

# **Level 4 Human in a Ruined World #Chapter 301 - Read**

## **Level 4 Human in a Ruined World Chapter 301**

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 301: Den of Evil (6)

He overcame the Devourer's ability by channeling his greed for money.

It was a moment that proved that desire, when strong enough, could rival even a noble will.

Pure, unfiltered desire.

- ...You, little foot.

It was a level of crudeness that was astonishing.

Master Bang couldn't help but be shocked.

'Is this what humans from Earth are truly like?'

"Get lost already!"

But what was truly shocking wasn't just the crudeness of humans.

BOOM!

As the Devourer's body tilted after Yeongwoo's second strike, the orcs around them gasped in disbelief.

- Wow!

- Ah...!

For the orcs, this was an inevitable reaction.

The Devourer was like an enormous battleship on their home planet, impossible to sink.

No matter how brave a warrior might be, none dared to stand before the Devourer, which meant that battle with it was never even a consideration.

Its outer shell was so thick that traditional weapons couldn't even scratch it.

If there were a single entity that had claimed the most orc lives back home, it would undeniably be the Devourer. When they thought of the moment their home was taken, what came to mind first was the unstoppable advance of the Devourer.

But now that same Devourer was...

SLASH!

With Yeongwoo's third strike, the enormous body of the Devourer split apart, and its tentacle-like limbs, which had been thrashing wildly, suddenly stilled.

- ...

So, perhaps...

- Is... is it dead?

- Is it really...?

- The Devourer... dead?

The Red Foot orcs, eyes wide with shock, looked at the fallen Devourer, unsure whether it was truly dead, yet too afraid to rush over to confirm it.

Then, for the first time...

SQUELCH!

The orc lord, Bantubangtong, took a step forward.

- Little Foot! Are you alright?

Of course, he knew that this little monster was surely unharmed.

But still, Master Bang examined Yeongwoo from head to toe with genuine concern.

This was politics.

The moment Little Foot had split the Devourer in two, this monster had essentially become the future of the Red Foot tribe.

Sure, there were many powerful beings scattered throughout the universe, beings who could wipe out the orc tribe with a single gesture.

But among those many strong ones, the only one willing to help them seek vengeance against Mara was none other than Little Foot, Jeong Yeongwoo07.

- Are you hurt anywhere? If you feel unwell, speak up. I still have some of the red ointment left.

As Master Bang spoke and approached, Yeongwoo lightly kicked one of the Devourer's lifeless legs.

"I'm fine. If possible, just give me a drink of water."

Although Yeongwoo had a mutated digestive system and could survive without eating or drinking, he hadn't lost the desire for the sensations of it.

Humans typically drink when they feel physical or mental thirst, and they also do so to acknowledge that a problem has been resolved.

In a way, it was like a ceremony.

Thus, Yeongwoo requested water to celebrate the end of the tense battle, and Master Bang gladly complied.

- Bring water!

When Master Bang ordered water from the back, the brothers, realizing it was a victory celebration, finally surged forward to get a closer look at the Devourer's corpse, a sight they had never seen before.

And around this time, a system message appeared before Yeongwoo.

「You have slain the Devourer, Daltio!」

A record of the kill was added.

「You now have 2 kill records eligible for the Victory Monument」

‘It's dead for sure.’

Only after checking the system message did Yeongwoo feel fully relieved.

If the Devourer hadn't been completely dead and suddenly started spewing mist again, all the brothers running toward them would be wiped out.

Each living brother could generate over 30,000 karma a day, so watching them perish in droves would have been a nightmare for Yeongwoo.

“Now that we've taken down the Devourer... do you think the remaining brothers will be able to cross over?”

As Yeongwoo looked toward the portal and asked, Master Bang's expression showed uncertainty.

- If any brothers are still alive over there, surely someone will show up.

The number of brothers guarding the sacred site of Aratubank numbered in the tens of thousands.

But with the confirmation that the Devourer had ravaged the sacred site, it was impossible to guess how many had survived.

The sacred site's defenders were particularly brave, and even knowing they couldn't stand against the Devourer, they likely charged forward to meet their glorious end.

Thus, the key question was the timing of the Devourer's appearance.

Since they could only see but not hear what was happening beyond the portal, the best they could do for now was to station signalers to wave flags.

- Hmm...

The grim outlook made Master Bang sigh, so Yeongwoo placed a comforting hand on his arm.

"Still, the fact that we now know we can defeat the Devourer is encouraging. We've confirmed it's worth risking 50% danger, haven't we?"

The unspoken implication was that the 1 billion spent on this attempt could be recovered in the next one, but Yeongwoo didn't feel the need to say that part out loud.

"We'll be able to save more brothers thanks to this effort. We need to look at the bigger picture."

As Yeongwoo said this, the Devourer's body, which had been lying in front of the portal, began to dissolve into the air.

Whooosh...!

Just like when Yeongwoo had defeated the phantom dragon Moracus, a sword appeared where the corpse had been.

"...A Void Fragment."

He could tell just by looking at it.

Yeongwoo turned to Master Bang, who nodded in response.

- Little Foot, you've kept your word. The souls of the brothers will be greatly comforted.

Without another word, Yeongwoo walked toward the sword.

Clank, clank.

Then he touched the second Void Fragment rising from the ground.

Tap.

It immediately turned into smoke and merged with the Void Fragment Yeongwoo already possessed.

「Void Flesh」 - Void One-Handed Sword

【Absorbs other Void Flesh.】

【Phantom Dragon: 10% increased damage against living creatures.】

【Devourer: Damage to abilities increased by 15%.】

‘Whoa, what? The stats are crazy.’

The effect added to the Void Fragment from defeating the Devourer was a 15% increase in ability damage.

Even as a single item, that was a significant boost, but the effect would continue stacking each time he obtained a new fragment.

In other words, if he fought another Devourer, the ability damage would increase by 30%, and after another, it would rise to 45%.

‘This is insane. I want to meet all the Devourers in the world.’

Since Yeongwoo was human, he could only gain ability damage through equipment.

「Heresy」 - Unique Gauntlet

【15% of attack power is converted into mental damage.】

Currently, only 15% of his total attack power was converted into ability damage.

If he wanted to continue growing his Void Fragment, he would need to secure more ability damage.

'With the mutated being event coming soon, I should look into acquiring some ability-based equipment today.'

From his experience, ability-related equipment wasn't very common, and items that converted damage attributes were even rarer.

'Ironically, I now have something I can't buy, even if I have the money.'

Looking at it from a different angle, it also meant he had reached a new level of power.

"..."

Yeongwoo naturally shifted his gaze toward the stone chamber beyond the portal.

'Is there a way to enter that chamber directly? If I can, I could amplify my ability damage significantly.'

Yeongwoo wasn't just obsessed with money; he was also obsessed with power.

And right in front of him, he saw piles of cash.

"...Huh?"

As he blinked while looking into the stone chamber, the view became even clearer.

"Wait, the brothers!"

A new group of brothers had appeared from the previously quiet stone chamber.

"Signalman! Raise the flag!"

Yeongwoo, blinded by greed, began ordering his brothers around like he had been an orc since birth.

Then, raising his sword, he prepared for any potential incoming devourers.

"I wouldn't mind if one more appeared. Ah, of course, saving my brothers is more important, though."

As Yeongwoo's greedy gaze pierced through his brothers—no, the space behind them—a creature named Bantubangtong noticed his odd focus and grew fearful.

- Little Foot, what are you waiting for?

"...I'm just concerned that something else might be chasing after my brothers."

Yeongwoo said this as he sheathed his sword back at his waist.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Clang!

“But it doesn’t seem like anything else is coming.”

Meanwhile, his brothers crossed the stone chamber swiftly, passing through the portal.

Whoosh!

Then, Bantubangtong grabbed one of the brothers who had just set foot on Earth and asked,

- Is everyone here? How many brothers are left at the sanctuary?

The one caught by Bantubangtong grimaced and replied,

- The barrier in the ceremonial chamber has also fallen, so all the guardians should be heading this way by now.

- At least that’s some relief.

- But with so many filthy beings... I wonder...

The young orc, who was speaking with a heavy heart, suddenly closed his mouth.

Then, with an enraged expression, he drew his sword.

- You... you wretched creature!

He stammered several times, shaking off Bantubangtong’s hand, and rushed towards the sarcophagus-like reliquary in the distance.

Tap-tap-tap!

Why?

Because right now, an alien was brazenly laying hands on the sacred relic itself, the very symbol of the sanctuary of Aratubank.

- Brother, stop! That is no longer our sacred relic!

