.

* Affinity with the Rebecca Church is already at the maximum.]

Duguen!Duguen!Duguen!

Grid's heart thumped as he read the contents of the quest. His greed wriggled under the enormous stimulation. Grid's original heart was crying.

'Grab the Holy Sword!

'A half-god, half-god!

'No one will be able to beat me! I will reign forever!

'The whole world will see me everyday, and people will look up to me.

'My first love Ahyoung will feel regretful every night. Huhuhut.

'What about those guys who bullied me?

'This is a unique opportunity. It is dangerous now. A strong person like Kraugel or Agnus can take my position at any time.

'What about those people hoping for the downfall of the Overgeared Kingdom? What if I am deprived of everything and return to that awful life?'

Duguen!Duguen!Duguen!

His conflict was biased. Grid's greed was too strong, despite receiving many rewards and overcoming his past. He gripped the holy sword harder.

"Grid!"

Grid heard Damian's shout. Damian sincerely respected and envied Grid. Grid liked him too. It sometimes felt akin to a dream that he shared a mutual admiration with a great person like Damian. However, it wasn't enough. Grid didn't let go of the holy sword in his hand.

"Grid! Wake up!"

Then he heard Isabel's cry. Isabel—she was a poor woman. Grid had saved her, and she gained happiness. The feelings of gratitude, love, and respect she felt for Grid were a great source of strength and pride for him. He felt a bit sorry to let her down.

"I..." Grid's tight grip on the holy sword loosened slightly. Still, this only lasted for a moment. Grid increased his strength again because he couldn't suppress the greed inside him.

"Your Majesty!"

“Father!”

“...!”

He heard Irene’s and Lord’s cries. That’s when Grid’s mind awakened, and he shifted his gaze from the sword for the first time. The first woman who loved him—she was the woman who devoted herself to him and taught him what happiness and rest were. Additionally, there was the fruit of his love with her—the child who followed his back.

Then other faces appeared in his mind—Huroi, Yura, Jishuka, Regas, Pon, Lauel, Peak Sword, and Toon.

“!..”

The biased conflict changed. He suppressed his boiling desire and shouted with all his strength, “I can’t risk my family and colleagues...!”

What was he doing alone? His people would suffer if he gave into his desires and became hostile to the world. He didn’t want that. Right now, his life wasn’t his own.

“Damian!” Grid shouted and threw the holy sword into the air. Pope Damian caught the turning sword, and a bright smile appeared on Damian’s face.

Phew, it was really fortunate. What would he have done if Grid had become the second coming of a malignant saint? It was the worst situation that Damian didn’t even want to imagine.

“This... Stop all of them!” Aliburn shouted urgently, overwhelmed by the divine power released from the holy sword. He had lost his calm expression long ago, but he was already too late. Yatan’s Servants and the black magicians weren’t able to react yet.

“Goddess’ Will.” The pope waved the first holy sword, and a divine power was manifested. The sword glowed in the darkness, getting rid of all the dark curses and cutting the Yatan’ Servants and black magicians in its path.

“Kuock!!”

The first holy sword was a weapon against the great demons. Yatan’s Servants couldn’t endure its power. Aliburn suffered a terrible blow and collapsed, while Grid started dancing in response to Damian’s move.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship!”

“You!” Aliburn glared at Grid with bloodshot eyes. The grudge he felt toward the person who made all his plans useless was too great to be described. “I will die and take you to hell with me!”

“Kill!”

“Kuk...!Kuaaaaak!”

“H-Hik...!”

“The Third Servant!”

The deathly screams of the wicked being who threatened thousands of Rebecca members drove the black magicians into chaos. They ran away while the Rebecca paladins chased them.

“Pant... Pant...”

Aliburn disappeared in a gray pillar of light, and Grid stumbled. The physical and mental fatigue he felt while fighting to protect his precious ones were tremendous. The sudden drop of stamina meant it wasn't strange if he fell down immediately. However, Grid stood firm. He had to hold out his wife and son.

“Your Majesty!”

“Father!”

“It's fortunate. I'm glad you're safe.”

As he embraced them, the smile on Grid's face as warm as the portrait of the goddess. The Rebecca Church's elders gazed at Grid with a different expression in their eyes. Meanwhile, Isabel looked like she was on the verge of deifying Grid.

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Grid touched the red-eyed Irene gently. It was an attitude like he was handling the most precious treasure in the world.

“I was praying that you were safe the entire time I headed here. Thank you. I'm really thankful that you're safe.”

“Your Majesty...”

Grid's eyes, hand gestures, and warm words gave Irene great happiness. Irene's affection for Grid was now close to infinitely deep.

“You don't know how happy I am to be here...”

If Irene had been alone in the crisis, she would've felt more sorry than joyful. She would've felt guilty that she had forced the king to come all the way here while he was busy taking care of the country and its people. However, Irene wasn't alone in today's crisis. Her son Lord, the loyal Kasim and Chucksley, and the young knights who were the future of the country were all in danger. Irene felt a deep gratitude and respect to Grid who had saved all of them.

“On the first day we met, you were fighting to save someone,” Irene recalled. Those had been the days when she was just the eldest daughter of an earl. Back then, Doran was still alive, and Grid had helped rescued her when she was kidnapped by the Yatan Church. “I first heard about you when I was made the ruler of Winston.”

She had heard there was a hero who saved the powerless people from an evil lord, including an old blacksmith called Khan. That hero was Grid. After that, Grid saved Irene who had once again been kidnapped by the Yatan Church, rescued Reinhardt which had been invaded by golems, and saved the 250,000 residents of Pangea on the East Continent. Grid was a person who only lived for others. This was his life.

"I sincerely admire you." Irene blushed.

"Hum. Hum hum." Grid sweated and coughed with embarrassment. He felt somewhat uncomfortable every time he saw Irene misunderstanding himself. It made him worry that Irene would one day be disappointed if she knew his real self. Irene buried herself in his chest and whispered, "Please know... I would love you even if you weren't a hero."

She realized it when she saw the brilliantly shining sword being eaten by the darkness Grid emitted. Irene would've cheered Grid on even if he abandoned herself and Lord to walk down the corrupted path.

"You are the most precious person in the world," she said in a voice full of conviction.

Grid was filled with joy. "Irene..."

Just like Irene, Grid felt infinite affection when he looked at her. No more long words were necessary. The two of them shared a hot kiss without caring about the gazes of other people. At this moment, the emotions they felt were completely mutual. Of course, they didn't forget about Lord. The two people both had one hand wrapped around one of Lord's small hands. This 'family' gave the child peace of mind.

"Father. Mother..."

The parents, who loved each other more than anyone else, had a positive impact on Lord. Today, the child had seen and learned many things—the patience to swallow a grudge for the sake of the cause, the loyalty of a retainer and the duty of a ruler, the wisdom of a woman and the love of a mother, the pope's righteousness and power, his helplessness, and...

'Father's strength and...'

Then Lord's gaze moved to the skeleton standing silently nearby. Several of its ribs were broken, and there was a large crack in its skull. It was Lich Mumud.

'...Sadness.'

Was it because Lord was young that he could see the sadness, regret, and hatred in Agnus' eyes as he looked at Lord and his mother? Additionally, Lord felt that Mumud was lonelier than anyone else. Lord knew that everyone had emotional wounds, just like how his teacher Kasim resented the empire and how his mother feared the Yatan Church.

'I need to be someone who can help with the wounds.'

This was his path. Lord's way of thinking was established through this incident. If his father set up a kingdom and was walking the path of a guardian, then Lord's role would be to assist his father and take care of the missing parts.

'I will make more people stand by Father in the future.'

Lord believed it. King of Shadows Kasim, Pope Damian, Sword Saint Kraugel, and Farmer Piaro—he believed that with these great teachers, he would become much stronger later on. Lord didn't doubt that he would overcome today's helplessness.

'Stronger, I will also become stronger.' Someday, he would stand side by side with his father. 'I have to work harder for Father.'

Normally, the prince watched for an opportunity to weaken the king while the king kept an eye on the prince. It was a sad reality. As history already proved, the relationship between a king and a prince was very different from the relationship between commoner parents and their children. It was like the cruel relationship between an old lion and a young lion. That's right. The young prince's pledge to be loyal to the king was a very important event in history.

Grid's kiss with Irene had finished. Then Grid followed his son's gaze and his expression distorted like a demon.

'That bastard is still...!'

He belatedly noticed Lich Mumud standing motionless while gazing at his body. Grid didn't know about the living Mumud, but Lich Mumud had become Agnus' limb. Agnus was a clear enemy, so Lich Mumud was a dangerous enemy that Grid had to watch out for.

"Agnus! Come out!" Grid's shout rang out in the sky of early dawn. He pulled out the Enlightenment Sword and rushed toward Lich Mumud.

"Father! That skeleton isn't the enemy!"

"Your Majesty! That lich helped us!"

Irene and Lord cried out urgently, but Grid was already close to Mumud. Moreover, he also couldn't accept Irene and Lord's claims so easily. Mumud had helped Irene and Lord? It was something that Grid couldn't understand. He thought that Lord and Irene were mistaken. The Enlightenment Sword clashed against the magic shield that Lich Mumud had created. The already damaged walls nearby crumbled from the black flames, but Lich Mumud's shield was complete.

"Where is your master?" Grid gritted his teeth at the thought of Agnus. This person was hiding his body somewhere and laughing at Grid's suffering wife and son!

"..." Lich Mumud didn't respond and stared at Grid with deep eyes. There was no counterattack. It felt like he was ridiculing Grid.

"Agnus!"

Agnus was a crazy person, making this situation dangerous. Despite this, Grid was appalled and upset at the thought that Agnus enjoyed Irene and Lord's suffering. So, Grid's offensive became more powerful. He didn't care about the small amount of stamina he had recovered and continued attacking Mumud. In the meantime, he kept the God Hands, the light elemental, and his pets beside Lord and Irene, showing how worried he was about them.

