

Level 4 Human in a Ruined World

#Chapter 21 - Read Level 4 Human in a Ruined World Chapter 21

Chapter 21

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 21: Overnight Lodging (2)

Room 208 was a typical motel room.

It had a double-sized bed in a space of about 6 square meters, and underneath the desk, serving as a dressing table, there was a small refrigerator.

The bathroom was immediately to the right of the entrance where Yeongwoo stood.

The proximity of the toilet and the sink was worrisome, and it seemed like one's shoulders might touch the sink when dealing with important matters.

"It's incredibly narrow."

"Yeah."

Yeongwoo and Yechan briefly looked at the entire room, then sighed and pushed their bicycles upstairs to the entrance.

The bicycles, dirtied from the road, left black marks on the floor, but it didn't seem to matter.

Thud.

Seeing the bicycle lying diagonally with a bag full of stones, Yeongwoo confirmed that the door was locked, took off his shoes, and entered the room.

Then, he realized belatedly, 'There's light in the room.'

It was probably part of the "night stay service."

'I wonder if the water will come out properly.'

Yeongwoo's gaze fell on the shower inside the narrow bathroom.

Physically, he wasn't very tired, but mentally, he was exhausted.

He had experienced too much in one day – the argument at the currency exchange, the first murder, the Strongest Sword, the battle with goblins, and the confrontation with Jang Seonbok at the Gumi Private Hospital.

“Sigh.”

After confirming the locked door again, Yeongwoo put down his shield and early bird on the floor and unpacked his backpack.

‘Can I take this off?’

He wondered while feeling around to remove the makeshift knife sheath from his waist.

Eventually, he found a small button attached to the back of the belt in the side-rear.

Using his fingernail, he pressed it deeply, and the seam of the belt loosened, releasing the structure.

Click.

Finally, having released the knife sheath, Yeongwoo undid his own belt and, while feeling around his waist, said to Yechan, who was also fumbling with his sheath.

“I’ll wash up first. If someone tries to come in, let me know.”

“Oh, okay.”

Yeongwoo, without hesitation, undressed and entered the bathroom.

Suddenly, the mirror above the sink reflected him.

His exposed body looked like decaying flesh covered in black and blue bruises all over.

On the other hand, the title of “Strongest Sword” on top of his head was shining dazzlingly, almost boastful, as if flaunting what he had gained as the price for all those bruises.

“Ah.”

Finally recalling something, Yeongwoo touched the spiral-shaped tattoo on his left chest with his hand.

Then, something happened.

Pod!

The title that had been attached to his head disappeared without a trace.

“It’s touch-sensitive. Not funny at all.”

Yeongwoo stood in front of the shower with his head cleared.

And with a slightly nervous heart, he turned on the water.

Squeak!

What happened next was quite surprising.

Splash!

Without a moment of silence, the water gushed out immediately.

“Wow, oh my god.”

As Yeongwoo received the pouring stream of water, he unintentionally exclaimed.

Even though it was just a shower in a single day, it felt like the first time he had taken a shower in about a decade.

After Yeongwoo finished showering in a good mood, Yechan, who had been sitting at the desk, approached and offered something.

Swipe-

“What’s this?”

“It was in the refrigerator.”

What Yechan held out was none other than a can of orange juice.

“And you could take this out without paying?”

As Yeongwoo received the juice, an information notice came to his mind.

* All items provided are not allowed to be taken out of the room.

Consuming the drinks provided in the room is allowed, but taking them with the intention of stocking up is not permitted.

‘Well, that makes sense.’

While sipping the juice, Yeongwoo looked around the room again.

‘...Oddly enough, there’s no computer.’

Are there motels without computers in this day and age?

Yeongwoo smirked, thinking that maybe the system deliberately left it out.

After all, would this crazy world rent a computer overnight for a mere 3,000 won?

‘Let’s be satisfied with being able to shower.’

Yeongwoo stared at the scattered clothes on the floor, then suddenly realized.

‘Ah.’

The fact that he was currently naked.

“You... You should wash up too. I need to put on a gown.”

As Yeongwoo awkwardly grabbed the gown on the table, Yechan nodded hesitantly and carefully undressed.

Slick, swish.

“...”

For some reason, it was an embarrassing moment.

Deliberately making a loud noise, Yeongwoo lay down on the bed as Yechan awkwardly took off his clothes.

Plop.

With a sound, the sheet slid down, relieving his tired body.

Then, a tremendous sense of relief enveloped Yeongwoo.

“Phew...”

Finally, the end of a long day.

「01:16:32」

The abnormal weather timer was still displayed at the top of the field of view, but he could no longer pay attention to it.

The sleep that had been pushed in during the digging moments pressed against his eyelids.

Somewhere, there seemed to be a sound of water pouring, but even this was soon forgotten. And then...

Bang.

Bang, bang!

Thunk, bang!

"Oh, who the hell is banging on someone's door at this hour?"

Yeongwoo, in the midst of half-sleep, had such thoughts before abruptly waking up.

"Gasp."

He remembered where he had fallen asleep just before.

It was the motel where the night stay service had begun.

In other words, in the midst of this insane world.

Thunk!

The loud noise echoed again.

This time, he could accurately pinpoint the origin of the sound.

"Is anyone in there? Please open the door!"

Someone outside was banging on the door without any consideration.

「00:06:46」

The timer at the top of his vision was pointing to the three-minute mark.

"I must have slept for more than an hour."

Seeing that even the memory of falling asleep was hazy, it seemed like an intense nap.

Swish.

As soon as he got up, he was wide awake.

Yeongwoo first inspected the room for signs of intrusion, such as missing items or someone else's footprints.

"Ugh..."

In the meantime, Yechan, who had been sleeping on the floor, half-opened his eyes and raised his head.

"W-What's happening?"

"Looks like someone is looking for a room."

Yeongwoo checked the bathroom one last time and picked up the early bird lying on the floor before approaching the entrance.

Thud, thud!

Thud!

Meanwhile, the unidentified figure continued to pound on the room door as if they were about to break it down.

'They guarantee the right to sleep, but does that mean it doesn't guarantee a peaceful sleep?'

Nevertheless, if he opened the door, would the other person be able to enter immediately?

'I distinctly remember that if you rent a room, you can restrict others from entering.'

As Yeongwoo had such thoughts while placing his hand on the doorknob, a familiar text box appeared.

「When you open the door, a barrier will be created that allows only the lodger to enter.」

「If you wish to share a room, confirm the other person with the barrier, then change the room rate and maximum occupancy.」

Without hesitation, Yeongwoo opened the door.

Swoosh!

As the door opened, a blue barrier rose menacingly above the door, blocking the fist of the outsider who had been about to knock on it.

Thump!

“Ah!”

“...!”

Both Yeongwoo and the outsider were startled.

The outsider was surprised because the face of the room owner was exactly the same as the one on the commemorative coin.

On the other hand, Yeongwoo was taken aback for a different reason.

‘What... what is this?’

His surprise was due to the fact that the person outside was a woman.

Not just any woman, but a woman carrying a backpack filled with various weapons and petrified food.

In addition, a small dagger was stuck in the hip knife sheath, a one-handed sword was in her right hand, and a steel round shield was held in her left hand.

The backpack was neatly tied with a rope containing an axe, an extra one-handed sword, and another steel shield.

‘Could I still be dreaming? What on earth is this person doing?’

She was the most meticulously armed person he had seen so far, and judging by the amount of luggage she carried, her strength and stamina values seemed unusually high.

“What is this...?”

Yeongwoo unintentionally mumbled to himself.

The woman, looking at Yeongwoo’s head, tilted her head.

“Uh... isn’t it?”

It seemed odd to her that the title of Gumi’s Strongest Sword, similar to the one in the commemorative coin, was missing.

Even her first impression was surprisingly... ordinary, unlike what she imagined.

“Are you not Gumi’s Strongest Sword? But why is there nothing? The Strongest Sword is...”

As the woman continued her sentence, she suddenly closed her mouth.

Then, she looked straight into Yeongwoo’s eyes.

“No, more importantly, there’s no time now. Please open the door!”

「00:03:41」

As the woman said, time was running out.

However, Yeongwoo had no intention of playing the hero even to the extent of getting up from his bed.

“Check other rooms.”

With this statement, Yeongwoo intended to close the door.

But then, the woman began banging on the barrier like crazy.

“This is the last room! No one else is taking me in!”

“Of course. So, find another vacant room.”

Creak.

The gap of the door began to narrow further.

At this point, the woman shouted frantically.

“Hey! I’m pregnant!”

And this strategy worked reasonably well.

Yeongwoo, who had left a gap of about one centimeter, stopped moving.

“Heh.”

The woman, not expecting the door to close, reflexively flinched and looked nervously at Yeongwoo.

“I-I’m serious. But no one believes me.”

It was understandable since the woman's belly showed no signs of pregnancy.

If her claim was true, she might be in the early stages of pregnancy.

"You're pregnant... and you're still wandering around like this?"

"I have to protect the child. If I die, our baby will die too."

The woman's gaze as she spoke was quite serious.

"What about your husband?"

"He was killed by goblins."

"..."

By this point, Yeongwoo had nothing more to say.

Then, Yechan, who had been listening in the background, spoke quietly.

"Since we're all awake now... why not let her in?"

"I barely slept for an hour. Should I stay up all night because of her? My stamina won't be able to handle it tomorrow."

"I'll keep watch. And if we take away her weapons and tie her up, it should be fine."

Yechan seemed determined to let the woman in.

After all, he had shown a particularly vulnerable side to the kids from the beginning.

Given that, it was hard for Yechan to simply dismiss the claim that she was pregnant.

"If we tie her up unarmed, there shouldn't be a big problem... Do we really need to go through all that trouble?"

Yeongwoo had mixed feelings as he thought about it.

Considering the situation, it didn't seem necessary to go to such lengths.

In any case, it appeared that the couple had challenged goblins before, and only the wife had survived.

Of course, assuming the opponent's claim was true.

「00:02:11」

The remaining time had decreased to the two-minute range.

There was really no time now.

“Are you really going to do this? There are two of you over there. Just tie me up as the student suggested, please let me in.”

“...”

After a brief hesitation, Yeongwoo decided to let the woman in.

“Wait.”

Seeing a keypad in the corner of the barrier, Yeongwoo pressed ‘3’.

Beep.

「The total number of occupants has been changed to 3.」

「Would you like to set a lodging fee?」

At this point, Yeongwoo looked back at the woman.

“What about the money?”

“Huh?”

“How much can you pay? Check how much time is left and answer well.”

“Oh.”

The woman, after a moment of blank expression, quickly regained her composure and took something out of her pocket.

Swish.

Ironically, it was a commemorative coin with Yeongwoo’s face on it.

“This is all I have. I’ll give you this.”

To say she would give him everything was a bit of an overstatement.

The woman offered a single commemorative coin, equivalent to 10,000 karma.

Anyway, considering that the room’s rental fee was 3,000 karma, it was quite a lucrative deal.

“Yes, that’s fine.”

When Yeongwoo set the lodging fee to 10,000 karma, the blue barrier turned green.

「Hopeful occupants, please pay the lodging fee and enter.」

This message was visible to both Yeongwoo and the woman.

“Should I just go in there...?”

The woman cautiously pushed the coin through the green barrier.

Clink.

As the coin passed through, it seemed to be enveloped by a green protective shield, preserving it until the entry process was completed.

This system prevented room owners from taking the lodging fee and closing the door, a practice known as ‘evasion.’

Eventually, when the woman fully entered the room, the protective shield was removed from the coin.

Then, simultaneously, the woman’s gloomy aura, which had been visible through the face, dissipated.

“This is an outrageously expensive one-night stay. If I knew, I would’ve come earlier.”

After placing the commemorative coin on the table, the woman looked alternately at Yeongwoo and Yechan, asking.

“Your gown looks nice. Can I wash up too?”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

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Chapter 22

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 22: Overnight Lodging (3)

Seated on the edge of the bed, Yeongwoo silently listened to the sound of water flowing from the bathroom.

Sigh...

“.....”

What on earth is all this?

In front of the practically useless glass door of the bathroom were scattered clothes and a backpack that a woman had been wearing, except for daggers, a short sword, and a shield.

‘What is she doing in there.’

It was almost inevitable to imagine the woman showering.

Carrying nothing but a sword and shield, she entered that narrow bathroom.

Of course, it was not at all sensible for a man she had never seen before to casually enter a room where two people were and start showering.

‘Does she have that much confidence in her fighting skills?’

Looking back at the woman’s appearance and story, it was clear that she was no ordinary novice.

‘Anyway, once she finishes showering, I should tie her up securely.’

If he tied her hands and feet with a rope and left her on the floor, even if she tried to break free and launch a surprise attack, he would be able to respond in time.

Of course, Yechan would probably wake him up before it’s too late.

‘Hmm.’

Yeongwoo still stared intently at the commemorative coin on the desk.

Then, he noticed that the timer at the top of his field of vision had disappeared.

‘Ah, come to think of it.’

By now, a red mist should be forming outside.

Since there was a window on the wall to the right of the bed, Yeongwoo quickly approached and looked outside.

Even though the half-open window also had a blue barrier, he could see the outside situation well enough.

It was like a truly grim fog spreading throughout the city.

“Huh.”

Gradually, silhouettes of people appeared near the fog.

Thud!

A man running frantically towards somewhere.

Seeing that he was completely unarmed, it seemed like he either fell victim to bandits or was a latecomer who didn't follow the initial quest line.

‘It seems he managed to survive without encountering goblins.’

But luck seemed to have run out here.

The red mist was closely chasing the man's rapidly moving legs.

And eventually.

Splat.

Without any sound or sign, the mist swallowed the man.

“.....”

Although the distance between the scene and the motel was considerable, screams should have been heard, but there was still no sound.

Instead, the blurred silhouette of the man, enveloped in the mist, staggered and stumbled.

Then, as usual.

“Ah.”

The man stopped walking and collapsed to the ground.

‘How long did it take? About a minute?’

