

Overgeared 971

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“What is that?”

The glasses that Grid wore had an odd aspect. The transparent gleam made it seem like they were made from extraordinary gemstones, but the black liquid that had a purple sheen was jarring.

‘What type of liquid was injected separately?’

It seemed like a wrong choice if Grid wanted the feeling of sunglasses. They weren’t practical because they interfered with the wearer’s vision.

“They will be the eyes of the evil eyes’ king.”

Did he need to explain things in words? Grid shared the item information with those gathered in there.

[Ether Glasses]

[Rating: Epic

Durability: 187/210

* Incomplete ether effect.

* Charm +80.

* Vision -2.

* The abnormal ‘blurred vision’ state will occur once per second.

The accessories maker Elizabeth, whose reputation has risen sharply in recent years, made these glasses by crafting ether diamonds.

The beauty of the ether diamonds is gorgeously expressed. It would be great if someone who wanted attention wore them.

The ether has a partial magical effect, and the field of view is disturbed because the ether is injected into the lens. There will be some discomfort.

Weight: 5]

Glasses were classified as accessories, and among all the accessories, they were items that were easiest to wear.

“Try it.” Grid handed the glasses to Lael. That’s right. Items called glasses could be easily given to others by the owner. There was no transfer procedure. It was simple as long as the other party didn’t resist, since it had to be worn on the ears and nose.

[You have received the Ether Glasses.]

[Your eyesight has fallen. Your vision is blurry.]

“...It’s uncomfortable.” Lael wore the glasses and narrowed his eyes. The cloudy fog and ripples interfered with his vision. “The ether effect is incomplete.”

Lael took off the glasses and tried casting magic against the lens. The condensed wind on his palms struck the lens. The lens didn’t even crack, and there was no repulsion. The magic was extinguished like it was a lie. The word ‘absorption’ seemed correct.

“Indeed...”

“Wow! Isn’t this great?”

Grid explained to Lael and 10 meritorious retainers who were admiring the glasses, “Ether is a substance from another world that absorbs magic power. Once the evil eyes’ king wears these glasses, all the magic emitted from his eyes will be absorbed by the lens. Thus, the magic can’t be reflected by the White Dragon’s Eyes, and the possibility of destruction will be gone. The evil eyes’ king will be able to see the world.”

Grid described it casually, but this was actually the core point. The evil eyes king had his eyes sealed from the moment he was born. The power of the evil eyes, which destroyed all objects it touched, was an amazing and powerful curse. He wanted to see the world. The item that could fulfill the evil eyes king’s earnest desire was the Ether Glasses.

“It is the best gift for the evil eyes’ king. He will like you more than you think.”

It was an item that could turn the evil eyes king that even the empire was wary of into a perfect ally. Lael was convinced that the value of the Ether Glasses was astronomical. It was a treasure born from the combination of information from Kraugel, Elizabeth’s techniques, and Grid’s power in the Demon King Subjugation.

“Go to the evil eyes village right now. We must secure the evil eyes’ king before the empire acts.”

The 10 meritorious retainers were motivated. They had a feeling that the grace period given by Ares wasn’t very long. The 10 meritorious retainers expected that Valhalla was likely to consider negotiations with the Overgeared Kingdom as the next best option. Negotiations with the empire could already be underway. Valhalla would gain a much bigger benefit from establishing a friendly relationship with the empire in return for giving the White Dragon’s Eyes to the empire.

Lael was immersed in his thoughts. “Certainly, we have to hurry, but I’m worried that the ether effect is incomplete. Is it because the ether effect is incomplete that the durability is quickly consumed?”

The durability was at 187 when Lael received the Ether Glasses. Once it absorbed basic magic, the durability was reduced to 186. Grid nodded with a dark expression. “That’s right. The durability is consumed every time it absorbs magic.”

“Is the amount of durability reduced dependent on the magic power?”

“No, fortunately it isn’t. I have experimented with Zednos and Laella, and the durability decreases by the same amount regardless of magic power.”

“Then the amount of magic power emitted by the evil eyes king shouldn’t be a problem.”

“No, there are many problems. The magic power that is emitted from the eyes of the king is close to infinite, meaning this level of durability will only last a few minutes.”

“Infinite...”

“I don’t know if it is limitless or infinite, but I’m sure that it is inexhaustible. That’s why I’ve decided...” Grid opened his inventory and pulled out a new ether diamond—a palm-sized diamond with a small amount of purple black liquid inside. “I will go through the process of disassembling and reassembling the glasses made by Elizabeth in order to raise my understanding to 100% and gain the production method.”

Grid received seven rewards from the Demon King Subjugation (8 when including the Demon King’s Appearance event).

For three of the rewards, he chose the ether diamonds.

He chose only three for a few reasons. First, Elizabeth’s help was needed to craft the ether diamonds and make the glasses. Second, after learning how to make Elizabeth’s glasses, Grid could recreate the glasses with a higher quality.

Finally, the third reason was that Grid couldn’t separate the ether from the ether diamonds, no matter what physical methods he used. It was a substance from another world, so even Sticks and Braham didn’t precisely understand the ether. After some distress, Grid tried to separate the ether by destroying the diamond, but the ether that touched the air evaporated without a trace.

It meant Grid wasted one of the three ether diamonds he had obtained.

‘I would be ridiculously overgeared if I could get pure ether...’

For example, what if he mixed the ether with Valhalla of Infinite Affection? Grid could gain more magic protection than the Duke of Wisdom. The magicians wouldn’t be able to hurt Grid easily.

“Then we will first go to the evil eyes’ village to protect the king. Your Majesty should join us after making new glasses.”

Although Grid had a portable furnace, it was better to make items in a smithy equipped with various facilities and tools. The better the working environment, the more likely it was that a higher-rated item would be created. Grid nodded. “Don’t overdo it. There are some strong bastards in the empire.”

The surest way to deal with the empire was to send strong people such as Piaro, Mercedes, Noll, Asmophel, and Singled, but nobody wanted to do that. Those people only had one life.

“There is still time in our truce agreement with the empire, so it won’t be a big deal. Don’t worry.” The reliable Lael snapped his fingers. A group of kids with chibi bodies poured in from outside the conference room.

The Destiny Guardians. They were the 16 evil eyes that Grid had rescued from the dungeon in the past and given to Lael as guards.

“You who wants to transcend and see into the past and future... We have responded to your noble soul and come to this place. From this moment on, we will defend your destiny. This is the fate that is weighing on the Destiny Guardians’ backs... Kukukuk!”

“...”

The appearance of the evil eyes was chilling. It was because they spoke nonsense every time they appeared. The 10 meritorious retainers made embarrassed expressions while Lael swept back his bangs. His silver hair reflected the moonlight and seemed to scatter stars.

“My soul, trapped in solitude, is in a turbulent state as it faces your destiny. I pay tribute to the eyes covered by a black cloth and will ask you something in the name of Lael. Destiny Guardians, do you have the courage to encounter a furious storm of fate?”

“Kukuk... courage? It is one of our ‘sources’ that will never fade... Kukukukuk!”

“You don’t feel fear? Amazing! I can feel the power of language from your answer! The black dragon sealed in my arm is starting to move...!”

“Huhuhut... The master of the great evil eyes has never felt fear since being born. Even if the black dragon sealed in your arm wakes up, we will never back down... Eh?” The evil eyes were talking excitedly for a while only to become shocked. It was because they discovered Grid standing behind Lael.

“Y-You are the symbol of a past life reincarnation who has made a connection with our great king that deals with dark flames and white ice and sees the truth of the world!!”

“Grid!!”

The astonished evil eyes started sweating nervously and looked away. They were afraid that they would be dragged into a cave and given pickaxes if they met Grid’s eyes. When the evil eyes suddenly became mute, the 10 meritorious retainers couldn’t help feeling in awe of Grid.

‘What? Overwhelming the evil eyes species with his gaze...?’

‘He shut up the evil eyes who aren’t afraid of the world!’

‘My Liege! I respect you!’

In fact, the evil eyes were a very strong species, unlike their pretty appearance. The moment they released the seal on their eyes, they could harm or restrain the target just by looking at them. Yet even the great evil eyes species would fall down before Grid. Anyone could see that Grid was amazing!

“...Then I’m going to make glasses. I’ll meet you in the evil eyes’ village as soon as possible.”

Grid left behind the silent evil eyes and ran to the smithy. He was resolved to make sturdy Ether Glasses.

‘If I can control his power, it will be an opportunity to recruit someone who might be stronger than Piaro. I can’t afford to miss this opportunity.’

“Wouldn’t it be better to wait for a response from the Overgeared Kingdom?”

The God of War Ares—the second player to build a kingdom after Grid—visited the empire with his military adviser, Sima Hui. He wore a deep helmet to hide his identity and was followed by the best players of Valhalla. By the way, the person they were escorting was Sima Hui, not Ares. Of course, this was at Ares’ command. He didn’t want to lose a named NPC that he finally obtained after six visits to the East Continent.

“The Overgeared Guild will delay the answer as much as possible. The White Dragon’s Eyes will lose their value if we wait for their answer.”

The reason why Ares and Sima Hui visited Titan directly was to negotiate with the empire. They were going to hand the White Dragon’s Eyes over to the empire and establish a friendship between Valhalla and the empire. Ares wanted a friendship with the Overgeared Kingdom over the empire, but Sima Hui’s thoughts were different.

“The Overgeared King is a highly skilled technician who restored the treasures of the reapers. Unless I am overestimating him, it is likely he already understands the substance of ether and it’s likely he’ll to use it to help the evil eyes king. He will be prepared for the White Dragon’s Eyes and will have no intention of negotiating with us until he sees some damage.”

“Isn’t that way of thinking too extreme? Like us, the Overgeared Kingdom thinks of the empire as the toughest challenge. They helped the founding of Valhalla to keep the empire in check. Why would they be so cold to us now?”

“They will be afraid.”

“Afraid?”

“Your Majesty’s ability to conscript and nurture your soldiers’ strength means it is inevitable that Valhalla’s power will soar into the sky. Cooperating with Valhalla to overcome the empire is like riding a tiger’s back to chase the lion. Thus, they will be worried even if the empire has been defeated.”

“...”

Ares had felt it. He was intrigued by Grid’s ability to make items and had been trying to establish a friendship with the Overgeared Kingdom because of the grace he had received. However, Ares became bitter as soon as he realized this, ‘The Overgeared Kingdom is very wary toward us.’

He was locked in thought for a while before speaking with half-closed eyes, “Okay. I will actively agree with your plan to strengthen our relationships with the empire and to consume the resources of the empire and the Overgeared Kingdom. I won’t hesitate anymore.”

“You have decided well. There is no need to be directly hostile to the Overgeared Kingdom just because we are holding hands with the empire for a while.”

“Umm... By the way, are we really going to the imperial palace? We might be bringing the White Dragon’s Eyes, but I am still the king of an enemy kingdom. Will the emperor truly meet us? I would be glad if he didn’t kill us...”

“We don’t have to meet the emperor. The grandmaster has already captured our movements. He will probably attempt a meeting.”

“Grandmaster?”

“He is the most powerful person in the empire and has the authority to wield military power. His reputation from 100 years ago was so great that his name was heard even in my country.”

“Reputation on the East Continent...? 100 years ago? Huh, he seems to have a considerable degree of longevity.”

“He is a transcendent. Maybe you can think of it as a different form of immortality?”

“Transcendent...? Immortal? Do you mean a legend?”

“Well, it’s a little different.”

“...” Ares sensed the grandmaster wasn’t ordinary.

When he was just about to ask for more details, Ares was interrupted by a knight who approached them. “I came to meet you at the grandmaster’s command. Are you the king of Valhalla?”

Ares thought the knight was a Red Knight due to the red armor, but the shape of the armor was different. In the absence of light, the armor looked more black than red.

“Isn’t it polite to introduce yourself before asking about the other person?”

“I am Susan of the Neo Red Knights. I’ll ask you again. Are you the king of Valhalla?”

“...”

Sima Hui nodded on behalf of the wary Ares. “That’s correct. You are speaking to King Ares, father of Valhalla and distinguished God of War.

“Follow me.” Susan guided Ares and his men to a castle. She must have a considerable position in the empire as she led Ares’ party toward a grand castle, which was too large to measure with one’s eyes, without passing through a single checkpoint.

“...!” Ares rose on the horse for dozens of minutes and was speechless when he saw the appearance of the palace. The palace, which had been built with mysterious timber and stone, was shining with brilliant hues. It was shining brightly enough to break the boundary between night and day.

“This is the celestial palace where the grandmaster resides.”

The celestial palace! A palace where the emperor wasn’t staying had such a grand name...? Ares found it hard to understand. He was filled with a greater vigilance as Susan urged him, “Come in.”

“My escorts...”

“They can come in as well.”

“...”

Their weapons weren’t even collected?

'Is it impossible to harm the grandmaster at our level?'

How great was this person? Feeling nervous, Ares entered the palace. The grandmaster was seated deep inside the palace. His eyes slowly examined Ares.

"I was thinking that Valhalla's actions were unusually fast. So, it turns out that a precious asset of the east is serving Valhalla. It is nice to meet you. I think we can maintain a good relationship in the future."

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Making accessories was the realm of the accessories maker. No matter how good Grid was at blacksmithing, he couldn't make accessories unless he gained the relevant skills first. However, Grid had a way out.

'Item Understanding.'

He only recently realized that item understanding was the most fundamental force and fraudulent concept of Pagma's Descendant. By observing, using, repairing, disassembling, and assembling the target item, he would achieve 100% understanding and gain the production method.

That's right. Grid could learn how to make accessories as long as he had the Item Understanding skill. Of course, he needed time and effort to increase the understanding of the item, but that wasn't a problem for Grid—master of labor. He was willing to invest days and months to gain the production method of necessary items.

'Nevertheless, I can't make all items just because I have the production method.'

The absence of the craftsmanship skill was a problem even if Grid gained the production method for the Ether Glasses. It was simply impossible for him to make the item without the relevant skills. However, Grid had a secret technique that could solve that issue. That's right.

'Item Modification!'

It reinterpreted items with a 100% understanding into a new form. Grid was planning to use this skill to integrate the Ether Glasses with a helmet or mask. By classifying the Ether Glasses as a defense item rather than an accessory, he would gain the 'reasonable right' to make the defense item.

'Then I will cooperate with Elizabeth.'