"..." As Lich Mumud stood among the storm of sword attacks and explosions, he recalled his life. What had he been doing back when he was the same age as the young prince? He had been an orphan who didn't know his parents' faces and had to beg for food. Had he ever tried protecting anyone like the young prince before him had done?

There was one person—his wife whom he'd met in Siren. She had been his only love whom he'd promised to make happy forever.

Clack...Clack clack... Mumud's jaw moved, and his large cracked skull shook. The sad memories were to blame. There was a teacher who had raised him. Mumud had followed him like a father but was then betrayed. He'd left the wound of betrayal behind him when he met his love, but he became sick with an incurable illness after that.

Clack!Clack clack!

Ahh, yes. Mumud had lived in pain and died. There were people he loved, but it was different from an immediate family. He had found no peace in his life. Death was his rest, and he had hoped the death would last forever.

"Mumud!"

"..."

Yet a voice had pulled him out of death. As if he wasn't worthy of rest, Mumud had been given a new pain like he was born to suffer. Clack clack!Clack!Mumud's jaw moved more rapidly.

"Agnus!" Grid's eyes turned toward Agnus while attacking Mumud. Agnus was a half skeleton, which was the sign of turning into a lich.

Who was he fighting with?

Grid had this question but didn't think further about it.

"You!" Grid had clearly seen Lich Mumud cast magic in Irene and Lord's direction. If he hadn't used Skill Dispel, Irene and Lord might not be in the world right now. "Die!" Grid's extreme killing intent was directed to Agnus. It happened before Irene and Lord could shout anything.

"Mumud! Why aren't you killing that bastard? Eh? Kik! Kikikik! Kihahahahat!" Agnus crossed the line first. The silently defending Mumud immediately responded. He hated Agnus but was forced to follow his orders.

"Kuk...!" Grid was about to fly to Agnus only to be struck by magic in his side. It was a sphere of mana that decreased Grid's health by thousands.

"Asshole!"

"Kuahahahahat!"

The chaos reached the peak. Grid had comforted his family, but then another enemy had appeared. So, he had been unable to confirm his quest rewards. He didn't even know what he had gotten from killing Aliburn. Agnus was the same. He had succeeded in raiding Silvenas, but he had run to the banquet hall without checking what he had gained. It was because he wanted to make sure the powerless woman was okay.

"Ohhhhh!"

"Come!"

The shockwave generated by the conflict was incomparable to before. It wasn't just the already collapsed banquet hall. Even the Vatican was shaken. The residents of the village below the mountain were worried that a landslide could occur.

[Chapter 874](#)

There were people who were physiologically disgusting. Grid was one such person to Agnus. According to one theory, Grid had a past that resembled Agnus'. Grid hadn't experienced something as serious as failing to protect his beloved, which led to her death, killing those responsible, and mourning his lover afterward.

'He also suffered!' Agnus knew that it was difficult to compare the pain that individuals suffered. The bullies who had harassed him and devastated his lover were an example. They had used his palm as an ashtray every morning and laughed at him, but hadn't he endured the pain and turned the pages of his textbook?

Yes, pain was a relative and selfish thing. The pain he suffered couldn't be considered any worse than what Grid had suffered. This was the actual reason why he found Grid physiologically disgusting.

'I can't understand!' Why didn't Grid spend his life abusing others after what happened to him? 'Why does he look so happy?'

Grid was always with someone—his family, lovers, and friends. They were always smiling while standing with him. This was difficult for Agnus to understand. Had Grid forgotten the days when they were powerless? They were now in a position to trample on people rather than embrace them. People like them had to be alone.

[You have suffered 8,900 damage.]

[Your health is less than 10%. You have used Silvenas' Power that is attached to the Rune of Death. The nature of the dark demonkin who can assimilate with darkness has manifested, hiding your appearance and status.]

[Your contractor Baal is happy.]

-Evil that uses personal beliefs to devour evil. It is the opposite of my former contractor. Once again, I did well in choosing you. How interesting.

[Affinity with 1st Great Demon Baal has risen by 10.]

The notification windows appeared before Angus, but he didn't confirm them. His hateful gaze only chased Grid.

"You're an incompetent person who can't protect your precious people!"

Why wasn't Grid's mind dark like Agnus'? Why didn't he choose to be alone? Why didn't he concentrate on the precious ones he had earned and embrace all the little people? At the very least, Agnus didn't like this. He hated Grid. Agnus had just disappeared from Grid's eyes when there was an explosion of black flames from the Enlightenment Sword.

The splash damage caused new damage to Agnus who was hiding his body.

[You have suffered serious damage!]

[You are in a half-lich state. You have a resistance to death for the duration of this transformation.]

[You have survived!]

It was a gray dawn. Agnus' ribs were cracked as he hid in the shadow of a slanted pillar. He was in danger of losing his balance. This was a crossroad of life and death. It was an urgent battle situation where his head could be blown away at any time. The usual Agnus would be laughing madly, expressing his joy at exhilarating moments that made him forget the awful reality.

However, it was different now. The only emotions that could be seen on Agnus' face were confusion and pain. Agnus wasn't confused over protecting the hateful Grid's family. He had protected them because he projected his dead lover onto them, thus Agnus had no regrets about that.

Rather, the origin of the pain and confusion Agnus was feeling right now was Grid specifically. Why was Grid so different from him? Was Agnus the one who was wrong?

'No! No!'

"You are wrong!" Agnus' sword penetrated the darkness and stabbed Grid's side. It contained a powerful curse which weakened all the resistances that Grid had. In particular, Grid's dark resistance was completely destroyed.

"Cough!" Grid coughed up blood and was reminded of the notification windows that rose a few minutes ago.

[The goddess of light, Rebecca is awaiting your response.]

[You have once again been given an opportunity to gain great power through the goddess' blessing.]

[War God Zeratul is feeling satisfied with your choice.]

[War God Zeratul supports the goddess' affection toward you.]

Like Agnus, Grid had yet to check his notification windows. From the first day they met till this moment, Agnus was always hurting someone. Grid disliked this type of person who could trample on others easily and feel bliss while doing so. Now Grid's precious family members were sacrifices for Agnus' joy?

"Crazy jerk!" A desire to kill bubbled up inside Grid. He felt a sense of responsibility to kill Agnus. The killing intent Grid felt toward Agnus was real, and the fighting energy around him became thicker.

"Wave!" Waves of sword energy stretched out around Grid. He was using this wide-area skill to capture Agnus who had suddenly become invisible.

"...There!" Grid detected Agnus. It was when Grid felt that some of the waves were being blocked by something, Then Grid focused and started a sword dance—Pagma's Swordsmanship, Pinnacle Kill. The manifestation of the fusion swordsmanship was an obvious mistake though.

"Kuk...!"

Flop! Grid stopped the sword dance as his legs weakened. He had been too agitated that he overlooked the state of his stamina.

[You are on the verge of running out of stamina. You can't use any combat skills.]

"Overgeared... Corn..."

Grid urgently needed to recover his stamina by communicating with his unicorn. It was the first thing he thought of, but how could he communicate with the unicorn during the battle? His enemy wasn't a fool, nor was he dull-headed... especially not the enemy he was dealing with right now!

"Kikikik! Kihahahahat!" Agnus' body was penetrated by Wave, and the darkness was removed. Half of Agnus' body was just a bunch of white bones, but his momentum was fierce as his disheveled hair moved in the wind.

Grid felt a sense of crisis. Now that he'd placed the God Hands, Noe, Randy, the Overgeared Skeletons, and the light elemental in the role of protecting Irene and Lord, there was no one left who could defend him. Moreover, it was hard for him to even move his fingertips.

"Grid!"

With his blurry vision, Grid could see Agnus charging toward him.

"...!!"

"...!!!"

The surroundings were noisy. He could hear the voices of people talking, but the contents didn't enter his ears.

'Why?'

Would he die like this? No, his opponent was exhausted and on the verge of death. Agnus' use of Lich Transformation could be considered his last resort.

'Maybe he still has his immortality and Bentao's Mockery remaining...'

Grid painfully opened the Rune of Darkness, using Cray's Power which absorbed 100% of the damage done to the target. Determined to maintain his life against Agnus, Grid swung his sword in a basic attack. He still had the effects of the First King title, Tiramet's Power, and his immortality. So, he judged that he could win if he continued fighting.

In the first place, Grid was in a position where he just had to keep enduring. In order to protect Irene and Lord, he absolutely couldn't collapse. Grid pledged this firmly while swinging his sword. Meanwhile, Agnus used an attack skill as he plunged through Grid's basic attack and hit Grid's body.

The two people, who were trying to harm each other, tangled together. Then there was a flash of light. Compared to the past, its strength was now ridiculously weakened, but it was clearly the sword that had hurt Yatan's Third Servant Aliburn.

Grid's and Agnus' eyes turned toward Damian at the same time. Damian had also evolved a step further after regaining the holy sword and preventing the invasion of the Yatan Church. As Grid and Agnus

finally started looking around, Damian said to them, "This is a sacred place that serves the will of the goddess. Stop fighting. In the capacity of the pope, I won't allow any further killing."

"Why?" Grid questioned him. Agnus was the enemy. Putting aside personal feelings, he was still Baal's Contractor. He was a person who should be targeted by the Rebecca Church. So, why didn't Damian take the chance to punish Agnus? Grid couldn't understand it.

Damian pointed to Irene, Lord, and Lich Mumud. "Look."

"...?" Irritated and suspicious, Grid followed Damian's gaze and was shocked. He witnessed Lich Mumud's shield floating in front of Irene and Lord. Lich Mumud was protecting Irene and Lord from the aftermath of Grid's battle with Agnus.

"What..."

Irene and Lord's shouts came to the mind of the troubled Grid. They had said that he was a good skeleton. Lich Mumud protected them...