Bantubangtong's voice, filled with shock, echoed from behind, but it didn't reach the young orc who had devoted his life to protecting the relics and the sanctuary.

What filled his eyes and ears now was...

Crunch!

The alien was tearing off the seal plate of the reliquary.

- Why are you all just standing there? Protect the relic!

Wrapped in an inexplicable sense of dread, the young orc threw the sword he held in his hand.

Whoosh!

It was aimed at the vile interloper from another world who dared touch their sacred relic.

But...

Swish!

Despite being only 15 meters away, his sword didn't reach its target.

Ping!

- Ugh...!

The filthy alien didn't even bother to turn his head, blocking the thrown sword with just two fingers on his left hand.

Meanwhile, his right hand...

Crack!

The seal plate protecting the reliquary was completely torn off.

- Ah!

With a groan of despair from the young orc, a tremendous surge of energy erupted from the reliquary.

Boooooom!

The dense energy, so thick that it turned the entire chamber white, was...



- Aratubank!

- Aratubank...!

- Ah, the heroes!

Aratubank.

In other words, the very souls of the ancestors who made the Red Foot clan possible.

“What the... what is this?”

Even Yeongwoo, who had just torn off the seal plate, blinked in astonishment at the unexpectedly grand “unboxing show.”

Without any need for his brothers to explain, he could tell from the gigantic energy whirlpool surrounding them that these were souls.

“...Why didn't they move on and why are they all gathered here?”

The density of energy enveloping his skin and soul made him feel just how deep the history of the Red Foot orcs was.

And soon...

Shhh...!

Amidst the swirling energy, faint whispers began to emerge.

These whispers didn't pass through Yeongwoo's senses but were instead imprinted directly into his consciousness, resembling the transcendent language used by higher beings of the universe.

—Who has awakened us?

—The time has come.

—A tragic fate.

—Is it war?

For the first time since becoming spirits, they had been awakened.

To humans, this relic was as sacred as a parent's urn.

That's why Master Bang couldn't bring himself to think of the relic as mere “equipment.”

Even though they possessed a “myth,” they had revered it so much that they kept it untouched, even while Mara invaded.

But now...

‘Well, it’s still equipment, right?’

Yeongwoo saw a large shield resembling a coffin inside the now-gleaming reliquary.

When he touched it...

Fizzle!

A massive heat instantly generated, melting Yeongwoo’s fingertips.

“What the... you fucking...!”

Startled and furious, Yeongwoo reflexively swore, but it was understandable.

If he didn’t have regenerative abilities, that brief touch would’ve permanently cost him the joints of his right index and middle fingers.

“It seems the ancestors are rejecting me.”

When Yeongwoo glanced at Master Bang, who stood nearby, Master Bang reluctantly rolled up his sleeves.

- Awakening Aratubank is sinful enough, but we mustn’t commit further transgressions.

The implication was clear: Master Bang, a pure-blooded Red Foot orc, would take the responsibility of using the relic.

After all, the Red Foot clan was in such dire straits that they had allowed an outsider to break the seal of their relic.

This signified just how weakened they had become.

Apologizing to the ancestors was necessary, but so was borrowing the great power of the myth.

Thud!

As Red Foot leader Bantubangtong took his first step toward the “myth,” Yeongwoo drew Bastard, and pointed it at Master Bang.

“Hey, stop.”

- ...?

“What do you think you’re doing? We agreed. This relic is mine now.”

Little Foot’s greed was so intense that it could overwhelm even the pressure of the Devourer.

Even the battle-hardened Bantubangtong was momentarily taken aback by the aura Yeongwoo was exuding.

- B-but... Aratubank is rejecting you. There is no other way.

“Why isn’t there? Isn’t it premature to say that without trying?”

With that, Yeongwoo shifted the tip of Bastard toward the relic.

Swoosh.

“Introduce yourselves. You’re both myths; you should recognize each other.”

Then he said something so blasphemous that no orc in history had ever dared to utter:

“You’re itching to show off your myth to your descendants, aren’t you? Stop acting up and lower your guard. Here I come again.”

With that, Yeongwoo reached out his right hand toward the relic once more.

His two fingers, which had been burned earlier, had already healed, and soon...

Tap.

Yeongwoo’s fingertips touched the surface of the relic without any issue, and for the first time since the reset, an alert appeared:

<<|||I-A 「Myth」 has appeared on Earth.>>

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 302: The Successor (1)

<<|||I- A “Myth” has appeared on Earth.>>

The appearance of a myth on Earth.

This phrase, appearing for the first time since the reset, carried significant meaning.

‘What? There was no such announcement when I received Bastard.’

Didn’t that notification mean that the system overseeing this reset had recognized the influx of a myth onto this planet?

But why wasn’t there an announcement for the “Bastard,” a myth that had arrived on Earth early on?

‘Does that mean Bastard wasn’t an official appearance?’

Yeongwoo could only think of it this way.

‘But I paid taxes, and even the president paid a transfer tax, as far as I know.’

Of course, the circumstances of receiving Bastard and the holy relic of the Redfoot Orcs were different.

The former had been provided as a piece of equipment through a formal service contract, while the latter was technically more of an ‘incident.’

‘That’s right. The holy relics were more coincidental, so why...?’

Yeongwoo pondered this while stroking the surface of the relic that was within his reach.

As he did, the whispers of the Redfoot ancestors residing in the relic gradually faded, and soon, a tooltip for the equipment appeared.

Flash!

「Aratubank」 - Mythical Shield

【Immunity】

【Coffin】

【Shared Pain】

‘Hooh. The shield itself is named Aratubank.’

It was the first mythical equipment he'd obtained since Bastard, and his first mythical armor.

In a way, it was also the first myth Yeongwoo had obtained on his own.

Though the Redfoot Orcs had forged this myth, it was only through Yeongwoo's peculiar, fateful call that the myth had crossed dimensions to arrive on Earth.

Whether it was thanks to Yeongwoo's heart effect or pure coincidence was uncertain.

#### 【Fate Roll】

| Whenever you reach a pivotal moment in fate, the lowest possible probability is applied with a 3x multiplier.

#### 【Stubborn】

| The difficulty of all problems increases. All surprises increase.

What was certain, however, was that if someone like Jeong Yeongwoo didn't exist on Earth, Aratubank would never have appeared in this place.

'Ah, is that why the system reacted? Because, from a cosmic perspective, this myth is the only natural occurrence...?'

It was still difficult for him to comprehend things from a cosmic perspective, being just a mere creature in the grand scheme.

"....."

Yeongwoo stopped pondering and turned his attention to the detailed tooltip of the new myth, Aratubank.

'Let's see how impressive the effects of a mythical shield are.'

There were three unique effects in total, and the first effect already surpassed expectations in a 'mythical' manner.

#### 【Immunity】

| This shield cannot be destroyed and can block most non-physical damage and mental attacks.

'What? Seriously, ancestors...!'

Yeongwoo re-read the detailed tooltip for 'Immunity' with a look of awe.

Generally, a shield was meant to block physical attacks, and with a bit of imagination, it might even block something like a dragon's breath.

But this shield could block most non-physical damage and even mental attacks.

'The Devourer's influence must also count as a mental attack.'

Had his brothers used this relic, could they have avoided losing their homeland to Mara?

"....."

Yeongwoo didn't think so.

Only one person at most could use the shield's effect, and his brothers lacked the firepower to kill void creatures in the first place.

'You shed far too much blood to reach me.'

Yeongwoo wiped his dry eyes and shifted his gaze to the next tooltip.

【Coffin】

| You can place blood relatives into the coffin. Special effects are granted depending on the phase and condition of the stored targets. (0/2)

'Huh...?'

This was an effect he found hard to believe for different reasons.

'Place blood relatives... in a coffin? This shield, really?'

No matter how he interpreted it, that's what it seemed to mean.

It implied that by storing his blood relatives in the shield, he could gain special effects.

What's more...

'Depending on their phase and condition... Phase I get, but what exactly does condition mean?'

Various thoughts swirled in Yeongwoo's mind.

The word "condition," in the context of the tooltip, left room for multiple interpretations.

'Does it mean whether they're alive or dead?'

Yeongwoo scratched his chin.

What else could it mean?

‘It’s not like it’s talking about their health condition.’

There was also a decent chance it referred to the type of race.

After all, in this world, where the reset was ongoing, members of the same bloodline could belong to different races.

Like his mother, who would return as a dragon one day, or his second uncle.

‘Either way, it’s insane. Why on earth would you carry your blood relatives’ corpses in your shield?’

It was a dizzying thought, but one more effect remained.