Yeongwoo recalled the time from when the man touched the mist until he became unable to move.

'It seemed like about a minute. I'm not sure if he's dead or not.'

While Yeongwoo pondered alone, Yechan called him from behind.

"Um... Mister."

"Yeah?"

Turning around, Yeongwoo saw Yechan looking somewhat confused.

And the woman who had just finished showering was standing a few steps away.

Wrapped in a shower towel, she held a short sword and a shield in each hand.

Nevertheless, Yeongwoo's Gumi Sword Technique and Golden Flash remained silent.

He judged that it wasn't a combat situation at the moment.

"Thanks to you, I had a good shower. Thank you."

Glancing briefly at the commemorative coin on the desk, the woman leaned the knife she held in her right hand against the wall.

Making sure the hilt of the knife was within reach in case she needed to grab it again.

In response, Yeongwoo looked at her with a sharp expression, as if not to forget the promise they made outside.

"I told you I'd tie you up unarmed, didn't I? I'll do as I said, so put down that shield too."

Then, the woman obediently dropped the shield in her left hand to the floor.

"I didn't lie earlier. So, I hope you won't be too weary."

But instead of responding, Yeongwoo placed the shield between the wall with the window and the bed.

This way, he could grab the shield even while lying on the bed.

The woman, who couldn't help but notice this, smiled again.

"But seriously, you're not the Strongest Sword, right? Gumi is not a big city, but can there be two people who look so alike?"

"What does it matter if I am or not?"

“Well, if you are... it’s a good thing to meet a noble, and if not, it’s not a problem.”

A vague answer.

Yeongwoo decided to remain silent to avoid unnecessary disturbance.

After all, he planned to leave Gumi as soon as the mist disappeared.

‘I have to go to another city before the next Mutant appears. The longer it takes, the greater the difference in abilities with the Strongest Sword of other regions will be.’

[Golden Horde]

|Summon the Golden Rain in two or more regions. (1/2)

[Excellent Social Worker]

|Send the mutants back alive.

Of the recommended achievements that could be attempted in a short period, these two were available.

If lucky, he might even accomplish both simultaneously.

“By the way, what’s your relationship?”

The woman threw another question.

“Not a special relationship. It just happened that we ended up travelling together.”

“Not family either? But you can share the same room?”

Surprised by the woman’s question, Yeongwoo instead smirked.

“Well, you’re sharing a room over there right now.”

“Oh, right.”

Around this point, Yeongwoo sensed something suspicious.

“Well then, could you put some clothes back on? It’s a bit awkward to leave you tied up in that state.”

When Yeongwoo signaled to Yechan to prepare the rope, the woman chuckled and spoke again.

“Wouldn’t it be more dangerous to tie me up while I’m dressed? You never know what might be in my pockets.”

The woman, wrapped in a towel, nonchalantly raised both arms, displaying a cheeky expression.

Seeing this, Yechan, holding the rope, looked awkwardly between Yeongwoo and the woman.

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo, standing by the bed, spat out his words with annoyance.

“That’s my business to take care of. Hurry up and get dressed. If we delay any longer...”

“What if we delay any longer?”

For some reason, the woman seemed extremely relaxed.

From this point on, Yeongwoo was convinced that at least one of the things the woman claimed was a lie.

For example, the story about being pregnant.

‘No matter how easy we may seem, our levels are different. Yet she can afford to be so leisurely? Especially since she’s claiming to be pregnant.’

Yeongwoo still shook his hands, gesturing for the woman to be tied up quickly, and observed her closely.

Then...

“Give me that.”

She came down from the bed, took the rope from Yechan, and Yechan, looking perplexed, alternately looked at Yeongwoo and the woman.

On the other hand, Yeongwoo, holding his Early Bird in his right hand, spoke irritably.

“Just do as I said. Quickly, put on some clothes. If we take more time...”

“What if we take more time?”

The woman seemed oddly relaxed.

From now on, everything seemed unbelievable.

The strangest thing was that the woman continued to insist on being unarmed.

Yeongwoo continued to gaze fixedly at the woman, who, despite his gestures, was still not tied up.

“...”

When Yeongwoo kicked away the shield under the woman's feet, she raised the corners of her mouth.

“Now, can you relax?”

“I don't know.”

Yeongwoo, holding Early Bird in his right hand and the rope in his left, approached the woman.

At that moment, the woman looked at the terrifying blade of Early Bird and shivered as if in fear.

“Are you trying to tie me up with that in your hand? It's dangerous. Lower it for a moment; after all, I don't have any weapons.”

However, Yeongwoo was ready to corner her, disregarding her words.

“Just stay quiet.”

As both sides approached within two paces...

“...!”

Yeongwoo's eyebrows twitched.

It was because he saw something flashing from inside the towel the woman had wrapped around her body.

And simultaneously, Gumi Sword Technique and the Golden Flash warned him.

「The Senses value has temporarily increased from the original 100 to 137.」

“This...!”

Swish, thud!

Yeongwoo and the woman moved almost simultaneously.

The woman tried to draw the dagger hidden inside the towel to stab Yeongwoo's neck, and in return, Yeongwoo...

Swish!

Raised the Early Bird, which had been lying down, to cut the woman's arm.

It was the arm she was extending with the dagger towards him.

Thunk!

"Huh?"

Whether she forgot the pain in the rapidly unfolding moment or not, the woman looked blankly at her right arm springing in an unnatural direction.

And then.

With a thud, along with the sound, she screamed as her arm fell to the ground.

"Nooo!"

Blood spurted from the severed part.

Yeongwoo sighed while observing the blood staining the bedsheet.

It was all because he realized he would spend the night on a sea of blood.

"Hey."

"Noo!"

"Your previous words about this being the last room, did they mean something else? You've already ransacked the other rooms, and only this one remained, right?"

Yeongwoo made a plausible inference, but the woman seemed too preoccupied to respond.

She was too busy rushing towards the entrance as if crazed.

"Wait. Anyway, even if you go outside, you'll die."

Yeongwoo, retrieving the shield wedged between the bed and the wall, threw it diagonally toward the woman's lower back.

Splatter!

With a dreadful noise, the steel shield stuck into the woman's waist, curving in a peculiar direction.

Thud!

“Ack!”

With a moan, the woman, who had fallen forward, poured out sweat from her whole body, writhing in pain.

“This crazy...!”

Yeongwoo, jumping off the bed, muttered quietly.

“You should have quietly waited and attacked at dawn... Why did you choose the difficult path? Surprisingly, it seems to have worked well with other guys.”

Then, terror filled the woman’s face.

She had now realized that she had seriously misunderstood her opponent.

“You... you were the Strongest Sword.”

“Weren’t you trying to act tough with me? Wasn’t it different from what you imagined?”

“W-well...”

“Die.”

Without bothering to hear more, Yeongwoo deeply stabbed the woman’s lower back with the tip of his sword.

Swish.

With that, the trembling woman’s movements ceased, and a small puddle of blood formed beneath her.

“...”

Yeongwoo stepped on the blood while searching the woman’s body.

There was no other weapon in the towel, but he found something in the woman’s fingers.

‘There was a ring.’

It had a color as if it were a discolored silver ring.

‘I wonder if it’s an item.’

When Yeongwoo pulled the ring from the woman's hand, an item tooltip appeared.

「Assassin's Finger」 – Artifact Ring

【10% increase in stats in a one-on-one battle】

【–Empty Slot–】

*'Portrait of a Murderer' bonus.

'Portrait of a Murderer?'

This was an achievement.

To be more precise, it was an achievement that Yeongwoo had never seen before.

Probably an achievement corresponding to a different personality, not "Stubborn," and that is to say...

'Did she also open achievements?'

Anyway, at first glance, it was confirmed that this woman was not an ordinary player.

And Yechan, who had witnessed all these scenes up close...

"..."

He stood frozen in place, as if he couldn't even properly breathe.

Every moment he had just witnessed was shocking.

"Are you okay? In the end, she was a scammer."

Yeongwoo tried to comfort Yechan awkwardly, swallowing the remark, 'Che claim of being pregnant was probably a lie as well.'

[Current time, 11:23 PM.]

After confirming that the fog outside had thickened more than before through the window, Yeongwoo lay down on the bed with a delicate bloodstain.

Hwaat.

The fresh smell of blood rose through his body.

However, it wasn't disturbing enough to hinder him from falling asleep again.

Thanks to becoming accustomed to the scent of blood during that time.

Relieved tension allowed his entire body's muscles to relax.

With a sigh, his eyelids became heavy.

But Yechan...

"..."

Unlike Yeongwoo, he couldn't easily fall asleep.

For a while, he stood still, gazing at the corpse lying near the entrance.

It was a cruel and bizarre night.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

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Chapter 23

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 23: The Barefoot Superhuman (1)

Ding! Ring!

...

Ding! Ring!

...

"What's this now?"

Yeongwoo, awakened by the ringing tone, slowly opened his eyes.

Through the window left open yesterday, sunlight poured in.

Then again.

Ding! Ring!

Turning his head, he looked to the left.

The motel phone on the bedside table was loudly ringing.

“Crazy.”

Yeongwoo checked his wristwatch while picking up the receiver.

The current time was 8:02 AM.

Click.

“Hello.”

The habitual greeting escaped his lips without him realizing it.

On the other side of the line, there was silence for a while.

Then.

《There is 1 hour and 48 minutes left until check-out.》

A mixed voice of a man and a woman conveyed the announcement.

“What the hell...”

A shiver ran down his spine as he fully woke up.

Yeongwoo, who had cautiously picked up the phone, threw it far away without realizing it.

But the caller had already hung up.

‘This shitty situation....’

In any case, the wake-up call was effective.

It not only woke him up but also restored his sense of reality in an instant.

“Wh-what was it?”

Yechan, too, had hastily risen from hearing the phone ring.

He stood by the window, staring with surprised eyes.

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo, still looking at the body of the woman lying near the entrance, moved to the window and confirmed that the red mist had completely dissipated.

“It was a check-out notification. We should get going.”

Although there was still plenty of time until the check-out, there was no reason to waste time meaninglessly here in the deserted yard.

Yeongwoo opened the refrigerator, drank canned coffee and tea.

Then, he took out a dagger from the right arm of the woman lying on the floor, thinking it might be useful to strike the opponent's weak point, just like the deceased had done.

“Now, what's left is...”

Yeongwoo's gaze fell on the backpack the woman had been carrying.

He had little interest in spare weapons and miscellaneous items, and what he was looking for was...

“Oh.”

As Yeongwoo rummaged through the backpack, he felt a familiar texture in his hand.

Click.

Sure enough, there was a pile of coins at the bottom of the backpack.

When he turned the backpack upside down and shook it, not only the crimson coins but also dazzling commemorative coins continuously poured out.

Swoosh!

‘That's a lot. How many did she kill?’

Yeongwoo speculated that before coming to this room, the woman probably looted other rooms one by one.

The total amount of coins on the floor added up to a whopping 364,000 karma.

32 commemorative coins and 44 crimson coins.

‘I should consider myself lucky to meet her before she could convert these into stats.’

Now Yeongwoo's cash assets were 810, translated into stats.

He immediately started distributing his stats to avoid making the same mistake as the woman.

‘As long as I don’t lose the Golden Flash, there’s no hurry to increase my senses.’

That leaves strength, stamina, and durability.

Strength had risen to 400 due to the ‘Furious Goblins’ ring, stamina and durability were still lacking at 150 each.

‘Maybe durability should take priority now? My body still can’t handle my maximum output.’

Yeongwoo left only 10,000 karma as ‘change’ and poured the remaining 800,000 into his stats.

『Character: Jung Yeongwoo07』

[Strength] 600 (19+581)

[Stamina] 350 (21+329)

[Durability] 550 (13+537)

[Sense] 100 (24+76)

These stats were configured under the assumption that the Golden Flash sense theft would apply to monsters and mutants, based on the premise of the artifact.

「Assassin’s Finger」 – Artifact Ring

【10% increase in stats in a one-on-one battle】

【–Empty Slot–】

The newly acquired ring had the term ‘one-on-one battle’ attached to it.

‘If the Golden Flash only worked on humans, they would have used the term ‘one-on-one battle’ as well.’

However, the tooltip for the Golden Flash was:

【Steal 50% of the enemy’s senses during battle.】

During combat, the ‘enemy’s’ senses were stolen.

Moreover, this was a legendary-grade item.

So, Yeongwoo was confident that it would be effective even against mutants.

Suaaat!

After investing in stats, a unique vitality spread throughout his body.

Yeongwoo took only a rope from the woman's backpack, removed his gown, and put on his clothes again.

Yechan, who had been watching him blankly, belatedly grabbed his clothes.

* * *

Riverside Motel, 2nd floor.

As the two closed the door and came out into the corridor, loud noises pierced their ears.

Ding-ling!

Ding-ling!

It was none other than the ringing of phone bells coming from other rooms on the 2nd floor.

"...?"

Since all the doors were wide open, Yeongwoo could see into each room as he crossed the motel corridor.

"Oh my god."

Just by looking at the scattered bodies in the narrow motel rooms, it seemed like something had happened yesterday.

Most of the victims were men, some in gowns, and others completely naked.

Some had only half-worn clothes on from the outside.

In some rooms, men and women were mixed, and the woman in question seemed to have had a hard time in such places.

There were far more traces of combat in this room compared to others.

‘At any rate, it’s impressive.’

Yeongwoo sincerely admired.

Combat skills aside, how did she manage to enter each room?

There must have been different gender ratios and compositions in each room, yet how did she successfully enter each time?

‘Well, in the end, I did open the door for her.’

Yeongwoo continued forward until he reached the last room at the end of the corridor.

“ ... ”

In that room, two women who seemed to be a mother and daughter were lying without even holding weapons.

As Yeongwoo approached the door, a blue barrier appeared as if to block his way.

Since the check-out time was still valid, it meant that outsiders couldn’t enter.

Ironically, there was no longer anyone to unlock the barrier for this room.

The world had gone mad.

Glancing back, Yeongwoo noticed Yechan standing with a grim expression.