'Their words were true?'

Why though...? Damian watched Grid's trembling eyes and said carefully, "I understand Grid's feelings, but...let's end the fight for today."

The Rebecca Church saw Baal as an enemy. Baal's former contractor, Pagma, had tried to defend the Hall of Fame, but ultimately, he still sold his soul to the great demon. The Rebecca Church didn't regard Pagma as a hero in his later years and thought that the new Baal's Contractor should be punished.

However, Pope Damian judged that now wasn't the time for it. "I think it is better to leave each other alone today."

Damian didn't know why Agnus had betrayed the Yatan Church and helped them. He wondered about the reason but didn't dare ask. The most important thing was to rectify the situation. He believed a chance for that conversation would come someday. Still, this reason didn't seem enough to satisfy Grid. "What are you up to? Why did you protect my family?"

"Ah? What nonsense are you saying? I never did anything like that."

"Answer seriously!"

"I didn't know it was your family."

"...?"

"I just saw a pretty woman and didn't want her to die. Kikik... I wanted to play with her."

The duration of Lich Transformation had ended, and only death was waiting for Agnus. He didn't want to miss this opportunity when he didn't know if it would come again. This was a great chance for a fight with the Overgeared King Grid while he was unprotected.

"Sigh." Agnus gave a reason that nobody would believe and swept his hair back. He neatly arranged his hair, exposing his cold golden eyes. "Don't speak."

“...?”

“Just fight and kill. Huh? Kik! Kikikik! Kihahahahat!” Agnus broke away from the appearance of politeness and rushed toward Grid. Agnus ignored the pope. Consequently, the Rebecca followers watching quietly couldn’t stay still anymore. Isabel’s spear and the paladins’ sword pierced and stabbed Agnus’ skinny body. Agnus was fully restrained before even reaching Grid.

“Why did you...?” Damian’s lamenting cry rang out, but Agnus didn’t pay any attention to it.

Instead, Agnus’ gaze went back to Irene and Lord who were sad and tearful, before looking at Grid again. “You...”

“...”

“...Become stronger.”

This was the end. Agnus’ body slowly turned to gray after being stabbed by the spear and swords. Mumud followed behind him.

“Skeleton knight...”

‘When will they be saved?’ Lord grew sadder as he saw Agnus’ and Mumud’s sorrow. The red-eyed child tried to hold back his tears.

Then Pope Damian went to talk with the elders. They sent the royalty and the imperial prince away to rest. After that, they started to investigate how they had allowed this invasion to happen and also examine the extent of the damage.

“I saw your struggle. Your Majesty is truly a hero. I was impressed by your moves several times.”

“I’m flattered,” Grid responded passively to 2nd Prince Dulandal’s words and was only able to face the goddess after confirming that Irene and Lord were asleep.

-Hero, bless you.

[Chapter 875](#)

He was sleepy. Today had been extremely long and hard. He lay down in his bed and thought his sleeping cap looked like an angel. Grid felt thankful that this beautiful woman was his wife and that this bright child was his son.

“...”

Grid’s expression was very dark as he stroked their heads carefully. He was also feeling greatly confused.

‘Agnus, why...?’

Irene’s and Lord’s claim about Agnus helping to protect them hadn’t been their misinterpretation. The Rebecca followers, Overgeared knights, and even Pope Damian testified to it. Everyone spoke unanimously. It was thanks to Agnus that Irene and Lord were safe.

‘Why the hell did he do that?’

According to the testimonies, Agnus was originally helping the Yatan Church but betrayed them to help Irene and Lord. Grid could easily guess how much Agnus had lost with this single choice. Why had Agnus saved Irene and Lord while suffering big losses?

'A madman who feels pleasure through fighting and trampling on others...' This was Grid's evaluation of Agnus.

In fact, the Agnus that Grid met was no different from the rumors. He always laughed as he trampled on someone. Yet that madman fought for others? Moreover, they were Grid's wife and son? Grid tried to read Agnus' intentions, but it was impossible. No matter how he thought about it, he couldn't understand why Agnus had sought to protect Irene and Lord.

"...In the first place, isn't it too much to try and understand him?"

Agnus wouldn't be called a madman if he could be understood.

'He is an opponent who is fickle and doesn't think too deeply...'

Indeed, Grid shouldn't waste time and energy on useless things. He shook off his thoughts and decided, 'I just need to protect those important to me. That's enough.'

It was a promise that he had to keep. In any case, he was grateful for Agnus' actions that protected Irene and Lord. It was an unforgettable favor.

"Sigh..."

Irene's and Lord's breathing sounds stabilized Grid. Grid took a deep breath and calmed his mind before looking at the notification windows which were still on one side. He checked the unconfirmed notifications, belatedly remembering that he was in the middle of a quest.

"Ah..."

He had completely forgotten about the quest. It wasn't a game for him today as he had only focused on saving Irene and Lord.

'That's right. I gave up the sword...'

If he hadn't given up the holy sword, he would be a half-god overwhelming the world right now.

"...Hat." Grid let out a scoff. He felt disgusted about the greed that had almost made him give up his family, colleagues, and kingdom.

'However, it is natural to be greedy.'

[Reward for Gaining the Incomplete Holy Sword:

The 'Holy Sword of the 4th Evil' will be acquired.

* Your race will evolve from a human into a half-god. A half-god is a race that transcends humanity and approaches being a god. There will be room for great increases of all abilities.

* The passive skill God's Command is strengthened. The probability of activating God's Command will become 100%. However, a critical hit won't be applied to skills that God's Command is used on.

- * The skill 'Corrupted Holy Sword' will open.
- * You will be cursed by Goddess Rebecca, God Dominion, God Judar, and God Zeratul.
- * Affinity with the Rebecca Church, Dominion Church, and Judar Church will fall to minus values.
- * Followers of the Warrior God will chase you.

Reward for Returning the Incomplete Holy Sword:

Goddess Rebecca's blessing. Affinity with the Rebecca Church will rise to the maximum.

- * Affinity with the Rebecca Church is already at the maximum.]

This was the reward for the Crossroad of Good and Evil hidden quest. The difference in rewards between giving up the quest and not giving up the quest was too large.

'I know how great the goddess' blessing is.'

He had acquired the Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle skill thanks to the goddess' blessing. Grid was likely to get another four fusion skill with the goddess' blessing. It would become one of the strongest skills he had gained. However, was it better than a 100% chance of activating God's Command? Once God's Command had a 100% chance of activating, Grid would be able to use all the skills twice in succession. He was able to assert that the value of the 100% God's Command was much higher than Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

'...Well.'

There was no point in regretting now, even if the reward was very low. In the end, he was able to keep everyone safe. Grid controlled his heart and finally responded to the notification window that said: [The goddess of light, Rebecca, is awaiting your response.]

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

-Yes, I was waiting. It is very nice to see you care for your family.

"...!!" Grid was astonished by the answer of Goddess Rebecca. He had already heard Goddess Rebecca's warm voice several times, but this was the first time their conversation was so clear. Wasn't a 'divine message' a one-sided communication? Grid had previously recognized the gods as a part of the system, but he could now establish a new hypothesis.

'NPC? Is the god an NPC?'

He should've noticed it ever since getting the jealousy of the blacksmith god. Clearly, the gods had personalities and had a form somewhere in existence.

'If one day I meet a god... Ah?'

A chill went down Grid's spine as he thought about it. The 'truth' that he'd heard from the legendary great magician Braham in the past crossed his mind.

'Once human desires reach the peak, chaos will come to the world. In other words, if Goddess Rebecca no longer controls the world, God Yatan's destructive instinct will be exercised. God Yatan will emerge

to destroy the world, then Goddess Rebecca will once again create a new world. The two opposing gods on the surface are actually cooperating with each other. Great demons, angels, and humans are all playing in the hands of the gods.'

These were Braham's claims.

'No, there were no gods in the first place. Yatan? Rebecca? The gods aren't the omnipotent beings that we think they are. Like machines, they are accessories that exist for the world's providence. There is no reason to serve their existence or endure their trials.'

They were made like that in the first place. The gods were just accessories of this world. Grid agreed with Braham's claims since he knew that Satisfy was a game. Both Yatan and Rebecca were part of the system Lim Cheolho had created, and they were passive existences that conformed to the will of the world (Lim Cheolho).

However, Grid's thoughts changed once he realized the gods were NPCs. The gods had personalities. They weren't passive presences like what he had expected. Maybe the individual's judgment could go against the system. For example...

[Crossroad of Good and Evil]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

After all sorts of adventures, you have won the power 'God's Command' that the fourth malignant saint 'Taren' left for later generations.]

The setting of Satisfy, which Lim Cheolho created, stated that this quest is something 'Taren left for later generations.' This was a 'truth.'

'Human, this isn't Taren's arrangement. It is Dominion's and my arrangement. Don't listen to the voice of the corrupted one.' This statement suggested that War God Zeratul's claims might be false. Grid's entire body got goosebumps.

-Thank you again for fighting for the peace of humanity.

Goddess Rebecca's voice was so warm that it felt creepy, yet Grid was blank-faced and didn't show any response.

[The goddess of light, Rebecca, is awaiting your response.]

This notification window floated in front of Grid, forcing him to answer. Grid answered hurriedly, "I just did what I had to."

He thought that the gods weren't evil or part of the system. They were just NPCs with individual personalities.

'Why does it matter?'

They were beings who stayed in the distant sky and were strong allies who gave humans the power to fight against the great demons. Yes, there was no problem. He was just one player, and he didn't need to worry about them.

'Just...'

It was worrisome that the seven malignant saints might not be evil, unlike what had been known in the past. A group of bright lights enveloped Grid's body while he frowned.

-I will give a gift to the hero who fought hard.

[Rebecca the goddess of light has given you a blessing.]