#### 【Shared Pain】

| The Redfoot ancestors will bear half of your pain. Your pain will be significantly reduced, and emotional suffering such as guilt and sorrow will also be alleviated.

‘What kind of crazy equipment did these guys make...?’

Yeongwoo, now baffled, glanced back at Master Bang, who had been watching him closely and flinched.

- How is it? Aratubank, our myth.

Yeongwoo let out a long sigh in response.

“It seems like incredible equipment.”

- ...But? Is there something wrong?

“It feels like it’s turning me into a total psychopath.”

The Shared Pain effect, which took away half the pain, was excellent.

Thanks to his Berserker Amulet, he was already in a state where a certain level of pain was completely ignored.

So Aratubank’s final effect would greatly mitigate the pain that the Berserker couldn’t suppress—pain that was either too intense or too insignificant.

However...

"They say the ancestors will take away feelings of guilt and sadness. Like some kind of worry doll."

- Worry doll...?

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

"...It's a thing."

Yeongwoo chose not to explain further.

"In any case, it'll help me draw blood without hesitation."

As he finished speaking and pulled Aratubank out of the relic case, the nearby orcs let out groans.

- Ahhh...

- So, it ends like this.

- The holy relic!

- Aratubank!

For them, wouldn't it be as if their nation's treasure had fallen into the hands of an alien?

Of course, Yeongwoo was also recognized as a member of the Redfoot Orcs, but there was a clear difference.

'I can't stuff my brothers into this shield. I'm not a real orc, and I don't share their blood.'

So, while he could understand the feelings of the Redfoot Orcs, that didn't mean he had any intention of returning this sacred artifact.

Because...

Flash!

[Mythology Catalog]

[2]



Just now, the number of collections in the Mythology Codex had increased by one.

'I can't unlock the effects with just two. Do I need to gather three?'

Then a warning appeared, just like with the Bastard Sword, stating that Aratubank wouldn't activate its effects unless equipped directly.

[There are 3 inactive effects.]

[Subject: Golden Trail, 「Bastard」, 「Aratubank」]

[Reason: Bound Effects]

'Of course, since I need to carry the bloodline.'

After some thought, Yeongwoo inserted a Void Flesh into the codex and then grabbed the shield directly with his left hand.

Clang.

The mythical shield Aratubank was a large shield with a diameter of 1.5 meters, big enough to almost cover Yeongwoo's entire body.

It was designed to have a special function called "coffin," and it actually resembled a massive iron coffin, a detail Yeongwoo found quite satisfying.

'It looks just like the chairman's ship.'

Anyway, he had obtained his second mythological item and secured two legendary defeat records, so his business in Australia was essentially done.

"I guess it's time to head back."

When Yeongwoo said this, looking toward the Korean Peninsula, a previously gloomy Bantubangtong brightened and asked eagerly,

- You're finally leaving?

"Yes. Soon, mutants will fall upon Seoul."

It was time to collect the payments.

Moreover, with his new shield, he could now confidently claim to be invincible against the mutants.

Even if his mother were to return today as a mighty dragon, he would be able to give her a good beating.

'If she sees how much her son has grown, Mother might not be too displeased.'

Shh.

Yeongwoo gestured towards Negwig, signaling that it was time to return.

Then Master Bang cautiously approached and whispered,

- What about the money...?

"You should start preparing. Once I'm done dealing with the mutants, I'll be back to collect the 380 million."

- 3.8 billion...?

"Yes. The promised 3 billion, plus the 800 million you were supposed to pay today."

- .....

"Don't make that face."

Yeongwoo was about to say more, but he wondered if Aratubank's pain-sharing ability was already in effect, so he decided to be generous.

"I'll collect the 1.8 billion no matter what, but as for the remaining 2 billion, I'll take it when the number is complete."

Shh.

Yeongwoo pointed to the rescue count displayed at the top of Darwin City's gate.

[3,682/15,000]

While Yeongwoo was coveting the sacred artifacts of his brothers, refugees continued to pour in from the sanctuary, and now 3,682 brothers had been saved.

"If no more brothers show up, keep the portal open until I give further instructions. We need to catch the gluttonous ones if they appear again."

- What? Then until you return, we...

"Wouldn't it be wise to keep the area around the portal clear? If something happens, send a dispatch to Seoul."

In a way, it was a blessing in disguise.

Like Yeongwoo, the brothers could use the high-speed travel routes, meaning, in theory, they could call Yeongwoo in just a few minutes.

At least, in theory.

“I hope you’ll be able to reunite with as many brothers as possible. And don’t forget to prepare the 1.8 billion. Now that I only feel half the guilt, who knows what I might do.”

After scanning his brothers in Australia one last time, Yeongwoo climbed onto Negwig.

Swoosh!

The Redfoot Orcs' eyes helplessly followed the sacred artifact held in the hands of the Littlefoot.

- Littlefoot, will we ever be able to reclaim our sacred artifact?

Master Bang pleaded on behalf of his brothers, and Yeongwoo thought for a moment.

“Hm... By the time I return it, something might be inside the artifact.”

Whether it would be his father, or perhaps his mother or uncle, he hadn’t thought about it yet.

What was clear was that from the brothers’ perspective, they would feel their sacred artifact had been tainted when it was returned.

But if they still wanted it.

“If the day comes when I no longer need even mythological items, I promise to return it.”

Even though Yeongwoo’s promise was vague, the Redfoot Orcs’ faces lit up.

- Is that... truly possible?

“Of course. But you’ll have to grant me one more favor.”

Yeongwoo raised a wicked finger, and Master Bang’s expression hardened once more.

-...What kind of favor?

“Come with me to Seoul now and submit some of your defeat records.”

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

## Chapter 303: The Successor (2)

Touring Seoul.

With Master Bang seated in the back seat, Yeongwoo sped down the elevated highway, built by his brothers, like a beam of light.

Whoosh!

Their destination was Seoul... or rather, the Special City of Metal Seoul.

"Is this your first time in Seoul?"

Yeongwoo asked, glancing back.

Master Bang, who had been watching the receding continent of Australia, replied:

- This is the first time I've left the Autonomous Territory.

The red-footed orcs had been too preoccupied with occupying northern Australia.

After the Pangea Incident, when the continents merged, Master Bang had immediately encountered the demon Yeongwoo.

Thus, the Australian wasteland was the only place they'd seen on Earth.

Of course, the brothers who had built the transport routes might have seen other parts of the planet from the sky, but...

'Since they've already become stars, they can't share their impressions of this world.'

Yeongwoo's gaze dropped to the landscape below, revealing the southern part of the Korean Peninsula.

As Master Bang followed his gaze, he asked cautiously:

- Little Foot.

"Yes?"

- How many humans are there?

"...That's a tough question,"

Yeongwoo said, rubbing his chin.

"Before the Reset, the population was around 8 billion..."

- 8 billion?

Master Bang's eyes widened in disbelief at the number.

"Yes, but that was before the Reset. The number has probably decreased significantly by now."

Many people had either been wiped out or mutated in the Extermination Vote, which judged the world's 'imbalance,' but Yeongwoo knew that, in reality, only a small fraction of the population had been affected.

The real decimation had likely come from the 'Individual Filtration'—a process that had pitted the masses against each other in deadly combat.

Half of Earth's population must have perished during that phase.

And with it, the planet's ability to resist the Reset had also been halved.

Starting the Reset with only half the original population meant that the karma intended for Earth had been cut in half as well.

Fewer people also meant fewer chances for extraordinary heroes, villains, or demons to emerge.

"The population probably dropped by half when the Reset began. And that diminished population, unprepared, faced monsters and mutants..."

As Yeongwoo explained how Earth's population was halved again, Master Bang tilted his head.

- I still don't quite understand the concept of 'mutants.'

"...?"

This implied that he understood other concepts, which made Yeongwoo curious.

"Does that mean you understand the Reset and the monsters?"

- It's hard to believe that humans would so recklessly judge their own kind. But...

Master Bang trailed off, looking silently at Yeongwoo.

- But I can see how it could be possible.

He went on to explain that his home planet, where the red-footed orcs originated, had experienced something similar to the Reset, though the process had been slightly different.

- One day, we were told that our planet's destiny had reached its final chapter.

"The final chapter of destiny...?"

Yeongwoo couldn't help but perk up his ears.

This was the first time he was hearing about the history of Master Bang and his brothers.

- We were told that to continue our existence, we had to prove our worth through battle. For us, battle is life itself, so accepting it wasn't difficult.

But Master Bang added that the challenges had been unimaginably tough.

- We also had a vote.

"What kind of vote?"

- We could choose our opponent for the trial.

"...Ah."

Yeongwoo finally understood.

