

Level 4 Human in a Ruined World #Chapter 291 - Read

Level 4 Human in a Ruined World Chapter 291

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 291: New Capital, Seoul (1)

"This should be enough."

After delivering his one-sided announcement, Yeongwoo noticed a Negwig, carrying two slaves, running towards him from a distance.

- Screeech!

It could only enter after the core was removed, and all the gates of the Forbidden City opened.

'Oh, come to think of it, the Negwig hadn't been able to enter until now.'

This fact was frustrating when the Metal Forbidden City was under enemy control.

But now that he had secured the "Core," it pleased him.

'The Metal Forbidden City's barrier was strong enough to block the Negwig? Then wouldn't the same apply to Metal Seoul?'

With two other companies simultaneously declaring war on Dogo during this turbulent time, it was a great relief that Seoul's defenses would be improved.

Especially since he planned to use Metal Seoul as the address for Dogo's Earth branch.

'Of course, the citizens of Seoul won't like it... but I'll have to convince them somehow.'

As he had just announced, there was only one hour left until the start of the business presentation.

So, Yeongwoo hurriedly reached out to touch the "Core" in front of him.

Thump.

Then, for the first time since the reset, a tooltip from Toma appeared.

「Steel Core」 - ◇ Toma Power Source

【C-Class Development Site Creation】

【Guardian Dragon】

【Annihilation Mode】

‘A Toma power source, huh.’

As Yeongwoo's expression showed interest, a detailed description appeared below it.

Pop!

【C-Class Development Site Creation】

|Transforms a designated area into a state where it can be reinforced.

【Guardian Dragon】

|Increases all #dragon-type abilities by 20% within the reinforced area.

【Annihilation Mode】

|This power source supports a special defense system.

‘Ah, it’s a kind of mode-switching item.’

Yeongwoo thought he could roughly understand it just by looking at the tooltip, though he’d have to use it in Seoul to be sure.

Most likely, placing this core somewhere in Seoul would transform a specific area into a state where it could be modified.

After some procedures, it would turn into a bizarre fortress, much like the Metal Forbidden City.

However...

‘But wasn’t the order to set the new capital given by Dogo, not Toma?’

[Dogo] "Heavenly Capital"

[Mission] Secure the remodeling core of the Forbidden City and establish the new capital of Earth.

[Special] In this mission, you must disclose the support from Dogo.

[Reward] 30 million Karma

So, who would be responsible for reinforcing the "new capital"—Dogo, or Toma, who made the core in the first place?

‘This is really hard to figure out.’

He wouldn't know until he used the core himself.

The one thing that was clear was that just as he was tied to Dogo by an advertising contract, Toma must have had some sort of deal with Im Dupyeong.

‘I saw the 500 million debt mark under Im Dupyeong's chin. It was probably something like a debt.’

But there was no tooltip related to this on the core he had just obtained.

In other words, the "becoming a god" that Im Dupyeong mentioned must have been a separate contract with Toma.

And it was likely what saved him from the 300 million arrows.

‘Toma wouldn't have stopped 300 million arrows for just a 500 million debt. I bet he sold something really important.’

Although he felt ominous, he didn't notice any immediate losses.

After all, he had obtained the core without paying any extra fees, which was already a significant gain.

“Negwig, let's hurry back to Seoul. Right now, public opinion is the most important.”

Without the support of the people, Yeongwoo07 would just be a mere puppet of aliens, a piece of Earth's trash.

So, gaining the support of the citizens, the voters, was absolutely essential.

He had no desire to see the birth of a Second Strongest Sword, nor did he want to kill his successor personally.

That would only lead him down an irreversible path of villainy.

Moreover, considering all he had done—from the contract with Dogo to the approval of the Orc Autonomous Region and the invasion of China—he needed to ensure that no adversaries were left on the Korean Peninsula to wrap things up properly.

After all, too many cooks spoil the broth.

'Fortunately, with the core, I can at least show some results.'

Yeongwoo's politics, which relied solely on destructive power, had to be based on achievements.

Crunch.

As Yeongwoo gripped the core tightly, it shrank to the size of his palm.

With the core in hand, he climbed onto the Negwig and pointed east.

Hyaaah!

"Let's go! Today, I will present the future of the Korean Peninsula!"

* * *

At the same time, near COEX in Gangnam, Seoul.

The ones most flustered by Yeongwoo's reckless announcement were none other than the Taewon Group.

The sudden news from Jeonggu about Yeongwoo's "business presentation" meant they had to prepare for a large-scale event in just one hour.

Of course, Yeongwoo himself only intended to chat with various Strongest Swords and citizens on the street, but Taewon had a different perspective.

"How did they gather so quickly? Rumors sure spread fast."

As Jeonggu muttered while looking at the crowd that had already formed a dark mass near the tower in Gangnam, Lim Suna, standing next to him, had a troubled expression.

"There will be even more people in an hour."

"...You mean there will be far more people than this?"

"Yes. People will definitely come from Gangbuk and Gangseo as well. It's the Strongest Sword's business presentation... it's a huge event."

Everyone in Seoul, or rather the entire Korean Peninsula, knew that the elected representative was out of his mind.

Yet, because of the harsh times, they had no choice but to choose such a harsh person, which led to giving power to the infamous Yeongwoo07.

And within just a few dozen hours, this happened.

[Development Company 1, "Lemu," has declared war on "Dogo."]

[Development Company 2, "Mara," has declared war on "Dogo."]

Was it a mistake after all?

The choice they made together brought war to the Korean Peninsula.

"A cosmic war... it still doesn't feel real."

Lim Suna smiled bitterly.

Jeonggu bowed his head with a face full of guilt.

"I'm sorry. You must be very worried. Although he is my son, I can't control him... I'm in a difficult position too."

"No, you don't need to apologize, Father."

As Suna waved her hand, feeling it wasn't something Jeonggu should apologize for, he quickly lifted his head back up.

Swoosh.

Then, with a different expression, he began stroking his chin.

"Hmm, but..."

".....?"

"He wouldn't have started anything without a plan. He's too sneaky to fight a losing battle."

"What do you mean...?"

"It means that if he started the war, it must be because he believes he can win."

"...What?"

Suna, who had been wide-eyed with surprise, quickly regained her composure and whispered quietly to Jeonggu.

"It would be better if you refrained from making such remarks in public, Father."

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Regardless of whether they could win the war or not, any conflict with external forces was bound to be a burden for the general public.

This included Suna, who was an employee of Taewon Group.

'At least Yeongwoo and Father aren't at high risk of assassination, which is a relief.'

If there was one advantage to preparing for this "business presentation," it was the security. No matter how many people or experts gathered, she didn't have to worry about the VIPs' safety—that was one good thing.

'But everything else is just...'

Variables or headaches.

Just as Suna was about to rub her throbbing forehead, she barely stopped herself when she noticed a group of Strongest Swords approaching at an inhuman speed from afar.

"Didn't I say this would happen? I told you they'd cause trouble eventually, and even sooner than I expected."

"Being the strongest and being a representative are indeed different matters..."

"What kind of stunt do you have to pull to get a war declaration within a day of being elected?"

The approaching figures were none other than Oh Yeonhee from Songpa, Choi Namhee, the Strongest Sword of Seocho, and Lee Hanwook from Dongjak.

The three Strongest Swords from the Gangnam area were running side by side.

Oh Yeonhee, who recognized Jeonggu first, started to slow down.

"Father!"

"Oh, Yeonhee."

"Where's Yeongwoo? Is he not here yet?"

Yeonhee's eyes were filled with hostility toward Yeongwoo.

No matter how impressive Jeong Yeongwoo's achievements were, she couldn't justify him causing a war that involved two to one odds.

And it wasn't just her.

The crowds near the tower and COEX area were all wearing expressions of dissatisfaction and fear.

"The announcement about the war agreement—what a ridiculous statement. They didn't even put the decision to a vote, just asking for our consent."

As Yeonhee questioned Jeonggu in place of the absent Yeongwoo, Jeonggu bowed his head again.

"Yes, I saw that statement too. It was indeed inappropriate."

Yet he didn't forget to add one more thing.

"But wasn't it us who got the war declaration? With swords drawn, the enemy is already coming at us; we can't just sit around debating whether to fight."

"Still, there's a difference between saying things one way and another. At least the tone could have been... "

As the two argued over the "war agreement," the crowd around the tower began to stir.

"Oh?"

"It's coming!"

"Whoa, what is that?"

Amidst the commotion, people who had been watching the sky finally saw what they were waiting for.

Like a shooting star, a streak of light was cutting across the sky from afar.

"Is that... the Strongest Sword?"

"The Strongest Sword!"

"Is the Strongest Sword here?"

Even though there were already several Strongest Swords present, everyone was calling out for just one "Strongest Sword."

The one who rides starlight across the sky, the only elected Strongest Sword in Korea—Jeong Yeongwoo07.

Shiing!

As the beam of light that had flown from afar was absorbed into the top of the tower in Gangnam, the crowd burst into cheers and flocked towards the entrance of the tower.

Most had come to see the face of the incompetent Strongest Sword who had brought on this war, but upon seeing him move like a comet, they forgot why they had come in the first place.

"The Strongest Sword!"

"Yeongwoo!"

Even more people continued to gather around the tower and COEX area in Gangnam.

And finally.

Pheeew!

The tower flashed white for a moment, and one side of the outer wall opened up in an arch, from which Jeong Yeongwoo emerged.

"Oh, oh? He's here!"

"Yeongwoo! Jeong Yeongwoo...!"

As people rushed forward to get closer to the Strongest Sword, Yeongwoo raised his voice from atop the Negwig.

"Everyone! Please step back! If anyone gets hurt here today, the business presentation won't happen. You'll end up in a war without even knowing why it started."

"What... What...?"

The crowd, which had been buzzing with excitement, was suddenly stunned by his unexpected comment.

Then they quickly rekindled their anger, directing it at the Strongest Sword.

"That's right! Because of you, we're about to have a war!"

"What's going on here?"

"Explain yourself! We trusted you enough to elect you, and now there's a war after just one day?"

At that moment, Korea's representative, Jeong Yeongwoo07, took out a "core" from his pocket.

Pop!

He glanced around at the crowd and asked.

"Why do you think this war is because of me? Do you have any proof?"

"...What?"

"Uh...?"

The people were momentarily confused again.

Yeongwoo quickly followed up with another point.

"The question you should be asking now isn't why the war started, but how we're going to win... You should be asking if I have a plan to win."

"..."

The crowd fell silent for a moment at Yeongwoo's words.

Then someone from the back of the crowd asked.

"So, do you have a plan to win?"

It was none other than Yeongwoo's father, Jeonggu.

So Yeongwoo...

Swoosh.

After briefly looking at his father, tossed the core into the air.

The small, fist-sized core began to grow larger as it ascended into the sky above Gangnam, and Yeongwoo grinned wickedly.

"Do you think we'll just win the war? The entire world will kneel before us."

Right on cue, the core in the sky grew to an enormous size, casting a massive shadow over the Gangnam area.

"Oh...?"

"Wait a minute."

"Do they really need to kneel...? Why?"

It was then that the citizens realized something important.

Someone in the crowd asked in a very small voice.

"Could it be... Are we playing the villain?"

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

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Chapter 292: New Capital, Seoul (2)

When asked if their country was playing the role of the villain, Yeongwoo07 didn't hesitate for a moment before responding with a question of his own.

"Villain? What exactly makes someone a villain? Is having strong power what makes one a villain?"

At this, everyone present fell silent.

'Damn... we really are the villains, huh?'

'So, I've become one of the bad guys...?'

'I wanted a rich and powerful nation, but I never asked to become a villain!'

Meanwhile, the core hovering over Gangnam continued to grow larger.

Vroooom...!

The core had already started to exceed a diameter of 20 meters, so much so that even Yeongwoo, who had activated it, glanced at it out of the corner of his eye.

'Is that really okay? Just how big is it going to get?'

Contrary to Yeongwoo's inner thoughts, on the outside, at least, Korea was becoming quite powerful.

The mere presence of a giant metal sphere in the sky casting a dark shadow gave the impression of an evil lair.

"So... what kind of evil deeds are we supposed to commit, exactly?"

"Are we going to start engaging in invasions and plundering?"

"What about war? If we're the villains, does that mean the two companies that declared war on us are the righteous ones?"

"Oh, right. Did they declare war on us because we're the villains?"

The room became noisy again, descending into chaos.

"....."

Feeling a slight throbbing in his temples, Yeongwoo pressed his finger against his head and, as if resigned, spoke.

"Hah... Well, since they've declared war, we'll have to fight. We'll start by crushing whichever of Mara or Lemu is closer."

"Oooh...?"

The citizens got excited at Yeongwoo's somewhat aggressive wording, "crush."

After all, if they were going to be villains, it was better to be a formidable villain who builds an empire rather than a low-level villain who gets wiped out.

"And in Australia, we have an army of... oh, at least several thousand orcs."

As Yeongwoo said this, pointing south where Australia lay, everyone in the room turned to look in that direction.

"When we attack Mara, the orcs will join us in the assault. To secure this alliance, the orcs in northern Australia have been giving us 80 million Karma daily."

"Eighty million?"

"...An army of thousands of orcs?"

"We're earning 80 million in foreign currency every day?"

The people were dumbfounded by the unbelievable briefing, but Yeongwoo wasn't done reporting his achievements.

"We've also expanded into China. With the costs controlled, our pure profit from China is around 100 million Karma daily, and we're planning to take even more, depending on the situation."

"One hundred million?"

"You're planning to take even more?"

"So we're already engaging in invasions and plundering?"

As the citizens began to question whether this was all really okay, Yeongwoo proudly puffed out his chest.

"Fortunately, the former President of China, Im Dupyeong, was already bleeding the country dry long before we got involved. This has somewhat diluted our misdeeds, so we won't go down in history as the worst invaders."

At some point, Yeongwoo had started speaking rather bluntly, but the citizens nodded in agreement as if relieved, having lost their sense of reality.

"Well, that's a relief."

"Anyway, didn't we take down a dictator? That's a good thing... right?"

There's a saying that anything taken to the extreme can break the opponent's spirit.

"Of course, we're not invincible yet. As long as we haven't identified the locations of the other two companies involved in planetary development, there will always be threats, and our relationship with Japan is still unresolved."

As soon as Yeongwoo mentioned "Japan," a fire lit in the eyes of some citizens.

Given the national sentiment, Japan was naturally considered a potential adversary.

After all, during the Pangaea era, hadn't Japan attempted to land in Busan?

At the very least, southern Japan was indeed an enemy.

"Now that we can use the tower to travel around the Earth, we should also assess the situation in Japan. It's a large country, so they must have a lot of money."