[The goddess of light, Rebecca, respects you for overcoming the temptation of the seven malignant saints' offer to strengthen the power of God's Command.]

['Skill Enhancement' has been acquired as compensation.]

[Skill Enhancement]

[You can strengthen one skill that you possess.

The power of the skill will rise.

However, this only applies to class-specific skills.]

Class-specific skills—in Grid's case, it meant Pagma's Swordsmanship and his various blacksmithing techniques. He didn't know how the enhancement would be applied, but this was a terrible reward for Grid who wanted an entirely new skill. Grid didn't know about the five fusion skill that Hell Grid used, but he was expecting at least a four fusion skill. Would it just end with the enhancement?

-Full blessings for your heroic future.

It seemed to be the farewell. The goddess's voice became more and more distant. Grid shouted urgently, "Excuse me! Goddess!"

A conversation meant that flexibility was possible!

-What is going on?

As expected, Goddess Rebecca stopped leaving and listened to Grid. Grid spoke in a blunt manner, "Help me fuse more sword skills together!"

A god was truly a god. Goddess Rebecca immediately understood Grid's meaning and laughed, -Huhut.

Considering her high affinity with Grid, she gave him a very valuable hint, -That is something only you can pioneer now. Isn't this blessing also supported by War God Zeratul?

"...?"

-It means this blessing is more valuable than previous blessings.

Goddess Rebecca didn't say anything else. The warm lights that made Irene and Lord smile in their sleep disappeared like they were lies. Then she was gone. Grid was left alone and brought up the list of skills which could be strengthened with Skill Enhancement. All of Pagma's Swordsmanship and the various blacksmithing skills were stated on the 'Skills that Can Be Enhanced' list.

'I can build fusion skills by myself... What is the method?'

Grid first confirmed the effect of enhancing a single sword dance technique. The first one he checked was Link. The result was amazing.

[Genuine - Link]

[Regardless of attack speed, the number of strikes dealt by Link will be fixed at 40 times per second. The damage is equal to 200% of your attack power.

Link can be connected to another sword dance.

* The enhanced skill is fixed at master level.]

"Ah..." Grid's face brightened. When he saw this, he no longer regretted missing out on the enhanced God's Command.

[Chapter 876](#)

'Isn't this a scam?'

40 hits dealing 200% attack power per second...? If he hit a target with all 40 attacks, he would cause 8000% damage in just one second.

'Of course, if the target isn't a fool, they will try to dodge or block...'

Grid had the Enlightenment Sword. He might encounter a great player who would dodge more than half of the 40 strikes, but the black flames or red lightning bolts meant he could expect more than 8000% attack power.

'Who could handle this?'

Except for boss monsters, wouldn't Grid be able to deal with almost all his enemies in one blow? In particular, players with relatively low health in comparison to monsters wouldn't be able to afford this attack power.

'It is possible to beat them in one blow.'

If Grid took into account that Link had the shortest cooldown of one minute among Pagma's Swordsmanship, it was unquestionably an invincible skill. It was the strongest skill that would kill an enemy in front of him with every minute!

'If I connect it with other sword dances immediately afterward...'

It was possible to use all types of two fusion skills by connecting Link -> a single swordsmanship. Then it would eventually be possible to use a five fusion swordsmanship. He was looking forward to the firepower comparable to the Hell Grid who overwhelmed Yura.

'...A god is a god for a reason.' Grid was thrilled by Goddess Rebecca's blessing. It was difficult to imagine how much stronger he would become in the future. However, this joy was short-lived. Grid was disappointed when he confirmed the cooldown time of Genuine Link.

'The cooldown time is 30 minutes?'

Did he see that wrongly?

“No, it is right?”

‘Dammit!’

How strong was the skill? Could it really be called an upgraded version if the skill with a cooldown of one minute was changed to 30 minutes?

‘This can’t be.’

The biggest advantage of Link was its ability to unleash the black flames through the multiple hits. If Grid was lucky, he would be able to hit the target every minute. There was no big advantage in a skill that had its cooldown increased to 30 minutes. Then Grid determined the changes that would occur with Wave and Restraint. Wave would become stronger, and Restraint would completely ignore all status resistances. However, the cooldown of these two skills would also change to 30 minutes.

“Hah...?”

What about Transcend, Kill, and Revolve?

“The strength increases but...”

Grid’s expression became worse with every skill. The other sword skills also had a fixed cooldown of 30 minutes. Grid eventually couldn’t bear it anymore and jumped up. His wife and son were sleeping, so he let out the curses that had built up inside him, “Damn!! %!*\$!!”

“...!” The knights guarding the door were disconcerted by Grid’s sudden cursing. In particular, Coke was extremely shocked. Then when Grid discovered the knights belatedly, he coughed. “You have suffered a lot.”

“It isn’t a bother. I am delighted and honored to be in charge of Your Majesty’s defense.

“...” Grid was amused by Coke’s vigorous attitude. He had no idea of Coke’s saga though. Was it because Irene and Lord had complimented him before...?

“...Thank you.” In the silent corridor, Grid bowed deeply to coke.

“Y-Your Majesty?” The best person in the world was bowing to him? The confused Coke didn’t know what to do. Grid kept bowing and said, “I’m really grateful that talented people like you have entered the Overgeared Kingdom and that you sacrificed yourself to protect Irene and Lord.

Grid had heard that Coke was the pinnacle of the second generation 10 Rookies. He knew that there were many options for a talent like Coke. Coke wasn’t a person who chose the Overgeared Kingdom for the mass-produced Grid set, so he must’ve moved to the Overgeared Kingdom because he envied the Overgeared members. The way he protected Irene and Lord with everything he had shown he wasn’t aiming for quest rewards. He had sincerely tried to protect Irene and Lord and was then chosen as Lord’s knight as a result. Grid raised his head and caught Coke’s hand. A big, rough hand wrapped around the knight’s hand.

“I will surely repay you. So, going forward, continue to look after my son.”

Grid never dreamt that Lord's first knight would be a player. Players were much more fluid than NPCs and there were many variables. This meant Grid had to put in a big effort to maintain Coke's loyalty.

'Please continue to protect Lord,' Grid sent him this message through warm eyes.'

"I don't want a reward," Coke said with red eyes. "I feel pride and joy every time I see you play an active role in the National Competition or achieve new feats. That alone is enough."

Coke was a Korean like Grid. He felt genuinely pleased every time Grid elevated their country's status. His heart heated up, and he had a passion to be like Grid one day. Grid was a great help to Coke just by being present. This was the power of an 'idol.' Just as many young people cheered on their athletes during the Olympics and World Cup, Coke dreamed while watching Grid. It was a great joy and honor for him just being able to talk to Grid.

"Ah..." A smile crossed Grid's face as he read the emotion in Coke's eyes. He realized that he was the idol of the young man before him. A wind blowing through the half-open window ruffled Grid's hair. There were many emotions filling the eyes which were covered by the fluttering hair.

'The talents I never would've dared to be envious of now think of me as their idol...'

Grid was happy and proud. A feeling of additional pressure accompanied the pleasant emotions. The burden stemmed from a sense of responsibility toward those who worshipped him.

'If I shame them or let them down...' Grid cleared his throat several times.

It was shameful that his double nature was exposed a moment ago. Coke noticed his embarrassment and grinned. "Two years have passed since I first saw Your Majesty."

It had been when Coke was living in the fortified city of Patrian. After meeting Grid and Piaro, he had steadily gotten to know Grid's personality through various media like the TV and the Internet.

"I'm already familiar with your personality." Yes, Coke knew about Grid and understood. "I know this but I still admire you."

"..."

"Please relax and act comfortably. I will never be disappointed in you." Coke gazed at Grid with firm eyes!

As he realized Coke's unwavering heart, Grid trembled. He hadn't experienced it until now. It turned out that there were many people like Coke who admired him in the world. However, it would take them a lot of time to reach Grid's side and stand out. Why? It was because Grid was the sky above the sky. It wasn't easy for newly emerging talents to reach the high Grid.

-Grid. The thrilled Grid received someone's whisper. It was from Pope Damian. -If you aren't busy, can you give me a moment?

Had something happened? Anyway, it was fine.

-Yes.

Grid moved to the gardens of the Vatican. As Grid left, Coke bowed and maintained his position. Coke had defended Irene and Lord and gained the title of Protector. He was becoming stronger just staying by his master's side.

"Damian, there is something I want to ask you," Grid said as he found Damian waiting in the gardens. Rebecca, the goddess of light, might be an NPC and not unconditionally good, unlike what people perceived. What did Grid think about this? It was a heavy and complex subject. In any case, the gods were too far away and Grid had other things in front of him.

"Did you receive the goddess' blessing as a quest reward?"

"Yes, I was blessed with this quest reward."

"Ah, is that so? I'm glad. Did you receive a blessing called Skill Enhancement?"

"Skill Enhancement...? No, nothing like that. I receive a new skill every time I get a blessing. I never got a chance to enhance my skills. Why are you asking?"

"Why..." Grid started to explain to the interested Damian. Damian was a trustworthy person on the level of the Overgeared members, so Grid confessed everything he knew. "That is the conclusion."

Damian listened to Grid's complaints and summarized the situation, "You're saying that the cooldown time of the enhanced skill is fixed at 30 minutes?"

"That's right. Can this really be called enhancement? Does it matter if the power increased if I can't use it often?"

"Certainly. It is fair to call it a type of buff."

"Yes. How is this a blessing? Isn't this too much?"

To think that the reward of a god was this stingy...? Damian spoke cautiously to the grim Grid, "What about skills with a cooldown of over 30 minutes?"

"Huh?"

"For example, will a skill with a cooldown of one hour change to 30 minutes if it is enhanced? If so, wouldn't it be considered enhanced?"

"Ah...?"

'Perhaps?'