It was a Reset tailored to the red-footed orcs.

'Does each planet or species have a different trial?'

Perhaps the Reset was just one of many tests, and it was Earth's humans who had summoned it.

"So, you chose Mara as your opponent?"

- The words used to describe him were the most sinister. I cast my vote for Mara, confident that everyone else would do the same.

“ ... ”

It was a way of thinking that was distinctly red-footed orc.

If they had to fight someone, they would unite against the most evil-looking candidate.

But the price they paid...

‘They became cosmic refugees, forced to infiltrate another species’ planet as monsters.’

Yeongwoo couldn’t help but wonder if the other monsters he had fought, like the red-footed orcs, had been the inhabitants of other planets.

‘Probably.’

The heavily armed goblins from the first day of the Reset, the wyverns—all of them were likely refugees from their home planets, seeking new homes.

“If a species successfully passes its trial, what happens?”

Yeongwoo asked vaguely.

Master Bang shook his head.

- We are those who have lost our home. How could we know?

Then, gathering his blunt fingers, Master Bang placed his hand on Yeongwoo’s shoulder.

Thud.

- But now Aratubank is in your hands. It’s a holy relic we preserved through failure, so you won’t fail.

“...Master Bang.”

- Perhaps it was fate that brought us to a land where there are still those who haven’t failed.

Grip.

With these words, Master Bang gripped Yeongwoo’s shoulder tightly.

“ ... ”

The emotions conveyed through his hand were overwhelming, so Yeongwoo couldn't turn back to look at him.

- Protect this planet, Little Foot! If you don't fail, we can rebuild a new great city in Darwin.

In other words, the red-footed orcs' new home had to be Earth.

If Earth failed, they would lose their future too.

"I guess I have no choice. I'll have to see for myself what happens if we pass the Reset."

As Yeongwoo spoke, the landscape beneath them became heavy and imposing.

-...!

They had entered the section of the journey that led to Metal Seoul, the proud iron city of the Korean Peninsula.

- Little Foot! Turn around! I think we've taken the wrong road!

Seeing the steel-covered city, Master Bang shouted in alarm.

Yeongwoo responded with an evil grin.

"Hah! Master Bang, that's Seoul, the future capital of Earth."

- Wh-what? That demonic place...?

The sinister nest of Little Foot, Seoul.

"Don't worry, the laser cannons haven't been installed yet, so we won't get shot down."

As Yeongwoo sped towards the tower in Jongno District, where the Victory Monument stood, Master Bang, his pupils still wide with shock, muttered:

- Are there really humans living in this place?

"Of course. They must be quite surprised too..."

As Yeongwoo arrived at the station in Jongno-gu, the top of the tower, which had been open, closed again.

"There's a saying on Earth: If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together."



Then, as Yeongwoo operated the descent mechanism of the tower, he said to Master Bang:

“Let’s go far together. Invest all the settlement records you have in this planet.”

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

\* \* \*

Sajik-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul.

In front of the victory monument built on Korea's ancient cultural heritage, the Sajikdan, people continued to gather.

So when Korea's Strongest Sword, Jeong Yeongwoo, appeared with the Orc Lord, Bantubangtong, riding the Negwig, everyone gasped in disbelief.

“O-Orc!”

“He really brought an Orc...?”

Though Yeongwoo had mentioned the Orc Autonomous Territory of Australia during a ‘business presentation,’ no one had ever expected him to bring one directly to Seoul.

- There are so many humans here.

In Australia, only a tiny fraction of the thousands of orcs were human, but here in Seoul, Bantubangtong was the only orc amidst a sea of humans.

No matter how much of a warrior Master Bang was, he couldn’t help but feel intimidated, and Yeongwoo, aware of this, deliberately dismounted from the Negwig first, extending his hand to his companion.

“Take my hand. If they see that I respect you, they won’t dare act carelessly.”

Master Bang cleared his throat, grabbed Yeongwoo’s outstretched hand, and leapt off the Negwig.

Clang!

When his iron boots touched the ground of Seoul for the first time, the crowd surrounding them quickly stepped back.

“W-what...”

“He’s huge...”

Now that Master Bang stood on his two feet, people could finally comprehend his size, which was larger than Yeongwoo’s.

Yeongwoo then addressed the crowd.

“This is Lord Bantubangtong from the Red Foot Autonomous Territory of Australia. He will donate victory points to the monument in honor of Seoul’s and Earth’s rise in status.”

With that, Yeongwoo extended his left arm, gesturing toward the monument, and Master Bang reluctantly followed.

- He seems to act properly here.

“It’s a kind of domestic mode. These people are not only my kin but also from the same country.”

- Same country?

Master Bang looked confused.

For the Red Foot Orcs, who considered all their kin to be ‘brothers,’ the concept of being more attached to those from the same country didn’t exist.

So Yeongwoo gave another example.

“I’m a Red Foot too, but not a ‘true’ Red Foot, right? As the Aratubank incident revealed. It’s the same here on Earth. Even among humans, there’s a difference between who’s really on your side and who’s not.”

- Complicated.

“If you don’t get it, just put the victory points in.”

When Yeongwoo pointed to the monument they had now reached, Master Bang looked up at the two towering pillars.

- How do you use this?

As he touched the surface of the monument, his pupils immediately began to glow.

He had connected to the interface of the victory monument.

“You’ve figured out how to use it now. How many records can you register?”

Although Yeongwoo asked, Master Bang remained silent.

“Don’t tell me... you don’t have any?”

It was possible.

The legendary settlement records depended on the status of the defeated opponent.

The system only recognized ‘legendary beings,’ meaning the enemy had to be historically significant on the planet or of a void-dwelling dragon level or higher.

So it wouldn’t be surprising if Master Bang, who had lost his homeland to Mara, didn’t have any grand achievements to his name...

- How many do you need?

“Huh?”

The sudden question made Yeongwoo pause and stare at Master Bang.

“What did you say?”

- The settlement records you mentioned. How many do you need in total?

“Oh, that.”

The current number of victory points required for Earth’s rank-up was 635.

So they needed either seven settlement records from Earth or four from beyond Earth.

‘I already have two off-planet records, so I only need two more off-world records.’

Just as Yeongwoo was about to say ‘two,’ he stopped himself at the last second.

‘Wait.’

The thought occurred to him that Master Bang might have an unexpectedly large number of records.

He blinked quickly and stared at Master Bang.

“Master Bang, I’m not sure. You’d have to try putting them in to know for sure... How many records do you have?”

Then, with a serious expression, the Red Foot Orc Lord, Bantubangtong, spoke.

- Small Foot, here you go again.

“...!”

Then, just as Yeongwoo had done in front of the Negwig earlier, Bantubangtong extended his hand.

Swoosh.

- As you said, respect me. Respect us. Why do you insist on being a trickster?

“...Ah.”

Yeongwoo felt embarrassed.

- Speak the truth, from the heart. I have always spoken the truth.

Yeongwoo clasped Master Bang's outstretched hand with both of his and spoke:

“Master Bang! I was going to lie and say I only needed two! But the truth is, I need much more! Could you donate... all the records you have?”

[PR/N: This mf 🤖]

- ...?

This was not just a curveball but a magical pitch of sorts.

Even Master Bang, who always spoke the truth, was momentarily taken aback, and Yeongwoo, sensing this, clasped his hand even tighter.

Squeeze!

“Master Bang, now you can speak. How many records do you have? Surely you'll speak the truth, right? As you always have!”

- ....

Master Bang swallowed hard and looked up at the sky.

Not at the monument towering above, but at his home planet, somewhere beyond.

- Fourteen.

“...What?”

- I have fourteen settlement records. These are the records of our great ancestors.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

### Chapter 304: The Successor (3)

"14 records? Are you saying there are 14 records that can be inscribed on the monument right now?"

Yeongwoo asked with wide eyes, and Master Bang nodded.

- Yes, that's correct.

One of the four lords of the Redfoot Orcs, Bantubangtong.

His soul carried the entire history of the Redfoot clan, and that "history" included not only the legacy of his ancestors but also their achievements.

In other words, legendary battles fought by the Redfoot Orcs were preserved within Bantubangtong, and over time, these became 14 records that could be inscribed on Metal Seoul's Monument of Victory.

"Fourteen... my goodness."

Yeongwoo's mind began to race.

He only needed two achievement records for Earth's status upgrade review.

But was that really all?

'This monument can't be a one-time thing. Once the minimum glory points are filled, there must be more benefits.'

Moreover, Earth's cosmic status couldn't be that high.

So, whether there was a higher-tier review or an additional scoring system, Yeongwoo naturally thought there must be something more to this process.