"Ah... Japan too?"

“Well, they are a dangerous country.”

“Aren’t they a former war criminal nation? There’s no guarantee they won’t start another war.”

But even then, Yeongwoo wasn’t finished with his accomplishments.

“I’ve been entering dungeons every night, saving people, and obtaining bonds.”

“Bonds?”

“You saved people, Mr. Yeongwoo?”

Some responded with disbelief, but what was even harder to believe was the amount and the countries from which those bonds came.

“30 million from India, 100 million from the U.S., 10 million from Poland, 20 million from the U.K., 40 million from Peru, and 80 million from Saudi Arabia.”

“Huh...?”

“Is that the total amount of bonds we hold?”

“It seems to add up to about 280 million?”

Could such a large sum have been received purely as a reward for good deeds?

“Yes, that’s right. I’m planning to collect that money soon.”

As Yeongwoo folded one finger after another, recalling the bond amounts, the people began to look a bit weary.

“Crazy... This is too much.”

“At this point, shouldn’t we be the ones disappearing from the Earth?”

“We’re just pure evil.”

Yet, deep down, they felt it keenly.

While the methods might have been rough, the Strongest Sword before them was indeed on track to fulfill his promise of "strengthening the nation and unifying the world."

And, more than anything else...

'This is bad... I don't think anyone else can clean up this mess.'

It was becoming increasingly clear that no one could replace Yeongwoo07.

'At this rate, he might really unify the world.'

'...If we're willing to accept that we're the villains.'

'What does he plan to do with all this massive karma?'

While every citizen in the room was trapped in this dilemma, Oh Yeonhee from Songpa was the first to put a stop to it.

"So, if I understand correctly."

Tap!

As she spoke, clearly somewhat angry, and took a couple of steps forward, the crowd naturally parted to make way for her.

"All that we've done in the name of our country so far is collude with the orcs who've illegally occupied Australia and extorted money from countries around the world?"

"That's correct. As a result, our steady income will soon reach 200 million a day. We're well on our way to achieving a rich and powerful nation."

"No, how can that be...?"

Oh Yeonhee tried to protest but couldn't.

The only issue was that they were walking a brutal path; otherwise, everything else was exactly as promised during the election.

And by that time, Yeongwoo had taken a few steps forward into the crowd, making way for Negwig to walk ahead.

Click, click.

"Are we villains? In the old world, perhaps. But where are we now?"

When Yeongwoo asked the question into the air, someone within the crowd mumbled to themselves, lacking confidence.

"A... a reset world?"

Yeongwoo, who somehow overheard this, snapped his thumb and middle finger, making a sharp sound.

Snap!

"That's right. This is a reset world. Everything has been reset—our destiny, the social structure, and even the way we survive."

Click.

As Yeongwoo took another step forward, the citizens filled the space he left behind.

"Therefore, I refuse to be defined by those outdated values of the past."

"Huh? Then, what...?"

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

When the citizens tilted their heads in confusion and questioned him, Yeongwoo pointed his sword towards the core floating in the sky.

"We are not villains; we are a great power."

"...!"

"If anyone dares to call the Korean Peninsula a den of evil, bring me their name. We must correct what's wrong. If you have power, you can change even concepts."

"Crazy..."

"Has he lost his mind...?"

Some citizens were so shocked that they covered their mouths in disbelief, while others were impressed by the ruthless ideology that burned through their mental circuits.

That's right.

If you don't want to be a villain, just eliminate everyone who calls you one.

Whoosh!

"Are we villains?"

Yeongwoo asked, thrusting his blood-red cursed sword into the air.

No one dared to answer 'yes.'

Just as Yeongwoo had declared, the very concept of 'villain' had changed—or rather, disappeared altogether.

"Then what are we? What do you want to become?"

He asked, rephrasing his question.

A few citizens cautiously opened their mouths.

"A... great power?"

"A great power."

As if waiting for this response, Yeongwoo shouted the phrase that had been his campaign slogan.

"We shall rule the world with national prosperity and military strength!"

At that moment, with a crashing sound, the core floating in the sky shattered into dozens of pieces and began to release a powerful energy field, causing the citizens to collapse on the spot and scream.

"Aaaaah!"

"What's happening?"

"Is that thing going to explode?"

But Yeongwoo stood tall atop the steel structure, staring straight at the core with an unyielding gaze.

Because in Yeongwoo's eyes, the regional reinforcement interface had appeared.

「Steel Core is ready for activation.」

「Steel Core」 - ◇ Toma Power Source

【C-Class Development Site Creation】

【Guardian Dragon】

【Annihilation Mode】

Activation ready.

It likely meant that the region was now ready to be transformed into a C-class development zone.

'The time has come to rewrite history.'

According to the "Capital Relocation" quest, the region that this core would transform would become the new capital of Earth in the future.

[Mission] Secure the remodeling core of the Forbidden City and establish the new capital of Earth.

This line also hinted at Yeongwoo's determination to somehow drive out his competitors, Lemu and Mara, from planetary development.

So, trusting in his backing by Dogo, Yeongwoo shouted:

"Now, watch closely! See how we will become a great power!"

"W-what...?"

"Is there something more?"

As the citizens, who had been cowering, began to raise their heads, Yeongwoo approved the core's activation.

Flash!

Then, an invisible wave spread out from within the opened core, displaying a system message to Yeongwoo.

「Current selected coordinates are ||||-Earth-482-183-4361-83. Locally classified as 'Gangnam District.' Convert to a C-class development zone?」

'Huh? Not Seoul, but Gangnam?'

Yeongwoo hesitated to give the approval.

Since the quest mentioned the term "capital," he assumed it would apply to an entire city, but it turned out the maximum area that could be reinforced with this core was only at the district level.

'What's going on? Is the concept of a capital in the universe smaller than I thought?'

Although he felt slightly disappointed, he couldn't back down now, with all eyes focused on him and the core.

So, in the end, Yeongwoo decided.

'Approve.'

He approved Gangnam District as a C-class development zone.

「Gangnam District has been set as a C-class development zone.」

Shortly after, a brief notification message appeared, followed by a loud sonic boom from the sky.

Whooosh!

"What the...?"

When Yeongwoo looked up at the sky, he saw a large metallic object, clearly a product of Toma, falling rapidly.

‘Ah, so that's what was used to create Metal Forbidden City...’

Yeongwoo quickly understood.

Activating the core to make a specific region development-ready would cause Toma to arrive from outer space to begin construction.

‘So, it's not Metal Seoul, but... starting with Metal Gangnam?’

Well, no one became full from the first bite.

Yeongwoo thought it wasn't a bad start, either.

After all, no myth was created in a single day.

‘Anyway, this is the beginning. The success story of mine!’

As Yeongwoo watched the falling alien supplies with anticipation, he noticed another metal object falling from even higher up.

"Huh?"

"What's that?"

"Something else...?"

The object grew larger as it fell rapidly, quickly catching the attention of the general citizens as it struck down the Toma supply unit to the side and instead landed on Gangnam soil.

Boom!

It landed near the core, exuding an ominous atmosphere as if it were a dud.

「Now commencing the planet's second development process.」

"Second...?"

It was none other than a module sent by Dogo.

「The current module has arrived in C-class development zone 'Gangnam District.' Would you like to upgrade this area to B-class development zone 'Seoul'?」

"Ah...!"

Yeongwoo's pupils widened as he realized the significance.

At the same time, his hand was already slamming the activation button on the module.

Bang!

「This city will be upgraded with the support of the intergalactic weapons brand, Dogo!」

Then, another invisible wave emanated from the module, and this time, a dramatic change began immediately.

Clatter-clatter-clatter!

Starting from the ground beneath the core, ashen steel tiles began to spread rapidly.

"Huh?"

"What, what is this?"

Before the citizens could even react, the ground beneath their feet turned into metal, and the COEX building, which was supposed to be used as a business presentation venue today, was transforming into a fortified structure.

Then, like a mutation log from the first day of the reset, the upgrade log for B-class development zone Seoul appeared in quick succession.

—Dogo's development module has discovered the key site 'Gyeongbokgung Palace' in 'Seoul.'

—Dogo's development module has discovered the key site 'Jongmyo Shrine' in 'Seoul.'

—Dogo's development module has discovered the key site 'Four Main Gates' in 'Seoul.'

It was clear that Dogo was currently exploring Seoul.

A Metal Seoul, where Gyeongbokgung Palace fires photon cannons and the Four Main Gates rise to defend the city in times of crisis, was no longer just a dream.

"Aah!"

Feeling the steel heart pounding in his chest, Yeongwoo shouted his final advertising line.

"This is the new capital of Earth! Dogo Special City, Metal Seoul!"

[Translator - Night]

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Chapter 293: New Capital, Seoul (3)

Metropolitan City, Metal Seoul.

The declaration of the establishment of "New Seoul" by Yeongwoo did not even reach the ears of the citizens.

Cha-ja-ja-ja-jat!

Everyone was too preoccupied with watching the city transform into "Metal Seoul" to pay any attention.

"This... is Seoul...?"

"Oh my God."

"No way..."

Already, the roads and sidewalks were completely covered in steel, and now the ordinary buildings around COEX were being reinforced with metal.

Even the trees lining the streets had turned into "metalized" versions with sharp, blade-like branches.

"Um... is this really okay?"

Lim Suna, an assistant manager from Taewon Group, looked at Jeonggu with a worried expression.

Jeonggu also seemed unsure of what was happening.

"This crazy guy... I didn't think he'd take things this far."

When he looked toward his son, Yeongwoo, he saw him doing something in front of a module sent by Dogo.

"Yeongwoo! You brat!"

Jeonggu waved his hand and called out to Yeongwoo, but the repeated cheers of the crowd drowned out his voice.

"I'd better go see him. Assistant Manager, please find a safe place to stay before anything else weird happens."

As Jeonggu started pushing through the crowd, Suna also looked around and began walking toward a group of Strongest Swords gathered nearby.

In fact, the safest place would have been by Jeong Yeongwoo's side, but there were too many people there.

Even Jeonggu, who was a Strongest Sword himself, was having a hard time getting through.

"Excuse me, please make way."

Despite holding the prestigious title of "The Strongest Sword of Dobong," Jeonggu found that the citizens, who were mesmerized by the "metalization" of Seoul, were not inclined to clear a path for him.

As a result, it took him several minutes to cover a distance of less than twenty meters.

"This is driving me crazy, seriously."

Finally, after sweating profusely, Jeonggu reached Yeongwoo and the Dogo module.

Only then did his son acknowledge him.

"...Why are you here? It would be more comfortable for you to stay with the other Strongest Swords over there."

Jeong Yeongwoo⁰⁷, the prodigal son of Korea.

Since Yeongwoo couldn't take his eyes off the module, Jeonggu asked,

"I wanted to know how much further you're planning to take this."

"Take this further? Don't you want to live in a powerful nation?"

Yeongwoo's pupils reflected a bluish string of characters as he spoke, so Jeonggu, as if mesmerized, moved closer to him.

There, he saw a guide about "Metal Seoul" being displayed on the module Yeongwoo was manipulating.

◇ We are pleased to introduce you to Earth's new B-class development site, 'Seoul'!

◇ The current regional level of Seoul is '1,' and foundational adjustment work is in progress before full reinforcement can begin.

"...What is all this?"

Jeonggu blinked as he read the text, and Yeongwoo shrugged.

"Looks like there's a specialized development protocol for this."

Seoul was currently in the foundational adjustment phase, meaning the entire city was being covered in metal.

This work would likely have to be completed before the city could move on to the next stage of development.

‘Still, it should be done within 8 hours. I need to set the business address.’

As Yeongwoo stroked his chin while looking at the module, new text appeared on the screen.

Paaaat!

◇ While reinforcement work is underway, we will configure basic city functions.

"City function settings?"

"These bastards, what kind of nonsense are they planning now?!"

Furious, Jeonggu pointed at the module, but Yeongwoo frowned.

"Ah, please be quiet for a moment."

No matter how powerful the Dogo organization might be, with a royal family-descended destroyer king as its chairman, the actual work on the field had to be done by Yeongwoo himself.

"Didn't you see earlier? Mara and Lemu declared war on us simultaneously. It's going to be a 2-on-1 fight. So, whether it's nonsense or whatever, I'll use any means to become stronger."

As the effective representative of Dogo in this war, Yeongwoo couldn't say he wasn't scared at all.

But he had overcome greater obstacles before and was confident he could win this time too.

Paaat!

Soon, a sort of questionnaire appeared on the module.

◇ Please select the option that best aligns with the purpose of this city's development.

[1] Build a commercial city.

[2] Expand trade routes.

[3] Secure a refuge.

But from the fourth option, things started to get strange.

[4] A hub for treason.

[5] Root out anti-royal factions.

[6] Expand industrial facilities.

"...What?"

"What the hell? Why is rooting out anti-royal factions an option for city development?"

"Seems like it reflects the chairman's trauma."

But the real kicker was the seventh option.

[7] Weaponize the city.

"Oh."

As Yeongwoo finally found an option that he liked, Jeonggu swallowed hard.

"Check out some of the other options, there might be something decent."

However, Jeonggu's wish was not fulfilled.

[8] Iron-fisted rule.

[9] Transition to a tyrant.

"What's the difference between 8 and 9? Aren't they practically the same?"

Jeonggu muttered with his mouth agape, but Yeongwoo shook his head.

"You don't get it. 8 is about ruling with an iron fist from the start, while 9 is about transitioning into a tyrant after initially being something else."

"...What? What does that have to do with the city?"

"Who knows? Maybe the suppression functions they support are different."

".....!"

Suppression functions?

It was the first time Jeonggu had ever heard such a bizarre expression, and he opened his mouth even wider.

He could see a glimmer of tyrannical talent in his son.

"Hey, you said you wanted to create a powerful nation, right? You're not going to oppress people, are you?"

"That would be difficult. If I did that, my karmic burden would pile up enormously."

As Yeongwoo answered, he turned his gaze to the last two options at the bottom.

[10] Prepare for civil war.

[11] Social Ascension.

Seeing these final two options, Jeonggu quickly pointed to the tenth one.

"Yeongwoo, this is it! Prepare for civil war!"

Prepare for civil war—perfectly suited for the current situation on Earth.

It was, in every sense, a purpose perfectly suited to the current state of the Earth.

Especially if this place, New Seoul, was truly destined to become the official capital of the Earth in the future, then the ongoing three-way conflict could indeed be considered a civil war of the Earth.

"Let's go with option 10. There's nothing else to see,"

Said Jeonggu as he looked at his son.

But he noticed that this damned kid's gaze was directed a bit lower than where option 10 was located.

"What the hell are you looking at...?"