Although it would have been morally right to ask if he was okay, Yeongwoo didn’t bother.

“Let’s go now. We have to leave.”

“...Yes.”

They each dragged their bicycles to the lobby, passing by the body of the Level 1 Extra whose head and torso were separated.

* * *

Swoosh!

The bicycle carrying Yeongwoo reached its maximum physical speed.

They headed southwest towards the Gyeongbu Expressway.

In terms of the route, they were technically retracing their steps.

However, the scenery was completely different.

Bodies were strewn along the roadside as if a plague had swept through.

‘Probably killed by the red mist.’

In reality, it wouldn’t be far off to say it was death caused by acquired poverty.

Since warnings had been spread two hours before the fog appeared, it wasn’t difficult to find a place to stay if you had money.

That meant people who died on the streets were likely to be impoverished.

Thus.

“Ugh.”

“Another beggar.”

People who had been searching through corpses early on mostly ended up disappointed.

Yeongwoo and Yechan rode their bicycles through the bodies of the dead and the living.

Swoosh!

Perhaps because of the fast speed or because they spotted the early bird at Yeongwoo’s waist, no one dared to stop or attack the two.

‘Do mutants appear at a scheduled time every day? If that’s the case, we can plan our route accordingly.’

The major schedule in this world, as Yeongwoo had observed so far, was as follows:

- 9:00 PM, start of the lodging service.
- 10:00 PM, tax collection.
- 11:00 PM, abnormal weather occurrence.
- 10:00 AM, check-out time.

And at some point before sunset, goblins and mutants would appear.

However, the patterns of the remaining 'events,' excluding tax collection, were still unknown.

Whether they repeated at the same time every day or not was yet to be determined.

'I'll find out tomorrow, I guess.'

In an instant, crossing through Sinpyeong-dong, they reached Gumi Central Road.

Swoosh!

'There it is.'

Visible in the distance on the other side of Central Road was the elevated expressway, the Gyeongbu Expressway.

'Let's jump over there. Now seems like a good time.'

Perhaps lifting Yechan and climbing onto the elevated highway was also possible.

Yeongwoo eagerly pressed the pedal, ready to quickly test his seemingly miraculous physical abilities.

Then, unexpectedly, with a sudden crack, his center of gravity shifted downward.

"Huh?"

Swiftly using one foot to touch the ground, he managed to support himself, but the bicycle that had been carrying him finally collapsed beyond repair.

"Ah..."

The bicycle frame couldn't withstand Yeongwoo's output and ended up completely broken.

Probably, the cause was getting overly excited after visually confirming the expressway a while ago.

"..."

As Yeongwoo stared at the shattered bicycle, Yechan, who had overtaken him, quickly stopped his bicycle.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah, it's just the bicycle that's broken."

Yeongwoo made a somewhat embarrassed expression, but on the other hand, he thought it wasn't a big problem.

"I can just run with two legs."

With a strength of 600, stamina of 350, and durability of 550, it might look a bit funny, but in reality, he could probably move faster than a car's city driving if he ran seriously.

Yeongwoo securely tied the handlebars and the backpack hanging on his back to his body with a rope.

Then...

Thud.

In a state where his feet adhered closely to the ground, he sprung forward towards Yechan in front of him.

Papak!

This time, even before he could take two steps, a strange sound came from his feet.

Poong!

"Huh?"

The shoes couldn't withstand the pressure of high-speed running and burst.

However, since his bare feet didn't hurt particularly, Yeongwoo looked at Yechan, who was surprised, and passed by.

Waaaah!

Despite just running with two legs, a gust of wind rushed at him as if he had opened a window in a moving train.

'Is... is this right?'

Amazed at his inexplicable athletic ability, Yeongwoo looked at the Gyeongbu Expressway, which was now approaching.

Although he had to lift his head to see the upper part of the road, for some reason, it seemed like he could easily jump up there.

'I think it should work.'

With his two legs prepared for maximum output, Yeongwoo's right foot kicked the ground, propelling his body upward.

Waaaah!

Defying gravity, Yeongwoo's body soared vigorously.

'Unbelievable.'

Easily leaping to the height of the elevated expressway, Yeongwoo smoothly entered the Gyeongbu Expressway.

Crack!

The asphalt ground beneath Yeongwoo's heels crumbled.

Checking the condition of his bare feet, Yeongwoo shouted towards Yechan, who was still below the expressway.

"Can you climb up?"

In response, Yechan slowly rode his bicycle towards the road.

"No, it'll be too difficult for someone like me, Mister."

For some reason, Yechan's tone sounded heavy.

"...?"

Sensing something unusual, Yeongwoo looked at him curiously and asked.

"Are you okay? Is there something wrong? I can help you climb up. I will just come down, and lift you up and jump."

Then Yechan, who had arrived below the elevated expressway, looked up at Yeongwoo with a quiet expression.

"...Is it meaningful to go to such lengths?"

"Huh?"

Yeongwoo, puzzled by Yechan's words, was about to ask what he meant.

However, Yechan, looking around, put one foot on the pedal of his bicycle.

“Anyway, even if I go up there, I won’t be able to ride at the same speed as you, Mister. It seems like this is as far as I’ll go in your debt.”

“In debt? What are you...”

Before Yeongwoo could find the right words, Yechan quietly continued.

“Go ahead. I now have some weapons and money, so I’ll figure something out.”

“Really? Are you deciding to be independent all of a sudden?”

“We weren’t really a family to begin with. So, rather than saying it’s independence, it’s just parting ways because the time has come.”

Yechan smiled with a bitter expression.

Only then did Yeongwoo realize that the other party was sincere.

However, was it really possible?

Could someone like him survive in this crazy world?

‘No, it’s just unnecessary worry. We weren’t family from the start.’

Yeongwoo forced himself to accept it.

From a practical perspective, Yechan was becoming more of a burden, and it was wise for him to become independent if he wanted to grow properly.

But how could relationships between people be measured only pragmatically?

From Yeongwoo, who had grown attached to him, it couldn’t help but feel a bit disappointing.

“I’m going to Seoul eventually. So, if I manage to survive, let’s meet in Seoul someday.”

At this, Yechan, with a momentarily blank face, looked up at Yeongwoo and burst into a hollow laughter.

“Seoul? Yes, sure. By the time we meet there, I probably won’t be ordinary.”

Of course, both of them knew that the likelihood of Yechan reaching Seoul alive was not very high.

“Well, take care of yourself.”

“You too, Mister. Thanks for everything.”

Yechan bowed his head in farewell, then confidently rode his bicycle under the elevated expressway.

Swish!

The sound of Yechan’s bicycle quickly fading away.

When Yeongwoo turned around, Yechan, who had crossed the elevated expressway and was running on the other side, gradually became a small dot.

Soon, he turned into a tiny point and disappeared into the cityscape in the distance.

Silence lingered as Yeongwoo bid farewell to his first companion.

However, there was no time to dwell on it.

Yeongwoo immediately turned his head and read the small road sign visible ahead.

‘Gimcheon, 27km... Can I make it by running?’

This would have been unimaginable in the past, but now it felt entirely possible.

There was a genuine sense of confidence.

No one was on the highway, and only sporadic stone-like remains of cars could be seen.

Taking a deep breath, Yeongwoo sprinted forward as if bouncing off the ground.

Swoosh!

The surrounding scenery began to rapidly pass by, similar to before.

‘Just running like this doesn’t make me tired at all. I really turned into a monster.’

It had only been two days.

‘I wonder how other Strongest Swords are faring....’

As Yeongwoo contemplated this, a change occurred in the forward view.

Although it wasn’t certain, a faint light appeared in the distance.

“Huh.”

Not long after, the uncertainty turned into conviction.

“....!”

Although still somewhat faint, there was no doubt that a reddish column of light was descending from high in the sky.

‘Marker of a mutant. It means they couldn’t eliminate the mutants in Gimcheon yesterday.’

Yeongwoo’s expression solidified as he sensed the impending danger.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

This chapter is updated by fr(e)webnov(e)l.com

Chapter 24

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 24: The Barefoot Superhuman (2)

‘What on earth is Gimcheon doing?’

Without realizing it, Yeongwoo criticized Gimcheon City.

The fact that the mutant had been alive all day yesterday meant a lot.

Human casualties beyond imagination.

And the powerless Strongest Sword.

Of course, Strongest Sword had no obligation to protect the residents of his area.

But apart from that, if Gimcheon Strongest Sword was strong enough, the mutant couldn’t have survived until now.

Thud!

Soon, the upper right corner of the field of vision flashed, and the regional status changed.

Finally, He had left Gumi and entered the Gimcheon region.

But no matter how you looked at it, Gimcheon Strongest Sword's condition was strange.

[The current area of residence is 'Gimcheon.'

[The Strongest Sword of this area is 'Park Kyungtae 421.' 36 times, no defense.

'36 times...?'

It meant that in one day, the title of Strongest Sword had changed 35 times.

In other words, no one in Gimcheon had properly held the title of Strongest Sword.

This city did not possess a strong person.

'These crazy people.'

Yeongwoo was angry.

In this world where everyone carried a sword, being strong generally meant being closer to evil, but still, someone had to stop the mutant, right?

Rather than running away like a flock of sheep and being attacked by all, wouldn't it be better to resist?

'Maybe they couldn't even handle goblins before the mutant. How chaotic was it for the Strongest Sword to come down to 36?'

Yeongwoo recalled the goblins' meal scene from yesterday and gritted his teeth.

Then he pounded the ground even harder.

Thump!

Each time he lifted his foot off the ground, he felt the asphalt fragments hitting his heels and bouncing off.

The wind brushing against his cheeks and earlobes was much fiercer than before.

And finally.

"...!"

The distant view of Gimcheon City began to come into sight.

Behind the red light pillar, sporadic blue light pillars, marks of monsters, remained.

Still, judging by the fact that there weren't dozens of marks, it seemed that not everyone had let go.

But ultimately, they couldn't stop the mutant.

Some residents were courageous, but it wasn't enough.

=Kindness, Order, Cleanliness Movement=

[Happy together, welcome to Gimcheon.]

Yeongwoo passed the signboard set up at the entrance of Gimcheon City and ran madly on the road with fields spreading on both sides.

The distance between him and the mutant mark kept getting closer and farther.

'He's still active. He's continuously chasing people.'

Thud!

Since some time ago, the mark had been tilting to the west, so Yeongwoo also left the road and crossed the fields.

Thud, thud, thud!

Splash!

It was early June.

The fields, just finished being harvested, were filled with water.

As Yeongwoo, moving swiftly, entered the area, mud and stalks splattered in all directions.

"...?"

And at that moment, Yeongwoo noticed something crucial.

The stalks spread across the field were not rocks.

"Food must have turned into rocks... but since the rice hasn't fully grown, they didn't consider it as food?"

There was no time to delve deeper into his thoughts.

His legs had already passed through the fields, now stepping on the mountainous terrain, and soon a gas station appeared in the distance.

The proper entrance to the city had begun.

Splash!

Leaping down from the hill back onto the road, Yeongwoo passed the gas station and entered an area filled with apartments.

Simultaneously,

“...”

He saw more corpses scattered on the streets than there were apartments.

From roughly cut pieces to partially consumed bodies, and bodies twisted at strange angles.

However, judging by the fact that they were all facing in the direction Yeongwoo came from...

‘They were trying to leave the city but got caught.’

Moreover, this was the outskirts of Gimcheon City.

Considering that he hadn’t seen any other corpses on the way from Gumi to here, it could be assumed that most Gimcheon citizens couldn’t even reach the highway and died.

‘They still have their skin. The monsters in this area might not be goblins.’

In Yeongwoo’s experience, goblins would peel off the skin or outer layer of their prey when eating.

However, the dead in Gimcheon still had intact skin.

Pop!

The procession of corpses continued.

As he approached the city center, the state of the corpses improved.

While unarmed corpses were not uncommon on the outskirts, now Yeongwoo occasionally saw people with more than one weapon.

‘This place was really hell.’

As Yeongwoo thought this, while checking the regional status again,

Pop.

[The current area of residence is ‘Gimcheon.’

[The Strongest Sword of this area is ‘Kim Sunhwa 190.’ 37 times, no defense.

Gimcheon Strongest Sword had changed hands again.

“...?”

Only after seeing this did Yeongwoo realize.

‘The previous Strongest Swords didn’t die at the hands of challengers. The reason for changing the Strongest Sword 36 times was not because of people but...’

Mutants.

Any Strongest Sword who appeared in Gimcheon to confront the mutants failed to defeat them and consecutively died.

Because of this, the position of Strongest Sword kept becoming vacant, and the system was arbitrarily assigning the next challenger.

Similar to how Yeongwoo became Gumi Strongest Sword just by showing off in front of the crowd.

‘Then where is the current Strongest Sword? Is that person also near the mutants right now?’

Yeongwoo looked toward the spot where ‘Kim Sunhwa 190’ was expected to be, focusing on the red light pillar.

At that moment, the pillar seemed to twitch, and the vicious cycle began again.

[The current area of residence is ‘Gimcheon.’

[The Strongest Sword of this area is ‘Kang Sung-ho 306.’ 38 times, no defense.

And in that short time, Kim Sunhwa 190 also died.

‘What is happening?’

It’s unclear whether the massacre unfolding there is a one-sided slaughter or a battle.

In any case, it seemed certain that the system was appointing people near the mutants as Strongest Sword.

‘Damn it, I’m going.’

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo was in close proximity to the city where the red light pillar was shot.

The remaining distance would be at most 2 kilometers.

Zap!

It didn’t take even a few minutes for Yeongwoo to focus his sight on the scene of the incident.

“...!”

As expected, there were dozens of people.

And from Yeongwoo’s perspective, they seemed to be the strongest group in Gimcheon.

Why?

Because each of them had one weapon and shield.

Some even had early bird privileges, and there were those who had farmed quite a bit the previous day, carrying large backpacks.

However, they were all in retreat.

“R-run!”

“Aaah!”