"Master Bang, please register two records first. Then I will add the two records I have to meet the review requirements."

- Review requirements?

“Yes, just registering these will allow us to begin Earth's status upgrade review.”

Earth.

The new home for the Redfoot Orcs who had lost their homeland.

Thus, Bantubangtong could not help but be generous regarding matters concerning this planet.

- Very well. I will register two records immediately.

Master Bang nodded and placed his hand on the monument's surface again.

Soon, a notification was broadcast across all of Seoul.

— Lord Bantubangtong of the Redfoot Orcs has registered two legendary achievement records.

This announced that the abduction project Yeongwoo had launched earlier today was already yielding results.

Then, Yeongwoo registered his two records of slaying the Phantom Dragon and the Devourer.

Flash!

— Mayor Jeong Yeongwoo07 has registered two legendary achievement records.

Suddenly, the Monument of Victory emitted an invisible wave of energy, pushing back the surrounding air.

Hooaaah!

— The current glory score for Dogo City, Metal Seoul, is 1,025 points.

"Ah, finally..."

— Having reached the minimum required points for a planetary status upgrade review, this planet is now included in the upgrade queue.

"...Queue for the status upgrade?"

The unfamiliar term made Yeongwoo tilt his head, and a follow-up message continued.

— Soon, status review inspectors will begin observing this planet.

“Oh.”

— The planet's official status will be determined based on the significance of events recorded over a set period.

In simpler terms, the more significant the events that occur on the planet, the higher the likelihood of achieving a higher status.

And this meant that Earth was now one step closer to being a part of the universe's mainstream.

It had risen from being a backwater planet, still restricted by cosmic 'greenbelt' regulations, to being included in the queue for official status evaluation.

'Considering that the companies holding planetary development rights include Dogo, Lemu, and Mara, there will definitely be major events in the future.'

Yeongwoo was confident about the upcoming review.

Already, Dogo, a galactic thug with royal lineage, had extended his influence to this planet.

Not to mention, one of Earth's developers was none other than the king of ten thousand demons, Mara, and the Redfoot Orcs, who had lost their homeland, had sought refuge here as well.

Since the universe tended to value karmic consequences and extraordinary events, Yeongwoo figured the inspectors would take great interest in what was happening on Earth.

'The path to vengeance shines brighter today than ever.'

As Yeongwoo gazed at the tower in Jongno District, the Monument of Victory gleamed once again.

Flash!

— The level of the Monument of Victory has risen. The required glory score for the next phase is 3,000 points.

“As expected, there's a next phase. Are you seeing this, Master Bang?”

Yeongwoo nodded as he read the system message, while Master Bang grimaced.

- The greed of the universe knows no bounds. Just like you.

“Haha, I'll take that as a compliment that I'm a universal talent.”

Yeongwoo brushed off Master Bang's scolding and pointed at the monument.

“Now, as promised, please add the remaining records.”

- What?

“Don't you still have 12 records left, Master?”

Yeongwoo asked with a wicked grin, and Bantubangtong's eyes briefly widened.

Then, in a moment of clarity, he steadied his shaking pupils.

- Yes, that's true. We have 12 records left.

Click.

After finishing his sentence, Master Bang suddenly took a step back.

“Master...?”

Yeongwoo looked at him in confusion, and Master Bang, the only Orc politician on Earth, twitched his lips.

"Master Bang, are you alright?"

Even the demon Yeongwoo couldn't help but be concerned by Master Bang's troubled expression.

What happened next was astonishing.

- Yes... but I never promised to give them to you.

“...What?”

- It's true we have 12 records left, but I don't want to give them away so easily. That's... my true feeling.

“Huh?”

Yeongwoo's eyes widened in disbelief.

For the first time, Master Bang mimicked Yeongwoo's style of speech.



- So... how much will you pay for my true feelings? I'm curious to see how much your affection for this planet is worth.

"What?! Master Bang?"

Yeongwoo had to admit he was outplayed.

'Damn it. As the saying goes, "You become like the people you surround yourself with." It turns out our ancestors weren't wrong. He's become quite crafty.'

But then again, he was dealing with an Orc who was honest to a fault.

As the saying goes, "Even if you're caught by a tiger, stay calm and you'll survive."

'Get it together, Jeong Yeongwoo! Are you going to lose to a greenhorn who just arrived on Earth?'

Unlike the straightforward Orc, Yeongwoo was a demon who had spent his entire life thriving in capitalism.

"Master Bang, if that's what you want..."

Just as Yeongwoo was about to make a sly offer, Master Bang cut him off.

- Little Foot, I understand this isn't easy. But how could I possibly put a price on such a noble cause?

And just like Yeongwoo had once done, Master Bang raised three blunt fingers.

"Three? Three million...?"

It was a number with many implications.

If it was 3 million karma for all 12 records, that would be a bargain.

But if it was 3 million per record, the total would be a staggering 36 million karma.

Still, even that wasn't beyond Yeongwoo's reach.

It wasn't an unbearable situation.

The price was no less than 12 records of 'legendary feats.'

This wasn't a resource that could simply be bought with money.

"Could it be... 300 million...?"

When Yeongwoo tried to guess a realistic amount, Master Bang smirked bitterly.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

- These records are the prideful legacy our ancestors left for us. So, what you are trying to buy is the history of the Red Foot.

With that, Master Bang glanced for the first time at the citizens of Seoul surrounding the Sajikdan area.

In fact, the words he was speaking weren't just directed at Yeongwoo; they were meant for everyone in Seoul.

- If you want to take our history, then guarantee our future in return. I will demand three promises from you.

“...!”

The three fingers Master Bang had shown earlier weren't indicating a price but the three promises he would demand on behalf of his clan.

“Wow...”

“No way...”

“To take history in exchange for the future...”

The citizens of Seoul who heard Master Bang's proposal alongside Yeongwoo gazed at the massive red orc with admiration.

Master Bang's heartfelt words had melted even the cold, unfeeling hearts of Seoul.

‘Damn, public sentiment...’

Even though Yeongwoo had dominated the Korean Peninsula with his aim to strengthen the nation and bring peace to the world, it seemed like he had failed to win the people's hearts today.

He had lost in a political battle against the orc from another world.

Did true sincerity always prevail...?

For the first time in a while, Yeongwoo, who had been walking a path far removed from righteousness, felt something in his heart.

“Alright, Master Bang. What would you have me promise?”

Even as Yeongwoo said this, he was hoping Master Bang would make a mistake.

After all, everyone present was human, citizens of Seoul.

If Master Bang made a suggestion that would significantly harm Seoul, public opinion could shift in an instant.

But Master Bang, who had led the Red Foot clan for a long time, had political skills far beyond Yeongwoo’s reach.

- First. If you no longer need the Aratubank, return it to us. It is our sacred object and the spirit of our ancestors.

“Heh.”

- I may become a foolish ruler who sold off history, but I hope I can still take back some small good news.

‘...Shit.’

This was a request that was impossible to refuse and would inevitably evoke sympathy for the Red Foot orcs among the citizens of Seoul.

Essentially, Master Bang had just requested the support of the people’s hearts.

“...Alright. So, what’s the second?”

- Second. Waive the harsh tribute for just two days. Just today and tomorrow. We need money too, to bring more of our brothers here. And only when we have more brothers can we contribute more to this planet’s development, don’t you think?

“You don’t mean to include the gate usage fee in that ‘harsh tribute,’ do you?”

- I do.

‘This bastard, should I kill him?’

For a moment, murderous intent flashed in Yeongwoo’s eyes, but there were too many onlookers, and he couldn’t draw his sword.

Essentially, Master Bang was saying he wouldn’t pay the 300 million that Yeongwoo had demanded.

Moreover, he was asking for the basic daily tribute of 80 million to be waived for today and tomorrow as well.

“.....”

After thinking deeply, Yeongwoo cautiously sought a compromise.

“At least cover the cost price. The money I initially spent includes the taxes collected from the people present here. Return that to me.”

He was referring to the 100 million that had been spent to activate the gate in the first place.

Swoosh.

When Yeongwoo signaled his counterpart to take a broader view, Master Bang took a step back.

- Fine. I'll manage it somehow.

“Alright. What's the last promise I must make?”

At this point, it seemed like Yeongwoo had done remarkably well.

In reality, he hadn't lost much at all.

In return for this negotiation, he was gaining a whopping 12 records of legendary feats.

- What we want last is...

At last, Master Bang presented his final condition.

- Make us a place in Seoul.

“...What? What did you say?”

- If this is truly to become the capital of this planet in the future, we want to live in Seoul too.

In short, he was asking for an autonomous district in Seoul for orcs.