It was the same as the Overgeared King's Crown. The crafting of the Ether Diamond was left to Elizabeth while Grid planned to increase the completeness of the item by adding it to a defense item. Item Modification was a skill with a limited number of uses, but this item was worth it.

'I am investing in the evil eyes king.'

Additionally, he was looking forward to the defense item which would be made with the Ether Glasses. If a defense item with a high amount of magic resistance were born, he might be able to mass-produce it one day and strengthen the Overgeared Guild.

'Okay. Let's try it properly.'

Feeling motivated, Grid became absorbed in his work. As he worked on the glasses, his presence in the smithy for a few days was a great concern for Panmir—the first ranked blacksmith and chief blacksmith of the Overgeared Kingdom.

‘Shouldn’t he do something like hunting or questing?’

After the 4th National Competition, the levels of the players were rising like crazy. The gap was closing. As players levelled up, the gap between classes was reduced, and Chairman Lim Cheolho’s words were becoming a reality. The normal class rankers—who made up the majority of players—found hope at the 4th National Competition, and this hope became passion. The rankers, including the hidden classes, were dreaming of becoming the second Grid. The long-term experience gain buff from the National Competition rewards meant it wasn’t an exaggeration to say most players were hung up on hunting.

During this important period, Grid was spending all his time in the smithy while the 10 meritorious retainers were at the evil eyes village carrying out a mission. Thus, Panmir realized that the weight on their shoulders was enormous.

‘The more responsibilities there are, the more you have to lose. I can’t help feeling that it is really amazing.’

The Overgeared Kingdom would become stronger and never collapse easily. The confident Panmir also felt a sense of responsibility. He rushed through the dozens of smithies in the blacksmith district and encouraged the blacksmiths.

Ttang!Ttang!Ttang!

The hammering sound that lasted day and night was the symbol of Reinhardt and the Overgeared Kingdom.

Lepio was a small estate with only rice fields and mountains on all sides. It was one of the most popular secluded sites in the Gauss Kingdom, and people were very enamored with it.

“I never thought the evil eyes’ village would be in a place like this. It’s properly hidden. Won’t the empire have a hard time finding it?”

“Kukukuk... Headless man. It might be hard, but I will personally correct your words. This place is the mysterious land where darkness and chaos co-exist, not the evil eyes village. We also aren’t hiding but have ‘sealed’ ourselves in. The world will perish if the power of the evil eyes goes on a rampage—”

“Am I a dullahan? Why do you call a person with a head a ‘Headless Man’? I can’t understand what you are talking about.”

“...”

The rest of the meritorious retainers looked sadly at Vantner, who was shaking his head and scoffing. The only person who couldn’t understand the evil eyes’ words was Vantner.

Euphemina changed the topic, “It is a beautiful place.”

A desolate land where darkness and chaos co-existed...

The evil eyes village boasted a completely different landscape to what the 10 meritorious retainers had imagined. They had imagined a barren land where demonkin lived, but it was a pretty place with small, rounded houses.

“The roof colors would be prettier if the sun comes up.”

“Kukukuk. The moon is better than the sun. When we wash our bodies under the cold moonlight, the blood flow in our bodies is stabilized and the roar of the monster called ‘Me’ stops.”

“You are underground, so you don’t get the moonlight here, right?”

“...”

Regas’ pure question stung. The evil eyes—who had just been talking with great pride—flinched, and their shoulders drooped. The 10 meritorious retainers watching this scene clicked their tongues.

‘The evil eyes are weak against a tactless person.’

Then Jishuka brought things back to the point, “Let’s go straight to the evil eyes king. There is no time because the empire will likely attack in the near future.”

Faker and the Overgeared Shadows were already scattered throughout the village and searching. They were considering the paths the empire could use to invade the village and searching for terrain and objects that could protect it. A few minutes later, the 10 meritorious retainers—who were guided by the Destiny Guardians—arrived at the castle.

The castle was really small. The average height of the evil eyes was 1.2 meters, so all the buildings were small in size, including the king’s castle. The castle was barely 1.5 cm taller than the gates, so it looked miniature. Then it happened when all of the 10 meritorious retainers apart from Euphemina crossed the gates.

“We have been waiting.”

The highest ranking nobles of the evil eyes species—the so-called ‘ministers’ were waiting for the 10 meritorious retainers. All three of them were standing on the wall, sweeping their hair or placing a hand over their face.

“We know that you came here to defend our great king and that you are the subordinates of Grid, the only human who didn’t succumb to us.”

“However, we can’t just let you meet the king. We must make sure that you are qualified to meet our great king.”

“We know you aren’t enemies. The evil eyes king is an absolute presence that takes away the life and destiny of a man with just his eyes. If an unqualified person meets him, they will fall into the hell of eternity and eventually reach death. We have to test you. Submit.”

The three of them took off their eyepatches at the same time. Their exposed evil eyes turned round and round, disturbing the spirits of the 10 meritorious retainers.

[You have made eye contact with an evil eye.]

[Your spirit and soul is giving way before the mighty evil eye.]

[You have fallen into the 'submissive' state.]

[For 3 seconds from now, you will behave differently from your will!]

It was a three-second status skill. The time limit meant it was classified as a low-level effect, but the function was fraudulent.

"What is this...?"

Vantner started rubbing his head with both hands and barking like a dog while Jishuka behaved completely differently from her will as she measured her chest size. What if the evil eyes commanded the 10 meritorious retainers to attack each other?

'Crazy...! This tremendous ability!'

The 10 meritorious retainers were honestly impressed by the evil eyes ministers, who were on a different dimension. They thought that not even the empire could pass through the gates they guarded. The evil eyes ministers said, "I'm sorry but you aren't qualified. You can try to see our great king next time."

"We are only doing this for your safety. Please don't be offended. We have no intention of letting you enter, but we are thankful and appreciative. We'll provide you with accommodation, so please do well in the future."

"Protect our king and our village."

The attitude of the ministers was surprisingly pure and favorable. They had also anticipated the empire's invasion.

"The evil eyes people must have excellent books and intelligence..." Lauel shook his head whilst in awe of them. "It is hard to imagine the evil eyes, who live in a closed off space with only a few thousand residences, having books or an intelligence network. This is probably the power of Future Sight. Huhuhut... It is a great species."

"..."

"Everyone, as I've already told you, the empire will invade here in the near future. Until then, our mission is to protect the king. It isn't easy to wait for the enemies, but please remain motivated and responsible. We must not lose the evil eyes king."

"I understand."

Following this, the 10 meritorious retainers and the Overgeared Shadows settled down completely in the evil eyes village. They alternated patrols and took precautions to ensure the safety of the evil eyes king.

Three days later...

“You’ve gone through a lot of trouble.”

“From now on, we will join the mission.”

Coke, Zednos, and Laella arrived at the evil eyes village with 600 elite soldiers. The soldiers, who were armed with Grid’s mass-produced set, guarded the evil eyes village like steel bars.

‘We can stop a Red Knight easily like this.’

It was spectacular to see the gathering of the 10 meritorious retainers, including Faker and Yura—who were normally hard to see—as well as the elite forces. The Overgeared Guild wasn’t afraid of the empire’s invasion. They had the confidence to repel even a great demon.

‘This time, we’ll do our best without needing Grid.’

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It was the sixth day since the Overgeared Kingdom’s troops were stationed in the evil eyes village.

“It is rumored that at least 500 million players belong to the empire,” Pon expressed concern over his colleagues’ optimistic attitude about preventing the invasion of the empire. “Won’t we be swept away if the empire issues quests to all the players?”

“...”

The atmosphere sharply cooled down. They imagined the scene of five million players flocking together continuously. How long could they hold out against the waves of enemies that kept coming?

“...I never thought of the players.”

Coke and some of the Overgeared members paled and shivered. Fear dominated them before Lael reassured them, “Quests must have rewards. In particular, the rewards for war quests are several times more than normal quest rewards. It is difficult for the empire to release quests to hundreds of millions of players, no matter how much money they have.”

“Umm... Is it a problem for a nation to have too many players?”

“I can’t say it is completely good since there are many players who joined to army or were knighted. It is easy to move soldiers and knights who have to respond to a ‘certain duty’ without giving many rewards.”

“Soldiers... Why the hell do they want to enlist in the army in a game?” Peak Sword complained. As a citizen of South Korea, he had experience with military service. He didn’t want to go to the army again, no matter how patriotic he was. It was hard for him to understand the psychology of the players who joined the army. However, the other Overgeared members understood it well.

“Joining the army isn’t mandatory unless it is a special situation like South Korea. There are surprisingly many people who have fantasies about the army.”

“That’s right. They don’t want to join the army in reality, but they can at least do it in the game.”

“...Um.”

“That makes sense. Sometimes it is a disadvantage that so many of the Overgeared Kingdom’s players are Korean. They will never join the army even in the game.”

“Does it mean the Overgeared Kingdom’s ability to use the player forces is less than other countries?”

“Yes. This phenomenon will continue in the future unless Korea is quickly unified.”

“It is strange...”

To think the real world could affect the game this way...? The Overgeared members were very interested in it.

“Let’s go back to work.”

It was time for their shift. The Overgeared members scattered all over the evil eyes village.

It was the 10th day after the Overgeared members were stationed in the evil eyes village.

“This is boring.”

“I want to hunt. Why can’t the empire arrive faster if they are going to attack?”

Vantner and Peak Sword, famous for their lack of patience among the 10 meritorious retainers, finally reached their limit. The evil eyes village was a completely secluded place underground, and it destroyed the human spirit because it didn’t have any entertainment or hunting grounds. The two men had been guarding the gate for 10 days, and they were bored and anxious.

“Everyone outside is probably hunting right now.”

“I guess. You will suffer if you don’t hunt during the National Competition’s buff period.”

“We aren’t hunting, so the damage...”

“If there was a hunting ground near here, I would’ve hunted after every shift but there is no hunting ground...”

“Hah...”

“Sigh...”

Peak Sword and Vantner checked the time habitually as they wanted their shift to end quickly. They wanted to log out, sit in front of the TV, and have a beer.

“Huh?”

Peak Sword and Vantner, who were standing in front of the small castle where the evil eyes king lived, turned toward the entrance of an alley across the street. Three exceptionally short evil eyes were staring at them. The short evil eyes were less than one meter tall. Their faces were especially round, and there was a flush on the cheeks. One of them had a running nose with a long snot hanging from it.

“Little kids.”

“How cute.”

The evil eyes boasted cute doll-like appearances. Sometimes they had scars on their face and some were unusually ferocious, but they were still cute. People couldn't help smiling at their appearance. Then what about the young evil eyes? Peak Sword and Vantner smiled like fathers and waved to the children. They were surprised by the shy nature of the evil eyes children hiding in the alley. Peak Sword and Vantner felt they were even cuter.

“It is really nice as long as they don't open their mouths.”

“Yes, as long as they don't open their mouths.”

They recalled that first day when they arrived at the evil eyes village. Thanks to the Destiny Guardians confirming their identities, they had entered the village easily and had to face the enthusiasm of thousands of evil eyes. It had truly been hell. 1,000 people like Lauel had come up and talked to them. It wasn't an exaggeration to say they had almost lost their minds.

It was fortunate they had prepared earplugs in advance or they might've fainted. The earplugs were developed to resist the curse. They hadn't known that an item that was normally classified as a miscellaneous item would be so useful.

“The chuuni disease of the evil eyes king must be much greater. How much did God Grid suffer becoming friends with the king? God Grid is truly great. He isn't a god for nothing. Ah, really... The first time I met God Grid...”

“...”

Today, Peak Sword's cult worship of Grid began again. Vantner was taking out earplugs twisted from long use and stopped as he was going to put them in his ears. It was because the three evil eyes children were approaching.

“This point onwards is prohibited,” Vantner stated harshly despite the feelings in his heart. He couldn't relax his vigilance no matter how cute the evil eyes children were.

“It will be dangerous if assassins from the empire come. Don't hang around here and play elsewhere. In fact, don't leave your house at all,” Vantner warned coldly. Still, the evil eyes children lingered. They exchanged looks a few times before extending their hands which they had kept hidden behind them. In their hands, there were many candies that looked like ferns.

“Eat. This is something that all three of us risked out limbs to obtain.”

“...Did you take candy that your mothers hid?”

“Kukukuk? What are you talking about? My mother can't treat me badly. The power latent inside me is a violent guy who ignores the flesh of kin. Kukukuk.”

“I don't know what you're talking about... In any case, thank you.”

These were the children's snacks. Vantner and Peak Sword, who knew the evil eyes would be in great danger when obtaining goods from the outside world, only took one candy. Then they urged the

children to return home. The children hesitated before bowing. "You are the first and last humans we have bowed to since we were born. You should be honored."

"...?"

"...Thank you for protecting our great king." As if embarrassed, the evil eyes children blushed and fled as soon as they gave thanks. Peak Sword and Vantner stared at the children's backs in an upset manner.

"This is X."

"...You planted a flag."

Moreover, it was a death flag! This was a common development in manhwa and movies. The main character helped someone, then person who was normally cold suddenly thanked them... This was a line that signalled the time of death was approaching.

"Quickly contact Lael... Kuek?!" Peak Sword urgently took the posture of drawing the sword. Two dark human figures appeared out of the air and blocked the children's way. The startled children hesitated, and Peak Sword and Vantner flew toward the children.

However, the two enemies who appeared were assassins with great skill. The daggers thrown by the assassins obstructed Peak Sword and Vantner. While the two of them fended off the daggers, the assassins grabbed the necks of the evil eyes children. They intended to use the children as hostages, but their intentions weren't easily achieved.

Peak Sword and Vantner were strong.

"Where are you going?"

"...!?" The assassins barely escaped from the sword that flew toward them. The reason they didn't use the caught evil eyes children as a shield was that their mission was to capture the children. Peak Sword took the posture of Draw Sword and once again questioned, "What are you planning to do by catching these little kids?"

Of course, the assassins didn't answer. They took out daggers with the 'explosion' option attached and threw them. Vantner raised his shield to block the daggers. Then a powerful explosion occurred. The assassins believed that Vantner would be blown up along with the shield and were about to leave.

"These guys are truly X. Huhu."

Something spun among the thick dust. It was a circular shield. The assassins crossed their daggers and blocked the shield. However, the shield was so strong that they groaned involuntarily. The silent assassins let out sounds of pain, and Vantner laughed as the shield returned to him like a boomerang.