Jeonggu followed Yeongwoo's gaze back to the module.

[11] Social Ascension.

"Why this one?"

Jeonggu asked, genuinely perplexed.

Yeongwoo blinked quickly.

"How can the purpose of city development be social ascension?"

"Right? So we should go with option 10..."

"No, that's not it."

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

"Huh?"

"Wouldn't it make more sense to think about what kind of status could be elevated so much that it warrants reconstructing an entire city?"

“ ... ”

Jeonggu was left speechless.

He couldn't help but think that his son's way of thinking fundamentally differed from a normal person's.

“So? What do you think they mean by ‘elevating status’?”

“I can't say for sure. But...”

Yeongwoo looked up at the sky.

No, to be precise, he was looking at the vast space beyond the atmosphere.

“This module came from space. So everything it says is likely based on a cosmic perspective.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes. So that ‘social ascension’ is, with high probability...”

“A status in the universe...?”

When Jeonggu echoed the idea, Yeongwoo nodded.

“Yes. It must be a status recognized on a cosmic scale.”

But that wasn't the only reason why Yeongwoo was interested in option 11.

“Then whose status is it?”

“Huh? Isn't it your status?”

“Yes. It would be beneficial even if it's just my status that ascends. Especially if it's on a cosmic level.”

“So then? What else could it be if not your status?”

Yeongwoo then looked at the crowd filling the streets of Gangnam.

Jeonggu waved his hand dismissively.

“Oh, come on, no way.”

What Yeongwoo's gaze suggested was the status of all the citizens living in this city.

It might even mean the status of Earthlings, a level higher than just Seoul citizens.

“Father, do you know what the base status level of our planet’s inhabitants is in the universe?”

“...I wouldn’t know. Do you?”

“I do.”

“What?”

As someone who had experienced the unprecedented event of a human’s status rising on a cosmic level, Yeongwoo knew it well.

His status in cosmic law had risen from the original 12th grade to as high as the 7th grade.

Thus, in reverse, it could be seen that:

“Our planet’s inhabitants are classified as 12th-grade beings in the cosmic hierarchy.”

“12th grade?”

“Yes. You might not feel it, but that’s a very low grade.”

This was based on the status of the tattoo vendor from Pegua, whom he had once met as a ‘merchant.’

The vendor’s status in cosmic law was 11th grade, a being so low-born that he couldn’t even have a unique name.

Yet, the Earthlings, undergoing a reset, were classified as 12th grade.

Most of the people on this planet were of a status so low that they couldn’t even have names recognized in the universe.

“No... But even so, is it reasonable to change the city development direction for something like social ascension? Isn’t that too vague an administrative decision?”

Jeonggu, uncharacteristically rational, voiced his doubts.

After all, the decision to set the ‘development purpose’ this time was crucial.

The next phase of development, which would begin after the foundational adjustments, would also likely change according to the purpose chosen now.

So it seemed more prudent to focus on preparing for the civil war at this moment.

“Are you cursed with a disease that kills you if you play it safe? What’s gotten into you? Let’s just focus on preparing for the civil war.”

Jeonggu grabbed Yeongwoo’s shoulder, giving him fatherly advice, but this Korean demon’s eyes were already half gone.

“No, something’s bothering me.”

“What now?”

“The merchants we’ve met so far mostly had low statuses in cosmic law. On the other hand, those who went around beating others and flaunting their power generally had high statuses.”

“Well, of course, they’re living well because they have high status... beating others...”

“Exactly!”

“What are you trying to say?”

“In this universe, if you have high status, you can beat others! That’s what I’m saying!”

“...?”

Jeonggu realized the conversation was taking another wrong turn, but it was already too late—Yeongwoo had touched the module again.

“Father! The déjà vu I’m feeling right now isn’t a coincidence! I’ve been through something similar before!”

“What are you talking about?”

It was only natural that Jeonggu didn’t understand what Yeongwoo was saying.

He hadn’t been with Yeongwoo during his first binary choice.

That time, despite Yechan’s objections, he had chosen to distribute 30,000 Karma instead of monopolizing 3 million Karma.

“I’ll look further into the future!”

“You fool, we need to win the civil war first if we want any future at all!”

But Yeongwoo’s way of thinking was indeed different.

“What kind of future are we talking about?”

“...What?”

“A future where we live as a lower-class species in the universe? I can’t give up this opportunity for a future like that.”

With these words, Yeongwoo chose option 11, Social Ascension.

Fwoosh!

“People work harder when they have hope! Let’s secure a better future first, and then we can think about the civil war!”

“Damn it, kid! This whole status thing is just your...”

It’s just a guess, he was about to say, but his words were drowned out by the thunderous roar that followed.

Boom!

As soon as Yeongwoo selected the development purpose, an enormous amount of energy surged from the module.

Then, a system message was broadcasted across the entire Korean Peninsula.

—The development purpose of “Metropolitan City Metal Seoul” has been set to Social Ascension.

“Seriously, this kid!”

Jeonggu was so furious that he wanted to charge at his son, but he stopped when he saw the next message that appeared.

—The current level of this city is 1. Please raise the city level to undergo Earth’s status elevation review.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 294: New Capital, Seoul (4)

“Huh...?”

As soon as the words “Earth’s upgrade evaluation” were mentioned, Jeonggu made a bewildered expression, and Yeongwoo, excited, continued speaking.

“See? I was right, wasn’t I?”

Of course, even Yeongwoo himself didn’t know that a planetary status existed.

Up until now, the only statuses he’d encountered were the ranks assigned to different roles on the planet and the existence ranks according to universal law.

‘Well, I wouldn’t have known about this since nothing has ever been done on a planetary scale before.’

But things are different now.

The purpose of developing Metal Seoul, the special city established on the Korean Peninsula, is to elevate Earth’s status.

And now that Earth has begun serious planetary development, everything seemed to align perfectly.

‘And since it will eventually become my planet, the higher its rank, the better.’

Especially now, when connections with the “universe” were increasing, it was clear that both the planet’s and its residents’ statuses must be as high as possible.

The glimpse he’d had of the universe so far revealed it to be a society of survival of the fittest, strictly governed by a rigid caste system.

Even the universal law enforcers, who enforce the laws of the universe, couldn’t do anything about the tyranny of Chairman Dogo, who had a third-grade status under universal law. Lower-class beings aren’t even allowed to mention the names of those ranked second-class or higher.

So what would happen if Earth, a lower-class planet where the basic resident rank is 12th class, were to connect with that universe officially?

“Being invaded by other Earthlings is bad enough, but to be looked down upon by aliens...? That’s something I won’t allow to happen in my time.”

Jeong Yeongwoo07, a prodigy born out of a reset, uttered words filled with a surprising sense of humanism, prompting Jeonggu to look at his son with an unexpected expression.

“Oh... I didn't know you could think like that. That's surprising. What rank did you say you were now?”

“Seventh class, according to universal law.”

“From twelfth to seventh...”

Jeonggu nodded as if he finally understood.

He figured his son might have developed some sense of duty, perhaps as the first Earthling to achieve the seventh class.

Maybe it was a sense of duty to ensure that humanity would no longer suffer universal hardships.

‘Well, children from poor families tend to mature faster. Considering that he's risen quite high for someone from a lower-class planet, it's possible his perspective has broadened...’

But contrary to Jeonggu's thoughts, Yeongwoo had a very different, more ambitious plan.

“One day, I want to beat up a government official.”

“What? Why would you beat up a government official? Those people work hard. You'll seriously be punished if you do that.”

Of course, the government officials of the universe weren't human to begin with.

“To be exact, I want to reach a position where I can do that.”

As he said this, Yeongwoo habitually looked up at the sky, and Jeonggu followed his gaze.

“Do you know what it means to beat up a government official in the universe?”

“.....”

“It means you've become someone who, in most situations, won't be in danger. At least, that's what I've learned.”

Beating a government official.

It meant that you had become someone who could challenge the laws of the universe and still survive.

Though, of course, not even someone like that would dare to skip paying taxes.

“Who on earth taught you this?”

Although Jeonggu asked this question, he had a pretty good idea of who the teacher was.

‘That Dogo bastard has completely messed up my son.’

After all, in Yeongwoo’s timeline, Dogo existed before his father did.

“But to become such a powerful being, I still have a long way to go. First of all, I’ll need an enormous amount of money...”

“And what else?”

“I’m not sure. But I have a feeling that one’s origins are important too.”

This intuition stemmed from the life story of his actual role model, Chairman Dogo.

Dogo’s origins lay in the royal family of Vesedel, where he was the first prince.

In contrast, Yeongwoo himself was just an ordinary resident from the lower-class planet Earth.

The only similarity he shared with the chairman was that they were both illegitimate children.

“So, you’re saying that to fulfill your dream of beating up government officials, you want to raise Earth’s rank?”

Jeonggu couldn’t help but feel absurd as he said this.

There wasn’t a single logical connection in that sentence.

But Yeongwoo was serious.

“It’s about raising my origin and the status of my people for my future.”

There was a saying that all roads lead to Seoul.

Since the conclusion was optimistic, Jeonggu decided to drop the matter.

“...Alright. But seriously, don’t actually beat up any government officials.”

As the two of them were having this cosmic conversation, the foundational work for Metal Seoul was finally completed.

◇ The foundational work for “Dogo Special City Metal Seoul” has been completed.

“Oh? They say the work is finished.”

Yeongwoo, with a delighted expression, stood before the module as the next message appeared.

◇ The current settings of this city are as follows:

[Dogo Special City Metal Seoul]

| Level: 1

| Location: ||||I-Earth

| Mayor: Jeong Yeongwoo07

| Purpose: Status elevation

“What?”

“Huh? You’re the mayor?”

Both Yeongwoo and Jeonggu stared at the city settings window with wide eyes.

“Well, if someone had to be listed as mayor, I guess it would be you.”

Jeonggu scratched his cheek with a somewhat disapproving expression.

“But the city name is already confirmed as Dogo Special City Metal Seoul? These guys are hilarious.”

Jeonggu let out a chuckle, as if he couldn't believe it.

Just then, the city's module in Dogo displayed a new notification.

◇ Due to the internal function of the city’s power source, the 'Steel Core,' the city can initiate 'Guardian Dragon' and 'Annihilation Mode' settings.

◇ Due to the city’s development purpose of 'Social Ascension,' the highest priority construction is recommended. *Victory Monument.

The city's development plans were grimly serious, despite the comical name.

“They're recommending the first construction to be a Victory Monument.”

“This is completely insane. Where exactly is that supposed to be built?”

At Jeonggu's question, Yeongwoo tapped on the notification recommending the Victory Monument.

Pop.

A large holographic box appeared on the module, and the construction interface spread out.

Ping!

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Victory Monument]

| Register the legendary enemies who met their end before the city's name and gain Glory Points.

| Once the city's Glory reaches a certain level, bonus points will be awarded during planetary status reviews.

*Within 48 hours of constructing the monument, enemies not defeated in the city's name can also be registered.

“Wow.”

After reading the description of the Victory Monument, Yeongwoo was speechless.

It was exactly the construction he had wanted.

If this was built, wouldn't it give more justification for his use of violence?

‘This is an essential building for the violence business. I have to build this.’

As Yeongwoo finished reading the description and looked down, the construction module displayed the recommended locations for the Victory Monument.

◇ Two suitable sites for constructing the Victory Monument have been found.

[Jongmyo]

| 20% additional Glory Points if the registered enemies are affiliated with Earth.

[Sajikdan]

| 10% additional Glory Points if the registered enemies are not affiliated with Earth.

“Uh...”

Yeongwoo hesitated for a moment as he looked at the construction site options.

Both were cultural heritage sites of Korea, and the special effects were conflicting.

‘If I forgo the special effects, I could build it anywhere, not necessarily on heritage sites, but the effects are too good to pass up.’

The remaining issue was whether to build the monument at Jongmyo or Sajikdan.

“What do you think, Father?”

“...You're going to choose whatever you want anyway, so why bother asking?”

“Well, I need to hear someone else's opinion first so I can confirm that I'm right. It's like a verification process.”

“You crazy kid.”

Though Jeonggu shuddered, he pointed to ‘Jongmyo’ with his hand.

“Isn't Jongmyo better? The additional score difference is double, and most of the enemies you can register now will likely be affiliated with Earth, right?”

“That's true. Kim Jong-un can definitely be registered, and probably Im Dupyeong too...”

“Exactly. You already have two. Legendary enemies aren't that common anyway.”

Yeongwoo nodded at Jeonggu's words.

“Right. I'd get 40% more points as soon as it's built.”

“Exactly. And you'll probably have to fight a civil war for a while, so there will be more enemies to put into the monument.”

“Then I could get around 60% to 100% additional points.”

“Y-yeah.”

Jeonggu sensed something was wrong when his son readily agreed with him.

And sure enough.

“But if I build the monument at Sajikdan, I could probably get several hundred percent more points, don't you think?”

“What?”

“If there are so many legendary enemies on Earth, imagine how many there must be in the universe.”

As Yeongwoo looked up at the sky again, an angry Jeonggu exploded in frustration.

“You idiot! If you're going to do that, just do whatever you want and stop asking me! And stop looking up at the sky all the time!”

At that moment, the Strongest Swords, who had been watching from afar, started to approach, curious about what was happening.

By then, Yeongwoo had already confirmed Sajikdan as the construction site for the monument.

“I'm going with Sajikdan. We have to think about the future.”

As Yeongwoo touched the holographic text on the module, a city-wide announcement was immediately issued.

— The Mayor of Dogo Metropolitan City, Jeong Yeongwoo07, has approved the construction of [Victory Monument] at the key location 'Sajikdan.'

“What?”

“...Huh? Build what?”

“He's already the mayor...?”

The residents of Metal Seoul and even the Strongest Swords were surprised by the first construction permit issued by the mayor.

But what happened next was even more shocking.

Fiiiaaaat!

A sharp sound echoed from the far-off sky, and then metal chunks began to rain down from the northern sky.

“Ugh!”

“What the heck?”

The sight reminded people of the first day of the Reset, when the 'Mountain of Swords' appeared, and they were filled with fear.

But Yeongwoo...

‘Wow, they’re building it insanely fast.’

He instinctively knew that this was the construction scene for the Victory Monument.

Unlike normal construction on Earth, construction in a B-grade development zone happened in the blink of an eye.

Soon, a system message appeared in Yeongwoo's view.

「Victory Monument construction is complete.」

「There are 3 execution records available for registration on the Victory Monument.」

[Translator - Night]

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Chapter 295: New Capital, Seoul (5)

"Three kill records?"

Moreover, they were records that could be registered.

This meant they were records of defeating "legendary enemies."

Since no further text appeared afterward, Yeongwoo could only speculate.