It was an extraordinary insight.

Honestly, when else could orcs expect to claim even a single room in Seoul if not now?

And they weren't even human.

“Ah, well, that’s... for now...”

As Yeongwoo was struggling to respond to this unexpected request, the sky over Seoul suddenly darkened.

Ssss...

The nearby citizens, as if on cue, began checking their watches.

“Oh, no way.”

“Is it that time already?”

“Gasp. The time.”

Realizing why the sky had turned that way, Yeongwoo quickly checked the time.

The current time was 12:36 PM.

There were about 24 minutes left until the appearance of the mutant.

And the creature that began showing signs of arrival at this time was typically of only one kind.

“...A dragon.”

As Yeongwoo muttered this, Master Bang’s eyebrows twitched.

- Little Foot, what did you just say?

Yeongwoo raised his hand and pointed directly at the sky.

“If you really want to live in Seoul, watch closely what’s about to happen. You’ll realize that living here isn’t as easy as you think.”

At that moment, a massive bolt of lightning struck within the clouds, and an enormous presence began approaching.

Gwoooooooooo...!

The third dragon had appeared in Seoul.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

## Chapter 305: The Successor (4)

"It's... it's a dragon!"

"Ahhh!"

"Run!"

It was heartbreaking that people recognized the shadow in the sky as a 'dragon' just by looking at it, but in Seoul, this was the reality, a part of everyday life.

-What... what's going on? Where is everyone going?

As Master Bang looked at the people scattering in all directions blankly, Yeongwoo pointed to the sky.

"I can't guarantee that I'll defeat the dragon this time either. So, people are taking precautions and leaving early."

Of course, no matter how powerful the dragon was, it couldn't use physical force before its scheduled appearance at 1 PM.

And the fleeing citizens knew this from their previous two experiences.

But their primal fear of dragons was so overwhelming that they instinctively fled the scene first.

-A dragon really appears over the city?

For a Red Foot Orc who had gone through entirely different trials on a different world, this was nothing short of astonishing.

"Yes. You may not understand, but on Earth, humans who died in the past return as monsters."

-...Why is that?

"We decided to kill them. So, they come back for revenge."

Reset is, by its nature, a cycle of immense karmic retribution.

And some karmas were more unusual than others, such as the one tied to Jeong Yeongwoo07, the Strongest Sword of Korea.

Born as the child of Song Jiseon, the youngest daughter of Jinhyeon Group, the second-largest conglomerate in Korea, and Kim Jeonggu, a low-level human.

But before 'Jeong Yeongwoo07' even existed, the reset had already taken place, so Song Jiseon was likely the first to be ensnared by this strange cycle of karma.

Her transformation into a dragon was predetermined, even before Yeongwoo or Jeonggu had become the Strongest Sword.

In other words, it was fated that Song Jiseon would return as a dragon in this world, but whether her son, Jeong Yeongwoo, would survive in the reset world and represent Seoul in the battle against dragons was not guaranteed.

The latter was only possible due to a series of incredible coincidences.

But in the end...

'That's what happened. Now, every day at 1 PM, I wait for my mother and uncle to return.'

Could this be called fate?

Rumble!

The sky, which had darkened completely, rumbled with loud thunder, prompting Yeongwoo to summon Negwig.

Master Bang, watching the ominous sky, asked:

-Small Foot, where are you going all of a sudden? Your brothers are here.

He referred to the few citizens who hadn't fled the scene.

But Yeongwoo had already climbed onto Negwig.

Click!

"The dragon won't descend immediately. It will just mark its territory and then appear at 1 o'clock."

He pointed to the east.

"I have an arena over there where I fight the dragon."

-Arena?

For the first time, Master Bang's face showed interest.

It seemed that the concept of dueling wasn't unfamiliar to the Red Foot Orcs.

"Yes. If I fight the dragon in the city, everyone will die."

With that explanation, Yeongwoo gestured for him to get on the back seat, and Master Bang also climbed onto Negwig.

Golden Goblin and Pofu Tenta, already seated, grimaced and made remarks:

-Kee! Keeek!

-Babat!

All three of them were aliens, so the first two were asserting their territory out of seniority.

Yeongwoo glanced back and, while steering Negwig toward Gwangjin District, said:

"Be friendly with your fellow foreign workers. If you survive the civil war, you'll see each other often."

Master Bang, after thinking for a moment, asked Yeongwoo:

-Where is the land you promised us?

"Sorry?"

-The last promise. The land.

"Oh, you mean the autonomous district."

He was referring to the third promise Master Bang had proposed: allowing Orcs to reside in Seoul.

"If you really plan to live in Seoul... two places come to mind right away."

-Where are they?

"One is Guro District. There was some trouble, so we evacuated most people there. As a result, it's mostly empty now."



It was an ideal place for relocating the Orcs, as no one lived there anymore and the buildings were relatively well-preserved.

Though it seemed that Red Foot Orcs didn't require lavish accommodations, if they were to maintain Guro's housing, someone would have to stay there.

-Guro District? What about the other one?

Master Bang asked, a bit hopeful, and Yeongwoo pointed ahead.

Swoosh.

"Gwangjin District. Where we're headed now, to the arena."

-...What?

"It's perfect, aside from being in ruins. It's connected to Gangnam, my district, and you can meet a dragon daily."

Yeongwoo, even as he said this, wasn't sure if it sounded right, but he couldn't think of a better way to describe it.

"And the southern part of Gwangjin District has a view of the Han River."

-Han River view?

"Yes. You can see the river from your house, though right now there aren't any houses in Gwangjin District... never mind, forget it."

Just as he concluded that Guro District would make a better home for the Orcs, a massive lightning bolt split the sky in two.

Crack! Boom!

At last, the third dragon began its contact with Seoul.

'Ah, finally.'

A dragon.

So far, the pattern had been consistent: people from wealthy families returned as dragons.

The first mutant, conglomerate head Hongtae, turned into a fire dragon, and later, Im Kwangho and Song Taeho also turned out to be from powerful families.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

So today's dragon was likely...

'It's highly probable that the dragon returning today is also from a wealthy family.'

After all, Song Taeho, who had appeared just before, was the eldest son of the Jinhyeon family.

And Song Taeho was also the older brother of Yeongwoo's biological mother, Song Jiseon.

In other words, there was a high chance that today's dragon was also someone from the Jinhyeon family.

Crack! Boom!

As Negwig sped toward Gwangjin District, Master Bang sensed something and reached out, resting his hand on Yeongwoo's shoulder.

-Small Foot, your body is tense. What's wrong?

"I'm just thinking... there's a good chance I'll see my mother today."

Yeongwoo spoke his thoughts candidly, causing Master Bang to raise an eyebrow.

-Your mother?

Then he lifted his head to look at the sky again.

Though it was still only approaching 1 PM, the sky was as dark as night.

Could it be that Small Foot's mother was up there beyond that dark sky?

-Small Foot, are you not truly a human child?

"My mother is no longer human, that's all. Please, mind your words."

Yeongwoo muttered the line through his teeth while glancing backward.

— Huuuaah...!

A loud sound came from the sky, shaking the entire area's air. It felt as though something that had been in a deep sleep was finally stretching and letting out a shout.

-What, what was that?

Bantubangtong flinched in surprise, but Yeongwoo put his index finger to his lips.

"Be quiet, they'll introduce themselves soon."

Introducing oneself immediately upon arrival and seeking out an opponent was characteristic of dragons.

Every dragon Yeongwoo had encountered was the same.

Even though they were all from different prominent families, they shared this trait.

However, the dragon that appeared this time seemed a little different.

— What the hell?

Instead of introducing itself, it spat out a curse.

— What's going on here? Did I come to the wrong place?

"Ah."

Yeongwoo immediately understood what the dragon was talking about.

It was referring to the completely changed scenery of Metal Seoul.

The city would look like a vast expanse of ash from the sky.

And thanks to the characteristic texture of metal, the whole city probably resembled a circuit board from above.

— Hey! I think there was a transport error! Dammit!

The third dragon was shouting at something or someone in the distance.

Judging by the sense of distance in its voice compared to before, it seemed to be yelling toward the sky, not the ground.

In other words, the dragon complained to some entity responsible for sending it here.

'What the... Did a lunatic just show up?'

As Yeongwoo was thinking this, Master Bang cautiously spoke from behind.

-Little Foot.

"Yes?"

-That dragon... It's speaking exactly like you.

"...What?"

Frowning, Yeongwoo turned around, and only then did he understand what he meant.

"You're saying it talks like me? No way."

Yeongwoo denied the claim and was about to look back toward the sky when—

Kwoooooom!