Surprised, Grid thought about Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. This was the strongest skill that Grid had with a cooldown of two hours. It was an ultimate skill that could only be used once in battle as long as God's Command didn't activate. What if he enhanced this skill? Grid didn't delay. He opened the list of skills that could be enhanced and looked at Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

[Genuine - Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle]

[Four types of sword techniques are connected.]

2,000% of your attack power will be dealt to the target due to Linked Kill.

If the target is hit at least twice, the damage of Linked Kill will increase by 300%, and Wave will be summoned.

Wave will affect any enemy within a range of five meters. It will deal 750% of your attack power, and all targets hit will have all speeds decreased by 80% for 30 seconds. Additionally, there will be definite damage from the Pinnacle that follows.

Pinnacle ignores 88% of the target's defense and deals 2,300% of your attack power as physical damage.

You can connect another sword technique immediately after Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

* This skill doesn't share a cooldown with Link, Kill, Wave, Pinnacle, and Linked Kill.

* The enhanced skill is fixed at master level.

Skill Mana Consumption: Half of the maximum mana.

Skill Cooldown Time: 30 minutes.]

'This is great!' Grid's body shook as he confirmed the information of Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. Damian noticed that things had worked out and smiled. A fusion skill consisting of five sword dances? How funny. Grid was looking forward to fusing six sword dances.

[Chapter 877](#)

'I can use Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle more often!'

Then perhaps Grid could link up to six sword techniques!

'Will a completely new sword technique like Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle be born?'

If he used Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle and another skill in sequence, perhaps a new skill called Transcended Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle could be expressed as a true fusion skill.

"Umm." Yet Grid felt uncomfortable.

After all, didn't the four fusion sword dance show a power that caused a backlash among the gods? Additionally, the five fusion sword dance had caused Yura to die in one blow. So, it was obvious that the six fusion sword dance would obviously show off an extreme power.

It was at this point that Grid had a question. Would the system even recognize a six sword fusion sword dance? Would the S.A Group allow the six fusion sword dance to exist at all due to wanting to maintain the balance?

'How uncomfortable.'

Grid reminded himself that it was rare for expectations to become reality. That's right. Most of the benefits Grid had gotten so far had been products of 'chance.' It was rare for him to gain things intentionally. Nonetheless, these chances were the result of effort, of course.

'...No, let's not worry too much. I don't even know if a six fusion sword dance exists.'

A five fusion sword dance certainly existed. The clone had proved its existence.

'I should be able to make a five fusion sword dance. Then I'll be much stronger than I am now.'

Furthermore, there was the extremely tempting performance of the enhanced Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. In particular, the cooldown time going from three hours to 30 minutes was a big attraction.

'Honestly, a cooldown time of three hours is too long.'

Even if he wanted to keep it as a trump card, he couldn't use it at the usual hunting grounds. How could it be an ultimate skill with a cooldown time of three hours? What ultimate technique had the penalty of such a long cooldown time?

'The cooldown time for an attack skill should be shorter.'

It was truly right to enhance Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. Grid made a decision only to suddenly feel doubtful.

'No, do I need to use it on an attack skill?'

Pagma's Descendant was a blacksmith, so enhancing the blacksmithing side could be better.

'Who knows? Perhaps the probability of making myth rated items will rise?'

The greatest strength of Pagma's Descendant was that he could wear all items! Grid imagined himself wearing all myth rated items.

'What if I had a helmet, armor, shoes, gloves, a cloak, and a crown like the Enlightenment Sword?'

Wouldn't he be much stronger even without the five fusion skill?

'Overgeared...'

Yes, the core of a game was items. A skill? In the end, it was below items. The stronger the items, the stronger the skill. The stronger the item, the less damage he received when he was hit by a skill! Grid thought about it and confirmed what would happen if he enhanced the Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill.

[Genuine - (Seeing the Gods' Techniques) Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill Lv. 8]

[The production button is now enabled. and the time it takes to make an item has been greatly reduced.

A minimum of epic rated items will be produced. There is a somewhat high probability of producing unique rated items. There is a certain probability of producing legendary rated items. If certain conditions are met, there is a rare probability of making a myth reproduction or myth rated item.

* All stats of a production item will increase by 30%.

* When myth rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +20 and reputation throughout the continent will rise by +1,000.

* Something special will occur with every three myth rated items created. (Currently 2/3)

* The enhanced skill is fixed at master level.]

“Hah?” Grid was speechless. The production button was activated! Like ordinary blacksmiths, he would be able to create items automatically and the time it took to make items was significantly reduced. The items he created would have a minimum of an ‘epic’ rating! It meant he didn’t have to worry about normal or rare rated items appearing in the future!

‘The probability of making unique, legendary, and rare rated items also increased!’

This wasn’t the end though. Originally, the stats of any items Grid produced would increase by 21%. That alone was tremendous. If a normal longsword dealt 100 damage, the longsword produced by Grid would deal 21 more damage, meaning it could be treated as a higher-rated item. Now, the enhancement blacksmithing skill would increase the stats of all items Grid made by 30%. If he produced a weapon with 2,000 attack power, he would get an additional 600 attack power.

‘Furthermore, every time I make a myth rated item, all stats will increase by 20 instead of 10...!’

Grid’s eyes shook as he gulped. Should he enhance Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle or blacksmithing? It wasn’t easy to decide.

‘I don’t need to consider this seriously...’

Through this incident, Grid once again realized that there was a clear limit to the power of an individual. What could he do by becoming stronger alone? Ultimately he was only one body. He wasn’t Hong Gildong, and he couldn’t save everyone. Enhancing the blacksmithing skill and using it to strengthen his colleagues and subordinates would be a much greater help in the future.

‘It is certain. There are many advantages to enhancing blacksmithing.’

Moreover, enhancing the blacksmithing skill didn’t mean that Grid himself would weaken. Grid would also become stronger if his items were enhanced.

‘There just isn’t as dramatic an increase in strength compared to enhancing the sword dance. It also requires a considerable amount of time and luck...’

Grid frowned as he stood at the crossroads of choice. His face would never be extremely handsome due to his high nose and angular jaw, but lately, he was looking more mature than he should at his age. The greater his strength and the higher his position, the more things he needed to protect and worry about.

“Ah, I’m sorry. Why did you ask to meet me?”

How much time had passed by? Grid had been thinking for a long time when he was reminded of Damian beside him. Damian watched Grid with an awkward smile and bowed his head. “First, I want to say thank you.”

Without Grid’s help, Damian wouldn’t have been able to clear the Vatican quest. He guessed that it was a quest that could surely be cleared even without Grid. Nevertheless, he was grateful because Irene and Lord were safe. Irene and Lord would’ve been in danger if Grid hadn’t come. Damian didn’t want to think about it. Irene’s and Lord’s death would have a huge negative effect on Grid. He wondered how Satisfy would be ruined by Grid’s rampage if they had died.

Moreover, how sad would Damian be at the death of his cute and loving student, Lord? Damian’s chest throbbed just thinking about it. Then he said, “I actually have a problem.”

“A problem?”

What problem was there when all the Yatan members had been killed or captured? Damian handed a shining sword over to Grid. It was a sword covered in a gold color—the first holy sword.

“Ah...!” Grid couldn’t help exclaiming. Amazingly, he couldn’t tell what the holy sword was made of even with Pagma’s knowledge. It wasn’t gold, adamantium, or even pavranium. If he looked closely, it seemed like glass, and there was a clear sound when he hit it. It felt like a metal that could break easily, but Grid had witnessed the power of the sword firsthand. He already knew that this unknown golden substance was hard and sharp, unlike the surface features.

“What’s wrong with it? Ah!” Grid belatedly noticed the problem. There were small grey spots all over the holy sword. He rubbed the surface of the grey spots and found a rough surface. It was stone—a sign of petrification.

Damian explained, “The curse of the original sin is affecting the sword again. If this continues, the holy sword will be sealed in the Stone of Original Sin and the divine power will be lost.”

“What is the Stone of Original Sin?”

“It is said to be the curse of the seven malignant saints who tried to bring the gods down to Earth and become new gods. The curse has the ability to neutralize ‘all types of divine power.’ It is a corrupted power that denies the gods.”

“Hrmm.”

Was it really appropriate to call it a corrupted power? Grid was already suspicious of the relationship between the gods and the seven malignant saints, so he couldn’t accept it easily. However, he didn’t express this. Pope Damian had absolute trust in Goddess Rebecca. Grid didn’t want to question him in front of Goddess Rebecca and cause doubts or confusion.

‘I don’t have any certainty yet. Now isn’t the time.’

Damian had the position of pope, and Grid was the one who cast him in this role. He couldn’t create any confusion without clear evidence. Grid barely held back the doubting words that rose in his throat. Then Damian said, “I received a divine message from the goddess.”

“...?”

Damian handed the sword to Grid. “Please make the first holy sword complete.”

Ttiring~

[The new quest ‘Cleanse the First Holy Sword’ has been created.]

[Cleanse the First Holy Sword]

[Difficulty: Class quest.

Your blacksmithing skills have already reached the level of a god.

Prove it to the gods!

Your blacksmithing skills are now comparable to Pagma!

Completely cleanse the First Holy Sword and escape from his shadow!

Quest Clear Conditions: Cleanse the First Holy Sword

Quest Clear Reward: Unlock a new Pagma story and a new Pagma's Swordsmanship technique. The goddess' blessing.]

"...!?" Grid's breathing was blocked suddenly. What was this new class quest? This was a chance to learn a new Pagma story and get a new swordsmanship technique! It had been a few years since he had gotten a new sword dance.

Duguen! Duguen! Duguen!

Grid's eyes shone like lanterns, and his heart beat faster. He was very excited about the goddess' blessing on the rewards list.

'I might be able to enhance both Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle and blacksmithing!'

("Is the light so bright that you have to close your eyes? A half-god isn't any better than a blind man.")

A bitter smile spread on the face of the mocking Clown King. The Clown King sympathized with the seven good people.)