"It is good since I was bored. Put the children down and fight properly."

"Che...!"

The assassins couldn't fight properly. They were unlikely to win considering the power of the 1st ranked guardian knight Vantner and the 1st ranked quick draw swordsman Peak Sword. In any case, this place was full of enemies. The longer the battle, the more disadvantaged they would be.

The assassin cast a smoke screen. They intended to escape from the city while Peak Sword and Vantner were confused for a moment. It was at this moment that...

"Sob. Look," the evil eyes kid with the runny nose asked as he was caught by the assassin, "Touching my body, do you want to die?"

"...!"

There was a reason why the 'advance teams' had decided to kidnap the children of the evil eyes species. They thought the power of the evil eyes would be lacking because they were young. This wasn't the case. The little evil eyes took off his eyepatch, and the assassin holding him froze.

"Uh... Uwaaaah...!" The terrified assassin tried to throw away the evil eyes boy, but it was useless. The power of the evil eye acted just by 'seeing.' It was the most irrational force in the world.

"This...!"

The other assassin was surprised by his now dead colleague and turned to the two evil eyes he had captured. The rope tying them together was so tight that they couldn't move their fingers to take off their eyepatches.

'You idiot, you should've captured him properly like me!' The assassin cursed his dead colleague and sneered. He was going to leave here before the smoke was completely lifted. By the way...

"...?"

Did the stealth skill not activate? The smokescreen that blocked the enemy's vision became thicker and started to disturb his view.

"...!"The flustered assassin looked like he had seen a ghost. The two evil eyes children who had been tied up just a moment ago were now standing in front of him.

'When did they escape?'

The smokescreen thickened like a fog over a lake at dawn. The assassin stood alone in the middle of this, and his confusion was maximized. He heard the laugh of the evil eyes children who had disappeared from view.

"Die wandering this fog forever. Kuk... Kukukuk! Kuhahahaha!"

"Uwaaaah!"

It was useless to scream and struggle. The fog just became thicker.

"Wow..." Peak Sword couldn't close his mouth as he moved through the smokescreen. At first glance, the two assassins were obviously of high ranking. One had been completely frozen to death while the other screamed along as he fell into a hallucination.

'They even have the power to pull out the death flag...!'

The evil eyes species was absolutely amazing. They now completely understood why Grid and Lael were obsessed with the evil eyes.

“The duration of the illusion isn’t eternal. I recommend taking them out in advance,” the evil eyes children said while pointing at the hallucinating assassin.

Peak Sword nodded before approaching the assassin and tying him up. They took off the assassin’s mask and revealed that he was an NPC. Even after finding out his identity, they could attack still him. In other words, these assassins weren’t affiliated with the empire. If they were imperial NPCs, it would’ve been impossible for them to be attacked due to the armistice agreement.

‘External groups were contracted.’

Peak Sword and Vantner examined the city. Fierce battles were taking place everywhere.

“Hrmm... What to do?”

“What can we do apart from staying here?”

Peak Sword and Vantner’s mission was very important. Guarding the gate was equivalent to protecting the evil eyes king.

“It is dangerous. Don’t go home and head into the castle.”

It happened as Peak Sword and Vantner sent the children into the castle. Dozens of people appeared out of thin air. The invasion of the ‘advance teams’ wasn’t over yet.

“We’ll take care of you first before protecting the evil eyes.”

Peak Sword and Vantner smiled as they faced the assassin group. Not a single bit of tension could be found in them.

“It’s going to be super fun from now on.”

“Yes. It’s more interesting because we were about to die of boredom.”

“...Crazy bastards!” The leader of the assassins frowned and gestured. The assassins struck the two people at once. Iyarugt roared.

Chapter 974

Chris saw the odds of this mission succeeding as over 90%.

There were four months remaining on the truce agreement with the empire.

The agreement between nations was protected by the system so the empire and Overgeared Kingdom were unable to attack each other. The Overgeared members were guarding the evil eyes village and the empire couldn’t attack wildly.

Even if the empire invaded the village, the Overgeared members just needed to guard the gates and they would be able to protect the evil eyes king until Grid arrived.

‘These villains from my past life!’

However, the empire took different actions than expected.

They indirectly invaded by using external forces.

Chris' expression instantly darkened.

'Those villainous empire bastards, they intend to thoroughly consume our strength in this life, sealing the cycle of reincarnation and ending it all here!'

Chris quickly swung Grid's greatsword, the cross-shaped trajectory of the sword striking the upper body of the two assassins moving through the darkness and killing them.

The assassins with low defense were easily killed by Chris, who had the most powerful attack power.

'Dammit, it is a mess.'

Chris jumped to the nearby roof of the mansion and shook as he watched the whole city. There were battles taking place all over the village and the assassins who appeared in pairs were powerful enough to dominate two elite military units.

'They easily cope with two elite units containing 100 high level players...'

Was this truly rabble hired by the empire?

Chris raised the power of the Tyrant and flew forward.

The further he moved, the more his attack power increased.

"Viscount Chris!"

The expressions of the Overgeared soldiers still looked threatened despite capturing the assassins. Chris appeared like the raging wind and saved them from the assassins.

Chris ordered the unit leaders.

"Assemble your troops at the castle of the great evil eyes king who deals with dark flames and white ice and sees the truth of the world. It should never be breached, even if you must risk your soul being casted out of the circle of reincarnation or even destroyed."

"Yes!"

Among the 10 meritorious retainers, Chris was one of the twin leaders along with Jishuka. It wasn't a problem for him to operate the troops using his own judgment.

The soldiers replied vigorously and saved another unit as they marched in the same direction.

In the meantime, Chris moved along the roofs towards the village centre while killing assassins.

The heart of the village was a small library. It was a place where Lauel, Jishuka, Pon and Regas were guarding.

The reason why the top rankers were gathered there was because it was one of the most important bases in the village.

"I have come to keep the promise of our previous life."

Chris broke through the assassins surrounding the library and stood by Lauel. Jishuka was covering him by firing arrows while Lauel looked like he had aged 10 years.

"As expected, the empire seems to covet the knowledge and information which was sealed deep within the library to keep the world safe."

"Certainly..."

In other places, the assassins appeared in pairs while there were dozens of assassins here.

Chris faced more than 100 assassins and wondered,

"What the hell are these guys? Are they slicing through the dimension itself, appearing from the dimensional gap out of thin air without going through the door? Not even Faker who has unsealed the right arm of the God of Death can do that."

"They are borrowing the power of the akashic records."

"The akashic records... magic?"

"Yes. An excellent magician who has gained enlightenment and hatched out of their egg by breaking it can make the space itself weak, allowing people to warp in."

"It doesn't feel like Mass Teleport since they are scattered all over the place... Is it easy for a great magician to use this type of magic?"

"I don't know about ordinary magicians but it is easy for a transcendent."

"A transcendent...!"

One of the five pillars of the empire and the head of the Tower of Eternity.

Chris recalled the infamous Goldhit and was convinced.

"It is a fraudulent magic that grasps at the long forgotten thing called fear within me... How long can we last if troops keep being sent this way? Despite us being chosen ones born in the brightest day and the blackest night, blessed by both sun and moon, there is a limit to our stamina. We will run out of supplies and become exhausted, unable to unleash the full capabilities of our divine and sacred strength."

Chris confided the anxiety in his heart. He didn't feel suspicious about why Lauel hadn't anticipated the current situation.

It was true that Lauel was intelligent enough to be called a genius but he wasn't always successful. It wasn't possible for Lauel to cope with all the variables. He often failed and made mistakes.

However, this time was different.

Lauel didn't take this situation seriously.

"There is a limit to a transcendent's magic power, just as we have a limit to our stamina while being sealed in this weak vessel called a human body."

"It is the same whether they are making a frontal charge or moving with magic. We can't stop it if troops pour in all at once."

“Kukuku... There is no need to worry about a volume offensive. Hasn't this one shown his heaven-defying genius already when it was explained to you last time?”

“...?”

"Our enemies from the past life, despite being reborn under a forbidden star which granted them unimaginable wealth and power that they used to form what is called the empire, do not have infinite money. They will have to give compensation so they won't be able to easily pour in a lot of troops."

"The empire will have to pay to move them? Can't the empire move them for free?"

Nearly every kingdom or group on this continent had been offering tribute to the empire for hundreds of years. They were complete slaves of the empire. Chris wasn't convinced that the empire would pay compensation for moving them.

Lauel explained.

“Do you know why existing groups have lived like dead mice without resisting the empire despite it being the enemy of the world?”

“...?”

“It is because they think the empire's power is infinite. The empire isn't in a position to show weakness. The moment the empire offers no money, other countries will question the empire's power and the dominance will weaken.”

“That's why they have to offer a reward every time they move outside forces?”

"It's a commonly used bluffing system. The empire shines like the brightest sun, blinding everyone with their light, making people unable to see their faults."

“There is something I can't understand. Lauel, my companion of eternity, why do you keep saying that the empire is poor?”

It was strange.

This was the empire that dominated the continent for hundreds of years. The empire monopolized all sorts of resources and invaded other kingdoms.

Yet they were so poor that they couldn't move some outside forces?

Creating quests for 500 million players might be too much but the assumption that it was hard to move subordinate forces didn't make sense. It didn't make sense that the empire was poor.

Lauel was quietly using magic while listening to Chris' questions.

He changed the wind direction to maximize the power of Jishuka's arrows while also neutralizing the assassins' throwing techniques. He also created an earthquake every time they approaching, leading them directly to Chris.

Lauel was fighting effectively despite having few combat skills.

It was a combat method that made people realize why there was the 'fight cleverly' saying when praising athletes and martial artists.

Laue's brilliant brain was creating a disaster for the enemies.

"I thought of something while watching the magic machine in the National Competition. How much manpower and money did the empire invest in unearthing the ancient artifacts? How much techniques and money were poured in to restore and operate the ancient relics?"

"Do you mean that the empire is poor because of the magic machines?"

"No. The magic machines are just one of the causes. I just came to a more fundamental question."

"Fundamental question?"

"If the empire is truly as wealthy as people widely think, it isn't normal for them to struggle to suppress the Overgeared Kingdom and Valhalla."

"...?"

"Can't they step on the Overgeared Kingdom by constantly producing and dispatching infinite troops, just as you claim now?"

"Ah...!"

Chris felt like he had been struck by lightning as he gained enlightenment.

Laue was a person who was concerned about the empire's tactics and he was also the first person to realize the limits of the empire's tactics.

"You... You really are the number 1 unequalled genius under both heaven and earth..."

Laue laughed at Chris' heartfelt admiration.

"Time is fair to everyone."

As Grid grew, Laue was also growing. He studied, thought, accumulated knowledge and developed his vision.

"I don't know what type of genius that God of War Ares recruited."

Laue activated a pre-set trap to lure out the hiding assassins.

Then he laughed while covering half his face with his hand.

"That person needs to be ready to deal with me now."

Laue was convinced.

Grid and Kraugel had grown rapidly over the years.

They had an absolute force that made strategy and tactics obsolete and no one could be their opponent.

At this moment, grey pillars rose continuously in the evil eyes village.

They were the pillars that symbolized the death of the invaders.

'That is...'

Chris and Lauel turned towards the south without speaking.

It was the direction of the city entrance where the grey pillars were occurring the fastest.

It was the zone that Yura was protecting.

Chris clicked his tongue.

"Lauel, even if your expectations are wrong, I don't think the empire can break through if they come."

"...I agree. Let's go inside the building. It is time to change shifts with our lifelong friends whose fate and destiny intertwined with ours through all eternity, the evil eyes."

"Okay."

The magic power of the evil eyes wasn't infinite, just like a human's stamina isn't infinite. Unlike the king, ordinary evil eyes could only free the power of their eyes for two hours a day.

Two hours was enough.

"H-Hiik!"

"S-Spare me!"

The power of the evil eyes made even the coldest assassins kneel down and beg.

The evil eyes took care of most of the assassin remnants in just half an hour and then switched back to the Overgeared members, who had enough rest.

The empire's advance team was practically unable to do anything and collapsed.

"Kukukuk... You are decent. It is a power that is hard to be confined to the 'framework' of humans."

"Hahaha... You didn't buy people who are all talk."

It was the 19th day since the 10 meritorious retainers left for the evil eyes village.

[Your understanding of the Ether Glasses is now at 100%!]

[The 'Ether Glasses' production method has been acquired.]

"Kukuku, it's finally over."

Grid, who was stuck in the smithy and wrestled with the glasses for 19 days, finally achieved his first task.

He had obtained the production method and could now convert the glasses into the form of armor such as a helmet, or face shield.

'Given that I can use it myself...'

A helmet was better than a face shield.

It was because a face shield and mask couldn't be used together.

Grid had no intention of throwing away the best treasure, the Slaughterer's Eye Patch which had been a great help during the Demon King Subjugation.

'I need a helmet that is at least worth the value of Triple Layers. Okay, let's combine the glasses and helmet.'

Grid decided to set the value to at least Triple Layers and used the Legendary Blacksmith's Reconstruction skill to change the Ether Glasses. Then he suddenly remembered the White Tiger's Breath.

'The White Tiger Sword summons stone pillars. Then can I make a helmet that is as hard as a rock if I used the White Tiger's Breath?'

There wasn't the saying as dumb as a rock for nothing.

It was a great opportunity to increase his defense if he made a helmet that was as hard as a rock.

'...Um. Later, I'll get one more Ether Diamond and insert the White Tiger's Breath when making my own helmet.'

Four of the eight rewards that Grid obtained from the National Competition were the breaths of the sacred creatures.

Thanks to this, he had a total of one Red Phoenix's Breath, one Blue Dragon's Breath, one White Tiger's Breath and two Black Tortoise's Breath.

It wouldn't be long until his weapons and armor contained the power of these sacred creatures.

'Kukuku... Once I obtain pure ether, I will be the ultimately overgeared tower that looms above everyone, engulfing them within the shadow that I cast.'

Wouldn't it be enough to fight against the empire?

"...?"

Grid felt a bit strange as he started modifying the item.

It felt like just yesterday when he was shaken by the 'strong people of the era' he encountered when visiting the empire and now he didn't feel afraid.

Was he too puffed up?

No.

His impression of himself had risen thanks to that bastard Garam. He also became confident after his experience as the Demon King.

"Huehuehue..."