"One must definitely be the Kim Jong-un family. Thanks to them, I even cleared an achievement."

The achievement "Black Legend," which was completed when he killed Kim Jong-un, was one that required facing legendary evil.

"Then who are the other two?"

There weren't many opponents worthy of being called "legendary," so Yeongwoo quickly thought of another one: Beijing's evil overlord, Im Dupyeong, who was once the President of China.

Even before the reset, he was the ruler of China, and after the reset, he dreamt of conquering the continent again by blocking three hundred million arrows.

How could he not be considered legendary?

"Then who is the last one?"

There were a few more candidates, but without certainty, Yeongwoo immediately mounted Negwig again.

Click!

Then he said to his father,

"I'm going to Sajikdan. I need to see how much the glory score increases per kill record."

"You're going to Sajikdan, leaving all these people behind?"

Jeonggu asked as he looked around at the people filling Gangnam District.

The business briefing time Yeongwoo announced was soon, and not only the Strongest Swords from various regions came, but also residents from various places poured in.

"Yes. The monument is there, so I have no choice. Let's hold the business briefing in front of the monument."

"...!"

At Yeongwoo's words, not only Jeonggu but also the residents in the hall were surprised.

"S-Sajikdan is in Jongno, isn't it?"

"And you want us to go all the way to Jongno now?"

As the hall grew noisy again, Yeongwoo gestured for them to calm down.

"The business briefing isn't anything grand, most of what you heard earlier here covers it. We will start the planetary conquest, with Metal Seoul as the base."

In fact, those who had arrived early were quite fortunate.

They were there when Yeongwoo unfolded the core and established Metal Seoul.

However, the residents didn't seem satisfied with just that.

"But isn't Gangnam Yeongwoo's district? Shouldn't the business briefing be held in Gangnam?"

"Yes, let's do it in Gangnam!"

As people clamored, Yeongwoo's brow furrowed slightly.

Originally, the business briefing was intended to be conveyed to the Strongest Swords representing each region, so it was enough if only they followed.

"But everyone came thinking the business briefing would be held at COEX... So it's understandable they'd feel wronged after making the trip."

Yeongwoo pondered for a moment.

The people gathered here were citizens paying the defense tax and potential voters who could wield influence in a possible future re-election.

He couldn't ignore them.

'I can't just pretend I didn't take in millions in salary.'

Yeongwoo shifted his gaze to the city development module of Dogo to solve this issue.

Jeonggu tilted his head and approached Yeongwoo.

"Why? What are you looking for again?"

"I don't know. Something that might be useful right now."

If the Victory Monument was Metal Seoul's first building, theoretically, there should also be a second or third construction option somewhere in the module.

As Yeongwoo fiddled with the hologram interface of the module, he soon found a menu that caught his eye.

[Basic Facilities]

"Oh, what's this? Basic facilities?"

As soon as Yeongwoo pressed the button, new construction items appeared at the bottom of the menu.

[Relay Screen]

| Install relay screens throughout the city to allow the mayor to broadcast to the area.
The screens only operate when the mayor is in the city.

*Base cost: 20 million karma

"...Base cost?"

"There's a base price?"

Both Yeongwoo and Jeonggu reacted sensitively to the "base cost" at the bottom of the tooltip.

Because having a base cost meant...

[Angle adjustment: +10 million karma]

[Sound system upgrade: +10 million karma]

There were additional costs depending on the options chosen.

"These crazy people are really greedy."

Jeonggu immediately spat out a curse, and Yeongwoo shook his head at Dogo's method of recouping advertising costs.

Because...

Ping!

[Quest Complete - "Heavenly City"]

[Reward Issued]

|30 million karma

The timing couldn't have been better.

The Dogo quest was completed, and 30 million karma was credited to Yeongwoo, significantly increasing his wealth once again.

*Available Karma: 65,212,500

*Available Defense Fund: 78,967,105

His current personal fortune stood at 65 million karma, with an additional 78 million in defense taxes.

"Is it finally time to dip into the national treasury?"

Although he didn't like that the additional option prices were the same as the base price, the fact that it cost only 40 million karma to install screens throughout all of Seoul was practically a bargain.

"If we install it now, it'll be used almost permanently, right? I don't think it's an expensive price. They could have charged even more."

Ultimately, Yeongwoo was the decision-maker, so for the first time, he used public funds to purchase the "relay screen."

"Proceeding with the purchase, including both additional options."

Although the national treasury decreased to about 38 million karma, Titan screens appeared in the sky across all of Seoul, including Gangnam.

Zap!

"Huh?"

"What's this? In the sky...?"

As people widened their eyes, Yeongwoo's image appeared on the "relay screen."

Some citizens who were captured on the screen with him quickly covered their faces, and Jeonggu looked up at the sky with a sour expression.

"Doesn't this violate privacy?"

"I'm the special mayor of Dogo, so I'm practically a public figure. Just give up."

In Yeongwoo's gaze as he said this, there was a sense of the "weight that a mayor must bear."

「The purchase of relay screens from the company 'Dogo' cost 40 million karma from the defense fund.」

「This will be permanently recorded in the ledger and will be subject to voter evaluation.」

Yeongwoo was informed that the use of public funds would be tracked and recorded.

"Isn't this getting to be too much? I should get Mr. Kubu to handle some of this work."

Now that he had secured an announcement channel, the next step was to go to the Victory Monument and offer the legendary enemies as sacrifices.

Zap!

A small, palm-sized orb with a tiny lens appeared before him.

"Ah."

This was the angle adjustment device he paid an additional 10 million karma for—a sort of camera.

Swish.

Yeongwoo cleared his throat as he looked at the camera.

"Hello, citizens. I'm Jeong Yeongwoo, the special mayor of Dogo. It's nice to greet you, even if it's just through this screen."

Although he had done game streaming before the reset, this was his first time broadcasting to the entire city of Seoul, so he couldn't help but feel nervous.

"Uh... The screen you're seeing now is the first facility purchased with the defense tax you paid..."

As Yeongwoo scrolled down the [Basic Facilities] list in the module, other facilities appeared beneath the "relay screen."

[Surveillance System]

[Guillotine]

[Prison]

"...!"

Even just reading the top few lines, he could tell they were ominous, but fortunately, the camera didn't catch them.

"Yes, there are many good facilities prepared for citizen welfare. Please look forward to them."

Zap!

Yeongwoo hurriedly closed the module screen and turned the camera toward the north.

"Now, let's find out how close we are to elevating our status on this planet."

* * *

Sajikdan.

In the past, this was a place where people offered sacrifices to the gods of land and grain, praying for the nation's prosperity.

For a dynasty, it was as important as the Jongmyo Shrine.

In an agrarian society, the nation's wealth was directly tied to the harvest's success each year.

Therefore...

"This is quite ironic. This monstrous guy, who shouts about the prosperity of the nation, is going to Sajikdan to check his glory score."

Jeonggu, riding behind Yeongwoo on Negwig, couldn't help but feel a strange emotion.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Even in this situation, Yeongwoo was busy explaining to other citizens of Seoul, who couldn't attend the business report in Gangnam.

"In the future, we must absolutely..."

He explained how Seoul became "Metalized," how they would prepare for the upcoming war with the other two companies involved in planetary development, and he didn't forget to report the achievements made while running around the Earth and beyond.

"As I briefly mentioned earlier, the bonds we currently hold amount to 280 million..."

Finally, the Victory Monument, towering over the central part of Sajikdan, came into view.

"Can you see it? That is the Victory Monument! It's also the reason we must continue to face powerful enemies."

Yeongwoo turned the camera to capture the Victory Monument in front of him.

Swish.

The Victory Monument comprised two steel towers slanting towards each other, touching at the top.

Each tower began at the opposite ends of Sajikdan.

"Isn't that a bit disrespectful? Building something directly over Sajikdan, of all places."

Jeonggu said worriedly, but Yeongwoo wasn't bothered at all.

"Isn't it actually an honor?"

"...What?"

"The cosmic construction system recognized the significance of Sajikdan, so it chose this as the recommended construction site. It could have simply ignored it."

"R-Really...?"

Jeonggu scratched his cheek, finding Yeongwoo's oddly convincing argument persuasive.

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo stopped Negwig in front of Sajikdan and jumped off toward the Victory Monument.

Thud!

This was a chance to inform everyone that the enemies he had defeated so far could also contribute to the planet's status elevation, so Yeongwoo had to show this scene to all of Seoul.

After all, gaining support from voters for the violent business he planned to carry out in the future was essential.

"So, this is why results are so crucial in politics."

Snap!

Finally, Jeong Yeongwoo, the first mayor of Seoul in this reset world—no, the special mayor of Dogo—stood before the Victory Monument.

As soon as he did, a vortex began swirling between the two towers, and soon the system displayed a message.

「There are 3 records eligible for inscription on the Victory Monument. Would you like to confirm them?」

When Yeongwoo silently nodded, the next procedure automatically began.

[Baekdu Bloodline]

[Upon the reset, Kim Jong-un unexpectedly encountered his father and grandfather. The two predecessors, drawn from the void, fought desperately to preserve the bloodline, but they were not strong enough to block the laser aimed at the planet...]

"Why does the ending feel so melancholic...?"

After Yeongwoo read all the elimination records, the glory points assigned to the Baekdu Bloodline were displayed below.

[The Baekdu Bloodline is a legendary evil! You will earn 100 glory points if you inscribe it on this monument.]

‘Ah... The base score is 100 points.’

Yeongwoo stroked his chin for a moment before moving on to the next item.

Zap!

The name of someone whose face and voice were still vivid in his memory appeared.

[The Great Villain of Beijing]

[The sins committed in the previous world became an enormous debt in the reset world. Faced with the rain of deadly attacks, Im Dupyeong decided to take on a massive debt in exchange for a second chance. However, he never imagined that a greater evil than himself would come for him...]

‘These bastards are subtly mocking me, aren’t they?’

[The Beijing Archfiend is a legendary evil! You will earn 100 glory points if you inscribe it on this monument.]

By this point, it wasn't hard for Yeongwoo to infer that he, too, might have some glory points allocated to him.

‘But I haven't been taken down yet.’

With confidence, Yeongwoo opened the next record.

Zap!

[The Titan of Kromonius]

[The rebel Gameta registered as a temple keeper to escape the pursuit of the Vesedel royal family. However, it seems he couldn't escape the cycle of karma. Found dead in the temple, his body bore clear marks of a brutal beating and the blade of Vesedel...]

'Ah, poor Gameta.'

The last legendary enemy was the Titan Gameta.

[The Titan of Kmonis is a legendary traitor! You will earn 165 glory points if you inscribe it on this monument.]

"What? 165?"

It was a strangely uneven score.

The previous two enemies were exactly 100 points each, so why was this different?

"Oh."

Blinking, Yeongwoo soon figured it out.

'A base score of 150, plus a 10% bonus from Sajikdan.'

[Sajikdan]

[When an enemy not native to Earth is inscribed, you gain an additional 10% glory points.]

This was why additional points were granted for beings not from Earth.

'Cosmic entities have different base scores to begin with.'

If he inscribed all three elimination records on the monument...

"We'd have 365 points for Seoul's glory score."

When Yeongwoo said this, alternating his gaze between the camera and his father, Jeonggu's eyes lit up.

"Oh, really? Then how many more points do we need to undergo the upgrade evaluation?"

Yeongwoo turned back to the Victory Monument and inscribed all three records.

"Let's find out."

Swoosh!

The Victory Monument, now receiving the elimination records, began to burn white, shooting a pillar of light into the sky.

Boom...!

And soon, an announcement was broadcasted across all of Seoul.

—Mayor Jeong Yeongwoo07 has inscribed 3 legendary elimination records.

—The current glory score for Dogo Special City, Metal Seoul, is 365 points.

"And?"

As Yeongwoo waited for the next message, the system soon provided the desired response.

—The required glory score for this planet to undergo the upgrade evaluation is 635 points.

"What?"

"Huh? They want us to reach 1,000 points?"

This time, both Yeongwoo and Jeonggu stood with their mouths agape in identical expressions.

Despite all the havoc Yeongwoo had wreaked, he hadn't even gathered half the required points.

Moreover...

"....."

The announcement had just been broadcasted across all of Metal Seoul.

In other words, a significant portion of voters in the Korean Peninsula had just witnessed this outcome.

After choosing status elevation for the city's development instead of preparing for civil war, they had failed to achieve their goal.

Of course, given enough time, they could eventually gather the remaining points, but it was obvious that public opinion would turn hostile immediately.

"Th-This is bad, isn't it?"

Even Jeonggu, not entirely oblivious, subtly pushed the camera beside Yeongwoo away and asked in a small voice.

At that moment...

"....."

Yeongwoo, blinking rapidly in a way he never had before, quickly scanned the system messages in his field of vision.

Then.

You have 48 hours from the construction of the monument to inscribe enemies not eliminated in the name of the city.

[Time remaining – 47:51:37]

His eyes landed on the time limit given for the retroactive application of elimination records.

‘Enemies not eliminated in the name of the city can also be inscribed....’

As Yeongwoo silently blinked, unable to speak, Jeonggu finally broke the silence.

"First, let's just turn off the broadcast for a while..."

"No."

"Huh?"

"We haven't finished the business presentation yet."

"...What are you talking about? We're already in Metal..."

As Jeonggu stared blankly at the Metalized Seoul, Yeongwoo picked up the camera in the meantime.

Swish.

He then turned the angle to point at the timer displayed on the Victory Monument.

"I'm now announcing our new business for Metal Seoul. The business is called 'The Legendary Invitation Exhibition!'"

".....?"

Had he finally gone into a panic and decided to spout nonsense?

Jeonggu thought he had to stop his son before things got worse, but unexpectedly, Jeong Yeongwoo's eyes were sharp and clear.

"Over the next 47 hours, I'll invite the world's strongest to stand before the monument!"

"What?"

"At least some of them will have legendary elimination records. And I'll add one or two more during that time."

In simple terms, he planned to receive elimination record offerings.

The only problem was that the method was essentially...

"Y-Yeongwoo, isn't this practically kidnapping, threatening, and assaulting people? If you really go through with this..."

There was no need to finish the sentence by saying he'd become an irredeemable villain.

Jeong Yeongwoo was already exuding an aura more fitting of a demon king than a mere villain.

"Are we villains? We are...!"

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 296: Den of Evil (1)

"Great power...!"

"We are a great power!"

A few citizens shouted this among the crowd rushing toward the sacrificial altar, causing Jeonggu to look terrified.

“H-Hey, Yeongwoo. You’re ruining our country. Look at what these people are saying!”

Then, the demon Jeong Yeongwoo glanced at the citizens before returning to his father.