And behind them,

「Ket... This could be a somewhat enjoyable life, too.」

A hefty humanoid emitted a fierce aura as it rushed forward.

‘Mutant...!’

Yeongwoo's pupils dilated.

The mutants in Gimcheon were not goblins but 'Gnolls.'

Humanoid bodies with hyena heads.

Their height was about 3 meters, like Jang Sun-bok in Gumi, but in terms of body thickness and muscle size, their physique looked much larger.

The notable feature was that they had no separate weapons, and their armor only covered their torso.

'But their combat power is probably higher than Jang Sunbok.'

Yeongwoo pulled out his early bird from his waist, checking the opponent's name tag.

[Internet Broadcaster – Hong Youngtae (Pabble)]

'Huh?'

Hong Young-tae.

Also known as BJ Pabble.

Yeongwoo had come across this name through news articles.

He was a bit of a problem child, famous in the internet broadcasting industry.

He already had his license revoked for drunk driving, and recently, he caused a sensation by disrupting train operations on the tracks while claiming to fulfill viewer missions.

'He usually caused accidents in Seoul... Was he originally from Gimcheon?'

But Hong Youngtae seemed to have no affection for his hometown people.

「Another one's gone!」

Chasing after those fleeing with their backs turned, Hong Youngtae gleefully swung his fist, and anyone hit by his punch fell to the ground and died without exception.

「Kikik! It's like a kimchi war!」

Hong Youngtae laughed as he wiped his hands on the body sprawled on the ground.

The malicious delight had an unsettling, dark humor.

Then, as soon as the corpse no longer looked human, he bounced up to pursue the next victim.

In other words, this group, which could be Gimcheon's last defense, had been doing this long before Yeongwoo arrived.

They had become fanatical warriors, being preyed upon by the mutant.

‘...Oh my god.’

In the midst of the fleeing crowd, Yeongwoo saw the title ‘Gimcheon Strongest Sword’ shining brightly.

Even the 38th Strongest Sword, Kang Sungho 306, was in retreat just like any other person.

At this point, Gimcheon practically had no Strongest Sword.

「Hey, Strongest Sword! Wait up!」

Hong Youngtae pointed towards Kang Sungho 306 with his distant claw and crouched down on all fours.

Then.

Whoosh!

With lightning speed, he leaped high into the air, intending to land right on the head of the new Strongest Sword.

In response, Yeongwoo ran straight to the expected landing point and tapped his left chest.

Then,

Thud!

Yeongwoo's hidden title was revealed above his head.

『Gumi's Strongest Sword』

“Huh?”

“Ugh...?”

“Gumi's... Strongest Sword?”

People who had been running towards Yeongwoo stopped and looked at him in astonishment.

Meanwhile, under the massive shadow, Yeongwoo shouted towards the dumbfounded Kang Sungho 306.

“Avoid, Kang Sungho!”

“Wha...?”

Gimcheon’s Strongest Sword, frightened by the fierce face of Gumi’s Strongest Sword, looked terrified.

Then.

Thud!

Yeongwoo’s body landed on top of Hong Youngtae, who had been falling.

Splat!

This time, the corpse truly looked like a scene from a kimchi war.

“....”

Yeongwoo looked down at the shattered and sprawled Kang Sungho 306.

“I told you to avoid.”

Upon hearing Yeongwoo’s words, Hong Youngtae widened his long jaws.

“The Strongest Sword is here again.”

Then,

“Huh? What’s this?”

Sensing something unusual, he suddenly wrinkled his nose and furrowed his forehead.

“What the hell is this smell...”

When Hong Youngtae pronounced it this far, Yeongwoo finally remembered.

“This equipment carries the scent of a mutant. Other mutants can detect it and be on guard.”

The warning message he had seen when acquiring the mutant-grade ring, the 'Furious Goblin.'

In other words, what the mutant was smelling now was the scent of Gumi City Councilor Jang Sunbok.

"You, this bastard, could it be?"

While Hong Youngtae realized the identity of the smell, Yeongwoo was looking at the symbols of slaughter attached all over the guy's body.

'The only route is to kill them all.'

However, Yeongwoo didn't want to kill him.

He needed to achieve as many feats as possible since he had encountered a mutant.

【Special Grade Social Worker】

|Send back the mutant alive.

'Can't you show enough determination that the opponent would want to die?'

As Yeongwoo silently asked this question to himself, the positions and forms of the symbols attached to Hong Young-tae changed.

—Break

—Break

—Break

—Break

The symbol to break.

It was a sword that Yeongwoo was shown, not intending to kill.

'His size is so big that there are plenty of places to hit.'

Nodding his head, Yeongwoo tightly gripped the early bird and shield.

Finally, Hong Youngtae bared his teeth and made a threatening gesture.

Snarl.

And it was confirmed that the mutant would indeed launch an attack through the next message that appeared.

「The sensory value has temporarily increased from the existing 100 to 164.」

As expected, Golden Flash deprived the mutant's senses as well.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

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Chapter 25

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 25: The Superhuman with Bare Feet (3)

「What is this...?」

As the Golden Flash emitted a sensory displacement, Hong Youngtae's expression twisted.

He felt it too, something strange happening to his body.

「You... what are you?」

In a moment of suspicion, Hong Youngtae asked with a doubtful tone.

Hwaeat!

A gray trail pierced the guy's face, making a creaking sound.

Creak!

「Ah, damn!」

Yeongwoo thrust the shield into the guy's teeth without raising his guard.

“What are you doing? Without raising your guard.”

As Yeongwoo withdrew the shield from the guy's mouth, broken teeth fell to the ground.

Hududuk.

「This... this is insane!」

Hong Youngtae, with an expression of disbelief, covered his collapsed gums with his right hand.

An unbelievable situation.

So far, he had only encountered opponents who couldn't even properly compete with him, let alone match his skills.

「Who are you to be this strong...? Aren't you in a position to be punished? Isn't this cheating?」

“What?”

As Yeongwoo blinked his eyebrows and took another striking posture, Hong Youngtae instinctively took a step back.

“Who said we're the ones being punished? Where did you hear that?”

「Well, he didn't exactly say it was punishment, but...」

The guy mumbled, then, when Yeongwoo didn't follow up with another attack, he subtly extended one foot forward.

「So what I heard was...?」

Next, what the guy did was too obvious.

Swinging his right arm, which had been in front of his mouth, in a swift attempt at a surprise attack.

「We should be able to judge with our own strength, right...?」

Ssyaeaaak!

It was an attack so fierce that the sound alone sent shivers down the spine.

If Yeongwoo hadn't had the upper hand in senses, his chest might have been torn open immediately.

In terms of strength and arm length, Hong Youngtae had the advantage, so two hits were enough.

“...!”

Yeongwoo, predicting the surprise attack, barely managed to avoid it.

Hwaeet!

But as a result, the distance between him and his opponent decreased, allowing for many counterattack opportunities.

—Break

—Break

—Break

‘You’re done.’

As Yeongwoo confirmed the sign, Hong Youngtae, who had seen it, had a fearful expression for a moment.

And indeed.

Kwakwakkwang!

A brutal retaliatory beating found its way to the guy.

「Keuk!」

Having been hit with a right elbow and a left sidekick, and finishing with a kidney shot, Hong Youngtae couldn’t hide his bewildered expression as he retreated again.

Before being a mutant, he was a person too.

Since he had never experienced such a level of assault before, the momentum of the judgment and all that vanished like a ghost, leaving only instinctive fear.

「Wait a moment...! I really can’t breathe! Timeout!」

It was truly a rare sight to see a three-meter tall giant struggling irregularly, clutching his side.

Even the Gimcheon City warriors who had been fleeing with all their might stopped in their tracks to watch.

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo, sensing the guy’s spirit had been broken, sheathed the early bird at his waist.

Ssut.

It was to show determination until even a trace of the opponent's pride was left.

"Come here. I have something to ask."

As Yeongwoo approached with only one shield in hand, Hong Youngtae's voice trembled even more than before.

「Why... why are you like this? Ask from right there!」

Jubuk, jubuk.

"What did I tell you to ask anything?"

Even though Hong Youngtae raised both hands to show, Yeongwoo didn't stop walking.

Jubuk, jubuk.

Continuing to approach until his rough breath touched the strands of the guy's hair.

Bwooong.

Leaping about four meters into the air, Yeongwoo struck down on Hong Youngtae's yellowish forehead.

Pweeeok!

「Euk!」

With the head lowered, it was much easier for Yeongwoo to strike with full force.

From this point on, it was clear that there were too many exposed weak points, and Yeongwoo didn't need to rely on Gumi Sword Technique.

Pweeek, pwaeng!

The right fist and the shield alternated, pounding Hong Youngtae's body.

At this point, the Gimcheon City warriors, who had been watching from a distance, began to approach step by step.

"Is this a dre... dream?"

"What in the world is this...?"

Rather than admiration, they expressed confusion.

It was such an unreal sight for them.

A barefoot superhuman who had jumped in from somewhere was beating up a mutant right in front of them.

“Could that person also be a mutant? Does that make sense?”

“It does say Gumi Sword Technique. Anyway, he’s... human, right?”

Should they continue to flee, or should they witness the century’s spectacle of a mutant losing in a one-on-one duel with a human?

The Gimcheon City warriors hesitated, debating whether to run away or stick around.

Meanwhile, Hong Youngtae’s face was becoming a complete mess.

Pueok, puck!

To avoid a potential fatal blow with the shield, Yeongwoo had been using only his fists and feet for some time now.

As a result, his both feet were soaked in Hong Youngtae’s blood, stained red, and the fists were not much different.

“Huuk, hukk. It’s really sturdy.”

Yeongwoo stopped the beating only when his breath began to calm down.

In response, Hong Youngtae fell backward as if fleeing from Yeongwoo, barely touching the ground and spitting out blood.

Puhwaat!

「Stop now. Yo... you’ve done enough.」

Unlike the first time, his voice lacked both anger and fear, sounding resigned.

‘Is it over now?’

Yeongwoo thought it was finally time to have a conversation after hearing this.

“The judgment you mentioned earlier. Who told you about it? Where were you before you came here?”

At this, Hong Youngtae instinctively looked up at the sky.

「I, I don't know, really. I just waited in a very dark place.」

“You waited?”

「Yeah... the voice said so. That when the time comes, we'll return in order.」

He must be talking about becoming a mutant again with the red pillar of light and returning to the world.

“Then who is the voice? Does it control you guys?”

「...I don't know. It's just a voice. I only hear the sound.」

Saying this, Hong Youngtae looked at Yeongwoo with fearful eyes.

It seemed he thought that if the answer wasn't satisfactory, Yeongwoo would hit him again.

‘It doesn't seem like a lie. It's quite similar to what Jang Seonbok said.’

Jang Seonbok from Gumi had said something similar before he died.

– What year is it now? I don't know how long I've been captured.

– The first day? Then did I come first? Oh, is that so?

In other words, mutants were isolated somewhere other than this world and returned according to some kind of order.

“Anything else? Like a teleportation ability or something.”

「Teleportation...?」

Hong Youngtae made a puzzled expression, then, with his half-broken jaw, shook his head.

「...Ah!」

Suddenly, he raised his right hand, glowing blue.

“This sh*t...!”

Thinking that he might be initiating a self-destruct attack, Yeongwoo hastily drew his sword.

Sreung!

However, Hong Youngtae was more surprised and shook his head.

「N-no! Something strange! So, this is...!」

Hwaaat!

Eventually, the blue light in Hong Youngtae's right hand took on a certain form.

It was a door.

A door with an arched top that glowed blue, and an icon of a door opening and closing was shining.

「I don't know if you'll believe me, but someone else has to catch this. Without weapons, with your right hand.」

“Then can you teleport like this?”

「I... I really don't know about that. I haven't heard anything about it. If there's nothing left to do here or if you regret choosing to be a mutant, I was just told to use this method.」

“...”

From the situation, it seemed like that was indeed the teleportation button.

But that was only up to a point.

‘Assuming that crazy guy didn't lie.’

Since it was a door-shaped icon, there was also the possibility that it was something to warp the opponent, not a teleportation button.

Which one could it be?

‘Damn... Would this guy, who was a mess even in his previous life, speak the truth now?’

Unconsciously, Yeongwoo began to harbor doubts.

However, upon further thought, he realized that, strangely, this might be the real method of teleportation.

Teleportation was a kind of betrayal, abandoning the duty of a mutant and quietly returning.

‘So maybe they made it not easy to betray even if they wanted to.’

For example, a method that couldn’t be executed without the help of the opponent who had been fighting with weapons just a while ago.

Moreover.

[Special Social Worker]

|Return the mutant alive.

In the first place, asking a mutant about a teleportation method wasn’t something anyone could do.

It had to be someone listed in the recommended achievements as a ‘Special Social Worker’ for such an idea to arise.

‘Once again, it’s a choice between two extremes.’

Moreover, this time it wasn’t even officially recognized as a quest.

As Yeongwoo seemed to be in dilemma, Hong Youngtae, with a wide smile, slyly bent his raised right hand and said,

「Ho... how does it work? Anyway, I didn’t lie. If you can’t trust me, that’s your problem, but if you won’t let me go, don’t beat me up anymore.」

Since he didn’t completely fold his hand, the ‘Blue Door’ still existed.

‘Really, so many complications.’

Without thinking about it more, Yeongwoo entrusted his fate to his intuition once again.

“Damn it.”

As Yeongwoo put the early bird back in its sheath and reached out his right hand, Hong Youngtae flinched for a moment.

However, he neither stepped back nor prepared for another move.

If it wasn’t this, he knew that his future wouldn’t be optimistic.

“How this...?”

Yeongwoo, without further hesitation, reached out his hand.

Tub!

Finally, the hand of an ordinary person and the mutated right hand clasped the 'Blue Door.'

And Yeongwoo realized.

This act was just like a handshake.

「...Huh?」

Hong Youngtae, who held Yeongwoo's hand, looked at the empty space with wide eyes.

"Why? What's going on?"

Yeongwoo asked, but there was no answer from the other side.

Shaaaat.

Because it was already fading away.