Grid thought about the power of the empire and checked the date.

It seemed the empire hadn't invaded yet since there was no special communication from his colleagues in the evil eyes village. Thanks to this, Grid could focus on modifying the item.

[Chapter 975](#)

It was the 20th day of protecting the evil eyes.

"Stop the futile resistance!"

"You are the only ones who will lose if you keep fighting!"

Today, the enemies had come. Like the enemies on the first day and the enemies yesterday, they appeared out of thin air. Based on their chatter, the invaders had a common characteristic. They mistakenly thought they were strong!

"Ahahahat! Bring it on! We're right here!"

"City guards! Overgeared Runman! Move!!"

"...Please don't call us that."

The Overgeared members were full of energy. The Vantner and Peak Sword duo were particularly excited. Compared to during the 10 days of boredom, they were now full of joy.

Peak Sword used a new skill, Five Combined Strikes. Iyarugt flashed five times, and five attackers died.

[The experience of Iyarugt has increased by 0.1%!]

"Good!" Peak Sword snorted. The battles that occurred every day not only improved his skill proficiency but also increased his item experience. As he made a satisfied expression, Vantner crushed the enemy's head with the mace hidden behind his shield and asked in an incomprehensible manner, "Why are you so obsessed with Iyarugt?"

"Eh? What are you suddenly saying?"

"Didn't you get the gold medal rewards? If you ask Grid to make you a new sword with those materials, you can get a much stronger weapon than Iyarugt. Why are you sticking with it?"

In fact, Iyarugt had virtually been transferred to Peak Sword. It had been more than a year since he started using it as a flagship weapon and accumulating experience with it. It was very inefficient when considering that the experience rate of a growth item was slower than a snail. Wasn't it possible to get a more powerful weapon? Even if Iyarugt reached its final rating, was there any guarantee it would be stronger than a weapon made from one of the four sacred creatures? It was a mystery as to why Peak Sword was so obsessed with Iyarugt.

"Um..." Peak Sword felt that Vantner's question was worthy and thought for a moment before replying, "Setting aside the performance of the weapon, I expect the demonkin Iyarugt to be a great force. As you know, Grid has powerful NPCs, but he isn't actively utilizing them because their lives are finite. On the other hand, Iyarugt is classified as a pet, so I don't need to worry about him dying. I want to give Grid a new power by completely freeing Iyarugt."

“Once you finish the final upgrade for Iyarugt, will you return it to Grid?”

“Of course. I’m a type of item surrogate.”

“Oh...” Vantner was at a loss for words. Peak Sword’s choices and actions were all for Grid. Still, Peak Sword had his own stance and life. How could he sacrifice a few years for others?

Vantner smashed the shield against new invaders that appeared and asked a new question, “What’s the reason to sacrifice yourself for Grid? I feel a lot of gratitude to Grid, and I like him. I am prepared to lay down my life for him many times. However, I can’t sacrifice a few years of time like you’re doing. I can probably never do that.”

There was a more fundamental issue than the concept of righteousness. Sacrificing himself for others without hesitation? It was really hard work and not something that everyone could do.

Peak Sword shrugged as Vantner gazed at him like he was a strange creature. “Well, the biggest thing is that Grid is Korean. First, there is the tax problem. In South Korea, the job of a gamer isn’t recognized for its costs, so they have to pay nearly 50% of the revenue and expenditure as tax. It is the same with the national pension and health insurance premium. In any case, Grid is dedicating half of his profits to the country every year when he has the ability to earn billions of won in foreign currency if he wants.”

“...Do you feel gratitude and respect because he is making your country stronger?”

“Yes.”

“Crazy... Are you the president? Why do you feel appreciation for that?”

“Don’t you know the heart of the Patriotic Association of South Korea?”

“Why is your patriotism so strong?”

“It is a patriotism that has lasted for generations. I always feel gratitude toward Grid and realize that helping he is a patriotic blessing. I’ll live for Grid forever.”

“In any case, you’re not normal.”

“Huhuhuhu. I’ve heard that a lot since childhood.”

“It isn’t praise... Well, I’ve might’ve felt like you if I had any homogeneity with Grid.”

“Grid won’t be bald, so you will never be the same.”

“You rotten person!”

It was the 22nd day of protecting the evil eyes.

“Uhh... Again...”

The Overgeared soldiers were becoming visibly exhausted. The enemy had been invading for over 10 days, and every time it was a sudden surprise. Thus, the mental pressure was severe. The main problem was that the basic skills of the enemies overwhelmed the soldiers. How many times would they have lost their lives if they didn’t have the best quality recovery potions from the Reidan Alchemy Facility and Grid’s mass-produced set? The soldiers were pale as they stared at the scars under the armor.

It was the 25th day of protecting the evil eyes.

“The soldiers are at the limit.”

“Aren’t the reinforcements here yet?”

“The imperial troops have taken over Lepio Village. The road isn’t open support troops can’t enter.”

“Shit!”

The 600 elite soldiers of the Overgeared Kingdom were completely exhausted. They had already run out of potions to restore stamina, and their armor and weapons had become rags from successive battles. Furthermore, there were no blacksmiths or smithies in the evil eyes village to repair them.

However, there was one point of comfort. No, it was a huge point. Since the levels of the enemies were high, the soldiers gained an average of 20 levels during the battle between the two sides. Some soldiers even reached level 300 and achieved their third advancement. The soldiers were becoming the top elites of the Overgeared Kingdom. If they could all survive and return safely... The military force of the Overgeared Kingdom would rise greatly.

It was now the 28th day of protecting the evil eyes.

“Open the way.”

“This place is currently being invaded by mysterious forces. We can’t let anyone enter the war situation.”

“Anyone? The great army of the Saharan Empire is called just anyone?”

The empire’s regular troops arrived and tried to enter the evil eyes’ village. The Overgeared Kingdom was forced to gather troops at the entrance, so they couldn’t enter. The soldiers of the empire couldn’t enter the city as the Overgeared soldiers blocked it.

This was the so-called roadblock. It was a strategy which took advantage of the fact that it would be impossible for them to fight each other. The first one to use this strategy was the empire. The imperial forces blocked all entrances to Lepio Village to interfere with the entry of the Overgeared army. This meant there was no way for the Overgeared reinforcements to enter the evil eyes’ village below Lepio Village.

It was the 31st day of protecting the evil eyes.

“Uhh...”

The fighting spirits of the Overgeared soldiers had dimmed, but the imperial soldiers didn’t allow them to leave. The intruders suddenly appeared and fought the Overgeared soldiers. The Overgeared soldiers’ armor and weapons were broken, yet their reinforcements had yet to arrive...

The continuous feeling of despair filled the Overgeared soldiers who had already begun to run out of physical and mental strength.

“...”

The evil eyes people, who blocked the enemy from attacking the rear, had already been silent for two days. They were exhausted and had lost their ability to speak the dreaded words. On the other hand, the eyes of the imperial forces were relaxed. The despair of the Overgeared soldiers became greater as they were mocked of the empire.

Tatang! Jade magic bullets flew through the sky, and new invaders died as soon as they appeared. A beautiful black-haired woman declared to the soldiers, "You are safe."

She would protect Grid's property, even if she had to die 100 times. Yura swore that to herself as she created new magic power bullets.

It was the 33rd day of protecting the evil eyes.

"Pant... Pant..."

The 10 meritorious retainers of the Overgeared Guild were losing strength. They were arranged in turns to allow for sufficient rest, but their items had a limit called 'durability.' As the small battles were repeated daily, their armor and weapons started to scream and their repair tool sets were used up. Their combat force fell sharply the moment they switched to sub-items. The enemies felt a bit stronger, and a large number of them started to intrude. They hoped for it to end, and they wished for their allies to come. However, they couldn't show it in front of the soldiers, and their mental strength was quickly consumed.

"..."

The most ambitious Peak Sword and Vantner no longer enjoyed the situation. The situation wasn't very good. In order to enter the evil eyes' village, it was necessary to use space magic at the fountain in Lepio village. This was virtually impossible because Lepio Village was fully occupied by the imperial army.

"What now?"

"Tell us what to do."

The Overgeared members started to rely on Lael. It was a scene that showed Lael's position. Just like Grid, many of the Overgeared members believed in Lael. No matter what the skeptics said, he was indisputably the one who had established the Overgeared Kingdom.

Lael shrugged. "We've done our part."

"..."

They had done everything they could? Was there no solution left?

Lael laughed at his frustrated colleagues. "It is over now. In the first place, our mission was to last until the time came. We did well enough."

In Lepio Village...

"The cockroaches lasted for a long time."

Was it a 10 year old child? A little girl was smiling cynically. It was a smile that didn't fit her age.

"Now they have reached their limits."

A Black Knight standing by the girl's side said, "There was a report that side the enemy's spirit is completely broken."

"I heard that a few days ago."

"Haha, I told you that the enemy's spirit had started to decline."

"Hmm, now it is completely broken?"

"Yes, it is clear that they are at their limits. It is natural. Haven't they been fighting suddenly appearing enemies for over 20 days? I think it is incredible they've lasted this long."

The side of the Black Knight's helmet had five golden lines embossed on it. It was the symbol of the First Black Knight and showed that the middle-aged man was the leader of the Black Knights. Nevertheless, the captain was treating the little girl with great care.

It was natural. The girl's identity was Magician King Goldhit. She was the continent's strongest magician, the master of the Tower of Eternity, and one of the five pillars of the empire. The Black Knights might be one of the representatives of the empire, but it was hard to act like that in front of Goldhit.

"Hmm, I'll take Captain's words for it. I will send people in for the last time."

Goldhit had sent nearly 10,000 troops to the evil eyes' village over the last dozens of days. It was possible with the fountain that was a warp device, which gave a glimpse of the magical knowledge of the demonkin. Still, Goldhit wasn't all-powerful and was tired from using a great amount of magic power.

After a moment, 50 knights stood in front of Goldhit.

"You called..."

They were the Blue Flame Knights of the Gauss Kingdom. The swords of the Blue Flame Knights contained a blue flame, and their skills were good enough to compare to the Black Knights of the empire. Of course, the Blue Flame Knights had been pushed aside in terms of scale for the Black Knights, who had an enormous amount of resources poured into them and expanded to 1,000 people.

Goldhit spoke to the leader of the Blue Flame Knights, "Stand at the fountain. I will send you to the evil eyes' village and sweep away the remnants of the Overgeared members."

"..." The Blue Flame Knights leader gritted his teeth. The Overgeared Kingdom was the greatest enemy of the Gauss Kingdom. The Gauss Kingdom had been fighting with Grid since the days of the Eternal Kingdom and recognized the Overgeared Kingdom as a public enemy.

The knights leader had lost many troops to the Overgeared Kingdom and wanted to get revenge, but not like this. He was a knight of the Gauss Kingdom, not a knight of the empire. Why did he need to be commanded by the empire?

“Well... do you have anything to say?” Goldhit frowned as the leader of the Blue Flame Knights didn’t answer. Killing intent rose, and the Blue Flame Knights found it hard to breathe. “...”

Goldhit and the Black Knight were stepping on them. This was their territory after all...

The leader of the Blue Flame Knights stared at Goldhit’s small feet for a while before dropping his head. “...No. I’ll punish the enemy.”

They couldn’t resist the empire. They had to fight. The empire had paid 200 golden crowns in exchange for the right to use the Blue Flame Knights. The reason for obeying orders was clear.

‘Yes, we’re fighting for our country, not the empire.’

The leader of the Blue Flame Knights made a decision, and the grinning Goldhit sent them away with magic.

“They’re going to die.”

The Overgeared nobles and soldiers were staying in the evil eyes’ village. Soon, they would be crushed and collapse. It wouldn’t be long before the evil eyes’ king was defeated and the massive knowledge of the evil eyes was obtained by the empire.

“Kukukuk...”

This was an opportunity to study the eyes of a living evil eyes! Goldhit was feeling blissful. She thought it was worthwhile to come this far and suffer. It was at this moment that...

“The Overgeared King has arrived,” a Black Knight came to Goldhit’s barracks and reported.

The expression of the Black Knight was dull. He wasn’t too tense at the appearance of the Overgeared King. There was naturally no reason for him to be nervous. The Overgeared King wasn’t an enemy at present. Even if he tried something, there were two Black Knights and the magician king on this side.

“Hrmm...” Goldhit rose from her seat and headed to the entrance of the village. A black-haired man was standing there with folded arms. The silver crown on his head showed he was devoted to his status as king. It was a sorry sight.

“It has been a while,” Goldhit moved to the entrance and greeted Grid, who showed an obviously offended expression.

“I guess you are still kidnapping children and raising them like livestock.”

“What is the difference between livestock and a young child?”

“...?”

“Both are powerless. They are raised to be eaten.”

Goldhit glanced toward the ground, looking underground where the Overgeared Kingdom was struggling. She was saying that they were also pigs.

“Don’t waste time and go back. As a king, how can your ass get up from the throne so often?”

In fact, Goldhit had a lot of interest in Grid. She was interested in existing legends. It was a feeling that was close to liking but not anymore. Goldhit's grudge against Grid was huge after he took the thunder stone.

'...Hrmm?' Goldhit, who had been turning around after ridiculing Grid, suddenly stopped. She sensed the magic power filling the sky. Looking up, Goldhit became nervous as she detected the thunderstorm.

"Aren't there still close to three months left in the truce agreement between the empire and the Overgeared Kingdom? Overgeared King. It is impossible for you to attack us. You know better than anyone that you can't resist causality. It isn't worth it."

Grid was a player and instantly understood the 'causality' that Goldhit spoke about. She was probably referring to the 'system'. Still, Grid knew how to take advantage of the system.

"Is this called the struggle of the livestock?"

Rain poured down.

"Storm Demonic Energy Field."

Thunder struck. It was a mighty force that didn't distinguish between enemies as it swept through the soldiers blocking the entrance.

"...Crazy!!" Goldhit shouted as she protected herself from thunder with 10 layers of shields. This was the wrath of the magician king! It was a sight that couldn't be easily seen and was the precursor to a disaster. The number of people who had seen Goldhit's current state was small enough to be counted on one hand.

One of those people was Grid. Grid raised the fighting energy of the Hero King and stared at Goldhit with fierce eyes. "You aren't entitled to stand in my way."

"...!"

'Oh, my god. There is somebody who doesn't fear the magician king?'