“So what? It’s not wrong to call a great power a great power.”

He pointed to the top of the brightly shining Victory Monument.

“Do you think this will end with just a planetary civil war? Even if we fight and win amongst ourselves, it won’t be the end.”

“...Then what?”

When Jeonggu questioned him, Yeongwoo looked down at the armor of the royal family of Vesedel that he was wearing.

“Dogo, Mara, Lemu. At least three interstellar forces are currently positioned on our planet. And there are others, like Toma, who are trying to intervene unofficially.”

Yeongwoo thought that the debt company 'Osaek Credit,' which he had encountered before, might be a similar case.

“But isn’t Dogo your sponsor? If you win the civil war, doesn’t that mean...?”

If Yeongwoo won the civil war, his sponsor, Dogo, would also win.

However, Yeongwoo was considering far more than Jeonggu could imagine.

“Yes, if we win the civil war, Dogo could become the only alien force on Earth.”

“That’s right.”

“But why do you think that’s a good thing?”

“...What?”

“Dogo is still an alien force, and they’re businessmen.”

Moreover, they were in the business of violence.

Yeongwoo was walking a similar path, but he believed they needed to be cautious precisely because of that.

“Our chairman? I respect him. He’s an incredible person. But if you think carefully about how he gained that great reputation... you’ll realize there’s a need for caution.”

“What do you mean?”

“We need at least some negotiating power. We’re not fighting this civil war to become slaves or refugees, right?”

Yeongwoo looked back up at the sky.

But this time, his gaze reached higher than the sky, towards space's vast, unfathomable depths.

“One thing I’ve learned for sure about the universe is that if you lack power, things get difficult. Our brothers in Australia ended up here because they couldn’t stand up to Mara.”

Brothers.

The Red Foot Orcs in Australia lost their entire planet to Mara.

So there was no guarantee that such a future wouldn’t come to Earth.

“You... this kid...”

Jeonggu's eyes widened as he realized that his son had far greater ambitions than he had imagined.

Soon, Yeongwoo clenched his fist.

“So, I will become someone who can beat anyone.”

“...What?”

“That’s the only way to achieve true peace. No one will be able to stand in the way.”

“Please, just conquer the world. Don’t start messing with things beyond that.”

Jeonggu, born of the Earth, looked at his son worriedly.

Why else would the ancient myth of Icarus, who flew too close to the sun and fell, exist?

Humans have limits, and there are things they should never challenge.

“Don’t confuse bravery with recklessness. Getting this far is already amazing. But I’m not sure fighting with aliens even more is the right thing to do.”

As Jeonggu spoke gently, Yeongwoo tilted his head.

“We are already aliens.”

“Huh?”

“From the perspective of other planets, we’re just like them—aliens.”

Then Yeongwoo added a final remark.

“To be precise, we’re classified as 12th-grade aliens under universal law.”

“.....”

“So now the only question left is: what grade of alien do we want to live as?”

And the first solution to that problem had just arrived before their eyes.

The Victory Monument and the planetary promotion evaluation.

Thud!

As Yeongwoo took a step forward, Jeonggu asked in shock.

“Where are you going this time?”

“To do business.”

“Business?”

“Time for my first Legendary Invitation Match.”

A match that would likely be marked by kidnapping, threats, and violence—Jeong Yeongwoo’s first Legendary Invitation Match.

Stealing someone else’s achievements... was that even possible?

“Who... who’s the first?”

Naturally, Jeonggu, being human, couldn’t resist his curiosity, and soon his son gave him an answer.

“The Great Master Bang in Australia.”

“The Great Master Bang?”

“Yes. He himself is a legend, as he’s the first orc to conquer Australia.”

And he also survived the invasion of Mara, the master of the void.

With such a legend, Yeongwoo expected an impressive track record.

* * *

11:46 AM.

Leaving Seoul and once again ascending onto the overpass, Yeongwoo began speeding southward along the path of light.

Flash!

His destination was Darwin, a city in northern Australia, part of the Orc Autonomous Territory.

‘I’ll finally get to see that portal he talked about,’ he thought.

According to Orc Lord Bantubangtong, there was a massive portal in Darwin, the city of his brothers.

He had mentioned that they could bring in more of their kin using Karma through this portal.

For Yeongwoo, who had spent his entire life on Earth, it was a sight he couldn’t quite imagine.

Yet, Lord Bang hadn’t seemed too surprised.

‘Well, considering this is the man who once lost a planet to the Master of the Void...’

Who knows what bizarre things he had seen in the process?

Lord Bang was certainly the senior in terms of being invaded by aliens.

“Oh...!”

After a while, as Yeongwoo sped along the path of light, the edge of the Australian continent finally came into view, and soon the problematic city of Darwin revealed itself.

A city located at the northern tip of Australia, named after the famous British biologist Charles Darwin, known for his theory of evolution.

The soil had a reddish-brown hue, which gave the city a desolate feel despite its substantial greenery.

‘It really looks like orcs would live here.’

Since the orc city of Darwin had a “tower” they had built, Yeongwoo headed straight for it.

Flash!

From atop the tower, two heavily armored orc brothers with red feet stood guard.

It was, after all, their territory, so they had stationed guards.

“Brothers...!”

As Yeongwoo waved while approaching on the path of light, the orcs soon made way, completely opening up the top of the tower in Darwin for him.

– Human!

– The one with the small feet has arrived.

As the two brothers tucked their swords into their belts, they welcomed the only human allowed to use this road.

Yeongwoo glanced toward the base of the tower and asked,

"Where is Master Bang? I've come this far, but..."

One of the brothers pointed to the north of the tower.

- The Lord is greeting the brothers.

It seemed like the Lord was at the portal.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

"Ah, so he's here. That's all I needed to know."

When Yeongwoo nodded from atop Negwig, the other brother pointed at Yeongwoo's feet.

- Your feet aren't red. You must follow protocol before leaving the tower.

"Oh."

Only after hearing that did Yeongwoo look down at his feet.

His feet had been dyed red the last time they met, but now they were hidden by the Vesedel armor.

'Well, the dye must have worn off by now.'

As Yeongwoo scratched his chin, the brother who had pointed out Master Bang's location approached a nearby path.

"...?"

Curious, Yeongwoo watched him, wondering what he was up to.

The brother pulled a reddish cloth pouch from his belt.

It was slightly larger than a fist, carefully tied up.

"...What is that?"

The brothers' actions were so analog that they piqued Yeongwoo's curiosity.

Yet neither of the two brothers answered his question.

Instead—

Whoosh!

The brother near the path threw the pouch high into the sky, about 800 meters up.

The other brother quickly picked up a bow that had been lying on the ground.

Swoosh.

Then—

Whoosh, thunk!

With surprising speed for his large frame, he drew the bow and shot an arrow.

"Oh...!"

The moment Yeongwoo instinctively realized what was happening—

Swishhh!

The thin arrow flew straight into the cloth pouch, piercing it cleanly.

Bang!

The pouch exploded, and its unknown contents spread through the air, forming a red cloud.

It was a signal to Master Bang.

- We have prepared red feet for you.

The brother who had shot the arrow pointed at the red cloud in the sky.

"...Oh! It looks just like a foot!"

Of course, it didn't resemble a foot at all, but Yeongwoo made a polite lie.

This was human etiquette—humans generally think with their heads, not their hearts.

But the Red Foot Orcs—

- Red foot!

- Go! The Lord awaits you!

As always, they spoke with their hearts as they punched the transmission device at the top of the tower.

Bang!

As Yeongwoo saw his body enveloped in light, he hastily asked,

"Brothers! If the welcoming signal is red, what color is the warning signal?"

Through the now-whitewashed view, the brothers' rough voices answered,

- Black hand!

- The color of death!

And at the same time—

Swoosh!

Yeongwoo's body was transported to the lowest level of the tower.

"Hah!"

In an instant, Yeongwoo found himself on the ground floor, where yet another brother stood, holding a steel inkwell full of red paint.

- Small Foot.

The brother pointed a large finger at Yeongwoo, then dipped it into the inkwell.

He expected Yeongwoo to dip his foot in.

So, Yeongwoo dismounted Negwig, still clad in his Vesedel armor, and dipped his foot into the inkwell.

Squelch.

At last, the gatekeeper bared a savage grin, something resembling a smile.

- Go, Red Foot! The great city of Darwin awaits you.

Even though most of the city's buildings were still human-made, it didn't stop the brothers from talking about the "great city."

'Their self-esteem is through the roof.'

But as Yeongwoo stepped beyond the tower's inner walls and entered the "great city of Darwin,"

"...!"

He had no choice but to agree that Darwin was indeed a grand city of the Red Foot Orcs.

As soon as he stepped out of the tower, a massive portal, about 100 meters in diameter, dominated the view to the north.

"What the...? Why didn't I see that earlier?"

The colossal portal of Darwin.

It was a privilege earned by a species that had fallen to an alien planet as monsters and obtained a title on their own.

"...!"

Yeongwoo swallowed heavily without realizing it.

Because soon, he would have to go up to that portal and request the legendary kill record from Master Bang, as well as deliver the bad news that Mara wasn't in China.

'They've been working so hard, preparing for war.'

Yeongwoo saw some brothers passing by the tower, carrying raw metal ore.

It seemed like the ore had also come from the portal.

Not only could they rescue their brothers from their home planet through the portal, but they could also bring back materials left behind.

Rumble!

Suddenly, the ground shook violently, and the distant portal began to swirl.

'Wait, is it opening again?'

Sensing something unusual, Yeongwoo quickly mounted Negwig, and then his belt vibrated.

"What...?"

When he reached into his pocket, he felt the Epic Compass, "Fearful Cat," trembling.

- Graaa!

It was warning him that a dangerous enemy was near the portal.

"What's coming out of there that's making this thing shake?"

With a grim sense of foreboding, Yeongwoo was about to dash toward the portal.

Shwoosh!

The swirling portal suddenly calmed, its surface becoming transparent, revealing something beyond.

"This...!"

Yeongwoo instantly realized that the portal had been activated and was now connected to Earth and the brothers' home planet.

And if the brothers could cross over to Earth through the portal—

'In theory, other things could come through too.'

As this thought occurred to him, a long, eerie wail echoed from the 100-meter portal.

— Screeeee!

"Huh?"

Something else was coming through the portal, along with the brothers.

Whatever it was, it seemed to be chasing the brothers fleeing to Earth.

"You've got to be kidding me!"

With that, Yeongwoo hastily drew his Bastard and urged Negwig to charge toward the portal.

"Master Bang! You can't just smuggle in dangerous items! Close the portal!"

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 297: Den of Evil (2)

"Master Bang!"

As Yeongwoo shouted the name of Orc Warlord Bantubangtong and ran toward the portal, the brothers who had been carrying unidentified metal also dropped their loads and began running.

They too had heard the ominous wail just now.

'Damn, what are they bringing to my planet?'

Since Yeongwoo dreamed of being the sole stakeholder of Earth, he had a strong sense of ownership over the planet.

Therefore, he couldn't sit idly by while something dangerous entered his world.

Especially because it was Yeongwoo himself who had allowed the orcs autonomy in northern Australia, the responsibility for any harm that came from them essentially...

'It's my responsibility.'

Thud, thud!

Though the sound of the iron hooves of the Negwig rang loudly beneath his feet, the only thing Yeongwoo could hear was the disturbing cry.

— Screeech!

The chilling cry echoed again, and with it came a heavy footstep that hinted at the creature's size.

Boom!

'This is....'

The sound was so vivid.

This proved that the creature had already passed through the portal and entered Earth.

— Screeaaaach!

The grotesque cry rang out once more, and just then, Yeongwoo's sight caught a glimpse of the Red Foot Orcs' dimensional portal.

Whoosh!

".....!"

As he had seen from a distance, the brothers were holding a massive portal.

It was an enormous oval-shaped portal, about 100 meters in diameter.

And in front of the portal...

— Screeech!

A grotesque dragon-like figure was half-emerged from the portal, flailing about.

Its size was so immense that its head obscured the central part of the portal.

"What... what is that?"

Yeongwoo frowned.

Upon closer inspection, the dragon's body was composed entirely of black tentacles.

Strictly speaking, it wasn't a dragon at all but a mass of wriggling, unidentified tentacles.

"My God."

While Yeongwoo stood there with his mouth agape, the brothers lined up in front of the portal simultaneously hurled their spears at the 'dragon.'

Swish!

Meanwhile, on the side of the portal, the brothers burst open the red pouches Yeongwoo had seen earlier on the overpass.

Pop! Pop! Pop!

Suddenly, the 'Red Foot' insignia appeared in the air like a cloud, and at that moment, from inside the portal, under the dragon's belly and legs—

- Waaaah!

- Run! Don't stop!

- Toward the Red Foot mark!

Hundreds of Red Foot orcs charged out.

"Ah."

So, this was a rescue mission.

'It wasn't just about paying money and having a brother pop out individually. They had to rescue them live from an occupied planet.'

Meanwhile, the dragon that the spears had hit turned its head toward the spear-throwers.

— Scree!

Then—

Whooosh!

What had looked like a dragon's head unfurled like a sunflower and spewed out black breath.

Whooooosh!

In an instant, dozens of orcs were wiped out, and in the chaos, hundreds of other orcs managed to escape safely toward the red cloud.

The spear-throwers had been sacrificing themselves to distract the dragon.

"This...!"

Now fully understanding the meaning of the portal, Yeongwoo, furious, spurred his Negwig forward.

"Everyone out! I'll handle this!"

Thud, thud!

As the Negwig's iron hooves clanged with their distinct metallic sound, the monstrous dragon with its open head turned its gaze toward the new intruder.

Then—

Whooooosh!

It once again unleashed its black breath.

"You bastard!"

Yeongwoo, who had even withstood the laser cannons of the Metal Forbidden City, wasn't the least bit frightened.

He quickly raised Bastard and blocked the stream of black filth.

Whooosh!

Seeing this, the Red Foot orcs who had been watching were left slack-jawed.

- That, human?

- Small Foot!

It was at this moment that a familiar voice reached Yeongwoo's ears.

- Riders! Riders to the front!

It was none other than Red Foot Orc Warlord Bantubangtong.

- Small Foot is clearing a path! Fill in the remaining numbers!

‘Remaining numbers?’

As Yeongwoo tilted his head in confusion, brothers holding yellow flags approached right in front of the dragon’s belly.

They were signaling to the brothers still inside the portal to advance.

Swaaay!

Another group of orc refugees came charging out when the yellow flag waved vigorously.

Thud!

It was then that Yeongwoo noticed the number written above the portal.

[1462/2500]

‘Ah.’

Having seen this sort of thing more than once, Yeongwoo quickly understood.