The body of the three-meter-tall mutant, Hong Youngtae.

「Phew.」

Soon, even the long face of Hong Youngtae, which was making a futile expression, was disappearing from view, and the fluffy texture that Yeongwoo felt in his hand vanished.

"Hong Youngtae? Did he really leave?"

Yeongwoo asked this while facing the empty space.

At that moment, a golden sphere appeared where Youngtae had been.

"Ha."

It was the same sphere that Yeongwoo had seen when he killed Jang Sunbok.

「You have defeated the mutant.」

「Please choose a reward to complete the process.」

Following that, an instruction message appeared.

If Yeongwoo chose to spread karma to everyone again this time, he could achieve the 'Golden Horde' achievement.

Ping!

Then, evidence appeared showing that Yeongwoo had indeed spared Hong Youngtae.

[Achievement Accomplished: Special Social Worker]

|Achievement Grade: Legend

|Achievement Rank: First

'As expected.'

Holding his right hand, which was covered in cold sweat, Yeongwoo felt that his achievement orientation had become even more robust, forming a sturdy 'stubborn' quality.

「The recommended achievement list has been updated.」

'If one achievement is removed, a new one comes in.'

Yeongwoo, who was quickly learning about this world, sensed that even though he had achieved a lot, there was still something unexpected.

Paaat!

With a bright light, another message appeared.

[You can acquire a new title.]

"Huh?"

Surprised, Yeongwoo read the characters that were lined up one after another below.

-Overwhelming! Many candidates for the 'Strongest Sword' have witnessed your prowess. No one will object to the fact that you are 'Gimcheon's Strongest Sword.'

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 26

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 26: The Barefoot Superhuman (4)

‘What is this nonsense?’

Yeongwoo glanced briefly at the title still attached to his head.

As confirmed just now, he is currently serving as the Gumi’s Strongest Sword.

‘Could it be that the Strongest Sword can also hold multiple positions?’

Otherwise, why would they give the same type of title to someone who is already the Strongest Sword?

As Yeongwoo finished reading the previous guidance message, completely new information appeared.

《Merge of Similar Titles》

「When acquiring additional titles with similar effects and characteristics, a merger can be performed.」

「Some titles may transform into new ones depending on the number of mergers, and your possession of ‘Gumi Strongest Sword’ also falls under this category.」

Then, new information about the evolution route of Gumi Strongest Sword was displayed below.

[Gumi Strongest Sword] => Merge more than twice.

= [Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword (Advanced)]

‘Advanced, what does that mean? Does it imply promotion?’

As Yeongwoo had this question, an additional explanation followed immediately.

「When possessing three or more Strongest Sword titles in the Gyeongbuk region, you can acquire the title Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword (Advanced).」

「And among the holders of Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword (Advanced), the one with the most Strongest Sword titles in that region will ascend to Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword.」

‘Why is it so complicated? So, the person with the most Strongest Sword titles becomes Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword? But they must have at least three.’

Yeongwoo scratched his chin while repeatedly reading the explanatory text.

Of course, it was understandable because Gyeongsangbuk-do is divided into a whopping 23 regions.

So, how can you determine the unified champion of these regions?

‘Right.’

Even though Yeongwoo looked at it, competing based on the number of Strongest Sword titles each person possesses seemed the most straightforward.

However.

Pat!

There was one more competition method.

「However, all Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword (Advanced) holders can know the real-time location of the current Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword.」

「The title Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword can also be inherited through murder.」

‘...So that’s how it is.’

An event within the expected category.

Becoming Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword will undoubtedly make them stronger, but in return, they will be pursued by Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword (Advanced) holders.

‘Then, Gyeongnam Strongest Sword, Busan Strongest Sword, Jeonbuk Strongest Sword... It’s probably the same for each region.’

In essence, a nationwide battle royale involving all citizens.

Of course, considering the situation in Gimcheon City, there might not be as many Strongest Swords as expected.

Anyway, Yeongwoo already has two Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword titles.

If he acquires just one more, he can become a candidate for Gyeongbuk Strongest Sword.

-Do you want to merge with Gimcheon Strongest Sword?

...The merger authorization will disappear in 5 seconds.

...4.

...3.

Upon this, Yeongwoo silently approved the merger.

Immediately, the Strongest Sword title floating above his head flashed as if struck by lightning, and an alert appeared in front of Yeongwoo.

「Gimcheon Strongest Sword has been merged!」

「The effect of Gumi's Strongest Sword title becomes stronger.」

Ping!

「Gumi Strongest Sword+」 – Unique Title

【Supremacy of the Strongest Sword】

【Gumi Sword Technique】

‘The title has a plus attached. How exactly has it become more powerful?’

Yeongwoo examined the title tooltip for a while, then realized that a golden orb was still floating in front of him.

He reached out towards it.

Tap.

As the rotation speed of the orb increased, it revealed the rewards for defeating it.

?Confirmed Reward?

「Leather Belt of Nol」 – Mutated Belt

【Remote retrieval of weapons.】

?Optional Reward?

[3 million Karma]

Or

[Grant 30,000 Karma to all residents in the region]

‘The optional reward is the same as in Gumi. Is it because of the appearance of the mutant yesterday?’

Anyway, unlike last time, there was a clear reason to choose the latter this time.

[Golden Horde]

|Summon the Golden Rain in two or more regions. (1/2)

It was a great opportunity to achieve the Golden Horde achievement.

‘Actually, the Karma distributed to Gimcheon this time won’t be much. There won’t be many people who participated.’

Even so, he wanted to share Karma with the few people there.

For the greater good?

No.

This time, the decision was purely for Yeongwoo’s own benefit.

Poof!

[Grant 30,000 Karma to all residents in the region]

As Yeongwoo chose irony, the orb vibrated again and then soared into the sky.

Swoosh!

A golden beam traversed the airspace of Gimcheon City.

“What?”

“Wow, what is that?”

“W-What the....”

The warriors of Gimcheon City who were standing behind Yeongwoo, like guards, opened their mouths as they watched the orb that had passed through their field of vision in an instant.

Due to their lack of power, they dared not ask Yeongwoo what had just happened, whether it was a disaster or a miracle.

They simply watched as the orb flew up to the edge of the sky.

“ ... ”

Then, finally.

Boom!

The orb exploded like fireworks, coloring the sky in a golden hue.

“Wow.”

“Incredible.”

The eyes of the warriors of Gimcheon City, who were looking up at the sky, were also dyed golden.

Shortly after,

Swoosh!

Now, the Golden Rain, which could be considered Yeongwoo’s signature, began to fall.

Countless golden lights descended from the sky.

The warriors, exhausted from the prolonged battle, received the golden rain without any resistance.

Then, a miraculous agreement appeared before everyone’s eyes.

《Gumi’s Strongest Sword + ‘Jeong Yeongwoo07’ has given up exclusive ownership of 3 million Karma and gifted 30,000 Karma to all residents of Gimcheon.》

《Soon, 30,000 Karma will be provided in the form of commemorative coins. Prepare for it.》

“Commemorative coins?”

“What is this talking about?”

As the warriors were momentarily confused by the unfamiliar words, Yeongwoo felt an unfamiliar sensation at his waist.

‘Ah, the scabbard was on the belt area.’

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Something was different; the makeshift scabbard disappeared, and in its place was an ordinary iron belt.

Apart from the fact that it had two rings to hang weapons, there was nothing particularly special about its appearance.

However.

【Remote retrieval of weapons.】

This belt seemed to have a special function.

‘No way it could be remote retrieval.’

Yeongwoo stared intently at the Early Bird in his hand and, as a test, threw it towards the ground five meters away.

Swoosh, pick!

Then he reached out towards the Early Bird again.

Swoosh.

What happened next was a fresh shock for Yeongwoo.

‘Huh?’

The Early Bird, which had been firmly embedded in the ground where he moved his hand, was now pulled back into his hand.

Pick!

More precisely, it returned to the ring on the scabbard, but since it was possible to catch the sword in the middle...

‘This is like a complete sword technique. Since it can only be retrieved, it should be called semi-sword technique.’

Although he didn’t know the maximum distance for retrieval, it would undoubtedly be handy in various situations, not just in combat.

‘Equipment dropped by mutants seems to be different.’

As the sound of something falling from the air was heard at the right moment, Yeongwoo caught the commemorative coins without batting an eyelid.

Tap, tap, tap.

On the other hand, the warriors of Gimcheon City, surprised that the generated coins were golden, simply fumbled with them without doing anything else.

Just like Yeongwoo and the people did yesterday.

‘It feels like it happened a long time ago already.’

Watching the people searching the ground in a hurry, Yeongwoo felt a sense of camaraderie.

“For all that, invest in strength and durability. After that, start stripping the corpses in Gimcheon City. There will be quite a few dead people who couldn’t use Karma and died.”

Survival tips from the integrated Strongest Swords of the two regions.

Upon hearing this advice, those picking up coins looked up at him.

The people picking up coins looked up at him.

Then, they belatedly realized that the face depicted on the just-fallen coins and the bare-footed man in front of them looked exactly the same.

“Oh...!”

“Hey, wait a minute.”

The warriors of Gimcheon City tried to say something, but Yeongwoo was already driving the ground with the soles of his feet.

Kwaaak!

He needed to hurry and head north.

If Sangju City had failed in mutant hunting just like Gimcheon...

‘By now, there might be no one alive there.’

And if that happened, there was also a chance that mutants would no longer stay in Sangju City.

‘...I’m not in my right mind either.’

Yeongwoo discovered himself thinking like a local in this damn world.

Tap!

Now, his two legs pushed away the road from Gimcheon to Sangju.

And during this, the alarm indicating the waiting achievement continuously flashed in his field of view.

[Achievement Achieved: Golden Treasury]

|Achievement Grade: Legend

|Achievement Rank: First

「The recommended achievement list has been updated.」

「There are two unclaimed achievement rewards.」

‘Rewards? Oh, there was a social worker achievement.’

In that case, two new achievements would likely appear on the recommended achievement list.

Yeongwoo immediately opened the achievement window.

Poof!

【Your achievement tendency is “Stubborn”】

||Completed Achievements: 4

|The Caller of the Golden Rain [Legend] – First

|Forgive Your Enemies [Hero] – #46

|Excellent Social Worker [Legend] – First

|Golden Treasury [Legend] – First

His achievement tendency was still ‘Stubborn,’ and the completed achievements had increased to four.

‘Now, what’s on the recommended achievement list?’

〈Recommended Achievements〉

[Golden Flood]

|Summon the Golden Rain in five or more regions. (2/5)

[Nocturnal]

|Spend a night outside of your residence.

[Jeweller's Touch]

|Wear two rings of Hero grade or higher on the index and ring fingers each. (2/4)

[Perfect Orphan]

|Find and eliminate both parents. (1/2)

‘That damn Perfect Orphan is not going away.’

Yeongwoo shook his head while scrutinizing the newly appeared achievements.

‘Golden Flood... This seems like the next version after the Golden Horde.’

Yeongwoo’s gaze then landed on ‘Nocturnal’ right below it.

Yeongwoo’s gaze fell directly on the one just below, ‘Nocturnal.’

[Nocturnal]

|Spend a night outside of your residence.

This, too, was the kind of thing only the ‘Stubborn’ individuals would attempt.

Yeongwoo almost confirmed one thing about ‘Nocturnal.’

It suggested that obstacles equivalent to abnormal climate or something similar would appear every night.

Otherwise, why would there be an achievement simply to spend a night outside of the residence?

‘There must be a way to ignore or avoid abnormal climate.’

While Yeongwoo was contemplating achievements, the region he was staying in seemed to have changed, and the area status in the corner of his vision flashed.

‘Already near Sangju?’

Poof.

[The current region you are staying in is 'Sangju.'

[The Strongest Sword in this region is 'Dokgo Sehwan01.' 2nd generation, defense 146 times.

"Huh?"

Surprisingly, the Strongest Sword in Sangju City was 'Real.'

'If it's the 2nd generation Strongest Sword and defense is 146 times...'

The numbers held significant meaning.

Killing the inaugural Sangju Strongest Sword and, after that, 146 more murders.

That was the implication.

Who could this Strongest Sword be in this region?

Although Yeongwoo didn't know, with this level of cruelty, they would have faced battles with monsters, and there was a high probability that they had also defeated mutants.

'And probably chose the 3 million monopoly.'

Yeongwoo checked his relatively weak stats.

『Character: Jeong Yeongwoo07』

[Strength] 600 (19+581)

[Stamina] 350 (21+329)

[Durability] 550 (13+537)

[Sensibility] 100 (24+76)

In gaming terms, it was a strange build with a belief in 'item luck' and imbalanced investment.

Thanks to this, he had quite a bit of fun in Gimcheon, but the situation in Sangju might be completely different.

Because.

'The total stats of the Sangju Strongest Sword would probably exceed 3,000.'

On the other hand, Yeongwoo's total stats were only around 1600.

So, how could he defeat an opponent with stats nearly twice as high?

'Is there any other way? I can only enhance my item luck.'

Now, only one line of text remained in Yeongwoo's field of view.

「There are two unclaimed achievement rewards.」

In response, Yeongwoo looked towards the distant landscape of Sangju City and muttered quietly.

“Claim the rewards.”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

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Chapter 27

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 27: Villain's Battle (1)

As Yeongwoo approved the reward receipt, a dazzling golden light flashed before his eyes.

Paat!

Next, just like the previous reward receipt, a list of obtainable items appeared.

However, the status of the options for these items was unusual.

'What... is this?'

Regardless of whether the item's performance was good or bad, it was a tricky type that made it difficult to predict the effects.

「Golden Punishment」 – Legendary Bracelet

【Inflicts pain on enemies.】

【Accumulated Golden Ratio: 2】

*Special reward for ‘Golden Horde.’

「Pumpkin-Colored Whistle」 – Legendary Necklace

【Summons a friend.】

|Yeongtae.

*Special reward for ‘Excellent Social Worker.’

One inflicts pain on enemies, and the other summons a friend.

‘Since they are legendary items, the options must be impressive.’