The expressions of the Black Knights stiffened. They didn't expect the Overgeared King to act like this, and the pressure he was giving off was stronger than they had imagined it would be.

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'This guy must be crazy!'

The biggest disadvantage of large-scale attack magic was that it couldn't distinguish between targets. Of course, some spells were an exception but it was like that nine out of ten times. The Overgeared King's summoning of lightning within a 200-meter-radius was a blatant declaration of war. In fact, his magic was damaging the bodies of the imperial soldiers.

The lightning magic was somehow familiar. It evoked a strange sense of déjà vu as it generated magnetic force and caused her orb to shake. The sound of thunder in her ears confused her mind and disrupted the spell casting. Just before the lightning fell toward her head, Goldhit opened a shield that protected herself, only to feel confused.

'It's weak?'

Grid's magic clearly contained something strange. It generated a magnetism that slowed down the pace of spell casting, so it definitely transcended the category of usual spells. However, the attack power was too weak. There was no need to stack 10 layers of shields. Two layers seemed to be enough. Goldhit was confused since she had long known that Grid possessed Braham's soul.

'Hasn't he fully awakened the enhanced magic? No, he might be afraid of the empire and could be deliberately saving his strength. Once the soldiers died, he would cross a river he couldn't return from.

She needed to test it a bit more.

"Overgeared King! You violated the agreement first!"

Her opponent was a legend and a king. Goldhit shouldn't be condescending just because he was 100% an insidious person. In order to peek at a certain level of his strength, it was necessary to push him to the edge of a cliff. As she judged this, she started chanting a spell that caused the earth to shake. Goldhit thought that the big earthquake would hit the Overgeared soldiers and drop them into a pit.

'What?'

Grid scoffed, and Goldhit's spell was neutralized. It was proof of a higher-level knowledge. Grid's magic knowledge delved into Goldhit's knowledge and denied it.

Goldhit freaked out. 'T-This is unbelievable! This ability!'

The words of her teacher came to mind, "My master was omnipotent because of his magic. He easily grasped the magic process of others and cut off the activation of the spell itself. Every magician, except for Mumud, was helpless in front of Master. Thus, everyone was afraid of the Duke of Wisdom."

Duke of Wisdom...

Great knowledge was what blocked the magic from its source! It was an unrealistic force that exerted a power of 100 with one magic power. Goldhit hadn't believed it because it sounded like a story from the Age of Mythology. She laughed because it was too exaggerated.

However, Grid proved it at this moment. He was the omnipotent Duke of Wisdom that he had inherited from Braham!

'This power was real...!' Goldhit was shocked as the opponent's power surpassed her expectations. Lightning struck the crown of her head in this gap. This was lightning that inflicted 10,000 damage. It was an attribute that made magic resistance meaningless, but the strength itself was lousy. Still, even a small stake could break a rock if it kept hitting the same point.

Goldhit was struck 12 times on the head and got a headache. The lightning that fell irregularly in a 200-meter-radius persistently hit Goldhit like it had an ego.

'He has full control over this large-scale magic!'

The reason why large-scale magic couldn't distinguish between targets was that it was hard to control. Grid was in full control of a large spell with a range of 200 meters!

'This is the strength of the Duke of Wisdom...!'

The storm started to wane. No more lightning fell, but Goldhit's body still shook from the electric shocks.

"Your talent is great. You are a genius that will emerge once in 100 years. You will surely be the greatest magician in the world." Her master's praise scattered like dust.

"All magicians in the world have honored you as the magician king."

"Of course. I am the supreme existence of magicians."

She felt ashamed of herself for using the word 'supreme.' Her body was hot. The strange feelings overtook Goldhit. "Eek...!"

Why did she have to feel such petty emotions? Goldhit glared at Grid...

"..."

...She gave up. She was afraid. She wasn't confident enough to bear the insults that would be in the Overgeared King's eyes.

'It is better to back off here.'

The fact, 'Goldhit can't beat Grid', was added to the truth of the world. Goldhit stiffened like a rat in front of a snake and was covered in sweat. In order to gain the enhanced magic, she decided to revise her approach and attitude toward Grid for the future. There was plenty of hope. Since the first time they met, she had laid the foundation by expressing her favorability toward him.

"E-Enter." Goldhit immediately opened the path.

Grid's gaze was still watching the ground.

"..."

The Overgeared members, who were isolated in the evil eyes' village, had concealed their situation thoroughly. They had been worried that Grid would lose concentration while working because of their misfortune. Of course, they were in control at first.

For more than 20 days, Grid never noticed the situation in the evil eyes' village. However, within a few days of the arrival of Reidan's reinforcements, the situation of the evil eyes' village was delivered to Grid. Grid also had eyes and ears. The moment the army of Reidan moved, a report came from Piaro. Piaro had recognized what was going on in the evil eyes' village, then Grid received further news from Mercedes.

However, it hadn't shaken Grid. Instead, he had been immersed in his blacksmithing work. This was the job he had to do right now, and it was the wish of his colleagues. He also believed in his colleagues. That's right. Grid hadn't doubted the skills of the 10 meritorious retainers and the Overgeared members.

Then he arrived at Lepio Village and realized the situation was serious, unlike what he had thought. The troops sent from Reidan 10 days ago were still unable to enter the village. Grid was furious. He lost his temper the moment he saw Goldhit's disgusting face. His killing intent was strong enough to cut her neck right away.

However, the system recognized Goldhit as an 'allied force', so Grid was only able to use Storm Demonic Energy Field. Perhaps it was due to his high luck stat, but he was able to vent some of his anger.

[The target has received 10,000 damage.]

[The target has received 10,000...]

[The target has received 10,000...]

[Your have discovered the effect of the target's spell with the effect of Duke of Wisdom! The target's spell has been destroyed!]

The random lightning started to strike Goldhit. The power of Duke of Wisdom sealed Goldhit's magic. Perhaps there was a problem with the 'body' Goldhit was currently in and she was forced to step back.

"E-Enter."

"...Tsk."

Grid didn't want to see her again, but he couldn't waste time. The imperial soldiers who had been struck by the lightning were relatively healthy thanks to their heavy armor and expensive items. Grid moved through the nervous people and glanced at his allies. "Let's go."

"Yes!" The Overgeared soldiers responded and followed Grid. The imperial troops didn't block their way, and they entered the village without a hitch. The knights and soldiers couldn't act when Commander Goldhit had opened the way.

"Is it okay?" The Black Knight asked.

Hearing the Black Knight's concern, Goldhit nodded. "The grandmaster will stop him."

He was watching the situation here. Soon, he would come with the White Dragon's Eyes.

The evil eyes' king was destined to die even with Grid's presence.

"Charge!"

"This is our land! Don't forgive the demonkin who have been parasites under our land and the Overgeared Kingdom that protects them! This is our cause!"

The Blue Flame Knights were transferred to the evil eyes' village. Like the previous invaders, they appeared suddenly out of thin air. They honestly wanted to discipline and expel the demonkin as well as the Overgeared Kingdom, the main enemy of their kingdom.

This place was their territory. It was a place where enemies couldn't run wild.

A blue flame emerged from the tips of the swords wielded by the knights. The bare bodies of the Overgeared soldiers, whose armor were broken, were easily cut down. However, the Overgeared soldiers didn't lose their morale. Those who were cut in the chest coughed up blood and kept fighting, while those who were cut in one of their shoulders switched their weapon to the other hand, and those who had their legs cut crawled to advance. The Blue Flame Knights got a chill at this eerie sight.

"These guys... Keok!"

The knights, who were about to swing their swords again at the Overgeared soldiers who clung to them like zombies, suddenly fell from the arrow that flew silently. It was a signal that the ranks had collapsed. The arrows that assimilated with the darkness kept flying without stopping. The leading troops of the Blue Flame Knights collapsed, and the Overgeared soldiers climbed onto their chests and shoved their swords like beasts.

"Were they trained by Jude?" Someone clicked their tongues at the appearance of the Overgeared soldiers. It was Jishuka who was shooting arrows from behind the soldiers. Her blazing red hair and silky tanned skin made her look beautiful in the darkness as she fired the arrows.

"Sigh. If you don't run away, I can't back down."

Now she had only 13 arrows remaining. She planned to use her few remaining arrows for self-defense until the reinforcements arrived. However, the Overgeared soldiers didn't flee and fought to the end. Thus, she couldn't run away alone.

"...We must go back together."

She took a breath and pulled back the bowstring. The arrow that disappeared from the world struck the enemy's heart and revealed its appearance. At the same time...

[Critical!]

[The weak spot has been successfully attacked!]

[The number of enemies you've killed by shooting the weak spot has reached 10 million!]

[It is a great achievement that will go down in history!]

[The Advanced Bow Mastery skill has been upgraded to Sure Death Bow Mastery!]

"Eh?" Jishuka faced a new evolution.

'I've killed only 10 million?'

It was fortunate other people couldn't know what she was thinking. Then an amazing situation occurred.

[A holy voice has entered your ears.]

-You...World tree...Aura...

[★ Hidden Class Change Quest ★ Povia's Descendant has occurred!]

"...!"

Povia—it was the name of the former legendary archer. She was an elf and was known to be the best archer in the world. Becoming her descendant meant being a legend...

Jishuka achieved the conditions to get a legendary class without even knowing it! By the way...

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

“What if I don’t want to?”

-...

[Do you really want to reject the quest?]

“Yes.”

[The quest was rejected.]

Jishuka made a surprising choice. No, it was a natural choice. She had been called a godly archer for a long time.

“I’m going to surpass Povia, so it is funny to be her descendant.” Jishuka easily passed up the situation with a single smile. An ordinary person would never understand this attitude. It was a confidence that she could have because she was a genius. Then her unexpected choice caused a new development.

[The qualification for the hidden class ‘Bow Sage’ has been obtained. A class change quest will occur.]

“Hehe.”

As expected, warriors should fight. The over a month’s worth of struggling was a stepping stone for her to grow. Jishuka grinned and contemplated the battlefield with Hawk Eyes. Members of the Overgeared Guild were fighting all over the place and all of them were breaking their limits due to the extreme circumstances.

“I’ll be able to pay a proper price in the future.”

The Overgeared Guild was no longer a Grid one-man team. An arrow formed from magic power struck the throat of a Blue Flame Knight. The knights were astonished at the god who shot a bow without any arrows.

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“What is your relationship with her?” Sticks asked. His gaze was focused on Magician King Goldhit.

“Relationship? What relationship? Isn’t it a relationship where we want to kill each other?” Grid answered hurriedly.

Sticks laughed. “Then why is she looking at you like that?”

“Like what? Isn’t she in a bad state?”

“The magician king’s magic power recovery rate is faster than that of the elves who have the power of the world tree. She can easily adjust her condition. In fact, she was recovering in real time while confronting Your Majesty.”

“There is no limit to her flesh...? Mercedes said that the magician king’s body is generally less durable.”

“Nope. She looks fine.”

“Um... Sticks, are you feeling wary?”

“Hahaha... The magician king’s ability is above mine. I’m a knowledge seeker, not a magician.”

“Aren’t you good at magic? You can even use elemental magic.”

“It is a basic skill I mastered in the process of exploring knowledge. It isn’t a level to brag about in front of the continent’s greatest magician.”

‘...Don’t tell me, is it luck again?’

Goldhit had failed to cast the spell because the effect of Duke of Wisdom had activated ‘luckily’. This caused her to overvalue his skills and lose her will. It was a misunderstanding that could be seen in third-tier manhwa and novels these days, but the possibility couldn’t be ruled out. Grid had experienced this absurd development many times over the past few years. Even now, he was experiencing a lot of luck.

‘It feels good.’

This was the great power of luck! He felt that he had finally overcome his bad luck!

‘Decades ago, this development was a first-rate literary development!’

Of course, it was an unfounded claim. In any case, he felt like the protagonist of a first-rate novel!

Grid was filled with joy as he arrived in front of the fountain. The statue of a naked boy with a comical expression was decorating the fountain, and water was pouring from his little place. When Grid first visited this place, the evil eyes had manipulated certain parts of the statue to open the entrance to the village.

“However, I can’t remember a single maneuver. I’ll ask Lauel...”

“Entrust it to me.”

Sticks was used to having a deep conversation with the Destiny Guardians. He had a peculiar passion for learning. As such, he had learned a lot about the evil eyes species and how to enter their village. Sage Sticks manipulated the statue several times, and the space tore open, revealing a portal. It was a portal connected to the evil eyes village.

“It has lost a lot of life.”

“Life?”

What was wrong with whose life? Grid was reminded of the fact that Sticks was suffering from a curse. “Sticks, are you going to die now?”

“...” Sticks closed his mouth and stared at Grid. As a high elf, he had lived a long life and wanted to live longer. He was sensitive to death because he felt like he was going to die every time his heart hurt. Still, he couldn’t help feeling irritated when Grid mentioned it. “Don’t think I’m going to die yet. I’m talking about the life span of the portal.”

“A portal has a life expectancy?”

“It is the same with objects. A device made of magic power can't exist forever. Furthermore, this portal has a shorter life span due to the shock it received from outside.”

“What shock?”

“Goldhit seems to have placed an unusual spell on this portal. The portal's operation was changed so much that it was damaged and the life span greatly reduced. It will be destroyed by next year...”

“What happens when it is destroyed?”

“The passage connecting the evil eyes village to the ground will disappear, and the evil eyes will be isolated.”

“Can you recreate it?”

“It will probably be hard. A semi-permanent portal can only be made by the giants, but the whereabouts of the giants are unknown...”

“...Hmm, okay. In any case, the evil eyes have to leave this place.”

It was a natural thing. Now that the evil eyes village was revealed to the public, the evil eyes had to move homes for their safety.

“Do you intend to move the evil eyes to the Overgeared Kingdom?”

“Of course.”

“I will help actively. I am interested in the knowledge of the evil eyes people that is sleeping in the library. Then let's go.”

Grid, Sticks, the former Giant Guild members, and 2,000 soldiers moved through the portal. They panicked the moment they arrived at the village entrance. The situation in the city was completely different from what Grid's group had expected.

“...”

The village entrance was blocked by the Overgeared soldiers, and they were a wreck. It was hard to find any armor, and their bodies were covered with wounds. Grid got a glimpse of how bitter the fighting had been over the last month. It seemed like hell. They must be tired. Then what was this? The Overgeared soldiers were as tempered as a strong sword. They gazed at the enemies with unshakable eyes.