"..." The young man was calm as he stared at the writing on the slab.

However, the middle-aged man standing by his side was extremely confused. "C-Clown? Seven good people? What type of sophistry was this? Yes, it's clearly just manipulation! It is a wicked trick of the seven malignant people to get between future generations and the gods!"

Kusar was a pilgrim who traveled all over the continent to understand the true nature of the gods. The writing on the slab was completely different from what he knew about the story of the Clown King and the seven malignant people. This slab was definitely wrong. It was a big problem since the person who wrote about the time of the Clown King marked the seven malignant saints as good people.

"Put that stone slab down! The great demon is laughing at us while hiding somewhere!" Kusar fiercely denied it and turned away from the stone.

'...This is it.' The black-haired Kraugel gazed at the slab without being disturbed by the truth. He sensed it. 'Grid, Haster, Agnus... and me... Sooner or later, everyone will be together in one place.'

Some people would try to do good while others would remain evil.

"..." The illusion of a wing flickering back and forth between white and black appeared on Kraugel's back.

Grid, Agnus, and Haster had all succeeded in acquiring one of the seven malignant saints' skills. The freaked out Kusar exclaimed, "You are a great demon...!!"

"No, we don't know that yet."

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'How do I cleanse it?'

Grid felt troubled as he held the holy sword, but he showed no signs of great anxiety. He believed he would naturally figure out the method to cleanse it during the process of doing the quest.

'It is likely done by using the Goddess' Tears.'

Just like the Yatan Church had the Yatan Essence, the Rebecca Church had the Goddess' Tears. If the Yatan Essence was a universal poison, then the Goddess' Tears was a powerful remedy. Grid had experience with the Goddess' Tears and was confident that he could use them properly. The difficulty of this quest wouldn't be high.

'It isn't arrogance.'

The class quests of Pagma's Descendant had something in common every time. The process of acquiring a class quest was very difficult, but the difficulty of the class quest itself wasn't very high. Grid had on a bright expression as he was reminded of the previous class quests.

"Okay. I'll start right now."

He would surely cleanse the holy sword. The new sword dance and goddess' blessing alleviated some of his regret about missing out on being a half-god. Despite this, Damian poured cold water on the motivated Grid. No, he calmed Grid down. He said, "Not today."

"Why?"

"The royal families of different countries are still staying in the Vatican. They will leave tomorrow afternoon, so you can start then."

"Hrmm."

It was a good suggestion. Grid's main job was to be a blacksmith, so he would naturally proceed with the cleansing in a smithy. What if the sound of hammering started coming from the Vatican's smithy? Someone would certainly be interested, and rumors that the Overgeared King was working there would spread to all parties present.

'I can't show future enemies what I'm working on...'

After all, Grid wouldn't be paying attention to his surroundings and might expose something. It would be troublesome in many ways.

"That would be good." Grid nodded and checked how long he had been connected. He received the notification that he had been logged in for 14 hours today.

'It is better to rest.'

It was the right time to control his daily connection limit and take care of various physiological needs. Grid decided to log out until Irene and Lord woke up. Then he shifted his gaze to the moonlight, and someone was revealed to be present in an area where the moonlight didn't hit. It was Mercedes. She

had only been able to run toward Grid once Aliburn died and the barrier was lifted. Since then, Mercedes had been guarding Grid for several hours already.

"I will be taking a break. Look after the queen and prince while I am going."

"Yes," Mercedes responded with no unnecessary remarks.

"..."

Pope Damian was enraptured by the sight of Mercedes. Her white hair and pale skin in the moonlight were enough to make her seem like a translucent beauty. She was reminiscent of a 'yukionna' who appeared in Japanese legends. Mercedes had a cool and unrealistic type of beauty.

"She is a person, right?" Damian asked with a bemused face.

"Don't get distracted. Don't you have Isabel?" Grid scolded him.

Damian waved his hand. "Of course. I am purely impressed by her beauty. I've got no dark thoughts. It's just..."

"Just what?"

"...I am worried that you will get more anti-fans."

"Why?"

"No, it is just all the women around you..."

There were Yura and Jishuka in real life, his wife Irene, and now Mercedes. Why were there only beautiful women beside Grid? Even Damian, an ardent fan of Grid, was a bit jealous. For those who disliked or felt antipathy toward Grid, they might feel an anger beyond jealousy.

Grid understood the meaning and sighed. 'Why would they be jealous of me?'

In any case, he was single in real life. Grid didn't want to talk about it. He was ashamed about never having been in a relationship despite being almost 30.

It was noon. Pope Damian arranged a meal for all the VIPs who would've been tired last night.

Mercedes accompanied Queen Irene and Prince Lord to the dining room.

"I heard that you were deprived of your knight's qualification by His Majesty the Emperor, but I didn't realize we would be reunited in this form." The 2nd imperial prince Dalandal appeared and blocked the Overgeared party. He was very interested in Mercedes.

"It is good to see you, Your Highness."

"You are more beautiful than yesterday," Dalandal responded to Irene's greeting before turning back to Mercedes again. "The strength that you practiced to defend the imperial family... The strength that you gained from being loyal to the imperial family, it's now being used for the sake of another royal family? It is a contradictory result. This is absurd."

“...” Mercedes didn’t refute any of Dulandal’s sarcastic words. She understood Dulandal’s anger. The reason why she was strong was due to the support of the imperial family, not just her innate talents. Despite her having already paid them back with her merits, Mercedes was obviously a traitor from Dulandal’s point of view. The dog they’d raised with great care was now guarding another house.

“His Majesty mercifully gave you freedom. Still, if you have any loyalty or conscience left, shouldn’t you have stayed deep in the mountains? A woman who immediately wags her tail for another owner has no principles.”

The atmosphere was getting worse. Dulandal was clearly showing an example. This mocking in front of Queen Irene and Prince Lord was nothing less than mocking the Overgeared Kingdom itself. In the end, Chucksley couldn’t stand it and stepped forward. Yet before Chucksley could speak, a red knight came forward. “It is a luxury to even pay attention to an ungrateful person who has forgotten the virtues of the imperial family.”

The 9th knight, Susan, was newly appointed by the emperor, who lost his prejudices against the Red Knights after so many knights died and Mercedes left the empire. Her appearance startled Mercedes because Susan was Mercedes’ cousin. It was rumored that she was a genius, but she had only just come of age. So how did she end up guarding the imperial prince?

‘What happened in just a few months?’

As he read the questions in Mercedes’ eyes, Prince Dulandal smiled coldly. “His Majesty, who couldn’t believe in the Red Knights after Piaro’s betrayal, has started to use the Red Knights again.”

“...”

The imperial prince knew that Piaro hadn’t betrayed them and that it had actually been the plot of Great Demon Astaroth. The emperor had shed tears of remorse after finding out the truth.

‘...Prince Dulandal still hasn’t received the emperor’s confidence.’

He was lacking in every aspect compared to the 1st prince and 4th prince. It was rumored that the emperor’s evaluation of 2nd Prince Dulandal was ruthless and cold. Yet Dulandal was now talking proudly. “His Majesty has decided to reorganize the Red Knights into the strongest knights division on the continent, and the grandmaster is actively cooperating. It is completely different from the previous generation of Red Knights and your generation. Their loyalty and force will be better.”

‘Grandmaster...!’ Mercedes’ eyes widened.

Grandmaster Zikfrector—according to one theory, he was a strange character that existed in the history of the empire 100 years ago. He was a mysterious person who mastered swordsmanship, magic, and summoning, and he was an opponent that Juander feared. It was rumored that even the emperor couldn’t control him...

‘He will cooperate directly with training the Red Knights?’ A chill went down Mercedes’ spine. She thought of Zikfrector’s eyes which always seemed to dissect her.

“...” Mercedes’ trembling eyes looked at her cousin Susan. Was Susan able to become a Red Knight at this age because she had some relationship with the grandmaster? Mercedes was concerned. In spite of

this, Susan, a beautiful woman who resembled Mercedes, smiled. “The grandmaster told me something.”

“...?”

“I will receive a mission as soon as the truce with the Overgeared Kingdom ends. It is to seize the loot from the Astaroth raid from you. I’m looking forward to going against the genius.”

“...!!” Mercedes and the members of the Overgeared Kingdom were shocked. They didn’t know exactly what was meant by Astaroth’s loot, but Susan’s statement was clear. The empire would become hostile to the Overgeared Kingdom as soon as the truce was over. Of course, they had been prepared, but...

‘Daring to say this in front of the queen and the prince!’

Chucksley and the young knights of the Overgeared Kingdom could no longer overlook the behavior of the imperial prince and the Red Knights. In particular, Coke was furious. He couldn’t forgive their behavior of despising the kingdom that Grid had built. Susan read Coke’s killing intent and scoffed, “A nobody.”

Coke’s face turned red.

“It is up to here.” A black-haired man with fierce eyes appeared. It was Grid. He came toward the group and first kissed Irene and Lord on the cheek, without giving even a nod toward Prince Dulandal. Grid was clearly ignoring Dulandal and the Red Knights, causing them to frown. Then Grid bared his white teeth. “I am looking forward to the expression you will show me when the truce is over.”

“This rudeness!”

“Who are you? Talking like this to the great bloodline that has reigned for hundreds of years!”

The Red Knights immediately became furious while Dulandal remained silent. The imperial prince was interested. He wanted to see how high the great Hero King evaluated himself.

‘I can’t deny that he was great when fighting against the Yatan Servants. He is no less than Mercedes. As expected from someone who set up a new kingdom through force alone.’

However, what could he do alone? If the prince compared the power of the Overgeared Kingdom and the empire, only a few people in the Overgeared Kingdom had a strength great enough to resist the empire. The empire’s overall power was completely dominating. How could the Overgeared King go against the empire that dominated the continent? Didn’t he have the power of an individual at best? If so...