The sky flashed again, and a colossal shadow appeared beyond the black clouds.

— Uh.

"W-what?"

Though dragons were generally large, what they saw just now was...

"Was that... a whale or something?"

Even if you floated a real whale in the sky, it wouldn't match the silhouette they had just seen.

The dragon's wings literally covered the entire sky.

The body was easily over 100 meters long.

-That kind of thing appears in Seoul regularly...?

Master Bang, who now seemed to grasp the true nature of living in Seoul, looked at Yeongwoo with a tense expression.

And at that moment—

— Is there no one here?! Whoever you are, take my mark! I won't kill you immediately!

Failing to get a proper response from the universe, the dragon was now looking for a challenger.

Yeongwoo, as if he had been waiting for this, drew Bastard and prepared to answer the call.

Kwoooooom!

Once again, the sky flashed, and the third dragon revealed its identity.

— I am Song Jiseon, from Earth!

"...What? Song...."

Song Jiseon.

Chairwoman of the Jinhyeon family, the second most powerful conglomerate in the country.

And Jeong Yeongwoo's...

"...Mother?"

As soon as Yeongwoo realized the dragon's identity, the Aratubank held in his left hand began to vibrate violently.

The mythical shield's most peculiar effect, "Funeral Casket," had been triggered.

**【Coffin】**

| You can place blood relatives into the coffin. Special effects are granted depending on the phase and condition of the stored targets. (0/2)

In the meantime, Song Jiseon, mistaking the fear of the alien residents of the metal city as a sign of weakness, laughed loudly.

— Hahaha, you pathetic weaklings! Is no one daring to stand before me?

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

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[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 306: The Successor (5)

As he heard the rough laughter of his mother resounding from above, Yeongwoo recalled something.

— You won't be able to handle that guy. He's my brother, but he's a total maniac.

It was a warning left by his eldest uncle, Song Taeho, who had returned as Steel-Dragon but had yet to see the second uncle return.

However, the real warning Song Taeho had wanted to convey came after that.

— But what's scarier than him... is your mother.

Your mother.

Jeong Yeongwoo's biological mother, Song Jiseon.

The entire country knew that Song Jiseon, the youngest daughter of the Jinhyeon Group, had defeated her two older brothers in the battle for control over the company.

Although Yeongwoo didn't know much about it, the two older brothers who competed with Song Jiseon were notorious troublemakers in business circles and the public eye.

The eldest son, Song Taeho, often made verbal gaffes due to his arrogance and sense of entitlement, while the second son, Song Jeongho, was known for his eccentric personality and frequent involvement in scandals, both big and small.

Yet, it was said that the youngest daughter, Song Jiseon, was even scarier than these two problematic figures.

What kind of person was she?

'What kind of person? Probably a complete tyrant.'

Even though he had never met his mother in person, Yeongwoo instinctively understood.

— Hah-hah! Is there truly no one here?

Yeongwoo could sense that Song Jiseon must have been quite the force of nature during her human years as well.

After all, even now, she believed she was on an alien planet, yet she showed no signs of being daunted.

It was impossible to imagine just how intimidating she must have been in her youth.

'Of course, you'd need to be like that to defeat your chaebol brothers and rise to the top.'

As Yeongwoo gulped nervously, Master Bang, who was also looking up at the sky, muttered to himself.

— Is that really... your mother?

“...Yes. I'm not sure whether that's a good or bad thing, but at least she seems healthy.”

Even from the enormous shadow glimpsed through the clouds, it was evident how triumphant her return was.

‘Maybe the original future of Seoul was meant to be reduced to ashes by Song Jiseon.’

Yeongwoo scratched his chin while marveling at the silhouette of his mother, which impressed him every time he saw it.

Just two days ago, he wouldn't have been able to muster the confidence to face that silhouette.

But now things were different.

Though he had been branded a "mistake of the Jinhyeon family" by his eldest uncle, Yeongwoo had never needed the "Jinhyeon" name in the first place.

‘This is Metal Seoul, the special city of Dogo. There's no place for the ghosts of the old world!’

Whoosh!

Finally, Yeongwoo drew his blade, Bastard, just as the iron hooves of Negwig smashed into the ground of Gwangjin-gu.

Boom!

At last, they had arrived at the arena Yeongwoo had set up in the heart of Seoul.

— So, this is the place...?

As Master Bang looked around at the ruins of Gwangjin-gu, Yeongwoo nodded.

“Yes. When strong opponents appear, I usually lure them here and beat them down. I even dealt with one of my uncles here.”

As Yeongwoo said this, he touched the area near his heart, though Master Bang couldn't begin to guess the reason for that gesture.

— So, you intend to meet your mother here...?

Finally confronted with the grim nature of Mayor Jeong Yeongwoo, Master Bang recoiled.

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo had already raised Bastard towards the sky.

Swoosh!

“Mother...!”

As the Bastard’s powerful cry reverberated through the air, the massive shadow beyond the clouds flinched for a moment.

— ...What?

It was a reaction from Song Jiseon.

However, she had no idea that the cry she heard referred to her as “mother” and instead was surprised by something else entirely.

— Who’s there? Could it be a human?

Song Jiseon was startled simply by hearing a familiar language in this city of steel.

At that moment, Yeongwoo directed Negwig towards the center of Gwangjin-gu and swung the Bastard once again.

Whoosh!

“Mother! Over here! Give me the sign!”

And then Song Jiseon responded immediately.

— What are you talking about? Who’s your mother?

A massive presence stirred above, and the shadow looming over the clouds grew even larger.

Song Jiseon was descending closer to the ground.

— I-I can’t believe it...

Her enormous shadow was so intimidating that even the fearsome red-clawed Bantubangtong felt a sense of dread.

But Yeongwoo...

“Who else? You’re my mother!”

...responded without a hint of fear, provoking her further.



“Aren’t you Song Jiseon of the Jinhyeon Group?”

— What...?

Hearing the name "Jinhyeon" seemed to trigger something in Song Jiseon, as she fell silent for a moment before responding in a voice of shock.

— No way... this place is...?

Finally, she realized.

She was looking at Seoul, South Korea.

— What kind of mess has been made here?

As soon as Song Jiseon expressed her frustration, Yeongwoo shouted back at her.

“Come on, we don’t have time for this. Just give me the mark!”

The reason Yeongwoo was so obsessed with the mark of the dragon’s adversary was for the protection of the city.

Although Seoul was reinforced with steel, Song Jiseon was no ordinary dragon either.

— What? You bastard! What did you just call me?

As expected, Song Jiseon’s temper flared, and a stream of curses came flying out of her mouth.

Soon, a bright red mark descended toward Yeongwoo’s head.

Whoosh!

Ping!

Tracing a long arc in the air, it landed directly on Yeongwoo’s head.

It was none other than the adversary’s mark.

「General」

The character for "general", given to the one who would face the dragon on behalf of the entire city.

When the designated time arrived, the dragon would descend where the mark was placed.

‘Finally!’

Confirming the mark had been secured on his head, Yeongwoo, with a completely different attitude, addressed his mother with newfound respect.

“Mother! Please come down so we can talk!”

Then, thunder echoed in the sky, and Song Jiseon’s voice boomed down.

— You moronic bastard, calling me your mother...

She seemed annoyed as she spoke, but suddenly, she fell silent.

“...!”

Yeongwoo widened his eyes, watching the massive shadow soaring through the clouds.

“You remember, don’t you? You know it’s me, right?”

Though Yeongwoo pressed for an answer, no response came.

Instead, filled with certainty, he shouted toward the sky.

“You’re my mother, aren’t you? Even if you don’t recognize me, you must remember giving birth to me!”

At Yeongwoo’s desperate cry, Song Jiseon, who had been flying above, suddenly stopped all movement.

Swoosh!

“Wha...?”

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

As the enormous shadow disappeared from view, a moment of intense fury overtook Yeongwoo, and he leapt off the precipice at Negwig, clutching Bastard in his arms.

Taat!

"Song Jiseon! Where did you go? Are you abandoning me again...!"

But before Yeongwoo could finish his sentence, beams of light shot down from the skies all over Seoul.

Paaaah!

"...!"

These were the marks of the mutants and monsters.

The time had already reached 1 PM.

At that exact moment, the ceremonial act unique to the dragon race began.

「An [Abnormal Weather] ice storm has formed in Gwangjin-gu.」

‘Ice storm?’

Before Yeongwoo could even process the thought, the sky turned a deep blue and began to freeze.

Crack!

The ice storm had the terrifying ability to freeze an entire area solid.