On the other hand, the gazes of the opponents facing them were completely dead. The enemy soldiers were wearing luxurious armor and still had physical strength left, but they shrank back like dogs who had lost the fight.

“...?”

What was this situation? Grid's group turned their gazes to what was going on inside the city. Behind the Overgeared soldiers gazing at the enemy, there was a scene of blood and flesh scattering. A beautiful black-haired woman stabbed her sword into a knight's stomach and pointed her gun at his head.

"S-Spare me..."The knight coughed up blood and pleaded, but it was useless. The beautiful black-haired woman mercilessly pulled the trigger, and the knight's head burst like a watermelon.

"Waaahhhhhhh!"The Overgeared soldiers roared like beasts and stomped their feet. The soldiers were already in a state of despair and stepped back with surprise.

"Oh, you came?" The black-haired beauty neatly handled the remaining enemies and smiled after finding Grid.Her smile was so brilliant it was hard to believe she had slaughtered four knights.

"Y-Y-Yura, you went through a lot of trouble."

Was it the application of the Hell Leap skill? Yura's sword disappeared through a passage in the air and appeared again in a completely different direction, causing Grid to be stunned beyond being in awe of her. He thought he wouldn't be able to respond to her attacks.

'Incredibly strong...'

What if? If he really married Yura, wouldn't he receive a one-sided beating whenever they fought? He was afraid since combat senses could be demonstrated in reality.

The empire divided the evil eyes village into 16 points—the east and west entrances, the central library, the eight roads leading from the entrances to the library, the castle of the evil eyes king, and the four roads leading from the library to the castle. Most of the outside forces that the empire sent to the village came from these 16 points.

The same was true for the Blue Flame Knights. The main members of the Blue Flame Knights appeared in front of the library and in particular the castle gates.

"...The raid is short-term."

It was the Peak Sword and Vantner duo. They stretched and slowly opened their eyes before standing up. 30 knights could be seen. They wore full plate armor and yellow cloaks and held silver long swords with a cross handle. Just by looking at their armed state, one could tell they were unusual. It was obvious with one glance that expensive goods covered their bodies. They seemed to be knights of a senior noble or a royal family.

"Don't they look exceptionally strong?"

The enemies that they had been dealing with for the past month were also formidable. However, these knights were extremely unusual. Peak Sword and Vantner felt troubled. They noticed that their biggest crisis had come.

"We have to be tense. They will reach their goal if we're careless."Vantner raised his shield and stared at the rear of the knights. There was a young knight who didn't wear a helmet in order to show off his

good-looking face and the abundant hair he was proud of. He was called Apollo, and his name shone in silver. It meant he was a quasi-named NPC.

“He is at least level 400.”

That was at least 20 levels higher than Peak Sword’s. Additionally, quasi-named NPCs had higher stats than players. It seemed hard to beat Apollo even if Peek and Vantner worked together. Moreover, Apollo had many subordinates. They were estimated to be at least level 330.

“You guys, enter the castle right now. There are evil eyes in the castle, so listen to their orders,” Peak Sword ordered.

However, the soldiers refused. “We can’t leave the marquis!”

“We will stay and buy some time, so the marquis and earl should retreat!”

The soldiers put up a loyal appearance! They sincerely respected Peak Sword and Vantner and were determined to sacrifice their lives for the two people. Yet Peak Sword frowned instead of feeling impressed. “Get out of here quickly. That guy can’t run wild with you here.”

“...?”

This guy...? Run wild...? Who did he mean?

Then it happened as the soldiers were tilting their heads to the side. The sword hanging from Peak Sword’s waist started to shake wildly. Iyarugt in the sheath was snapping at Peak Sword, -You are a young fool. Why aren’t you quickly summoning me? Shit, I will fall behind by following you.

“...”

Thanks to Peak Sword using him for the past three years and two months, Iyarugt’s soul had strengthened, and he could now speak without needing to be summoned. However, his tone was very harsh. He talked like a back-alley gangster. Was this the reality of hell’s best swordsman?

Some people might be shocked and disappointed, but in fact, this wasn’t Iyarugt’s nature. Iyarugt just adapted to the change in environment. He was like this because of Peak Sword, who was sensitive to comments in articles, and Vantner, who was sensitive about his bald head. Iyarugt’s tone had changed after being stuck with them for a month, becoming tough.

‘...I’m glad Huroi isn’t here.’

If Huroi were here... It was horrible just imagining it. Iyarugt might’ve fallen to the point of mentioning people’s parents.

Peak Sword twitched and pulled Iyarugt out of the sheath.

It was a clear red sword.

-Peak Sword, as you know, this sword is just a medium that seals my soul. I don’t know what will happen to my soul the moment the sword breaks. I might be released or lose my body. Thus, be careful not to act stupidly. Iyarugt’s tone was fierce, but his soul felt worried.

Peak Sword smiled and nodded. "Yes, I'll be careful. I will never let you break."

On the other hand, the Blue Flame Knights were stunned. In particular, Apollo revealed a blatant feeling of greed.

"It is a beautiful sword. It is a work of art that isn't fitting for a man like you. I will have it."

"Pfft."

The magic sword was a work of art...? Was there a hole in his eyes?

"Why are you laughing?" Apollo glared at Peak Sword with a terrifying killing intent that would crush a person. However, Peak Sword was fine. Apollo wasn't terrible from the standpoint of Peak Sword, who had defeated the Hero in the National Competition.

"Who wouldn't laugh at a dog? Do I have to explain why I am laughing? Dog-like bastard. You don't know the value of this sword yet you dare covet it. Sit down."

"...You will die soon."

"You're the one who is going to die. Come! Iyarugt!"

Iyarugt started to emit a bloody light. Apollo and the Blue Flame Knights were shocked by the unusual aura and pulled out their swords, while Vantner paled and retreated with the soldiers. The mist solidified into a bead, and the shape of a man eventually emerged. He was Hell's best swordsman, a Sword Demon, Great Demon Zepar's only rival, and so on. It didn't take long for Iyarugt to show up in the world with his tough words.

"Fucking brat, summon me quicker next time."

An elderly man bent over with bloody flames wrapped around his body. A horn rose from his forehead, proving he was a demonkin as he flew forward with his sword.

"...!?" Apollo's eyes shook while the other knights didn't respond. The sword drew a full moon.

"...?" The bodies of the knights who discovered it belatedly were split in two, and blood streamed like a fountain.

"There are some decent guys mixed in." Iyarugt licked the blood from the sword, and his gaze focused on Apollo.

"Sublime Sword."

Iyarugt had achieved 'breaking through his limits' a total of five times with Peak Sword. He had regained almost half his power. It could only be sustained for a very short time since it was formed by the soul, but it was sufficient to clean up these small fry.

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Just like how some pets such as elementals didn't have the concept of growth, Iyarugt didn't have the growth concept of 'level.' This didn't mean he was restricted or had limitations though. Rather, it meant that Iyarugt could grow through the process of restoring himself.

[* By winning in a battle against the strong, he can regain a feeling of life. The more he wins, the more he will regain your skills. (5/10)]

This was stated in Iyarugt's status window. Every time he raided a named boss monster, he could break his limits and restore his strength. The power of Iyarugt's current Sublime Sword was four times more powerful than Peak Sword's Annihilate and was comparable to Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

"Kuek...!" Apollo blocked the sword with a shield and couldn't help groaning from the shock. His left arm that was holding the shield spun through the air.

"Captain!" The knights' horrified cries rang out. A demonkin had suddenly appeared, and one of the knights' captain's arms was cut off. Apollo used the first aid skill Hit a Pressure Point available for a fourth advancement knight and asked in a resentful voice, "I don't understand... The evil eyes are a species banished from hell. Why are you helping the demonkin?"

However, Iyarugt wasn't a conversationalist. He was only interested in pursuing fighting skills. Iyarugt had no interest in other people's positions, nor was he kind enough to explain his reasons.

"What a load of shit."

"..."

The moment the atmosphere became tense from Iyarugt's attitude, a voice rang out.

"Shouldn't you look at your own actions before blaming others?" It was Peak Sword who shouted from behind Iyarugt. "You are the invaders! Do you deserve to blame other people when you have invaded this territory, harmed the people and took away their peace? You are barbarians!"

"...I omitted the introductions, so there was a misunderstanding. We are the Blue Flame Knights of the Gauss royal family. This is our territory, and we have the right and duty to defend ourselves. It is the evil eyes who are the invaders, not us."

"G-Gauss Kingdom? Keuk! Still, the evil eyes haven't hurt your people!"

"How do you know? Can you guarantee that they haven't harmed anyone? They are demonkin. They must be ferocious to have been banished from hell."

"Uh...!"

"No... Before discussing race, it is a matter of basic national security... Think about it from our perspective. If you find out that a certain armed group is living underneath your Overgeared Kingdom... would you be able to overlook it?"

"...!" Peak Sword became more and more dumbfounded. It was because he couldn't refute any of Apollo's reasonable words. As an easy example, imagine if the Chinese army were living underneath South Korean territory. It was something that could never be tolerated for Koreans.

"I-I see... I fully understand your position. Technically, you guys are the victims..." Peak Sword admitted it honestly. However—

"Ah, I don't know! In any case, the Gauss Kingdom is our enemy! I'll get rid of everyone here!"

It was enough to ignore the unfavorable truth. Peak Sword refused any further conversation. He pulled out a dark sword—a long sword that Grid had made out of Belial’s Horn. Just based on the performance alone, it was a weapon that was slightly more powerful than Iyarugt.

“Let’s go, Iyarugt! Exterminate them!”

The new Iyarugt was launched like a flash of light while Peak Sword stood in place and bent over.

“Hell Moon Cut.”

Simultaneously, Iyarugt had cut through the lead knights and was surrounded by the enemies.

“Annihilate.”

Peak Sword’s weapon swept through the enemies around Iyarugt. It was a ridiculously aggressive offensive. Apollo realized the opponents weren’t willing to talk and raised a blue sword energy from the tip of his sword. It was a flame-like sword.

“My fire will protect my country!”

It was a powerful wave of energy! Peak Sword was pushed back during the gap created by using Draw Sword, and Vantner ran to his side to set up a shield. After that, Apollo’s sword energy struck Vantner’s shield. Vantner murmured to himself, ‘It is a whole different level...!’

As expected, a fourth advancement opponent was too much at this point in time.

A third advancement class could overwhelm a second advancement class. Then what about a fourth advancement?

It was difficult to deal with Apollo’s damage, despite his stats falling significantly because of his severed arm.

While suffering an internal injury and coughing up blood, Peak Sword shouted, “Hey! Iyarugt! Get rid of that guy quickly!”

“You aren’t my master so you should shut up.”

The ferocious Iyarugt moved close to Apollo. He also knew that Peak Sword would be in danger if he didn’t get rid of Apollo.

The swordsmanship of a demonkin was different from that of human swordsmen.

The dazzling sword strikes that depended on the innate power and vitality of a demonkin suppressed Apollo fiercely.

Apollo was aware that Iyarugt exposed one or two gaps, but he didn’t take advantage of them.

They were a trap.

Apollo had a hunch that he could suffer more damage if he was lured in by these gaps. It would’ve been easy to fight back and defend if only he hadn’t lost his arm. The biggest problem was that he failed to gauge the power of the first attack.

“Good! Well done!”

“Push him, Iyarugt!”

Peak Sword and Vantner didn't bother getting involved in the fight. It was because they weren't in a perfect state and would just be a hindrance. Now there were less than 10 Blue Flame Knights left, and they vented their anger with an energetic shout. “These guys!”

While they were fighting for their lives, these two people were hiding behind the crazy demonkin and cheering.

“We'll deal with you!” The blue flaming sword energy of the knights rose in unison. They had trained together for many years, and their cooperation was close to art.

“Aack!” Peak Sword screamed as two swords pierced his left side while he was busy blocking. Another two attacked from the right, and Peak Sword would be in danger of being killed if he didn't handle it right. Peak Sword forgot about his pride and rolled his body. He thought about Grid as he barely managed to avoid the crisis.

It was hard to deal with four players at once. Then what about Grid who won against 400 players? It was really amazing. He was a truly great guy.

‘Cool! Too good!’ Peak Sword could only be described as crazy as he praised Grid while on the verge of dying, “God Grid is the beeeeeest!”

‘He is sick again.’ Vantner clicked his tongue while hiding behind a sword. His shield's durability was low and was on the verge of being destroyed. “...!?”

‘They are royal knights!’

The Blue Flame Knights were truly powerhouses. Their level of swordsmanship was so high that it was difficult to find a gap of opportunity, and their attack power was also high. Eventually, the four blue flaming swords shattered Vantner's tattered shield.

“Eek! Hey! I'm dead!” Vantner cried out as he was stabbed in the stomach, but Peak Sword couldn't afford to help him. Peak Sword was in the exact same situation as Vantner. He had already been stabbed in the stomach several times.

“Oh, shit! You are a tanker and should be protecting me! You should go before me!”

“...”

The two of them were part of the 10 meritorious retainers of the Overgeared Kingdom. The Overgeared soldiers watched the legends of the Overgeared Kingdom struggle. They had been expecting a fierce and wonderful fight, but the situation was a mess.

“We will fight!”

“Yes! Go!”

The soldiers, who had been staring blankly for a while, raised their weapons. They hadn't participated because Vantner had been urging them to stay away, but now they had hit a limit. The soldiers were prepared to die. They decided to sacrifice their lives to save Peak Sword and Vantner.

"Waaaaahhhh!"

"Ugh... Run away..."

Peak Sword and Vantner didn't welcome the soldiers joining the fight. They might lose experience and items if they died, but they could resurrect again. On the other hand, the soldiers only had one life. Piaro, Asmophel, Jude, and the elite soldiers they worked hard to train... The two people didn't want the soldiers' to die after they had fought together for more than a month.

Peak Sword escaped the immediate crisis due to the soldiers joining and shouted while coughing up blood, "Shit...! Iyarugt! Protect the soldiers!"

Unfortunately, Iyarugt wasn't in a position to respond to his call. Apollo was also a strong representative of his country. He was furious, and Iyarugt couldn't shake him off easily. Vantner pushed the knights with his shoulders and saved his allies. Then he glared at the tightly closed gates.

"Shit! Those evil eyes to the end...!"