‘He is a flying bird who can’t grasp his enemy. Unlike His Majesty’s concern, the Overgeared King isn’t someone to be wary of.’

He was an inconsequential opponent who could be easily trampled on.

Then Grid said ridiculous words to Prince Dulandal, “The new Red Knights? This young knight will shatter all of them alone.”

“...?”The prince and Red Knights were stunned. Grid was pointing to Coke who had just been called a nobody by Susan.

“Hah?” Susan was dumbfounded by the absurd words. Her reaction was natural. After all, Coke’s level was lower than everyone else, and it was impossible for the NPCs not to know this. During the Yatan fight, Coke had been weaker than the young prince, yet he was going to beat all the Red Knights?

‘Why is he saying nonsense like this?’

Dulandal and the Red Knights had serious doubts.

“I’m looking forward to it. On the day that the truce ends and the empire aims a sword at us, my words will become reality.”

Making the weak stronger—that was the power of items. Grid, who intended to use the goddess’ blessing to enhance the Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship Skill, whispered to Coke, “Don’t be scared. There is still plenty of time. I will show you what it really means to be overgeared.”

The Saharan Empire was a huge nation. One city in the empire was equal to the full size of the Overgeared Kingdom. It was impossible to control all the people with the imperial family alone. Yes, Grid had already been preparing. He thought that the empire would threaten them when the truce ended or even before the truce ended, regardless of the emperor’s will. Grid needed to train talents to prepare for that time.

‘After clearing this quest, I will show a true overgeared army.’

‘The target is too high. His Majesty is making a mistake.’

While Grid and Dulandal were having a staring contest, someone was feeling tense. Coke felt like he was sitting on a thorny cushion.

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Coke felt like he was sitting on a thorny cushion.

‘Am I misunderstanding something?’

On the day that the truce ended, this young knight would knock down all the Red Knights of the empire, and the young knight that Grid was pointing to was Coke. Coke had the lowest level among the people gathered here, so it was ridiculous.

‘Is he pointing at Royman instead of me? Yes, I misunderstood!’ Coke didn’t accept reality and looked at Royman on his left.

Yet, Royman was staring at Coke. The same was true for the other knights behind her. Everyone was looking at Coke.

‘No, it’s right?’ Coke’s panicked eyes shook. ‘I’m going to destroy the Red Knights?’

How...? What was this?

'Ah...!' It was naive of him to take this practical joke seriously. Grid lay a hand on the confused Coke's shoulders just as he was thinking this was a joke. "Don't be scared. There is still plenty of time. I will show you what it really means to be overgeared."

"..."

Grid was serious. Coke was able to realize it since he had been steadfastly watching Grid as his fan. A fierce will shone in Grid's eyes. It was a willpower he showed every time he spoke true words.

'Does he really think I can go against the Red Knights?'

Coke was well aware of the power of the items that Grid showed but...

As his thoughts became complicated, Coke gulped.

He was happy that Grid trusted him, but he felt anxious that he couldn't live up to Grid's trust. Coke thought he was a failure before it even happened.

"How interesting," Dulandal's derisive voice entered Coke's ears. Dulandal was laughing at Grid's bluff. "I didn't think there would be a person who would act so vainly before me... Interesting. It's really pleasant. Is your occupation actually a clown?"

The prince's mocking gaze moved from Grid to Coke. "The innocent lamb is already trembling with fear. Kukuk! Is this a cattle being taken to the slaughterhouse?"

The imperial prince wasn't wary of Coke at all, treating him as a total nobody.

All the Red Knights were going to be defeated by this guy...? It was something that the imperial prince couldn't imagine.

"..." Coke stayed silent.

After all, the imperial prince's assessment was accurate. Coke was the peak of the second generation rookies and a player with exceptional talent, but that was all. He wasn't at a level comparable to the strongest Red Knights on the continent. In fact, weren't the high rankers who started the game a year earlier than him afraid of the Red Knights?

'I will only be able to defeat a Red Knight after a few years.'

So, why did Grid trust him? Coke was full of doubts.

"It might seem funny now, but won't it be different once he is overgeared?" Grid maintained his confident answer.

'Ah!' Coke belatedly realized it wasn't that Grid trusted Coke. It was that Grid trusted his items. 'He has the confidence to create the best knight!'

This was a confidence that only a legendary blacksmith could have! Duguen!Duguen!The anxiety dominating Coke's mind was lifted, and expectations filled its place. Coke was curious. How much could he grow when armed with Grid's items, and could he really defeat the Red Knights?

“Overgeared...? You are talking nonsense. Well, this is just a conversation. Empty talk is a waste of time.” Prince Dulandal had an unpleasant expression on his face.

Tsk! He clicked his tongue and warned as he turned his back to Grid’s party, “You better keep one thing in mind. Next time we meet and you omit honorifics, I will cut off your head immediately.”

The blood of the imperial prince was great, and he should be respected by everyone on the continent as a king above kings. To Prince Dulandal, Grid’s rudeness was an unforgettable insult. However, the reason he hadn’t immediately cut off Grid’s head was due to the emperor’s truce. No matter what sin Grid committed, the prince couldn’t ignore the truce that the emperor created. It would be a rebellion against the emperor!

‘Hut... Today’s patience will flow to His Majesty, and my position will rise.’

“Hrmm.”Dulandal evaluated his patience highly and left while smiling with satisfaction. Grid watched Dulandal’s back with a relaxed gaze. He was feeling relieved.

‘I thought an imperial prince would be a big shot, but he is ordinary.’

The prince was a type of person that Grid had often met. Grid judged the prince as being strong enough to stimulate his fighting energy, but that was the only thing Grid had to be wary about. He didn’t have the daunting feeling that Grid had felt from the emperor.

‘He is lacking compared to his father. I hope the other imperial princes are the same...’Grid prayed sincerely.

He was anxious that if the emperor’s successor showed excellent skills, it would become ever harder to cope with the empire.

“Your Majesty...”Mercedes confirmed that the imperial prince had completely disappeared from view and began to speak. She was very worried.“I heard about Sir Coke’s actions last night. He is promising, but his talent isn’t fully proven. It is too early to declare that Coke will defeat the Overgeared Knights.”

Of course, Mercedes knew what Grid was capable of. Considering the performance of the sword and armor that Grid had given her, there was room for the young knight to be stronger than she thought. However, the difference between the two couldn’t be easily overcome. The Red Knights were geniuses selected from among tens of thousands of nobles and were granted the swordsmanship that had dominated the continent for hundreds of years. They were also given the strength of the red energy, giving them the pride of the strongest. It might seem useless from Grid’s point of view, but Coke wasn’t Grid.

‘Furthermore, the new Red Knights will receive the great powers of the grandmaster.’

Mercedes knew that Susan was very clever and that her confidence wasn’t unfounded.

“Don’t worry too much. By the way, what is a grandmaster?”

“...” Mercedes looked at Grid with a strange expression. He was a person who had used the power of an individual to build a new kingdom, become a hero, and gotten recognized by even the emperor. Grid was certainly great. That’s why Mercedes was even more worried. She wondered if Grid had lost touch with reality due to being carried away by his greatness. Mercedes failed to conceal the frosty shadow on

her face as she replied, "The grandmaster is a great person who has mastered several martial arts, magic, and academics."

"He has mastered martial arts, magic, and academics?"

Mercedes' answer surprised Grid.

'In the end, it means that he is good at everything? A jack of all trades?'

A jack of all trades was familiar to Grid. It was because Grid was a typical jack of all trades himself. He knew blacksmithing, swordsmanship, magic, tailoring, and so on. Grid could do much more than a normal player.

'However, the depth is shallow.'

He was exceptional with blacksmithing, but what about swordsmanship, magic, and tailoring?

'My swordsmanship can't escape the limits of a sword dance, and I'm often caught by how long it takes to use.'

Meanwhile, magic was difficult to use because of his low intelligence.

'If I have to throw away the sword, I can arm myself with Belial's Staff...'

He was able to bring down so many mighty enemies was because he possessed a variety of items, titles, and fraudulent skills. Yet his tailoring was still at the intermediate level. Ultimately, he could never be afraid of a jack of all trades! This was Grid's evaluation.

'Like me, the grandmaster is outstanding in one field, but he isn't an all-rounder like the world assumes.'

"To be honest, I don't use the word 'mastered' for nothing. The grandmaster is outstanding in all areas. You should never take him lightly," Mercedes warned him.

Grid frowned. "What exactly do you mean by outstanding in all areas? Can he use a sword better than a Sword Saint or use magic better than a great magician? And is he smarter than a sage?"

"Yes."

"Eh?"

"There is no Sword Saint or great magician in our time who can reach the feet of the grandmaster. Since the grandmaster can freely enter and leave the imperial library, he is likely to boast more knowledge than Sage Sticks."

"What..."

It hadn't been long since Kraugel became a Sword Saint. In particular, the limitations of a player meant he was weaker than the previous Sword Saint. The situation was similar for the great magicians. There were no legends among the current great magicians. It was understandable to some extent that the grandmaster was stronger than them. However, Grid couldn't acknowledge that the grandmaster boasted more knowledge than Sage Sticks.

Mercedes said, "If the grandmaster had been watching the events in the empire, I assure you that all of Great Demon Astaroth's tricks would've been blocked in advance. Additionally, if the grandmaster had been in the imperial palace on the day Astaroth revealed his identity..."

"If he had been there...?"

"Astaroth would've disappeared as a handful of ashes before he could summon the Storm Demonic Energy Field."

It was due to their absolute trust in the grandmaster that the imperial princes weren't afraid of great demons and legends. There had been a day when the Magic King said, "The Undefeated King was the only one who was able to fight the grandmaster. The moment the grandmaster reveals himself to the world and is stamped into history, a new legend will be born."

"..." Grid was silent for a long time after hearing Mercedes' explanation.