Around this point, Yeongwoo couldn’t help but be confused.

Still, during the Golden Flash, he could somewhat deduce what the effects might be.

However, these two items had no displayed values, and their effects were exceptional.

It was difficult to pass judgment without trying them out.

‘I can understand what it feels like to inflict pain, but what does it mean to summon a friend?’

Yeongwoo’s gaze fell on the ‘Pumpkin-Colored Whistle.’

「Pumpkin-Colored Whistle」 - Legendary Necklace

【Summons a friend.】

|Yeongtae.

The name “Yeongtae” written at the bottom of the tooltip was probably Hong Yeongtae, the mutant Yeongwoo fought in Gimcheon.

‘Does it mean calling him to fight together?’

When Yeongwoo withdrew his gaze from the tooltip, the approval process was completed, and the newly acquired items filled his arms and neck.

Saaat!

With a chilly sensation, the golden bracelet wrapped around his wrist, and then a whistle connected by a thin string hung around his neck.

‘Really... a real whistle.’

A whistle that could call Yeongtae.

It seemed like only the person he summoned during the return could be called.

‘Then, if you have many friends, can you call several people?’

Yeongwoo stopped running for a moment, thinking about this.

Then, carefully, he brought the whistle to his mouth.

“...”

Suddenly, a whistle.

Yeongwoo let out a forced laugh and exhaled deeply.

Then.

Biririririk!

The distinctive sound of the whistle burst out forcefully, momentarily lowering the saturation of the surrounding scenery.

「Friend, Yeongtae has received your call and is summoned.」

“Crazy, it’s real.”

As Yeongwoo stared at the message in front of him with his mouth agape, a white crack appeared about ten meters above his head.

Crack!

Soon, Hong Yeongtae broke the crack and leaped down.

「Yaaah!..」

His momentum was still strong.

His jaw, which had been smashed by Yeongwoo, was now intact, as if nothing had happened.

Kwaaaaah!

Finally, Hong Yeongtae landed in front of Yeongwoo, shattering the asphalt with both feet.

“...!”

In response, Yeongwoo took a step back in surprise.

The thought that he might end up fighting with him again occurred belatedly as the first reason.

The second reason was the name tag attached to his head.

[Jeong Yeon Woo 07 Friend-Hong Yeongtae]

It was completely different from when he was a mutant.

“What happened? You are that Hong Yeongtae I fought back then... is that right?”

As Yeongwoo asked, the guy looked at his own head and then made a nonchalant expression.

「Yeah. How much time has passed since then?..」

Hong Yeongtae immediately asked about the time, disregarding everything else.

A common trait among mutants, whether in the past or now.

“Not much time has passed. It hasn’t even been an hour.”

When Yeongwoo answered like this, the guy widened his eyes and spoke fearfully.

「What...? Only that much time has passed? I thought it would have been at least a few months..」

“Were you waiting blindly in the dark again this time?”

「No. I was lying quietly in the room and came when you called. So, I’ve been waiting for you to call..」

“A room?”

In response to the unexpected answer, Yeongwoo looked at Hong Yeongtae’s eyes.

However, in the eyes of Yeongtae, who had lived in a place with no concept of time, there were no traces of falsehood.

「They give a room to each returning person. But now, there's only one real room. Can't go out, nothing to do. Just sitting quietly. It's better than waiting in the dark, but it's still like a living hell.」

After saying this, he glanced at the sky, then looked at Yeongwoo again.

「But the voice was like that. If you help and accomplish something, life in the room will gradually improve.」

“...”

Yeongwoo couldn't speak for a moment.

He couldn't even organize what he had just heard.

“So, right now, there's a separate world where returning people are isolated, and if you want to live well there, you have to help me. Is that what you're saying?”

At this, Hong Yeongtae, who had been silently listening to Yeongwoo's words, shook his long jaw up and down.

「That's right. So what should I do now?..」

The guy seemed only interested in establishing a record and returning.

Indeed, if the words just now were all true, Hong Yeongtae's 'remaining years' depended on how much credit he could earn through Yeongwoo.

However, unfortunately,

“Sorry, but there's nothing for you to do right now.”

「...What? So, should I just go back? You don't understand. If I go back, there's really nothing? There....」

Hong Yeongtae, who spat out words like a complaint, suddenly stopped and showed a terrified expression.

“Well, what's going on?”

「It's time... I feel it..」

Upon this, Yeongwoo looked at Hong Yeongtae's name tag.

"Oh."

Why did he realize it now?

Since some time ago, his name tag had been gradually disappearing from the top.

It was like the sand in the upper part of an hourglass diminishing.

'So, I can't summon him unlimitedly.'

「Please call me again. I beg you..」

The melted Hong Yeongtae disappeared into the air with flattened ears.

Suaat.

For some reason, it was an uncomfortable ending.

'So, is he now trapped in a room, endlessly waiting for a call again?'

Yeongwoo thought about blowing the whistle again but stopped.

There was no need to call right away since there was no opponent to fight, and it would only lead to unnecessary disappointment.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

It might be better for mental health to wait for the right time and then establish credit at once and return.

'If I can establish credit, that is.'

Yeongwoo tried to imagine fighting with Hong Yeongtae against the Sangju's Strongest Sword, but the image didn't come out well.

[The current stay area is 'Sangju.'

[The Sangju's Strongest Sword is 'Dokgo Sehwan01.' 2nd generation, defense 147 times.

While Yeongwoo was climbing up the road between the mountains, Dokgo Sehwan01 added one more defense count.

‘Crazy guy. He killed someone again...?’

As Yeongwoo thought about it, he suddenly realized.

‘No. That’s the defense count. If it’s a one-sided attack and killing, wouldn’t it be counted separately?’

In fact, most of the killings Yeongwoo had done so far were mostly in self-defense, so he didn’t know exactly how the defense count of Strongest Sword was calculated.

He just thought that if he killed someone, it would go up.

But even if it only reflected the number of times he killed in retaliation, it wasn’t clearly explained.

‘With such a high defense count, there are still people challenging him? That’s strange in itself.’

Anyway, it was certain that the situation in Gimcheon and Sangju was completely different.

Even though he could see a farmhouse on the other side, there was no red light pillar, let alone a blue one.

Clearing mutants and monsters.

This was a first in such a situation.

Blame.

Yeongwoo covered his left chest to hide the title and then moved along the road leading to the farmhouse.

Unlike Gimcheon, where corpses were plentiful on the outskirts of the city, Sangju was relatively clean.

Sometimes there were bodies lying in the middle of a field or a paddock, but their numbers weren’t large. Instead...

‘Huh?’

Already, something in the distance came into view.

About two hundred meters ahead, people were gathered in front of a building that looked like a warehouse.

‘What, there are people in a place like this? Usually, they gather in the city.’

As Yeongwoo walked towards the building, those on the other side also noticed his presence and reacted.

Some who were crouching in place stood up, and others walked towards Yeongwoo as if welcoming him.

Shuffling, shuffling.

The distance between the two sides gradually decreased.

Soon, Yeongwoo could clearly see the other side.

‘Old people.’

The opponent was a white-haired elderly man, around six of them.

Black skin with deep-set wrinkles, but they didn’t look fierce or anything.

They were just ordinary elderly people you could find near a farmhouse, each holding a knife, shield, or spear.

‘These are common things in this world.’

Yeongwoo silently watched as the elderly people subtly set up a surrounding net.

And the red stains on the blades they held were all vividly colored.

They must have killed quite a few people so far.

Shuffling, shuffling.

Yeongwoo nonchalantly walked straight into the midst of the opponents and asked.

“It’s my first visit to Sangju, so could you tell me what happened here?”

In response, an elderly man on the opposite side pointed Yeongwoo’s early bird with the blade of his axe and said.

“Why is someone like you asking about that?”

“No. I really don’t know. Even though you know what I have, why are you risking your life?”

"If you find it pitiful that old men are risking their lives, just give us some money. I'll send you away if you do. Just pay."

"Put down that sword too."

The two elderly men behind were the ones who spat out what Yeongwoo was saying.

They were responsible for Yeongwoo's back.

You are already surrounded, indicating that you should know it politely.

"Hmm."

Yeongwoo felt puzzled when he saw that the elderly people didn't pay attention to the Golden Flash.

Perhaps it was because they were too old.

Maybe they lacked the common sense to be on guard when they saw someone with a unique appearance.

'Maybe they think that I just picked up some strangely shaped gloves somewhere.'

Before attacking the elderly, Yeongwoo threw one last question.

"Then, where can I meet the Strongest Sword?"

"...What?"

Perhaps it was too absurd a question; some of the elderly burst into laughter.

"A complete lunatic."

"Strongest Sword? You can meet him if you go to the city."

"City? Which way is it?"

The last question was from Yeongwoo.

Simultaneously asking the question, Yeongwoo tapped his backpack, making a jingling sound of coins.

The elderly people couldn't ignore this sound that lit up their eyes.

"City? Just keep going up along the main road. But in my opinion, you probably won't make it."

One of the elderly men chuckled and pointed to a road leading to the city.

Confirming this, Yeongwoo put the whistle in his mouth.

He was thinking of leaving the task of dealing with “small fry” to Yeongtae to establish some achievements.

He was curious about what would happen.

Swiftly, the elderly who witnessed this also thought that Youngwoo might have some mental disability.

A young guy wandering around barefoot with a conch shell didn't seem normal at all.

However, in the end, Youngwoo couldn't blow the conch shell.

「Today's friend summoning is left with 1 attempt. Do you want to continue?」

The message appeared when he tried to blow into the conch shell.

‘No, if something like this exists, it should have been mentioned earlier.’

Fortunately in his misfortune, Yeongtae wouldn't know about this incident.

He had wasted one of his only two chances in a day.

‘Can't help it. Let's wrap this up quickly and head towards the city hall.’

The shadows of the elderly were already closing in on Youngwoo.

In response, he immediately threw an early-bird at the elderly in front.

Squeak!

The silver-colored blade flew like an arrow and accurately pierced the forehead of the old man.

Soon after, it returned to its original position as Youngwoo summoned it.

Whizz!

“What?”

“Uh...!”

“What's going on with this guy?”

Even the elderly who were not familiar with the game were impressed by Youngwoo's semi-swordsmanship.

Youngwoo, after retrieving the sword, faced their immediate collective attack with all his might.

Swish!

However, the opponent was the 2nd-ranked unified Strongest Sword.

Youngwoo easily nullified the attack by emitting the momentum of Strongest Sword, then swiftly swung the sword like a flash, beheading the elderly.

Squelch!

Due to the higher strength on this side and lower durability on the other side, Youngwoo felt a sensation like squeezing tofu.

Thud, thud.

The elderly bodies rolled on the ground out of sync.

“...”

Youngwoo searched the decapitated bodies for the remaining karma, then walked towards the road leading to the city hall.

He wondered what kind of place Sangju City was.

He had a feeling that he would see a lot in the future.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

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Chapter 28

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Chapter 28: Villain's Battle (2)

6,000.

The karma that Yeongwoo took from the elderly gang of thieves in Sangju City was only worth 6,000.

There were six elderly people, each with a crimson-colored coin.

‘This is just enough money to survive for tonight.’

No, to be precise, it was only enough money to pay the taxes that would be collected tonight.

When night fell, abnormal weather would come, and to avoid it, one had to use lodging services or find a charitable person willing to open their room for free.

Without securing money to pay taxes, survival was uncertain in reality.

‘Then those elderly people earlier were probably robbing to earn money for lodging fees.’

There was a slightly guilty feeling, but what could be done?

This was now the daily life of humanity.

Unless someone distributed commemorative coins every day, there was an inevitable shortage of money.

And if there was a shortage of money, there was a high probability of dying that day.

‘I wonder if every Strongest Sword in the country is experiencing a miracle of scattering golden coins... Well, anyway, it’s probably unavoidable that people die every day.’

Yeongwoo had seen corpses appearing on the streets again.

However, unlike Gimcheon City, it seemed he hadn’t fallen victim to monsters.

‘There are no signs of being eaten. Someone killed these people.’

From the messy dismembered parts and the remaining swords, it didn’t seem like the work of a skilled individual.

It was probably a skirmish between people of similar skill levels or a group of robbers like the elderly ones he had seen earlier passing through.

‘Is this the situation in all cities nationwide? Have they either completely collapsed or become lawless territories?’

While Yeongwoo paused for a moment to inspect the corpses, something rustled in the corner of his vision.

“...?”

Yeongwoo, who wouldn't miss it, turned his head immediately, and the subject of the problem jumped in the opposite direction, startled.

The other person was a man in his forties, carrying an excessively large number of bags.

At least ten, it seemed.

‘What is that?’

Due to the unique silhouette created by the bags he held in both hands, Yeongwoo couldn't help but follow the man.

They were going in the same direction anyway.

“Hey!”

Yeongwoo called out with the softest voice possible as he followed the man.

Naturally, the distance between the two sides shortened rapidly, and the man turned around in alarm.

“Well, what is it?”

The man was in a very frightened state.

The tip of the blade he wielded unskilfully trembled, evidence of his fear.

“Well, I followed you because I saw you suddenly running away.”

Yeongwoo raised both arms to indicate that he had no intention of attacking.

Although a shield was attached to his left arm, the early bird and dagger were neatly tucked into their sheaths.

“...”

However, the man's fear seemed undiminished.

He couldn't take his eyes off the early bird at Yeongwoo's waist.

‘What kind of things were the owners of these early birds doing in this neighborhood?’

As Yeongwoo looked in the direction of the man’s gaze, wondering, something finally clicked in the man’s mind.

“Uh, do you need a bag? If you need one, I’ll give it to you, so please don’t harm me.”

“Huh?”

The man thought that Yeongwoo was a robber.

“I don’t intend to harm you, but why do you carry so many bags around?”

When Yeongwoo pointed to the bags with the tip of his shield, the man flinched and took a step back.

“I-it’s for sale.”

“For sale? But earlier, you said you’d give it to me if I needed it.”

“...Well, it’s better than dying.”