If there was such turmoil, they should open the gates and help. However, the evil eyes didn't do anything.

'These nasty bastards, who are we fighting for?'

The people they were sacrificing their lives for were ignoring them. Thus, Peak Sword and Vantner felt that all their efforts were in vain. It was called sage time in jargon. Their frustration was decreasing their morale. At this moment, a flower bloomed in the middle of the battlefield. The red flower was blooming from the heart of a Blue Flame Knight.

"...?"

Was it a hallucination? The knight was bewildered as he discovered the red flower at his heart. Blood started pouring from his nose.

"...!" He couldn't even scream as his body fell. The flower that blossomed at his heart was already dying as it scattered petals everywhere. The scattered petals became blood and soaked the ground. That's right. The red flower that had fallen from the heart of the collapsed knight wasn't a flower but blood pouring from the heart.

"...What?!"

Who killed the knight without a trace? Who showed up and helped? Both the Blue Flame Knights and the Overgeared soldiers were incredibly astonished.

"...Phew, I survived."

Peak Sword and Vantner smiled with relief. They were aware of the identity of the person who had entered the battlefield. He was the shadow that protected the Overgeared Kingdom—the Death God Faker. Another Blue Flame Knight lost his life and collapsed.

‘Where the hell is he?’

The knights became tense as two of their colleagues died. They focused and desperately looked around. Nevertheless, it was useless. Faker invoked Lantier’s technique and was in an extremely secretive and mobile state.

Duguen.Duguen.Duguen...

It was a battlefield where only the heartbeats of the frightened knights were heard. There was complete silence. All the Blue Flame Knights died without knowing who killed them.

“...In any case, his form looks good.”

“He looks too cool in some ways. I’m going to spew.”

Peak and Vantner sat down and turned their gazes towards Iyarugt.

Iyarugt and Apollo were moving all over the battlefield. They had already moved away from the gate and crossed the city as they exchanged blows. Then a black sword fell between them. It was Faker. Apollo, who was maintaining a breathtaking balance, completely missed the opportunity to reverse the situation thanks to the sudden increase in enemies.

The result was a great victory. The guards, including Peak Sword and Vantner, were able to defeat the Blue Flame Knights with less damage than expected.

After a while, Grid arrived at the scene. He was relieved when he saw Peak Sword and Vantner, as well as the troops they led.

“You must be dying from the hard work. Leave the rest to us and go rest.”

“Yes, rest. Everyone has gone through a lot of trouble.”

“Hehe... Log out.”

“Wahhhh! King Grid!”

The soldiers cheered. Grid who led the large army was their savior.

“I won’t forget your hard work.”

The appearances of the survivors weren’t great. Grid knew how hard they had been struggling and remembered their faces. He would give them big rewards in the future.

“Your Majesty.” Then Sticks approached Grid with a bad expression. “A mighty magic power can be felt from the castle.”

“From the castle?”

Grid turned his gaze toward the gates. The gates were firmly closed. There were no signs of outsiders having broken in.

“Are you referring to the magic power of the evil eyes’ king?”

“Of course, I can also feel the magic power of the evil eyes’ king. However, this is as powerful as the evil eyes’ king... No, it is several times more powerful than the other magic power.”

Sage Sticks—the person who stayed calm when encountering Magician King Goldhit now had a shaky voice. “It is clear that someone has breached the castle.”

That someone was naturally...

“It is someone more powerful than the evil eyes’ king.”

“...Don’t tell me!” Grid immediately opened the gates and ran into the castle. Then he saw it. There were blood stains in the corridor leading to the king’s great hall. This was the place where the evil eyes ministers resided. It wasn’t difficult to infer as to the owner of the blood marks.

“Shit!”

The evil eyes’ king was in danger! Grid was filled with nervousness as he ran. He entered the great hall of the evil eyes’ king and received a message.

[You have encountered a strong person who has transcended the times.]

The young man holding the evil eyes’ king caught Grid’s attention. He was a slender beauty who looked tired.

“You are the one who advances your destiny.”

His identity was Zikfrector. He was famous as the grandmaster instead of his real name.

“Hmm, for the sake of convenience, I will kill you, Overgeared King.”

[An unknown survival instinct has been activated! Your fighting energy is charged to the maximum!]

“Let go of that hand!” Grid combined the Blade Aiming at the Gods and the Enlightenment Sword before using 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. Several dozen red energy blades struck the grandmaster. However, the grandmaster used the evil eyes’ king in his hand as a shield and was perfectly fine.

“The concept of death doesn’t work with you, but this doesn’t mean you won’t receive any damage. You are going to die,” the grandmaster uttered blankly before pulling out a white mirror and untying the band covering both eyes of the evil eyes’ king.

Then it happened at this moment.

“Mass Teleport!”

Grid instantly moved to the side of the evil eyes’ king thanks to Stick’s spell and placed the glasses on the king. They were an easily transferable accessory—the Ether Glasses made by Elizabeth.

“...?” The fatigue on the grandmaster’s face deepened.

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“...”

The ministers had died. The place where they barely built their lives had collapsed.

All the people who suffered because of their incompetent king, the Overgeared soldiers who struggled to help them, and those who died...

The evil eyes' king clenched his hands into small fists as he sat on his throne. The only thing he could do was destroy. It was impossible for him to protect others. This power was useless because it was too powerful.

“Are you the king of the evil eyes?”

“...”

The intruder asked him a question. As he approached, the smell of blood thickened. The evil eyes' king wanted to open his eyes and inflict the pain of eternity. He wanted to kill this intruder and soothe the grudge of his people. However, he remained patient. His lips were tightly closed from anger, and blood flowed from where he had bitten his lower lip.

He hadn't forgotten the Overgeared prime minister Lael's words about how the White Dragon's Eyes were dangerous and that he should never open his eyes. The will of those who fought for them, who were forsaken by their homes... He couldn't break these things.

If he did now, he wouldn't be able to face the souls of the Overgeared soldiers who had sacrificed themselves for him. He had to live.

“Not even resisting,” the intruder said in a ridiculing manner. He approached, grabbed the king's collar, and pulled him off the throne. An incompetent person who couldn't protect or get revenge for his people didn't deserve to sit here. At this moment...

“Let go of that hand!” Someone appeared and shouted. The evil eyes' king remembered the owner of this voice. He recalled the first time he encountered it in his life. It belonged to a man who had exchanged glances with the king and laughed without being exterminated.

‘...Grid.’

He had come to help. Why did Grid want to be entangled with a useless person like the king? Regret preceded gratitude. Grid had chosen the wrong person. This was the moment when the evil eyes' king was crushed by guilt.

“100,000 Army Massacre Sword!”

A mighty energy flew over the evil eyes' king. The evil eyes' king bled from the blow and woke up.

‘H-He is trying to kill me.’

Grid didn't come to help...? The evil eyes' king was shocked by the terrible pain. Then grandmaster released the band around the demon king's eyes. The red and blue eyes of the evil eyes' king appeared in the world. His gaze was facing the White Dragon's Eyes. The evil eyes' king had a gut feeling that...

He would die. The red flames that burned everything would burn his body to ashes, and the chill that froze even the flames would break his soul.

'I'm sorry. The sacrifices of your people have been wasted,' the evil eyes' king apologized as he faced his death. It was an apology for the Overgeared soldiers who had died.

"Wear this!" Then Grid appeared using Mass Teleport and covered the king's eyes with glasses. The magic power that rose from the eyes of the evil eyes' king felt like a lie.

"Ah...!" Behind the sunglasses, the eyes of the evil eyes' king were shaken. He saw a world that wasn't destroyed. This was the first time the evil eyes' king had seen the ordinary landscapes of life since he was born.

"This... Why is this...?"

He was a person who wasn't allowed to see. As such, the joy that this solitary being, who had been cut off from the world, felt after facing the world for the first time was incredibly huge. The evil eyes' king forgot the terrible reality and gazed at the marble pillars with trembling eyes.

He saw a boy wearing a crown. It was the king of the evil eyes himself.

"Ah... Ahh..." The evil eyes' king touched his face. The boy on the marble confirmed that he was himself. Then he raised his head and looked around. He examined every corner of the world like a dragon who had just hatched.

Grid said, "Let's get out of here. The bigger world is awaiting you."

"Grid..." The evil eyes' king turned toward Grid. Grid was smiling as brightly as the day they first met.

His big hand seemed to be saying, 'Your loneliness is at an end.'

"I... I can't do anything."

The evil eyes' king was incompetent. Was he worthy of holding Grid's hand? Consequently, the evil eyes' king hesitated. Yet Grid grabbed the king's small hands that were like a child's.

"Can't you do many things in the future? Now, let's go. Everyone is waiting. Your people and my soldiers are hoping that you are safe."

"They... are alive..."

He was glad, really glad. The evil eyes' king gave strength to the hand that Grid was holding. Then Grid glanced at Sticks who nodded because he had already chanted the spell for Mass Teleport.

Flash!

The spell was activated. Grid, Sticks, the evil eyes' king, and the grandmaster—all four people were transferred out of the castle.

"...Eh? Four?"

Why was there four?

“W-Why is he here?” Grid pointed to the grandmaster.

Meanwhile, Sticks looked like he had seen a ghost. “I didn’t bring him out. He just rode along with the spell.”

“What? This is possible?”

“It is impossible.”

“Then what is with the current situation?”

“That’s right. Very interesting.”

Grid was bewildered while Sticks was feeling inquisitive. As the two of them were making a fuss, the evil eyes’ king was looking at the crowd gathered at the gate. People could be seen. They were just as beautiful as he had imagined thousands and tens of thousands of times.

“Surround him!”

The Overgeared members and soldiers moved into action. Grid’s group surrounded the uninvited guest and pointed swords and spears at him. The grandmaster stood silently despite being surrounded by thousands of soldiers.

Grid threatened him, “You should go back. Hasn’t the plan already failed?”

The grandmaster nodded. “Certainly. It’s a failure.”

The grandmaster’s aim was the death of the evil eyes’ king. The problem could be solved cleanly by inducing the self-destruction of the evil eyes’ king with the White Dragon’s Eyes that King Valhalla had handed over. However, it failed when Grid appeared.

“How did you get the Ether Diamonds that a high-ranking demon is guarding? Hmm, it seems I was scammed by Sima Qian.”

Simo Qian of the east—as the subordinate of the Valhalla King, he had given many demands to the empire in exchange for the White Dragon’s Eyes and the empire had agreed to most of them. It was because the value of the White Dragon’s Eyes was too great.

Now, the value of the White Dragon’s Eyes had fallen due to the Ether Glasses. At the very least, it couldn’t be used to destroy the evil eyes’ king. In other words, the empire had been pushovers.

“It can’t be helped. I have to withdraw.” The grandmaster gave up surprisingly easily. He moved back toward Goldhit and the Black Knight who were waiting for him.

Jishuka came to Grid’s side and told him, “Kill him.”

She was aware of the dangers of the grandmaster and fully expected that he would one day be their greatest enemy. This was an opportunity. If the grandmaster’s offensive power was neutralized due to the truce agreement, shouldn’t they use the numerical advantage and pour attacks toward him? The militant Jishuka thought so, but Grid thought differently. “We will just be wiped out.”

Goldhit would cast several wide-range spells, and the Overgeared soldiers would be swept away. There was no guarantee that the skill Magic Contemplation of Duke of Wisdom would activate, and there was also a cooldown problem. No, the biggest problem was the strength of the grandmaster.

In the empire, there was Bain who was the emperor's shadow and his most powerful force, Goldhit who symbolized the ultimate magician and was the master of the Tower of Eternity, Kyle who was the genius that received the favor of the emperor, and finally, the Armored Cavalryman Chensler.

Unlike the above four people, the grandmaster Zikfrector had a low reputation among the Five Pillars. That was natural. He had no heroic achievements. There was nothing on the surface, so his reputation was smaller. However, Grid had a vague grasp of the grandmaster's reality.

'The empire's strongest!'

Mercedes had mentioned that the other four pillars were afraid of or respected the grandmaster. He was a critical figure that Chairman Lim Cheolho had advised Grid to be careful of. Additionally, the Hero King system classified the grandmaster as a 'power that transcended the time', not a 'powerhouse of the era.' Grid perceived the threat of the grandmaster to be no less than Garam. At this point, Grid couldn't fight him and win.

'I must become stronger quickly.'

There were too many mountains to transcend. Still, all these mountains could be surpassed eventually. He was convinced after seeing Kraguel's huge growth in just one year. The potential of a player was limitless.

'I have to become stronger,' Grid once again pledged before turning his gaze to the evil eyes' king. Thanks to the Ether Glasses, the king could see the faces of the people one by one. He held his beloved wife and son in his arms. It was a sight that warmed the heart... if only the Ether Glasses hadn't cracked.

"Eh? W-Wait! Hey! Close your eyes! Quickly!"

Feeling frightened, Grid ran to the evil eyes' king and handed him a helmet. It was a helmet with Ether Glasses.

"I'm now in Reinhardt, the capital of the Overgeared Kingdom!"

There was a boom in the number of blacksmiths flowing into the Overgeared Kingdom. There were more people gathered than usual, and reporters from various broadcasting stations competed for coverage. It was due to an unfamiliar group of demonkin visiting the Overgeared Kingdom—the evil eyes species.

"I heard they are demonkin, but they look cute."

"Yes, I imagined them as terrible hybrids."

"I think of them as dolls walking around."

"By the way, why are they wearing glasses?"

1,000 evil eyes were walking behind the 10 meritorious retainers. The proud chibi-like demonkin captivated the attention of the people. Grid and the evil eyes' king were at the head of the procession. Before them was the scenery of a big city drenched in golden sunshine. The evil eyes' king admired the magnificent and beautiful appearance. "It is really wonderful... The sky, the sun, the city... Everything is grander and more beautiful than I ever imagined."

Grid laughed. "Get used to it. How long will you admire the scenery that you will see every day?"

"...It's like a dream."

Then the evil eyes' king stopped walking. Grid was also forced to stop, and the entire procession paused. Everyone on the streets stared at the evil eyes' king. The reporters around the world focused on the evil eyes' king.

"Thank you. Really... Thank you."

As everyone watched, the evil eyes' king bowed deeply to Grid. The same was true for the rest of the evil eyes' people. A few evil eyes lost their balance when their big heads tilted, but this wasn't seen.