Mercedes saw that Grid was finally alert. "You can't make fun of the new Red Knights who are being trained by the grandmaster himself."

Grid was silent for a while before shrugging. "Mercedes, you are mistaken about one thing."

"I am mistaken?"

"Yes. I'm not making fun of the Red Knights." It was natural. The Red Knights had been raised by the legendary knight Mercedes, and now they were stronger than before. "I just want to say that my items are better."

"...?"

"I've been waiting, Overgeared King."

As they were talking, the group arrived at the banquet hall. Grid followed the elders' instructions and saw that in front of them was a table of delicacies across from the imperial prince. Prince Dulandal had a very unpleasant expression. He couldn't understand the elders' actions of treating Grid so well.

'What am I? I am a blacksmith.'

The various titles such as Hero King, Great Magician, and First King were all secondary. Grid hoped this boring lunch would end soon. He wanted to hold a hammer in his hand and cleanse the sword. That evening...

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

All of the royalty, including the imperial prince, left the Vatican. Then Grid headed to a small smithy in a corner of the Vatican. The holy sword had lost more light compared to when Damian showed it this morning. The speed of the petrification brought on by the Stone of Original Sin was very fast.

"Item Disassembly!"

Grid had to first raise his understanding of the holy sword to 100%. Despite the holy sword breaking down in front of his eyes, Damian didn't feel uneasy. He just believed in Grid!

[Chapter 880](#)

There was a concept of understanding items. He could get up to 100% understanding by observing, using, disassembling, and assembling an item. Once he succeeded in acquiring 100% understanding, he could gain the method to make the item.

"Item Disassembly!"

Grid intended to increase his understanding before cleansing the holy sword. The more he understood the holy sword, the easier the cleansing process would be.

'It might not be possible to raise my understanding to 100%.'

Why? Wasn't this holy sword the symbol of Rebecca—the goddess of light—and the pride of the supreme religion on the continent? It was exceptional among myth rated items, so was it impossible to raise the understanding of this item with a human's ability? No, all myth rated items were equally special. The performance might vary, but there was no arguing about the 'meaning' of a myth rated item. The reason why Grid thought it would be difficult to raise his understanding to 100% was that the holy sword was a quest item.

[First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified]

[Rating: Myth

The first holy sword of humanity. It was sealed by the Stone of Original Sin, but Pagma's Descendant—Grid—has temporarily unsealed it.

It still isn't completely free from the curse.

The Stone of Original Sin is encroaching back on it.]

At the time of the Crossroad of Good and Evil hidden quest, the name of the holy sword had still been Sword Stuck in the Stone. Information, such as details about the attack power, durability, and the options, hadn't been shown at all. It had only been a brief description. When he saw Damian deal a serious injury to Aliburn in a single blow, Grid had gotten convinced that...

'The holy sword is a quest item. It can't be used as a normal item.'

Quest items were items which didn't have any special function apart from in special moments. After all, it didn't make sense to mass-produce items made for specific quests.

'In order to preserve its symbolic value, the system would prevent a 100% understanding.'

However, it could go up to 99.9%. Grid couldn't learn how to make the item, but he could fully grasp the item's hidden functions and intentions.

'Just this much will give me a glimpse of how to cleanse it.'

First, he had to see how the curse had eroded the sword. As Grid judged this, he used the hammer in his hand.

Ttang!

Grid hit the church's relic without hesitation! It was a sight that would make the thousands of members of the Rebecca Church furious. However, Pope Damian watched Grid silently.

Ttang!Ttaaang!Ttatatang-!Ttaang-!

It didn't matter that Grid used various tools on the holy sword. Damian didn't shake at all despite the sword being thrown into the furnace. He just watched as his trust in Grid was absolute. Ultimately, Damian had no choice but to trust Grid. After all, Grid had already demonstrated his power, having disassembled and assembled Lifael's Spear dozens of times while saving Isabel!

'By the way...'

30 minutes must've passed. Damian gradually started to feel anxious as he watched Grid. When Grid placed the holy sword in the furnace, it maintained its full form instead of changing or breaking down.

'Am I mistaken? Why does it seem like there is no progress?'

It didn't seem to be a mistake.

'Is something wrong?'

The anxiety that Damian felt was correct.

"Pant pant... Damn?" Grid was cursing as he hammered and used the bellows repeatedly. He was about to go crazy.

[You have failed to find the melting point of the metal that makes up the target item.]

[The smelting has failed.]

[You can't find the binding section of the target item.]

[The disassembly has failed.]

'Why isn't my understanding rising?'

It might be a myth rated item, but Grid thought that his understanding of the item would gradually rise while disassembling the item. However, the method of understanding the holy sword was unconventional. Despite Grid's repeated attempted disassembly, his understanding was kept at 7%.

'I'm not hoping for 100%... I just want 99.9% or a clue toward cleansing the sword.'

No, there was nothing wrong with it.

'Will it rise if I keep trying?'

Grid's greatest strength was his persistence. Instead of feeling frustrated or demotivated after seeing his low understanding, he just controlled his emotions and started the disassembly again.

If he didn't understand after disassembling it 10 times, then he would have to do it another 10 times.

If he didn't understand after disassembling it 20 times, then he would have to do it another 20 times.

If he didn't understand after disassembling it 20 times, then he would have to do it another 30 times.

If he didn't understand after disassembling it 30 times, then he would have to do it another 40 times.

Grid continued trying.

"Pant pant! Pant! Keok!"

Suddenly, something came to Grid's mind. Blacksmithing was a heavy labor class that required high stamina, and he felt like he was on the verge of dying.

'Will I meet Khan if I die?'

"...id! Grid!"

"...Heok!"

Grid, whose tongue was hanging out like a dog, suddenly came to his senses. It was because a voice woke him up. He looked around and saw Damian right beside him with a worried expression.

"Shouldn't you rest now?"

"How long has it been?"

Grid routinely took a few days to make one item. He must've spent one or two hours trying to improve his understanding of the item...

"Huh?" Grid was looking at Damian when he became confused. The window behind Damian showed that it was currently the brightly lit daytime. "Have I been working all night?"

"It is already past noon. You have been working for 15 hours."

"What?"

Wasn't it an hour or two at most? A chill went down Grid's spine.

'Did I enter a trance state?'

It meant he had sufficient concentration. However, the efficiency was zero. His understanding gauge of the holy sword was still stuck at 7%.

"What..."

Grid became desperate. This was the first time he had gotten a horrible result despite having entered the trance state.

'Dammit!' Grid glared at the holy sword that was set up on the anvil. He didn't like that it maintained a perfect state in spite of all his troubles. Damian sighed. "There is a saying that the holy sword is made from minerals created by the blacksmith god Hexetia himself. It is in the realm of the gods, so this might be difficult for Grid."

“Hex what? Xe what?”

Ttiring~

[You have learned about the blacksmith god Hexetia.]

[Intelligence has permanently increased by 10, and the experience of all blacksmithing skills has increased by 2%!]

“...Eh?”

The acquisition of new knowledge was sometimes a great power. This was why people tried to read as many books as possible in the libraries of each city and kingdom. Grid was confused when he got the bonus effect of hearing about the blacksmith god for the first time.

[You have discovered the maker of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified.]

[Your understanding of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified has increased by 5%!]

[You have roughly identified the materials that make up the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified.]

[Your understanding of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified has increased by 7%!]

These notification windows rose in succession.

“...Ah,” Grid moaned. Was he happy? Not at all! Grid tried to suppress his soaring anger. He smiled awkwardly and asked Damian, “What exactly are the materials of the holy sword?”

“I heard it is divine stone. As I mentioned earlier, this is a material created by the blacksmith god Hexetia himself.”

Ttiring~

[You have obtained information on new minerals!]

[The base of your blacksmithing technology is expanding!]

[You have discovered the material that makes up the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified.]

[Your understanding of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified has increased by 15%.]

“...”

This was akin to doing something embarrassing when lying down to sleep like kicking off the blanket. Grid had countless similar memories, and one of those memories was when he first received Pagma’s Swordsmanship. He had followed the movements of Pagma’s Swordsmanship which had been drawn on the wall mural...

“Hah... XX!” He cursed properly for the first time in a while. Grid had forgotten the basics of a quest because the client was a player, not an NPC.

‘I forgot to get the minimum of information from the client...’

He was embarrassed and angry about having lost time.

'...No, it isn't my fault. Shouldn't Damian have come forward and explained when he noticed?' Grid trembled.

"Don't be too sad. Sometimes things don't work out. Why don't you have a meal first and rest before working again?" Damian suggested with a smile. He didn't notice that Grid was angry at him. "Ah~~ I'm hungry. What if my Isabel didn't wait for me before eating?" Damian was about to leave the smithy with a wide smile.

"Wait there." Grid called out to him with an eerie expression as he stared at the innocent-looking Damian.

"...?"

"You will sit next to me and not go anywhere until my work is done. Don't even think about eating."

"Hah?"

"Sit down and cough up all the information you know."

"B-But..."

"How can you eat in this situation?"

"...?"

Why was Grid suddenly mad at him? Damian thought it was strange at first, then he realized...

'He isn't angry! My thinking was too shallow!'

The curse on the holy sword hadn't been released yet, so how could the pope eat alone while an outside guest was struggling to solve the curse on the holy sword? The church members would be disappointed. They would whisper about how he chose to eat over tending to the holy sword. Damian would lose public sentiment, and his position would be lowered. He might even lose the pope's position next year.

'U-Unbelievable...'

Damian's eyes became teary. He felt a deep gratitude and respect toward Grid. "Once again, you are saving me and teaching me great lessons! Truly... You truly are God Grid-sama!!"

"What? What are you saying?"

"Your humility...! Kuock!! It is truly amazing!"

"..."

It was clear that there weren't many normal people around Grid. Grid realized this once again as he threw the sword into the furnace. Then the smelting began. This time he wouldn't fail.