The man glanced at Yeongwoo again.

“So, sir, are you currently in the business of selling bags?”

“Yes, well... You could say that.”

However, customers were limited to those weaker or at a similar combat level.

If he encountered a strong person who seemed unwilling to engage in a normal transaction, he would either run away or willingly throw the bag to save his life...

‘It’s a very unstable business.’

With the government and laws gone, safe transactions were not guaranteed, so it was only natural.

‘Actually, this person is somewhat unique. Instead of resorting to robbery, he decided to make a living by trading.’

Of course, it was unclear whether he had no intention to rob or lacked the ability to do so.

Anyway, this person had decided to earn money in a positive way, and he had chosen a good business.

‘Since the bags haven’t become stones, he could still obtain goods even without a foundation.’

He probably searched abandoned houses or corpses on the roadside to acquire items.

“So, is everyone in Sangju City living like this? Either robbing or doing business like you?”

“No. In fact, most people who were doing business like me are dead...”

The man’s statement went far beyond Yeongwoo’s expectations.

“Most... sell their bodies.”

“What did you say?”

As Yeongwoo furrowed his brow, the man made a terrified expression and tightly shut his mouth.

“No, go on. What are you talking about?”

“That’s what I said. Since there’s nothing else to sell, they sell their bodies. It’s a kind of slavery.”

In reality, it was followed by a whisper about selling their bodies.

“It’s unbelievable.”

This time, Yeongwoo showed a horrified expression.

“It’s the second day since the reset. Are you saying people are being bought and sold in exchange for karma?”

“As a reward to keep them from dying rather than in exchange for karma. Because if you have no money, you’ll really die.”

The man made a bitter expression and continued.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

“It’s not all like that, but anyway, it’s like that in the city. Since that place has the most resources, people with money gather there. People who want to live even if they become slaves are also there.”

“ ... ”

Yeongwoo couldn't help but be shocked.

This phenomenon was different from fighting against goblins with a height of 2 meters and entangled in the back.

Of course, there were similar incidents in Gumi, where the golden rain fell.

People who had become poor again by robbing commemorative coins spread their businesses in places like marts and convenience stores.

'Back then, there were people who sold their labor, saying they would carry the baggage if you gave them.'

But what if you couldn't earn money by considering yourself a baggage carrier?

Would you end up choosing to be a slave?

'Damn, is it really worth living like that? I'd rather...'

As Yeongwoo's thoughts reached this point, he recalled the elderly people he had seen on the outskirts of Sangju City.

'If they don't choose to commit suicide, they have no choice but to harm others.'

Even those who buy slaves cannot be harmed.

The fact that they can spend money is evidence of 'strength' in itself.

"Most of the people buying slaves probably succeeded in monster hunting, right?"

"That's right. Probably."

"Then there were probably people who didn't agree to such things, like human trafficking."

"There were, but they're all dead."

"...?"

"The one who started buying people with karma was the Strongest Sword of Sangju City."

"Ah."

Yeongwoo unknowingly shifted his gaze to the regional status.

[The current residence is 'Sangju.'

[The Strongest Sword in this area is 'Dokgo Sehwan 01.' 2nd generation, defense 147 times.

From the first glance, I expected him to be no ordinary madman, but leading human trafficking, that's beyond belief.

"I heard rumors that he also controls monster hunting. Probably to prevent money from flowing freely in Sangju City."

"Then, the mutants should be the same, right?"

"Mutants? Whether they control them or not, unless it's at the level of Strongest Sword, they can't catch them, can they?"

The man laughed as if he were making absurd remarks while looking at Yeongwoo.

In response, Yeongwoo looked at the road leading north and asked.

"By the way, sir, you seem to know the situation in this area very well."

"Yes, I've lived here all my life, and... I've heard a lot from customers."

Most of them had lived inside the city and fled for various reasons, the man added.

"Then, let me ask one last thing."

"Yes, go ahead."

"Uh... Where can I meet those who engage in human trafficking?"

"Are you talking about those who live there, or..."

"Those who live there."

"If you consider it as a trading area, you can think of it as near the city hall."

Trading area.

Hearing this phrase felt peculiar.

Earlier, the elderly people who were killed had told him to go to the city hall to meet the Strongest Sword, so it was a cross-verification.

“Thank you for your time. I’ll have to go to the city hall.”

“Why do you... Wouldn’t it be better to go to another city?”

“What about you, sir?”

“Yes?”

“Shouldn’t you have moved to another city? You never know when you’ll die if you stay here.”

After Yeongwoo’s words, the man made a momentarily blank expression, then asked.

“Isn’t it the same anywhere else? At least here, I know the geography well...”

“Anywhere would be better than here.”

After saying this, Yeongwoo turned to the road leading to the city hall, but he looked back at the man.

“Do you know that the person who killed the mutants can distribute money to everyone?”

“What...?”

At the sudden line, the man made a puzzled face but soon nodded.

“Ah, yes. I know.”

This also meant that even if the one who killed the mutants chose to absorb 3 million karma, a notification message would be displayed.

“I’m going to kill mutants today. If I succeed, I’ll distribute karma to everyone.”

“Excuse me, but mutants...”

The man tried to repeat what he said earlier.

It meant that unless one is at the level of Strongest Sword, it’s impossible to challenge mutants.

So, Yeongwoo...

Blam!

Before the man could finish his sentence, Yeongwoo revealed his title.

『Gumi's Strongest Sword』

“G... Gumi's... Strongest Sword?”

The man, who had been reading Yeongwoo's title with narrowed eyes, shivered as he reached the end.

“Are you saying you're the Gumi's Strongest Sword?”

Only now did the man's eyes meet Yeongwoo's peculiar appearance.

Golden gloves and bracelets, an inexplicable pendant, and bare feet.

Initially, the man thought he might be a skilled outsider just by looking at the early bird.

But now, there were many more hints.

“Why did you come here?”

Unconsciously, the man lowered his body.

At the very least, he should bow.

Given the existence of the Strongest Sword in this city, it wasn't an odd reaction.

“I came to kill mutants and achieve accomplishments... but it seems that's not the only thing I should do here.”

Saying this, Yeongwoo glanced at the regional status once again.

Upon seeing this, the man also looked at the corner of his vision following Yeongwoo.

Strongest Sword of Sangju City, defense 147 times.

“It's impossible to capture mutants peacefully. You have to fight with that person.”

“Well, it's good. I needed to collect the Strongest Sword title anyway, and I'm even more grateful when the opponent is a villain.”

With these words, Yeongwoo placed his foot on the road.

“If I win, the golden rain will come. Then commemorative coins will fall, so take them and leave.”

“What if it doesn't rain?”

“Then I must be dead. Go somewhere else. Personally, I recommend Gumi.”

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Chapter 29

[Translator – Night]

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Chapter 29: Villain's Battle (3)

After parting ways with Bag Merchant, Yeongwoo sped along the road faster than before.

He wanted to quickly confirm whether human trafficking was really taking place in this city.

Thud!

Passing several farms, rice fields, and barns, the surrounding scenery gradually transformed into a more urban environment.

A gas station appeared, followed by buildings covered in glass and a convenience store revealing itself.

At this point, Yeongwoo felt a tremendous sense of discomfort.

Ever since the convenience store appeared, people could be seen again, and they all raised their hands when they saw Yeongwoo, as if gesturing to call a taxi.

Moreover, they were all standing by the roadside as if there were some kind of rule.

‘What’s going on?’

Just from the ‘people raising their hands’ in his immediate line of sight, there were a whopping seven people.

Yeongwoo stopped in front of a man closest to him.

Before Yeongwoo could say anything, the man spoke first.

“Are you looking for someone?”

“Yes.”

“Well then, let me introduce myself first. I am Kim Taehong. Level 1, Karma 2,000. I can take care of seats, carrying luggage, collecting items... I can do anything within my abilities.”

This man, Kim Taehong, pronounced his lines cleanly without a single mistake.

“Level 1... Does that mean you serve me all day long?”

“Yes. That’s right. If you permit overnight stay, I won’t mind at all.”

The overnight stay referred to nighttime accommodations.

In other words, if the employer wanted to use the room they rented alone, it meant the servant would find his own place to stay.

‘It’s much more autonomous than I imagined.’

Yeongwoo grinned.

This seemed more like a personal business than human trafficking.

Of course, in terms of selling one’s labor, it could be expressed as ‘selling oneself.’

While Yeongwoo was examining the sturdy man in front of him, the man unexpectedly uttered an unexpected line.

“I... I have one condition, though.”

“What is it?”

“As I mentioned earlier, I appreciate the offer for an overnight stay, but I won’t sleep, and I won’t go near the male dormitory.”

“What?”

Yeongwoo was surprised, then realized the man had taken a step back.

‘Oh, did he find it strange that I was examining his body?’

While overnight stay was allowed, the refusal to sleep meant something else.

He would earn 2,000 Karma using his body, but that didn't mean he would sell his body in a sexual way.

"So, what about not going near the male dormitory?"

Yeongwoo asked immediately.

"No, I'm not interested in sleeping or anything like that. What about the male dormitory? Is there something there?"

"...?"

This time, the man seemed surprised.

"Aren't you from this area? There's a city hall in the male dormitory."

"Oh, City Hall."

Yeongwoo understood immediately.

City Hall, the main residence of the Strongest Sword and the place where human trafficking was said to be active.

Therefore, for this man who engaged in conservative transactions, City Hall must be a dangerous area.

"Why don't you go to City Hall then?"

"Because it becomes dangerous for both of us there."

Even if he was a strong individual who could be bought for money, it meant safety couldn't be guaranteed at City Hall.

At this point, Yeongwoo became more curious about what was happening at City Hall.

"Are you going to the male dormitory by any chance?"

As the man asked this, Yeongwoo just nodded without saying a word.

The expressions of other 'job seekers' who had subtly approached for their turn immediately stiffened at Yeongwoo's words.

"...It seems like everyone here avoids going near City Hall."

The man scratched his forehead and spoke.

"If you're in your right mind, you generally do."

"Then, let me ask one more thing."

"Yes, go ahead."

"Is the payment in advance or post-payment? In reality, if the other party decides not to pay, it's entirely possible."

"Yes, that's right. So, it practically depends on the conscience of the one paying."

"It's truly unbelievable."

"Well, the world has become like this. We're just doing this because there's no other way for now."

The man let out a bitter laugh.

Seeing this, Yeongwoo, for a moment, had the thought of taking out a coin from his backpack to give.

Sympathy and gratitude for the information.

However, that thought didn't translate into action.

The feeling of regret for parting ways with someone he would probably never see again, but did it matter?

After nodding in acknowledgment to the man and the nearby people, Yeongwoo continued on the road leading to the male dormitory.

At that moment, he thought that they would probably find it difficult to survive until tomorrow.

Even someone like himself, the Strongest sword, was after coins desperately.

Why would someone willingly give compensation to someone weaker than them?

This was the moment when he understood what concrete issues 'lawlessness' could cause.

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After parting ways with the man and continuing on the road, Yeongwoo soon encountered another group of people.

This time, the gender and age were diverse, and as soon as Yeongwoo entered their sight, they all raised their hands, just like before.

However, the types and nature of the services they offered were slightly different.

Some were peddlers selling petrified items, and some specialized only in 'item collection,' one of the services offered by the man he had met earlier.

If you told them the item you wanted and the meeting place, they would scour the entire city to find it.

Of course, there was no guarantee that they would come back alive even if they found the item.

'In the worst case, they might find the item and then the trading partner pulls out a knife,' Yeongwoo thought.

Nevertheless, the lineup of job seekers continued.

Yeongwoo encountered another group until he faced a sign that read 'Male Dormitory.'

「2km to the Male Dormitory.」

"We're almost there."

Yeongwoo looked at the sign and then glanced back.

The lineup of job seekers that seemed endless just a while ago was now nowhere to be seen.

It seemed that everyone was reluctant to stay near the male dormitory.

'Why are they so afraid? If it continues like this, the city won't be sustainable.'

If it continued this way, it wouldn't be long before job seekers from the outskirts of the city couldn't pay taxes, leading to their deaths or migration to other cities.

The population would decline.

However, considering the structure of this world where the only resource was supplied through hunting monsters and mutants, the survival of the strong wouldn't be a significant problem, whether the population decreased or not.

The road continued until Yeongwoo faced what seemed to be the urban area near the male dormitory.

Then, for the first time, he could see the traces of last night's battle – destroyed stone walls, scattered corpses, and dried bloodstains everywhere.

The difference from Gimcheon City was that the number of corpses in Sangju City was significantly lower.

Even though those who went monster hunting didn't necessarily strive to minimize civilian casualties, the strong individuals in Sangju City were much more capable than those in Gimcheon City.

'Hmm.'

As Yeongwoo ventured a bit further inside, even the few remaining corpses disappeared, and a relatively clean landscape unfolded.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

It was at this moment that Yeongwoo heard that sound for the first time.

"Beep!"

It was the sound of a car horn coming from the direction of Yeongwoo's back.

When he turned around, a white foreign car was making an angry noise with the engine running.

'A car...? Riding in a car?'

Yeongwoo instinctively thought that the person inside must be the Strongest Sword of Sangju City.

Reset Day 2.

At this point, when mutants appeared only one per region, who would dare to indulge in the luxury of purchasing a car?

'Unless it's someone who monopolized 3 million Karma.'

As Yeongwoo was about to draw his Early Bird from his waist, a second honk echoed from the white car.

"Beep!"

Then, the driver's side window opened, and a woman inside stuck her head out.

“What’s the matter? Can’t you clear the way? Should I just hit and run?”

A sharp voice matched the sleek design of her sunglasses.

Not pebbles but real sunglasses. It was a luxury item that could be considered even more extravagant than a car.

What the hell, this bitch?’

As Yeongwoo, shocked by the fresh attire, stared at her, the woman opened the driver’s side door with a bang.

“Can’t you understand a word? Should I just hit and run?”

With a clacking sound, her high heels, which had been covering her feet, met the road.

And at that moment, Yeongwoo noticed it too late.