"Our evil eyes will repay your grace for the rest of our lives." The evil eyes' king fell to his knees. Grid was at a loss and tried to pull him up, but the king refused Grid's touch. "I will serve you. Grid, please accept us."

"...!"

It was a natural step. The evil eyes were a race living in a village. It wasn't proper to establish an exchange between them and the Overgeared Kingdom. Moreover, since they had lost their home and become dependent on the Overgeared Kingdom, it was predictable for them to come under the Overgeared Kingdom.

However, Grid didn't expect this declaration to be in a place with so many people watching. After all, the demonkin perceived humans as a subspecies. Since the evil eyes' pride was as great as the vampires', their current actions were unconventional.

"You have uprooted our cursed fate. You saved me when I was sitting absentmindedly on my throne in despair while my soul became as cold as ice. You washed away the red blood that saddened the dark flames white ice castle. Grid, I will be loyal to you. This is my new fate and the 'way' that the evil eyes' people will walk eternally. I will rise from the seat of being an unqualified king and stand at your feet."

"..."

Something unbelievable had happened. The tens of thousands of people present were silent for a moment. It was so silent that they couldn't even hear a small breath. Lael covered one side of his face with a hand and muttered, "Ahh, this is a scene where time has stopped."

In any case, articles were released:

[Grid has become king of the demonkin]

[Once again, Grid has achieved a feat that's a first for a player!]

[How far will the power of the Overgeared Kingdom rise?]

[(Column) Let's learn about the evil eyes]

[Pope Damian reveals that he wants to be a companion of the evil eyes...]

(The Walt Disney Company, the world's best maker of animated films, wants to make a movie with the evil eyes as the main characters. Is there a guarantee for the Overgeared King?)

Grid had gotten his hands on a valuable power. Of course, it had only been possible due to the sacrifice and activities of his colleagues. Moreover, it wasn't just the evil eyes that Grid had obtained. An encounter with a small dragon was waiting for Grid.

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[The Overgeared Kingdom has completely absorbed the evil eyes species.]

[The Overgeared Kingdom is the first one to achieve harmony with a demonkin species.]

[The Overgeared Kingdom's national inclination has been changed from 'ordinary' to 'no discrimination and prejudice'.]

[The name of the Overgeared Kingdom has started to be mentioned among the different species hiding all over the continent.]

[Maxong, the king of the water clan, is spreading the great accomplishments of the Overgeared Kingdom.]

[Some species are showing great interest in the Overgeared Kingdom.]

[King Grid of the Overgeared Kingdom has earned 100,000 reputation and title of 'Different Species' King'.]

[Special quests have been generated for players belonging to the Overgeared Kingdom!]

[Process of Understanding Each Other]

[Difficulty: E

Peaceful relations between the people will help maintain security and develop national power. Share your greetings with the evil eyes species, who have become new residents of the Overgeared Kingdom, and raise your affinity.

Quest Clear Conditions: Exchange more than 10 words with the evil eyes species. There are no level requirements.

Quest Failure Conditions: If you make a question mark appear over the head of the evil eyes people during a conversation, the quest will start again from the beginning.

Quest Clear Reward: Affinity with the evil eyes will rise marginally. Acquisition of Gauss Kingdom area information (adaption to terrain will rise when active in the Gauss Kingdom). The national contribution will rise.]

“Oh?”

The rewards were quite good. National contributions were needed to gain benefits such as the mass-produced Grid set. Meanwhile, terrain adaptation was an additional factor that greatly contributed to combat and movement. Moreover, according to various media reports, the evil eyes were a species classified as advanced among the demonkin. If they could get along with the evil eyes, it would be a great help to understand ‘hell’, a place that was likely to become a stage for future activities. They might be able to obtain related quests luckily.

“Hello? Welcome to the Overgeared Kingdom.”

Players flocked to the place where the evil eyes were located. The Overgeared Kingdom was planning to use the evil eyes as a valuable power, so the evil eyes were staying in territories all over the Overgeared Kingdom.

“Welcome...? Kukukuk, interesting. Reaching out to us who have struggled with solitude in order to curb the beasts in our hearts... Ahh, are you the ‘same kind.’ Is there a monster sleeping in your heart?”

“...?”

Unlike what the players had expected, the quest difficulty was very high. Most players who walked with the evil eyes had their conversation blocked and question marks flooded over the evil eyes’ head. The quest was failed repeatedly.

[Insane Dragon Egg]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

Like the vampires, the evil eyes were driven out of hell.

The evil eyes are dreaming of working with the child of Nevartan to get revenge on the great demons.

Secure the insane dragon egg guarded by the master of the dungeon and hand it over to the evil eyes.

Quest Clear Conditions: Defeat the master of the dungeon and secure the insane dragon egg.

Quest Clear Reward: Secure 17 evil eyes as subordinates, increase affinity with the evil eyes and start an exchange with the evil eyes.

Quest Failure: Level -3.]

Grid had secured such a quest when he visited the Beware Dogs dungeon created by Eat Spicy Jokbal. It was an unforgettable quest. Along with the visit to the evil eyes village, it was a memorable experience. Yes, that’s about it. Grid was very interested in the insane dragon’s egg itself.

“What are you going to do with the insane dragon egg?”

“We’ll keep it until it hatches.”

“The dragon will grasp the truth of the world the moment it hatches. It will repay its father’s enemies by working with the evil eyes.”

“In a thousand years, the child of a dragon will become an adult and hell will be chaotic. Huhuhut...!”

...This was a conversation Grid had with the evil eyes. According to Satisfy’s story, there was no plan for the insane dragon child to be active for at least 1,000 years. An adult dragon was more powerful than a great demon. The bond between a dragon and player would break down the balance, and Grid thought there wouldn’t be a chance to get involved with the young insane dragon. By the way...

“My king. The precious destroyer of the future said it would meet you.”

“Destroyer of the future? Who?”

“The only flesh of Nevartan, the insane dragon who fell into darkness due to the evil dragon Bunhelier and the 1st Great Demon Baal. Their name is Nefelina, who will late destroy hell and Bunhelier for honor.”

“...The hatchling?”

“That’s right.”

A transcendent species that even a god couldn’t treat lightly—they were the strongest presences in the world even when the world was destroyed periodically. Grid remembered this. Then now that the evil eyes king mentioned the word ‘dragon’, Grid was very confused by the unexpected situation.

Suddenly, Sticks dropped a book on the floor from where he was organizing the collections from the evil eyes’ library. He was shaking fiercely. A dragon was a frightening existence for the person who had been cursed by the gourmet dragon Reiders and suffered from an incurable disease.

Grid didn’t welcome this situation. He predicted that the meeting with the hatchling would harm him. The reason for that was simple. It was because the dragon was too strong.

‘I am likely to become a pushover.’

There was no framework where a player could borrow a dragon’s power. The balance was likely to collapse if a dragon lent power to an individual player. There couldn’t be a good relationship between a dragon and a player unless the S.A Group were fools.

‘I am likely to become a victim like Sticks.’

The evil eyes king urged Grid, “The destroyer of the future has no time. I recommend you come and see them.”

“There’s no time? What are they busy doing?”

“They have to sleep. They sleep 23 hours a day.”

“...”

It meant the hatchling was only awake for one hour a day! My god, it was Grid’s first time seeing a creature who slept more than Noe. The evil eyes king looked at the amazed Grid and added an explanation, “The dragon will grasp the truth of the world the moment it hatches. In order to digest that enormous amount of information, the physical and mental expenditure is so huge that rest is essential.”

He seemed worried that Grid would look down on the hatchling. Grid thought for a moment before nodding. "Yes, let's meet. Instead, give me a minute."

He didn't want to meet the hatchling, but it couldn't be helped. Grid was curious about the existence of a dragon.

'Let's talk with Lauel before meeting the dragon.'

"Is the hatchling really here?"

Surprisingly, the place where Grid went to with the evil eyes king was Reinhardt Castle. It was the castle where Grid normally lived. The dragon was living in his home? Yet the owner of the castle didn't even know about it? The evil eyes king spoke to the bewildered Grid, "This is a great being. It is natural to make their will a reality..."

"It is great that they can live in someone else's house without permission..."

No rent was being paid. Grid grumbled about it while moving to the top floor of the castle. It was a space containing the bedrooms of Grid, his family, and Mercedes. The evil eyes king opened the biggest door. It was Grid's bedroom.

"...?" Grid's confusion grew. He entered the bedroom with a bewildered expression and became astonished. The scenery in the bedroom was completely different from normal. It was decorated with gold treasures and the size was 10 times larger.

"What is this?"

Was it possible to do internal construction without him knowing? No, it was impossible. He had woken up here this morning. This space didn't look like this in the morning. This was the power of magic. Grid belatedly noticed and turned to one side. There was a huge bed that was big enough for 20 adult men to lie on. A black shadow was wriggling between the lace being blown by the soft wind.

'Using my bed...'

Grid gained some knowledge that he wasn't curious about. While imagining a lizard several times bigger than a human crouching on the bed, Grid quietly approached it. Then the lace was lifted.

"You came." A girl with blue hair was lying on the bed, and she welcomed Grid.

"...Ah!" Grid couldn't help exclaiming. The girl was so beautiful that Grid was forced to lose his soul despite seeing beautiful people like Irene, Mercedes, Yura, Jishuka, and Sehee every day. Her facial features were as beautiful as a jewel, and the harmony between them was perfect. No, it was more than perfection. It was a transcendent beauty that humans couldn't even imagine. The girl's languid eyes made him lose his soul while he found her mouth cute. Simultaneously, valor could be felt from his thick eyebrows.

Grid was suddenly reminded of a woman. '...Marie Rose.'

She was a vampire duke with all types of charms. Yes, the girl in front of him was like a teenage version of Marie Rose.

“You are staring too obviously.”

How bewitched was he? Grid stared at the girl’s face for a long time before belatedly coming to his senses. She was a beautiful girl, but she wasn’t a human and the name Nefelina above her head was blue. This girl was a hatchling who was less than two years old. A young insane dragon...

[You have met the destroyer of the future—Nefelina.]

[The magic power that is the root of the world turns your presence into dust. All types of actions are sealed due to the overwhelming inability to cope.]

[You have resisted.]

[Nefelina is not yet an adult, but she is the only one with an intact spirit among the existing dragons.]

[This encounter is very special!]

“Hmm, I’m sorry. My magic power is uncomfortable for you.”

“N-No, I’m fi...ne.”

To think there would be a day when he would have to talk with honorifics to someone younger than Lord...? Grid was surprised, but it was something he had to do. On the one hand, he was very relieved. It was because a transcendent being who saw humans as ants had apologized to him. She illegally resided in a person’s house, but this was from the viewpoint of a person. Yes, it was clear that Nefelina was showing him the utmost courtesy. In the first place, the system confirmed that she was sane.

‘No, this... Does this mean the other dragons aren’t sane?’

A chill went down Grid’s spine.

“Human. Grid,” Nefelina called out Grid’s name in a gentle voice. She was laughing with her eyes curved in the shape of a half moon. The difference between her and Marie Rose was clearly shown at this moment. Marie Rose’s smile stimulated primal lust while Nefelina’s smile had a refreshing feeling that washed away those instincts.

“Yes, please say it,” Grid responded politely. He already forgot this opponent was an illegal resident and that she was a child who was just one year old. Nefelina spoke to him while smiling, “I have to grow up strong and well. This requires many nutrients. You shall give me 100 cows and pigs every day from now on.”

Ttiring~

[A new quest has been created.]

[Hatchling’s Livestock]

[Difficulty: SSS

Nefelina is trying to make you her supplier. She hopes that as the king of a country, you will feed her and keep her warm.

Quest Clear Conditions: Feed Nefelina 100 cows and pigs every day.

Quest Clear Rewards: A very slight rise in affinity with Nefelina every 100 days.

Quest Failure: A significant drop in affinity with Nefelina.]

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

Grid stared at the quest window for a while before coming to his senses and gritting his teeth. "...Do you see me as a pushover?"

The evil eyes king paled at Grid's unexpected reaction. "K-King! The destroyer of the future is someone we don't dare meet... Don't go against her will!"

"Be quiet, you pushover."

"..."

"It is 'destroyer of the future', not 'destroyer of the present'. Isn't that right?" Grid glared at Nefelina lying on the bed.

He woke up after having Nefelina see him as a pushover, and now he realistically analyzed the situation. Then he concluded that he didn't have to fear Nefelina. It was due to two reasons. First, she lacked the presence of Vampire Duke Marie Rose. Marie Rose was so bewitching that she froze all actions of the target. This meant that the current Nefelina was below the 'sealed state' of Marie Rose.

Second, he noticed it late because it was covered by the blanket, but Nefelina's human transformation magic was unraveling. Her body on the bed was two times fatter than it was originally, and a tail had emerged from below the blanket. The ability to maintain this polymorph for only a short amount of time showed her magic power was weak. Well, humans couldn't even use polymorph in the first place.

'She might be a dragon, but she is a hatchling that's less than two years old. She isn't as absolute as I thought.'

As the evil eyes had said in the past, Nefelina couldn't exert the full power of the dragon until 1,000 years had passed. In 1,000 years, Grid would've already died of old age. Thus, Grid might respect Nefelina, but there was no reason to be afraid of her. With Grid glaring at her, Nefelina was so startled that she hiccuped. "...Hiccup!"

Then she spoke in a hesitant voice, "...Only 10. Then I will give you the dragon's blessing..."

[The quest 'Hatchling's Livestock' has been changed to 'Hatchling's Request'.]

[Hatchling's Request.]

[Difficulty: S

Nefelina is a bit greedy. She hopes that you will feed her in moderation and keep her warm.

Quest Clear Conditions: Feed Nefelina 10 cows and pigs every day.

Quest Acceptance Reward: The dragon's blessing.

Giving up the Quest: A significant drop in affinity with Nefelina. The dragon's blessing will be taken back. The dragon's curse will occur.]

"Um..."

10 cows and pigs were 20 animals a day. This was a burden. It couldn't be resolved with an ordinary player's power, and it was a considerable waste for Grid.

'However, if I refuse... Nefelina will command the evil eyes to give her food.'

He might not be able to get the dragon's blessing, but he had to make a suitable compromise. After a moment of distress, Grid nodded. "Let's go with three."

"...T-Then my stomach will grow!"

"In exchange for three every day, I won't ask for a monthly rent."

"..." Nefelina's eyes shook. She was seriously distressed.