This number represented the total brothers that could be rescued in this round.

‘There are still a thousand more brothers to save.’

With this thought, Yeongwoo looked beyond the dragon to the scenery visible through the portal.

There, on a red, rocky mountain, stood countless Red Foot orcs.

"Ah!"

Though he didn’t know the exact location on the home planet, there were still far too many brothers waiting to be rescued.

Far more than the number that could be saved in this round.

Then—

“Watch out!”

Just as Yeongwoo saw a foreboding shadow cast over the rocky mountain—

Whoooosh!

Another dragon descended upon the rocky mountain where the brothers were standing, spraying tentacles everywhere.

"That bastard!"

Furious, Yeongwoo reached for the bow strapped to his body, but Bantubangtong shouted.

- Small Foot! It's useless!

"...What?"

- We cannot interfere with what happens beyond the portal! All we can do is...!

With that, Bantubangtong leapt out from the ranks of the brothers and hurled a massive spear.

Swish!

It was aimed at the dragon that had just breathed black breath at Yeongwoo.

Thud!

The spear struck the dead center of the dragon's head, which had been open like a sunflower.

The blow must have been significant, as the creature quickly retracted its head and dissolved the spear.

- We can only deal with what crawls out of the portal.

Master Bang's voice was filled with sorrow.

Meanwhile, the grotesque dragon let out another strange cry and shot out more tentacles.

— Screeaaach!

Whoosh!

Among the dozens of tentacles that sprouted from the creature's body, some shot toward Bantubangtong, who had just thrown the spear.

But Master Bang, having been through such situations many times before, swiftly drew the sword at his waist and sliced through the tentacles headed his way.

Swoosh!

He then quickly cut down the tentacle that had wrapped around the brother next to him and looked at Yeongwoo.

- Small Foot, why have you come here? Have you finally brought good news?

".....!"

At this, Yeongwoo's pupils couldn't help but tremble.

The reason he had come to this city was purely to seek understanding and a favor.

Since Mara wasn't in China, he needed to ask for more time, and he had to request the transfer of a legendary kill record for the city's development.

"Ba, Master Bang... I..."

When Yeongwoo couldn't find the words, which was unlike him, Master Bang let out another loud laugh with his mouth wide open.

- Hahaha! If there's no good news, we'll just have to make some. Look behind you! That is the gift you will give us.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

"...?"

When Yeongwoo turned around, he saw a monstrous dragon grabbing his brothers with its tentacles.

He wasn't here to bring good news, but rather to ask for help to save his brothers.

After all, hadn't his brothers in Australia already seen the declaration of war from Mara and Lemu?

"Oh, Master Bang!"

Yeongwoo, deeply moved by Master Bang's broad, ocean-like heart, raised the Bastard again.

Without hesitation, he sent a golden arc to sever the tentacles holding his brothers.

Shwiiiaaat!

“I’ll guard the entrance, so bring in more of the brothers!”

Yeongwoo, who suggested increasing the rescue count beyond the set number of 2,500, was met with Master Bang shaking his head.

- Once a number is set, it cannot be changed. You’ll have to wait for the next opportunity.

“The next opportunity? What does that...?”

Before Yeongwoo could ask, the monstrous dragon launched another attack.

—Keeeeek!

This time, dozens of tentacles were flying toward Yeongwoo.

“...!”

Yeongwoo slashed through the tentacles like lightning with his sword and leaped high into the air.

Taat!

In an instant, the brothers below him shrank into the distance, while the monstrous dragon’s body, made up of intertwined tentacles, loomed closer.

‘How is this thing so big?’

Even after jumping tens of meters, the spot where Yeongwoo landed was merely the dragon’s chest.

‘Seeing as there’s more of these things beyond the portal, it’s no wonder my brothers lost their planet.’

Just as Yeongwoo started to understand why his brothers had lost their planet, tentacles shot up from under his feet, wrapping around his entire body.

“Damn these things, how disgusting!”

In response to the tentacles reaching for him from all directions, Yeongwoo made a bold choice.

Thud!

He stabbed himself with his sword, causing his poisonous blood to spray out.

Thanks to that, all the tentacles holding Yeongwoo, as well as those approaching him, melted away.

Tsss!

—Kieek?

At this point, the dragon seemed to realize that it had picked the wrong target.

It stopped thinking about breathing fire and began retreating.

Thud! Thud!

“Where do you think you’re going?!”

But Yeongwoo had already leaped again, landing on the dragon's back before it could retreat fully through the portal.

Thud!

Yeongwoo’s Bastard slashed the dragon’s neck.

Slaaash!

Despite its tough exterior, the dragon’s skin tore like an old rag under the divine blade, revealing countless writhing tentacles inside.

‘What are these things?’

Since Mara, the ruler of the Void, was said to have taken his brothers' planet, this dragon must also be some creature from Mara’s domain.

Even after slashing from its neck to its chest, the dragon was still alive, so Yeongwoo resolved to finish it off with one more leap.

Taaat!

This time, he hurled his sword, piercing the dragon’s head, while simultaneously shouting loudly.

“Earth, 006! 491! 8271! 390!”

When facing such unpleasant creatures, the best course of action was to incinerate them with a laser.

Taat!

After requesting the strike, Yeongwoo retrieved his sword and moved away from the dragon.

Soon, an immense energy was detected from the sky above.

Boooong!

- Wait, this is...

- Uh...

A few of his brothers trembled, recognizing what was coming.

They couldn't help but recall the overwhelming power of asymmetric warfare they had experienced at the border between Jeju Island and Meganesia.

Craaash!

As the massive laser beam descended, splitting the sky, the red-footed orcs who had just escaped from their home planet fled in terror.

- The sky!

- The sky is falling!

- Aaaargh!

Though they were fierce warriors in battle, the red-footed orcs, like many others, were instinctively fearful when faced with advanced technology beyond their comprehension.

Still, they were fundamentally "red-footed."

- Everyone, halt! Reorganize the formation!

At the command of Lord Bantubangtong, not a single one continued to flee, and they all returned to their places.

At the perfect moment, the laser beam struck the monstrous dragon, erasing its hideous body cleanly.

- Ooooh...!

- The light!

'These Toma guys may be annoying with their cautiousness, but their weapons are something else.'

Yeongwoo was inwardly impressed by the Toma planetary bombardment weapon that had managed to kill even the dragon from another dimension.

Just how far could this firepower go?

Yet, Yeongwoo suddenly felt uneasy, as if someday they might face something that could withstand even this beam.

‘I don’t think Lemu or Mara’s agents would die just from a bombardment.’

But his worries were short-lived, as a system message suddenly appeared in his vision.

「You have defeated the legendary dragon Moracus!」

Then, something even more surprising happened.

「You have gained a record of a legendary enemy defeat that can be registered on the monument.」

“Whaaat?”

A new record eligible for the monument.

This meant that the recent battle had qualified as a “legendary enemy defeat.”

‘No way... Is this a glory point jackpot?’

Yeongwoo’s eyes widened in amazement as he stared at the portal, and Lord Bantubangtong approached, giving him a pat on the back.

- Little Foot! That was an impressive fight! There’s no need to fight dirty creatures with honor!

Moved by the words, Yeongwoo firmly grabbed Master Bang’s arm in return.

Thud!

“Master Bang! Glory overflows in this city!”

Just then, where the dragon Moracus had vanished, smoke began to rise.

Shiiiiiii.

“Huh?”

Yeongwoo was the first to notice and quickly drew his sword again, but Master Bang gestured for him to calm down.

- Little Foot, don't you see?

"...See what?"

- Part of Mara is now here.

With that, Master Bang pointed to where the smoke was rising, and there, a sword made of tentacles began to take form.

Sssrrrip.

The sword, looking as if it had been made by intertwining innards, was unmistakably...

'Wow... it looks like something a villain would use.'

Yeongwoo had just gained one more cursed sword.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 298: Den of Evil (3)

'Why do I keep getting things like this?'

Was there still something called fate?

With the constant developments urging him toward the path of evil, Yeongwoo looked up at the sky.

However, after slaying a tentacle-formed dragon, it was only natural for a sword entwined with tentacles to appear.

In truth, this was all karma.

Strictly speaking, it was Yeongwoo himself who had willingly walked down the path of evil, to the point where he had now become a demon.

After all, it was only a few minutes ago that he declared he would resort to kidnapping, threats, and violence just to register his hunting record.

- Little one, grasp the sword.

As Bantubangtong pointed to the sword left behind by the slain dragon, Yeongwoo asked,

"Master Bang, do you know what that sword is...?"

To this, Master Bang gently closed his eyes.

- It is certain that this item has been tainted by Mara's filthy touch. Can't you smell the stench even now?

"...You can just say you don't know."

Feeling the tense gazes of his brothers, Yeongwoo walked towards the ominous sword.

Clank, clank.

He was already clad in the Vesedel armor, and with the mythical weapon Bastard glowing red in his right hand, he looked like a demon lord even without the cursed sword.

'Of all places, among my brothers.'

Surrounded by large, red-footed orcs, he felt strange as he picked up the obviously evil sword.

Especially since this scene was being recorded, and who knows how it might affect future elections.

'Well, for now...'

Loot was always welcome.

Especially weapons.

Tap!

As Yeongwoo touched the tip of the cursed sword, gray waves spread out in all directions, revealing the weapon's tooltip.

「Void Flesh」 - Void One-Handed Sword

【Absorbs other Void Flesh.】

【Phantom Dragon: 10% increased damage against living creatures.】

"Hmm?"

Yeongwoo's eyes widened upon checking the sword's tooltip.

The word "Void" was inscribed where the grade of the equipment should have been, just like the Vesedel armor that had the royal family name stamped on it without a manufacturing symbol.

'If it's Void... it might be...'

—Master of the Void, one who walks in the shadow of cosmic laws, King of Ten Thousand Demons.

A title attached to Mara.

In other words, as Master Bang had suggested, this equipment indeed belonged to Mara.

To be precise, it should be seen as equipment governed by Mara's domain.

'So, Mara's equipment doesn't have manufacturing symbols either. It must be a very powerful piece.'

This fact implied a lot.

After all, Mara was one of the three forces that had won the right to develop Earth.

'But only Mara doesn't have a manufacturing symbol on their equipment. That must mean their status is incredibly high.'

On the other hand, Dogo had a ◇-shaped manufacturing symbol on their equipment.

The same went for Toma, which was another force outside the development rights holders. Lemu was likely the same, with manufacturing symbols attached to their equipment since their cosmic law rank was lower than Dogo's.

Summing it all up,

'The official ranking of the cosmic forces currently on Earth is Mara, Dogo, and Lemu in that order.'

Toma was probably on the same level as Lemu.'

Now, only one question remained.

'So, is Mara a second-tier entity in cosmic law?'

At first glance, it should be the case, but circumstantially, it wasn't.

As far as Yeongwoo knew, entities of the second tier or higher could not have their names casually spoken by mere mortals.

Yet, Master Bang and his brothers, who were undoubtedly cosmic entities, frequently invoked "Mara."

Therefore, judging by circumstantial evidence, Mara's presumed rank was...

'Probably third-tier... on the same level as the Chairman.'

However, despite being of the same third tier, Mara's external prestige was clearly higher than Dogo's.

'So instead of comparing Mara to the Chairman, it makes more sense to compare them to the Vasedel royal family.'

This made Chairman Dogo's position rather ambiguous.

Despite being from a family that could formally be included in the cosmic equipment ranking, he was still the head of a private corporation.

Thinking about this, it made more sense why Guppy, a special-grade enforcer from the Mon-O tribe, had beaten up Mara's subordinates while working for Dogo.

Although attacking Mara was a kind of rebellion, it was more like a younger sibling hitting an older sibling, rather than a child striking a parent.

'But in any case, Mara does seem like the stronger force... Can we really win?'

Although the Chairman's majesty, which was comparable to the Master of the Void and King of Ten Thousand Demons, was impressive, that wasn't important to Yeongwoo right now.

'Chairman? Did I board the right ship? Yes?'

While Yeongwoo was glaring fiercely at the sky, a thousand red-footed orcs completed their evacuation through the portal.

Thud!

The last orc leaped out of the portal, and the massive gate promptly closed behind it.

Swoosh!

With a chilling sound, the 100-meter diameter dimensional gate vanished in an instant, and Yeongwoo grabbed Master Bang in shock.

Thud!

"Wait, there were still brothers left behind! Is it really okay for the gate to close like that? If we had waited, more dragons might have come through!"

To this, Bantubangtong wrinkled his blunt nose.

- There's nothing we can do. If you wanted to save more brothers, you could have...

"Put in more money? And?"

Eager to reopen the gate, Yeongwoo sent a desperate look, urging Master Bang to finish his sentence.

Master Bang walked to the side of the portal.

- It's faster if you see this.

The grand city of the red-footed orcs, Darwin.

Installed here was an enormous metal gate.

It was built to securely house the 100-meter diameter dimensional portal.

Yeongwoo only realized this after the portal had closed.

"What... is this?"

He stared blankly at the oval metal frame that stretched far into the sky.

Just moments ago, this gate had shown another dimension's planet, but now it only reflected Earth's sky.

In some ways, Darwin was the most advanced city on Earth at this moment.

Nowhere else had a dimensional gate connected to an alien world.

Swish.

Then, Bantubangtong stood in front of a large lever next to the gate.

"Is this the gate's control mechanism?"

When Yeongwoo asked, Bantubangtong placed his hand on the lever and pulled it down forcefully.

Rumble, clank!

As the lever moved, a magical circle appeared above it, and a familiar system message popped up.

「Please input the number of entities to pass through the gate. 10,000 Karma is required per entity.」

"So, it costs 10,000 Karma per brother."

- Yes. But...

Master Bang gestured as if telling Yeongwoo to pay close attention, then pulled the lever down another notch.

Rumble, clank!

A new system message appeared.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

「Set the gate's danger level. The number of entities allowed to pass will increase based on the set level, but the risk of unexpected variables will also rise.」

[Current Danger Level: 0%]

[Maximum Danger Level: 100%]

"Ah."

Yeongwoo instantly understood.

"If you take the risk, you can bring more brothers through. What was the danger level earlier?"

- 25%. It was the first time. After I saw you arrive, I pulled the lever one more time.

'As expected of a great master, bold as ever.'

Indeed, the red-footed orcs had been able to steadily increase their numbers by always setting the gate's danger level to 0%.

They hadn't taken any risks until now.

But as soon as they confirmed that the demon from the Korean Peninsula had arrived in the city, they bet on 25%.

"At 25%, dragons might intrude. What would happen if we set it to 50%?"

Muttering to himself, Yeongwoo looked back at the cursed sword he had acquired in Darwin today.