The fact that the person he was facing right now wasn’t the Strongest Sword.

‘She’s wearing shoes, and she’s not carrying a weapon.’

Crucially, even when she saw that the person in front of her was barefoot, she didn’t show any signs.

This means that she does not know that there may be cases where one ‘cannot’ wear shoes.

In other words, the woman had never encountered someone with abilities at the level of a transcendent.

So, it made no sense for her to be indulging in such luxury.

“...?”

Looking at the woman without a sword and not carrying a small knife on her hip, Yeongwoo asked,

“What’s your relationship with the Strongest Sword? Family? Or is he your lover?”

“What?”

Momentarily perplexed, the woman’s face showed confusion.

Then, she quickly regained her arrogant expression and asked,

“Hey, where are you from? Seems like you don’t have basic manners.”

Even after seeing the Early Bird hanging from Yeongwoo’s waist, she didn’t show any signs of backing down.

And the reason was evident in the back seat of the white car.

Clank, clank.

This time, the back door of the white vehicle opened successively, and Yeongwoo shifted his gaze in that direction.

There, two sturdy men, each holding an Early Bird, got out.

‘Bodyguards, huh.’

The corner where the woman placed her trust wasn’t just the glow of the Strongest Sword.

However, when the two swordsmen finally saw Yeongwoo, they only made a bewildered expression and didn’t immediately engage in a display of skills.

It was immediately recognized.

The opponent wasn’t an ordinary person.

They seemed to have little understanding of the significance of being barefoot, but seeing the golden glint in Yeongwoo’s hands, they seemed to understand that it wasn’t an ordinary item.

“...What are you doing?”

As the two men hesitated, the woman’s displeasure was evident.

One of the bodyguards cautiously spoke up.

“He seems to be an outsider and might not know... Let’s just let it go peacefully. There’s no need to shed blood over this...”

“What?”

Unexpectedly, the woman erupted in anger and pointed at Yeongwoo.

“Can’t you get rid of this guy quickly? If you can’t handle this, you might as well go back and get beaten up.”

Silently, the threat from the woman surprisingly had an effect.

The two bodyguards reluctantly glanced at Yeongwoo, as if indicating that he should comply.

Yeongwoo, drawing his Early Bird slowly, spoke.

“Is this woman really that intimidating? Or are you afraid of the Strongest Sword?”

In response, the bodyguards assumed a combat stance and uttered their lines.

“We apologize. Our only means of survival is this.”

“No emotions here.”

The apology and the claim of having no emotions seemed genuine.

Taking this into consideration, Yeongwoo delivered his final warning sincerely.

“Lower your weapons and leave this area. I won’t pursue you then. Don’t unnecessarily invite trouble.”

However, since he concealed his title, it was perceived as a provocation from the other side.

“Ha. What?”

“This guy just made me feel something I haven’t felt before.”

Finally, the bodyguards adjusted their Early Birds threateningly, and Yeongwoo matched it by filling his pupils with golden light.

“Beep!”

A moment later, a golden wave emanated from Yeongwoo.

“...!”

At that moment, both bodyguards and even the woman could clearly understand whom they had encountered.

[Translator – Night]

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Chapter 30

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Chapter 30: Villain's Battle (4)

“Huh...?”

At the moment the woman saw Yeongwoo's golden eyes and made an expression of disbelief, a dagger swept through the air like a shooting star.

Swish!

The sound of tearing fabric filled the air as a security guard fell backward, slamming his head onto the ground.

Thud!

As the events unfolded in the blink of an eye, when the woman and the other security guards turned their heads, they saw only the lifeless body with a dagger embedded in its forehead.

Nearly half of the forces were already eliminated.

“Wow.”

“This... damn it.”

However, there was no time to be surprised.

Soon, the dagger, which had been lodged in the corpse, pulled itself out and returned to its original position.

Shiiiiing!

The two individuals followed the unbelievable trajectory of the dagger, realizing that the outsider at the center of the issue had not moved a single step.

“Wh-who are you, anyway?”

The remaining security guard, pressed under the dominance of the Strongest Sword, asked while struggling.

At this moment, he recalled the phrase the outsider had uttered earlier: “Die a dog’s death.”

It was not just boasting or provocation.

Moreover, the outsider didn’t even need to test his skills against him.

On the other hand, the woman twisted her body, taunting him with a sarcastic remark.

“Causing a ruckus in someone else’s neighborhood? And you think you’ll get away with it?”

Although the dialogue was overly formal, it strangely pleased Yeongwoo.

‘Is this woman going to take me to the Strongest Sword for my revenge?’

Observing the woman, the security guards, and the white sedan, Yeongwoo approached her and asked a few steps away.

“Who are you?”

“What?”

“Who are you to guarantee my safety? Is the Strongest Sword coming to save you? Why?”

Upon Yeongwoo’s inquiry, the woman’s eyebrows wrinkled in a slightly annoyed manner.

“I am...!”

However, the woman’s explanation did not continue smoothly.

“...”

From Yeongwoo’s perspective, he heard enough.

He spoke after her last sentence.

“Unless you’re a lover, it’s probably the mistress. But if it’s just that, it’s too exciting, isn’t it?”

After saying this, Yeongwoo quickly pierced the forehead of the remaining security guard.

Swish!

Due to his heightened strength and senses, the skull of an ordinary person felt like a lump of tofu to Yeongwoo.

Thud.

As Yeongwoo withdrew the blade he had extended, the unconscious body of the security guard convulsed as if being sucked into the shadows.

Kwoong.

Listening to this sound, Yeongwoo, slightly bending his waist, checked if there was anyone else in the vehicle to inspect further.

Meanwhile, all these scenes made the woman perceive Yeongwoo as a psychopathic murderer.

“What... What the hell are you doing to me? Why are you doing this to me?”

“I haven’t done anything to you yet. Besides, you sent those bastards first, swearing at me.”

After confirming that the inside of the car was empty, Yeongwoo pointed the blade at the driver’s seat.

“Drive. Let’s go to your lover.”

“What?”

While the woman wore a face questioning what nonsense he was talking about, Yeongwoo looted the early birds and pockets of the security guards.

“Do these guys get paid by the Strongest Sword? Why carry so much cash like this?”

“...Cash?”

“This.”

Yeongwoo thrust a handful of coins toward the woman, whose face seemed expressionless to anyone.

28,000 Karma.

“I don’t know. You should ask them yourself when you meet them.”

Swaying, the woman headed towards the driver’s seat.

Clearly, she intended to take the outsider to the Strongest Sword.

In response, Yeongwoo climbed into the passenger seat before the woman could attempt to run away with the car.

“ ... ”

Although the woman’s expression soured at once, Yeongwoo paid no mind and pointed outside the window with his finger.

“Now, where are we going? To the City Hall?”

“Not the City Hall. We’re going to a motel nearby.”

“A motel?”

Yeongwoo didn’t have many good memories associated with motels.

His expression turned grim, causing the woman to sigh deeply.

“He stays there. There’s nothing much to do at this time.”

Soon after, the woman started the car and smoothly drove across the road, cutting through the streets.

* * *

It wasn’t long after the car started moving again that Yeongwoo, gazing out the window, suddenly asked the woman.

“You didn’t answer earlier. What’s the relationship with the Strongest Sword?”

In a much calmer and dry voice than before, the woman replied.

“You’re really persistent. How does it change anything if you know?”

“I heard something on my way here. If it’s true, then...”

Even someone like Yeongwoo, who made a habit of questioning people with a knife to their throat, couldn’t bring himself to say the next line directly.

Did she sell herself to the Strongest Sword?

However, the woman’s response shattered Yeongwoo’s underlying assumption.

“What’s the relationship? If I have to say, we’re married.”

“...What?”

“That’s right.”

“You’re the wife of the Strongest Sword?”

“That’s correct.”

The woman casually made a left turn while wearing sunglasses.

They were getting closer to their destination.

“What did you hear on your way here? People selling their bodies or something?”

“...Something similar.”

“It’s not entirely untrue. But what does it matter to you? It’s not illegal anymore. Why is that important to you?”

As the conversation flowed this way, Yeongwoo found himself with no words to refute.

But aside from that, there was a lingering question.

“I heard that the Strongest Sword was the first to start human trafficking. So, isn’t that important to you at least?”

“...”

Finally, the woman sealed her lips, but the silence didn’t last long.

“Naturally, it’s regrettable, but on the other hand, I understand. It’s already a ruined world. Unlike others, we should be grateful just to have strength and money.”

She then added a bitter remark.

“But this kind of life won’t last long. Even if you manage to get through today well... someday, somehow, we’ll die.”

So, she said she was making the most of what she could enjoy, explaining that the Strongest Sword couple considered the world already doomed and were burning through the remaining days of their lives.

“But you’re also a Strongest Sword.”

“So?”

“Why roam around? You could have lived like a king where you originally were.”

“I don’t want to die.”

“...What?”

“I don’t plan to sit still and wait for the day to die like you guys.”

“Is that what your heart desires?”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

After this conversation, the woman pointed ahead with the hand holding the steering wheel.

“Here.”

The building she pointed to had a shabby sign.

「Motel Honeymoon」

While Yeongwoo read the sign, the woman had already gotten out of the car and was walking towards the entrance of the motel.

Soon, the entrance door of the building swung open wide, and a sturdy man came out to greet them.

Swish.

The man’s waist promptly bent down.

‘Truly the Strongest Sword’s wife.’

Considering the preceding conversation, there was no doubt about it.

Watching the woman and the man talk, Yeongwoo got out of the car.

“Is that him?”

The man, who had been talking to the woman, moved towards the motel counter upon seeing Yeongwoo approaching.

Since the axe was still in its sheath on the man’s waist, Yeongwoo also didn’t draw his weapon and asked the woman.

“Who is he? That man.”

“Well, you could say he’s the target.”

“...?”

Clack clack.

Without further explanation, the woman did not speak and moved towards the motel.

Due to the unexpected turn of events compared to his imagination, Yeongwoo felt as if his sense of reality was slipping away.

If that man is the target, it means that the Strongest Sword is with other women here.

‘But what about his wife at home?’

If they were allowing each other to engage in such affairs, there couldn’t be a more chaotic situation.

“What room number?”

“303.”

If it’s Room 303, it must be on the third floor.

With an annoyed expression, the woman started climbing the stairs.

The narrow staircase seemed to have been taken straight from the riverside motel in Gumi where Yeongwoo stayed.

Feeling a sense of discomfort, Yeongwoo followed the woman upstairs.

“...”

From around the second floor, an utterly foul odor, literally shitty, began to seep through his nose and tangle with the hair on his nostrils.

It was the stench of semen.

“What the hell, damn it.”

Unable to endure, Yeongwoo muttered, and the woman, glancing back, sighed with self-pity.

“What is it? It’s the end of the century.”

As they approached the third floor of the motel.

“Hey! Sehwan!”

An unexpectedly thunderous voice erupted from the woman's throat.

“Strongest Sword came from the neighboring town to kill you!”

In response, Yeongwoo pushed the woman aside and continued up the stairs.

Then, from the inside of a long corridor to the right, a blurry silhouette emerged.

‘Is he the one?’

Yeongwoo was about to throw a dagger towards the silhouette but hesitated.

Because the opponent was a naked woman.

However, what appeared next was clearly him.

Thud.

A fairly sizable figure appeared behind the woman, adorned with a radiant title above his head.

『Strongest Sword of Sangju』

Strongest Sword of Sangju, Dokgo Sehwan 01.

2nd level, 147 defenses.

The man was naked, standing behind the woman, glancing at Yeongwoo and then turning his gaze to his wife.

“What did you say earlier? Who's coming?”

“You idiot, another Strongest Sword is here to get you. If you don't do well, you might die today.”

Otherworldly conversation between the Strongest Sword couple.

Yeongwoo realized that the opponent was unarmed and swiftly threw the dagger he had almost thrown before.

Swoosh!

The thrown dagger into the shadowy corridor looked like a real lightning bolt.

It was a momentary sight, but the light coming through the small window at the end of the corridor reflected off the dagger, and almost simultaneously, the silhouette of Dokgo Sehwon 01, the Strongest Sword of Sangju, shook.

Thud!

The sound was the dagger hitting the wall at the end of the corridor.

Yeongwoo's attack, or rather, surprise, missed.

'Crazy. This guy really consumed three million karma.'

Yeongwoo felt chills all over his body.

He then quickly retrieved the dagger, but Dokgo Sehwon noticed something strange and jumped into the adjacent room.

"Who's this bastard?"

An angry voice echoed from Room 303.

He must be hastily preparing weapons.

Yeongwoo quickly crossed the corridor and arrived in front of Room 303.

Then, the same filthy smell from before spread, and a dreadful message appeared.

「The sense has temporarily increased from the original 100 to 428.」

Sense increased by 328 due to the odor of the golden flash.

This meant that the opponent's sensory value was originally 656.

"Damn it...!"

However, Yeongwoo was too busy taking a defensive stance following the hologram that appeared in front of him to read the message.

Swoosh!

Dokgo Sehwon's weapon was also an early bird, and it was so fast that even the Gumi Sword Technique couldn't find an opportunity to counterattack.

Ping, pang, pa-pa-pang!

The two Strongest Swords exchanged more than a dozen strikes in a moment, and the naked woman who had been standing in the corridor until now ran away in surprise towards the stairs.

It was an unexpected scenario of someone, who was capable of dealing with the Strongest Sword appeared.

On the other hand, the wife of the Strongest Sword, Yun Seoyeon...

“...?”

As the outsider seemed to be in conflict with her husband, she hurriedly ran down the stairs.

It was to request assistance.

With all the monsters cleared and no special tasks, all the skilled individuals in Sangju City were likely to be nearby.

However, what awaited her at the end of the hurriedly descended stairs was a completely unexpected sight.

Thwoom!

Thwoom!

The first thing heard was an ear-piercing roar.

Seoyeon, who had rushed down the motel stairs in a hurry, looked out with a face full of disbelief.

Then, she saw numerous columns of light shooting down from the sky.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

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