「Void Flesh」 - Void One-Handed Sword

【Absorbs other Void Flesh.】

【Dragon: 10% increased damage against biological targets.】

'If my guess is correct, this weapon's effect will continue to grow. If I acquire two Void Flesh swords, they'll merge into one. If I get three, the effect will either triple or I'll gain three different options.'

So, theoretically, the Void Flesh was a weapon with ridiculous potential.

And the way to obtain another Void Flesh was probably...

'...to kill something like that phantom dragon again. I'll have to open a portal and summon another being from the domain that Mara governs.'

Anyway, since he was planning to use this portal as a glory points dispenser, there was nothing more to think about.

"We don't have time. Let's open it before the mutators fall."

- What do you mean?

"What else? The portal. We need to rescue our brothers as soon as possible, don't we?"

Sure, killing Master Bang in front of him would earn me another legendary kill record, but... Yeongwoo wasn't that much of a villain.

Swish.

So, Yeongwoo lifted the 'Void Flesh' and pointed it at the inactive gate instead of Master Bang.

"Shall we try it at 50% risk? I'll deduct the rescue cost from today's tribute, so hurry up and deposit it."

However, for some reason, Master Bang didn't budge.

"...Why are you hesitating?"

- A signal.

"...What?"

- "A signal from our brothers. Only then can we open the portal."

"...What? You mean the brothers on that planet need to send a signal?"

- Yes. Even if we open the path, if there are no brothers on the other side, no one can be rescued.

"Hah."

Yeongwoo blinked rapidly at the unexpected response.

He had naturally assumed that the portal on the other planet, like the gate here, had a fixed location.

'So, in fact, the location of the portal is determined by the other planet, and all we can do is respond?'

Well, their home planet has already been swallowed by Mara, hadn't it?

So the brothers left on the other side were likely fugitives or independent fighters, without any fixed place of residence.

'So, the signal they sent earlier was probably while they were fleeing.'

On the rocky mountain of the other planet that he saw through the portal behind the phantom dragon, there were at least thousands of brothers standing.

And yet, the reason they didn't all rush towards the portal...

'They could see the number above the portal. They knew it wasn't their turn yet.'

Thud.

Without realizing it, Yeongwoo clutched his chest over the Vesedel armor.

For some reason, every time he came to meet Master Bang and his brothers, his humanity seemed to return temporarily.

"Master Bang, there can't be many brothers left on your home planet, can there?"

The Orc Lord Bantubangtong's eyes turned nostalgic, as if recalling the past.

"The number of brothers is dwindling. And Mara's interference is getting worse by the day."

He was talking about the increasing number of monsters that came through when they opened the portal.

"....."

Yeongwoo checked the cash he currently had.

* Available Karma: 65,212,500

* Available Defense Funds: 38,967,105

Including both personal and state funds, his total assets were about 100 million Karma.

And with that money, he could save a whopping 10,000 brothers on the other planet.

He could bring in 10,000 more Red Foot Orc warriors to Earth.

"Whew."

Yeongwoo took a deep breath as if making a big decision, then grabbed the lever handle that Bantubangtong was holding.

Thud!

"Master Bang! I will lend you 100 million Karma right now."

- What? 100 million...?

"Yes! Take the 100 million from me, save 10,000 brothers, and when you get a golden sphere by defeating the mutators... choose the 30,000 Karma supply."

- Small Foot, if that's really possible...

"Yes, then with just the newly rescued brothers, you'll generate at least 300 million Karma, right?"

When Yeongwoo raised his hand and formed the number three, Master Bang, sensing something suspicious, let go of the lever and stepped back.

- We are not good with numbers.

"It's 300 million! Master Bang!"

Shouting at the leader of thousands of Orcs, Yeongwoo then calmed his voice and folded one of the three fingers he had raised.

"You'll gain 300 million in an instant, and out of that, just give me 200 million."

- 200 million?

"Yes. Since I lent you 100 million, it's basically just giving me back 100 million. And you and the brothers will still have 100 million left. This is what we call a creative economy, Master Bang."

- B-but according to your words...

100% interest rate.

Master Bang was speechless at the outrageous usury.

But as Small Foot said, it was indeed a deal where both sides would gain an enormous profit.

It was just that using the brothers' rescue mission as a money-making scheme felt unsettling.

"Master Bang, do you think I'm comfortable with this? I'm using state funds, so if I spend the people's taxes, I have to report the purpose and outcome. There's no choice, I tell you."

As Yeongwoo spoke, his face showed both vigor and excitement.

This was, after all, a high-stakes game.

"Master Bang! Think of your brothers! Is your pride really the issue right now?"

As Yeongwoo once again sternly urged, pulling Master Bang's hand towards the lever, a horn-like sound suddenly echoed long and loud from inside the inactive portal.

"What's that? Could it be...?"

Yeongwoo's eyes widened as he looked around, and the Orc Lord Bantubangtong sighed and closed his eyes.

- It's a signal. Somewhere, our brothers have reached a dead end.

On the other hand, Yeongwoo, excited, drew both Bastard and the Void Flesh.

"Then we must save them quickly! Master Bang! What are you doing? Hurry up and take my money."

As Yeongwoo gave a nod, a golden goblin that had been waiting behind poured 100 million Karma in cash onto the ground.

Rattle!

The dark money brought by the demon of the Korean Peninsula.

Clearly, it was money with an impure intent, but it could also save countless brothers.

- Hmm.

As Master Bang clenched his eyes tightly again, urging him to hurry, the horn sounded once more from inside the portal.

Hooorn!

"This is already the second signal. Isn't it telling us to open the door quickly because they're dying?"

When Yeongwoo pushed for the portal to be opened, Master Bang, his patience worn thin, opened his eyes wide.

- Human! I'll endure you tainting our honor with your money! But do not mock the sacrifices of our brothers!

At this, Yeongwoo firmly grasped Master Ban's hand that had moved away from the lever.

"Do you think I'm mocking your brothers? With this money, your brothers won't even need to sacrifice themselves. Wake up, Bantubangtong."

-!

Because Yeongwoo's grip was so strong, Bantubangtong had no choice but to be pulled back to the lever.

But the decision on the number of people to be rescued was entirely up to the city's lord, Bantubangtong.

- This is disgraceful. But the preservation of our brothers comes first.

In the end, as Bantubangtong set the rescue cost at 100 million Karma and was about to pull the lever, Yeongwoo stopped him again by grabbing his arm.

Clench!

- What, what now? I've agreed to everything you proposed.

Then Yeongwoo lowered the lever handle another notch that Bantubangtong was holding.

Click!

"If you open it at 50% risk, you can save 15,000."

- What...?

"Then it seems even if you give me 300 million, there'll be plenty of money left. What do you think, should we save another 5,000 brothers?"

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

No data found.

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Chapter 299: Den of Evil (4)

- Oh, another five thousand brothers...?

Orc Lord Bantubangtong's eyes wavered.

He had fled from Mara to this otherworld, only to encounter another demon.

However, at least this demon offered a plan to save his brothers.

It was a level of evil incomparable to Mara, who had taken over his homeland.

- 50%... Is it possible? Even we don't know what we might encounter as a result.

As Bantubangtong anxiously gazed at the gate, Yeongwoo gripped his hand firmly, as if to reassure him.

"Either way, we'll have to go to war with Mara on this planet. We're just dealing with enemies we'd have to face eventually, but earlier."

Yeongwoo's eyes were resolute.

This was because, if this business succeeded, the profit Yeongwoo stood to gain would be beyond imagination.

If they could open the portal and survive at 50% risk, Yeongwoo would earn 300 million Karma in cash.

'And also acquire an elite force of 15,000.'

But that wasn't all.

Given the high risk, it was clear that a powerful being would emerge, allowing Yeongwoo to add at least one more legendary kill to his record.

Moreover,

「Void Flesh」 - Void One-Handed Sword

【Absorbs other void flesh.】

【Phantom Dragon: 10% increased damage against living creatures.】

'I can strengthen the Void Flesh as well. High risk, very high return!'

Blinded by the enormous benefits, Yeongwoo looked at Bantubangtong... no, at Bang the Great Hero.

"Master Bang! Make your decision. With one pull of the lever, you can gain 15,000 brothers and 450 million Karma. Of course, 300 million of that goes to me!"

-

In the face of the demon's whisper, the Master Bang tightly closed his eyes.

Then,

Rumble!

He set the danger level of the dimensional gate to 50%.

- We follow the greater cause!

The number displayed in the center of the gate changed from 10,000 to 15,000, then shot even higher.

Flare!

[0/15,000]

Finally, the portal began to reopen.

Rumble!

The metal gate installed in Darwin, Northern Australia, began to activate.

With the characteristic mechanical sound and a great vibration from within, the space inside the oval frame, just over 100 meters in diameter, started to ripple.

‘A portal!’

The city was being reconnected to the homeland of the Redfoot Orcs.

Crash!

Blue flames erupted from the edges of the frame, and the space inside was instantly filled with a blue substance.

Sizzle!

The sight was awe-inspiring, like a vertical sea surface, but given that it was 100 meters in diameter, it was also terrifying.

Only then did Yeongwoo start to think differently.

‘Isn’t this portal a bit too large for just rescuing their kin?’

Redfoot Orcs were typically 3 meters tall, with giant orcs reaching around 5 meters.

Even considering the possibility of bringing in large weapons from their home planet, a 100-meter-diameter gate seemed excessive.

‘30 meters would have been enough.’

So what was the purpose of this massive gate?

"....."

Yeongwoo's gaze naturally fell on the deeper sections of the lever.

The 75% and 100% danger zones.

Then,

Whoosh!

The rippling surface of the portal calmed, revealing a dark landscape beyond.

"...Where is that? A fortress?"

As Yeongwoo squinted to see the other side more clearly, the Master Bang opened his eyes wide.

- Aratubank!

"...Pardon?"

- The Tomb of the Fallen! The sacred ground of our brothers!

In other words, Aratubank, the place now visible through the portal, was a sort of memorial site.

"So, you're saying your brothers sent a distress signal from a memorial site?"

For them to be driven into a memorial site—how desperate must their situation be?

While Yeongwoo stood there with his mouth agape, the Master Bang urgently gestured to the flag bearers.

- Lead the way!

The flag bearers with yellow banners quickly rushed to the portal, while archers tossed red pouches into the air and shot arrows at them.

Pop!

The Redfoot emblem appeared in the sky.

Then, within the dark portal, a light began to emerge.

It was Redfoot Orcs holding torches.

- ...!

-

But for some reason, they neither shouted nor screamed, even stifling their breathing as they ran out.

"...What the heck?"

As Yeongwoo made a puzzled expression, the first brother finally crossed the portal and arrived on Earth.

Squelch!

[1/15,000]

The first brother to arrive on the alien planet Earth looked around frantically, not even having time to be startled.

Then,

- Bantubangtong!

Upon spotting Orc Lord Bantubangtong, he finally showed a relieved expression.

'What? Was the Master Bang quite famous on his home planet too?'

As Yeongwoo watched the reunion of the two orcs absentmindedly, the first escapee grabbed Bantubangtong's forearm.

- What's going on? Why did you call for an escape route from the sacred ground?

The Great Hero questioned him in a reproachful tone.

The escapee, sweating profusely, replied.

- The Devourer has found Aratubank.

- What?

At that moment, Yeongwoo saw it.

For the first time, the Great Hero's eyes filled with genuine fear.

"What... What is it? What is the Devourer?"

Yeongwoo asked, his curiosity piqued, and the Great Hero answered with a despairing expression.

- The Devourer consumes everything. Life, souls...

"Wait, why does that...?"

As Yeongwoo spoke, he suddenly realized something and fell silent.

'Right. Aratubank is a memorial site, isn't it?'

That meant it was a place where the souls of their nation's heroes and protectors resided.

But now, a monster that devoured souls had appeared in such a sacred place.

'A terrible catastrophe is unfolding.'

Having grasped the situation to some extent, Yeongwoo looked back at the portal, where a group of brothers holding torches was running toward the dark chamber in the distance.

They were even carrying a massive coffin together.

And behind them, thousands more brothers followed without even holding torches.

"What's that? Are they carrying a corpse?"

When Yeongwoo pointed to the large coffin the leading group was carrying, the Great Hero pulled his hand back down and said,

- You have a tendency to reveal your ignorance too easily, Little Foot. That is our ancient will, our holy relic .

"Holy relic ...?"

Indeed, it wasn't strange for a holy relic to exist in a place that honored the guardian spirits of the orcs.

But bringing that to Earth was another matter.

"Uh... Master Bang."

- Speak.

"What exactly is that relic your brothers are bringing? If it's something dangerous or if there's even a slight chance it could harm this planet..."

- Little Foot! Do not insult us!

"No, stop putting me in these situations. If it's a dangerous object or if it poses a threat to this planet, I have a responsibility to prevent its entry."

This was true.

The events outside the universe were unpredictable, especially those that went far beyond Earth's common sense.

Even though the brothers called it a "holy relic ," it wouldn't be surprising if it turned out to be an ancient orc corpse that had rotted for a thousand years and become toxic.

The brothers called it a "holy relic," but it wouldn't have been surprising if it were actually the thousand-year-old decayed corpse of an ancient orc, now toxic from rot. Of course, it could have been something far worse.

"I only authorized your stay on Earth, Master Bang, and your brothers'. I never agreed to smuggling otherworldly materials onto this planet."

- Small Foot! That is our holy relic, our spirit!

"No, Bang! For the last time, tell me exactly what that thing is!"

The moment Yeongwoo lost his patience and forcibly removed Bantubangtong's rank insignia.

— Rumble!

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

A disturbing noise came from beyond the portal.

"...?"

- Ah.

Bantubangtong let out a small sound.

Yeongwoo instantly realized what it was.

"It's the Devourer, isn't it? That sound?"

When Yeongwoo pointed again toward the portal, Bantubangtong nodded.

- It must have caught the scent of the relic. The Devourer craves willpower and souls.

And sure enough...

— Swoosh!

A gust of wind blew through the stone chamber where the relic transport team was moving.

Without any torches, the rearguard of the thousands of orcs began to collapse quietly, one by one, from the very back.

Dozens of brothers were dying every second.

"What the...?"

Shocked, Yeongwoo looked at Bantubangtong, who spoke with a solemn expression.

- The Devourer has reached the vicinity of the chamber.

"Wait, you're saying it kills just by being nearby?"

- It also drains life force.

"That's insane."

Yeongwoo looked at the situation beyond the portal with disbelief.

Even as their brothers behind them fell lifeless, none of the orcs in the relic transport team or the rest of the line lit a torch or broke formation.

They must have known that making noise or creating large light sources would make them easy prey for the Devourer.

‘They’re orcs, all right. But still...’

The scene clearly demonstrated the blind obedience and unity unique to orcs, but even that wouldn’t last long.

— Rumble!

The same noise echoed once more, and a gigantic silhouette appeared in the distant darkness of the stone chamber, beyond the reach of the dim light.

-...Ah!

As soon as Bantubangtong saw it, a look of fear spread across his face.

"Is that the Devourer? Have you encountered it before?"

Bantubangtong could only nod, unable to speak.

His expression was one of pure despair.

Then he turned to look back at his brothers, assessing the numbers still on Earth. And then, unbelievably, he spoke.

- Perhaps... it might be wise to close the gate. For the sake of my brothers and this planet.

"What? What do you mean? What about our money?"

Hundreds of millions in revenue depended on saving the 15,000 brothers beyond the portal.

And more importantly, Yeongwoo had already invested 100 million won in activating the portal—some of it taxpayer money.

"Are you saying that relic is truly as dangerous as poison? A threat to this entire planet?"

As Yeongwoo, on the verge of grabbing Bantubangtong by the collar, demanded answers, the orc—likely the strongest on Earth—shook his head.

- Our holy relic embodies our long-standing will, the myth of the Red Foot itself.

"What?"

- But the Devourer has already detected the relic. By the time the relic reaches here, we won't be able to stop the Devourer from crossing over.

The idea was to abandon both the relic and the brothers to ensure everyone's survival, by closing the gate before the relic could cross over.

For the Red Foot orcs, this would be an enormous sacrifice.

But while all this was happening, Korea's absolute sorcerer, Jeong Yeongwoo, was fixated on a different issue.

"What did you say earlier? The relic is what exactly?"

- ...?

"Didn't you say something about it being a myth? I'm sure you did."

- Y-Yes, I did. Of course, the relic is our...

"Is it a mythical artifact?"

Yeongwoo gripped Bantubangtong's shoulders with bloodshot eyes, and the orcs in the room began to gather.

Though Small Foot himself might be willing to endure the rudeness, they couldn't tolerate continued disrespect toward their lord.

But they knew well that this insane human could erase them all with just a strange sequence of numbers.

- Calm down. More importantly, we need to close the gate...

Seeing the relic and the large silhouette behind it approaching closer, Bantubangtong hurried to grab the lever.

Pushing it upward would close the open portal.

But.

Thunk!

Someone, far faster than the strongest orc on Earth, had already covered the lever with his palm.

- Huh?

It was none other than Jeong Yeongwoo.

"You haven't answered yet. Is that relic an artifact?"

Cold sweat trickled down Bantubangtong's forehead.

- You could say that, but it's...

Yeongwoo cut him off by waving his sword, Bastard.

Shing!

"Everyone freeze! Anyone who touches the lever dies on the spot."

- W-What?

The brutal act, unimaginable to orc minds, left Bantubangtong and all the brothers in the room with horrified expressions.

Yeongwoo tightened his grip on the sword as he glared at Bantubangtong.

"Master Bang!"

- Y-You... What are you planning now?

"Sell me that relic."

- What?

"The price? Free."

- ...!

"Better to hand it over to me than let Mara take it. In return, I'll kill the Devourer here and avenge your brothers."

Master Bang was about to rush to the lever, prepared to face death, as he retorted.

- That's madness! Small Foot, the Devourer isn't something you can defeat just with strength. Don't let your arrogance endanger this planet!

But there was one fact that the outsider, Master Bang, had overlooked.

And that was...

"Danger? Master Bang, don't be mistaken. On this planet, I am more dangerous than the Devourer."

With that, Yeongwoo swept his sword across the room, pointing to the thousands of brothers, and added a warm remark.

"Now, go and evacuate your brothers. Isn't it 30,000 karma per living brother?"

---Ah.

Master Bang finally realized.

There is no paradise where one flees to.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 300: Den of Evil (5)

Myth.

A piece of cosmic, higher-tier equipment that could only be crafted by those who wrote their own myths with their own hands.

Even from the unique effects of the only Myth equipment Yeongwoo has encountered so far, the "Bastard," it was clear how extraordinary Myth equipment was in the universe.

The "Bastard" could weaken the power of a transcendent being and, when fighting against a higher-tier opponent, even granted the user combat power adjustments.

Thus, the "Bastard" was not a weapon meant to be used in civil wars on small planets like Earth.

'It should originally be a sword that wreaks havoc among the higher beings in the universe.'

Myth equipment was just that.

That was why it was given only to beings who proved their worth by becoming myths themselves, and ordinary beings won't even see the shadow of a Myth in their lifetime.

However, Jeong Yeongwoo⁰⁷, a provincial lord from the frontier of the developing universe, was different.

'If I succeed in defeating the Devourer this time... I'll get my second Myth.'

If he couldn't write a Myth himself, he just had to take one that was already written.

Moreover, the opportunity to encounter a Myth this time was essentially a series of events Yeongwoo himself had caused by breaking expectations.

If he hadn't unified the Korean Peninsula, if he hadn't coveted planetary ownership, and if he hadn't approved the autonomy of the orcs in Australia, this moment wouldn't have come.

'The universe, no, my fate is pushing me forward...!'

His original heart, now transformed into a talisman, seemed to beat faster.
And perhaps, it really was something like that.

「Heart of Jeong Yeongwoo07」 – Epic Talisman

【Destiny Roll】

【Troublemaker】

【Material for Ascension】

【Destiny Roll】

|Every time you reach a turning point in destiny, the probability of the lowest outcome increases by a threefold multiplier.

"Master Bang! Did you think I was joking? Hurry up and get your brothers to safety!"

Whoosh!

As Yeongwoo yelled while laying down the "Bastard," Bantubangtong, who had been staring at the lever, clenched his teeth.

'This is madness.'

The Devourer, the very being that had the most influence in driving his brothers out of their home planet, had now been encountered again after being chased to another planet.

The fury welled up inside him as he realized this.

But what could he do?

- If you truly succeed in appeasing the souls of our brothers, that will be fortunate, but if you fail, our cooperation ends here.

Bantubangtong began evacuating the orc brothers as far away from the dimensional portal as possible while saying this. Yeongwoo shrugged.

"If I fail, won't everyone here die anyway? So it's only natural that we're done if I fail."

Then he picked up a yellow flag that had fallen on the ground and planted it 10 meters in front of the dimensional portal.

Thud!

'Anyway, Mara's forces have already infiltrated Earth. So, I was bound to meet them sooner or later.'

Moreover, if he couldn't even defeat one of Mara's minions despite being equipped with the "Bastard" and all sorts of legendary and epic equipment, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that this planet had no future.

No matter who the competitors were, the planet's ultimate ruler would inevitably be Mara.

"Master Bang, don't worry too much. I'm essentially the strongest on this planet..."

As Yeongwoo tried to reassure Bantubangtong, who was evacuating his brothers, his words were cut off by his opponent.

- As I said before, the Devourer is not a foe you can defeat with sheer strength alone.

"...What do you mean?"

- The Devourer is a being of the void. It sucks away the life and will of everything. The equipment you're wearing won't be able to withstand that.

Yeongwoo frowned as he interpreted this to mean that the Devourer's method of draining life ignored the damage reduction rates of any equipment.

"Wait, does that even make sense? Shouldn't the Devourer then be the strongest in the universe? How did you survive in front of it, Master Bang?"

In response to Yeongwoo's question, Bantubangtong, who had been looking at the dimensional portal, took a few steps back.

- I am one of the four lords of the Redfoot tribe, Bantubangtong. The history of the Redfoot tribe, accumulated over countless ages, is engraved in my soul. But without a new sanctuary, if I die, then essentially...

The entire history of the Redfoot orcs would be lost.

Bantubangtong added that his bravery came from the tribe's history, which was imprinted on his soul through the Lord's Ascension Ceremony.

For the Redfoot orcs, a Lord was like a living history book.

That was why all Redfoots showed respect to their Lord, and the Lord also...

'If they carry the entire history of their race, then it's only natural that their pride is tremendous.'

Perhaps this was the reason behind Bantubangtong's unique rhetoric.

"So, you're saying that because you are such an important figure, your will to live had to be strong, and that's why you were able to survive in front of the Devourer."

"Indeed. Mere attachment to life is not enough to stand before the Devourer. Only those with a noble purpose, driven by a grand mission..."

Just as Bantubangtong was about to start another speech from the heart, the large portal ahead rippled.

"Huh."

"Oh...!"

Finally, the artifact carriers crossed dimensions and entered Earth.

Boom!

The massive Redfoot orcs, carrying huge coffins, set foot on Earth's soil, and Bantubangtong hurriedly approached the lever.

Then...

Clank!

He tried to pull the lever all the way up, but...

Click!

As expected, the lever did not work.

The Devourer had already entered within a certain distance, a variable anticipated by the 50% danger threshold of the dimensional portal.

Shhh...

Then, near the portal, a pale mist rose, and the Redfoot orcs, who had just stepped into Earth, collapsed with half their bodies still stuck in the portal.

Thud, thud.

"My God."

Seeing the large bodies of the orcs falling helplessly, Yeongwoo realized that Bantubangtong's earlier words were not nonsense at all.

Even the brave brothers who did not fear death couldn't withstand the power of the Devourer.

What in the world was this strength?

- Prepare all for a spear-throwing attack! Smallfoot, support from the rear!

In the meantime, Bantubangtong, who had distanced himself from the portal, saw the signs of the Devourer's arrival and ordered his brothers to prepare for a fire support attack.

And finally...

Thud!

From the inside of the dimensional portal, connected to the home of the Redfoot orcs, a hand wrapped in dark scales emerged.

"...Oh."

Yeongwoo noticed that the hand alone was at least 3 meters long.

Shhhh!

At that moment, the Devourer's mist surged all the way to Yeongwoo's feet.

".....!"

It was at that moment that a strange pain, which even his Berserker Talisman couldn't ward off, wrapped around his entire body.

It felt like his insides were being tightly compressed, as if he had severe indigestion, and the sensation started digging into not only his body but also his mind.

'What the... What the hell is this?!'

As Yeongwoo's eyes widened in shock at the pain he had never felt before, the rest of the Devourer's body emerged from the portal.

Crash!

Another enormous hand crushed the bodies of fallen comrades near the portal as it landed on the ground.

From behind Yeongwoo, Master Bang's voice, filled with anger, rang out.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

- Little Foot! Retreat! As long as you are still alive, there is hope! We must plan for another day!

Although Master Bang had faced a similar situation on his home planet, the best option he could think of was still retreat.

He believed that if they could take the relic and Little Foot and leave Darwin, there might be another opportunity in the future.

After all, Little Foot's prowess was far greater than any other comrade he had ever seen.

".....!"

However, Little Foot, Jeong Yeongwoo 07, didn't move even as the Devourer's massive shadow loomed over him.

"Is this... a Void being?"

Instead of stepping towards Master Bang's voice, he lifted his head and stared at the Devourer, which was rising just five meters in front of him.

Rumble...

The Devourer, emanating a terrifyingly dense aura, had a nightmarish appearance.

Its massive body looked like a heap of flesh, supported by four arms covered in black scales.

The four hands, which replaced its feet, had long, sturdy-looking fingers.

And just like the lower part, the upper part of its body...

—.....

...had four arms raised toward the sky, forming a shape reminiscent of a crown.

In total, it had eight arms, divided into upper and lower sets.

The creature had no discernible face or head, just a body that appeared to be a mass of flesh.

"You look like... a dog's di*k."

Barely able to open his mouth, Yeongwoo muttered these words before gazing at the portal behind the Devourer.

Swoosh.

The numbers displayed at the top of the portal became clear.

[79/15,000]

Out of the 15,000 comrades that could be rescued, 79 had been saved.

That meant...

"Damn, I put in 100 million and only got 2.37 million back?"

Out of the 97.63 million Karma, including the national treasury, only 2.37 million had been recovered.

"Shit."

As rage boiled inside him at this realization, the strange pain that had been constricting his body suddenly vanished.

Swish!

"Huh...?"

It was just a brief moment, but there was no way the cunning Little Foot would miss such a detail.

"What was that?"

As the Devourer's influence began to envelop him once again, Yeongwoo unconsciously shouted,

"One hundred million...!"

And surprisingly,

Swish.

His body returned to normal, and energy surged through him.

"What... what is this?"

Yeongwoo looked at the bastard sword in his hand with a puzzled expression.

Swoosh.

His arm, which hadn't budged earlier, easily lifted the sword now.

As Master Bang had said, it wasn't just his attachment to life that had freed him from the Devourer's grip.

It was a higher sense of purpose, a noble mission.

Even the Devourer, who had been spewing mist until now, was startled and moved swiftly for the first time since arriving on Earth.

Swoosh!

One of its four hands, which had been planted on the ground, swung out.

Swoosh!

The Devourer's arm sliced through the mist like a whip, and the thousands of orcs watching from afar squeezed their eyes shut, bracing for the horrific scene that would follow.

But what actually happened was...

"Haah! Three hundred million!"

Little Foot, Jeong Yeongwoo 07, shouted the figure "three hundred million" as he swung his sword.

Swish!

The sword, slashing diagonally through the air, effortlessly severed the incoming arm of the Devourer, causing its body to tilt as it lost one of its supports.

‘Is this actually working?’

Yeongwoo blinked rapidly as he looked at the Devourer.

—.....

Although the Devourer had no face or mouth, everyone present could feel its surprise.

Swoosh!

Suddenly, the creature emitted an unprecedented surge of energy, surrounding the entire area in a thick mist.

"...Kehh!"

As the Devourer's influence grew even stronger, Yeongwoo responded with an even stronger incantation.

"Four hundred and fifty million!"

This amount could be extracted daily from all 15,000 rescued comrades.

450 million Karma.

However, it seemed insufficient to overcome the Devourer's maximum output, as his body remained frozen.

Crunch!

Meanwhile, the Devourer began to spread its four upper arms that had been clumped together.

‘Uh, uh? Why isn't it working this time?’

Yeongwoo stared at the creature's upper arms as they started to form a bizarre silhouette within the mist.

If this continued, he would have to take the full brunt of the Devourer's attack while standing still.

But no other incantations came to mind, so he thought of the relics of the Redfoot Orcs, which he had yet to open.

"The... the myth! I haven't seen the new myth yet!"

At that moment, the grip on his feet finally loosened.

Swoosh.

"Huh...!"

In this miraculous moment that even shocked himself, Yeongwoo instinctively took a step forward.

Thud!

Then, like a shooting star, he dashed forward and thrust his sword.

Swoosh!

"Get this cursed body out of my way! I can't see my money because of you!"

His comet-like strike pierced through the Devourer's body in an instant.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]