Even worse, Song Jiseon's influence wasn't limited to Gwangjin-gu; it spread to the outskirts of neighboring regions, suspending the monsters that had just started to descend along the beams of light midair.

‘Freezing an entire space? Is this even possible?’

Crackle, crackle...

Noticing the air itself beginning to crystallize over Gwangjin-gu, Yeongwoo quickly shouted out.

"Are you planning to kill your husband too? You can't kill me with this! But Jeonggu, he's weak; he'll freeze to death!"

He said this to save Master Bang, the Golden Goblin, and Pofu Tenta, who were also present.

Since he couldn't make her understand the value of the Orc Lord, he instead sold out their only connection—her father.

This strategy proved quite effective.

Crack!

Suddenly, the ice ceiling over Gwangjin-gu shattered, and Song Jiseon, Yeongwoo's biological mother, appeared.

—Husband? What a laughable term. That means nothing to me.

Rooooar!

With a chilling presence, Song Jiseon appeared, her entire body covered in translucent scales, revealing her as a massive ice dragon.

Boom!

As she landed on the ground and pressed her front foot against the earth, the ground beneath her froze and turned a deathly blue.

[Chaebol Leader—Song Jiseon]

‘...Are you kidding me?’

Seeing the title "Chaebol Leader" for the first time since the reset, Yeongwoo couldn't even keep his eyes open in her presence.

In fact, her entire body was radiating so brightly.

"Goddamn, she's huge, and now she's got a blinding light attack too? That's not fair."

While Yeongwoo muttered a sarcastic remark, Song Jiseon's blue eyebrows twitched, sensing something odd.

—What exactly are you?

Just as Yeongwoo guessed, Song Jiseon was an enormous dragon with a total length of about 250 meters.

Due to her long neck, standing upright meant she was looking down at Yeongwoo from nearly 100 meters above.

"Can you even see me from up there? How about coming down so we can talk? Can't you polymorph or something?"

Recalling his great-uncle who had charged at him as a knight, Yeongwoo made a suggestion, and Song Jiseon's anger flared again.

—Stop spouting nonsense and answer my question. You can't even breathe without my permission. Don't test my patience, I've spared you a thousand times already.

Her words were chilling.

Her translucent scales revealed blue blood coursing beneath, indicating her genuine rage.

But Yeongwoo was also holding back to some extent.

"Seriously, exaggerating much? You think I'm not sparing you? You want me to put you in a coffin right now?"

This wasn't entirely empty bravado—his left arm, holding 'Aratubank,' was trembling with wild energy.

—Hmph, just die.

As Song Jiseon's eyes turned cold and she prepared to freeze the entire area again...

"Wait a moment...!"

From a distance, a frantic voice called out.

"...Huh?"

Yeongwoo turned his head toward the source of the voice, and there, rushing toward them, was none other than Kim Jeonggu, Yeongwoo's biological father, certified by the universe.

"Both of you, stop! Please stop!"

Without even holding a weapon, Jeonggu flailed his arms as he ran toward them, looking every bit the pitiful father.

His eyes were filled with worry and fear.

Tat-tat!

Yet, courageously stepping into the icy storm, Jeonggu quickly checked Yeongwoo's condition and then gazed up at the sky.

He looked up at Song Jiseon, the ice dragon, with whom he once spent a passionate night.

"Ji, Jiseon! No, Lady Jiseon!"

Waving his arms toward the sky in a panic, Song Jiseon finally lowered her stiffly held head for the first time.

Groooooan...

She lowered her head to take a closer look at the tiny man beneath her, who seemed like an ant.

—Do you know me?

Panting heavily, Jeonggu began nervously wringing his hands together.

"Do... do you remember? That one time..."

Carefully choosing his words, Jeonggu finally managed to extract a historically significant name for the two of them.

"Re..."

—...!

Song Jiseon's pupils began to widen.

And almost simultaneously, Jeonggu finished his sentence.

"Renaissance in Bulgwang-dong... Do you remember...?"

—...

What happened next, neither Yeongwoo, Jeonggu, nor even Song Jiseon herself could have predicted.

After hearing Jeonggu's words, Song Jiseon opened her massive jaws and unleashed a breath attack.

—Diiiiiiiiiii!

At that moment, Yeongwoo raised his Aratubank, as if he had been waiting for this.

"Well, damn..."

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

## Chapter 307: The Successor (6)

Crashhhhhh!

The breath of the Ice Dragon, Song Jiseon, descended like a massive waterfall.

It was no wonder—her upper body alone stretched over 100 meters long.

Shatterrrrr!

The force of the icy breath, which froze everything in its path and cascaded from 100 meters above, was beyond imagination.

Of course, the fact that Yeongwoo was blocking this power shocked everyone present.

“Are you insane? Trying to kill everyone here?”

As Yeongwoo raised his mythical shield, Aratubank, a protective barrier formed in a gentle arc around him.

One of Aratubank's unique effects, “Immunity,” had been activated.

**【Immunity】**

| This shield cannot be destroyed and can block most non-physical damage and mental attacks.

And above them...

Crackkkkk!

The enraged breath of the Ice Dragon poured down like a landslide.

—I will erase everything...!

The fierce attack was as if she intended to grind all of Gwangjin-gu to dust.

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo glanced at Jeonggu, who had taken refuge under the shield.

“Seems like her memories of my father are pretty terrible, huh?”

Surprisingly, Jeonggu nodded without much resistance.

“I guess so...”

After all, Jeonggu had no real say in this.

The only wrong Jeonggu had suffered was that someone claiming to be his son had come at him with a sword, but Song Jiseon had given birth to Yeongwoo herself.

Unlike Jeonggu, Song Jiseon had been tormented by “that event” even before the reset.

“What now?”

As Yeongwoo held the shield for a while, he asked, to which Jeonggu looked up and replied, “Huh? What?”

“Mother. Isn’t it your responsibility to handle this, since you’re the father?”

Crassssshhhh!

Even as they spoke, Song Jiseon’s wrath poured down from the sky like divine punishment, and in the midst of the sound of shattering ice, Jeonggu squeezed in his line.

“What... what do you mean? She’s your mother!”

“What the hell? Did she have me alone? You were her partner, too, weren’t you?”

“.....”

Partner.

Jeonggu was momentarily at a loss for words at Yeongwoo’s perfectly fitting expression.

Sure, they weren’t married, nor had they made any promises about their future, so she wasn’t his wife.

But calling her a girlfriend didn’t seem quite right either.

Their connection was only that one night several decades ago.

“Well... yeah. Partner.”

Jeonggu, now looking somber, repeated the word “partner” quietly.

Then, suddenly, his face hardened, and he glared at Yeongwoo.

“Hey, listen. She might be my partner, but she’s your mother, so technically, you’re closer to her than I am!”

“What?”



“I mean, go talk to Jiseon. Get her to calm down!”

“You cowardly bastard.”

“What?”

As Yeongwoo and Jeonggu traded insults, the Master Bang who had crawled under the shield pointed outside.

—Brother, that looks dangerous.

“Huh?”

Yeongwoo peeked around the side of the shield and saw that Song Jiseon—his mother—had raised her forepaw for the first time.

Crackkkkk.

“Huh?”

At first, he thought she was about to strike with her paw, but then...

Whoooshhh!

A bright light began to gather in the sky.

“She’s going to launch a barrage!”

Yeongwoo realized his mother was about to make her move.

Fweeeeeeeeeeee!

Indeed, from where Song Jiseon hovered high in the sky, beams of light were pointing straight down, followed by a massive surge of energy.

“Ugh! Y-Yeongwoo!”

Gripping his son’s shoulder desperately, Jeonggu clung to him with all his might.

However, Cosmic Etiquette over Yeongwoo’s shoulders, along with his full Vesedel armor, shrugged off Jeonggu’s grasp.

“Argh...!”

At that moment, Jeonggu had a realization.

Even if he died here at Jiseon's hand, his son would surely survive.

But his survival instincts still pushed him to ask desperately:

"C-can you block that? You can, right?"

Even Yeongwoo himself...

Glance.

...turned to the Master Bang, who was standing beside him.

"Master Bang, can Aratubank withstand this?"

But before the Martial Artist could respond, another massive spear of energy slammed into Aratubank's protective barrier.

BOOOOOM!

An ominous sound echoed from the other side of the barrier, but everyone, including Yeongwoo, was still alive.

—O-of course. The ancestors left Aratubank to protect us.

Master Bang wiped the sweat from his brow.

Then Yeongwoo, gripping the illegitimate sword tightly, turned back toward his mother.

"I'll try to distract her. All of you, get out of here. You're just in the way."

But Jeonggu gently grabbed his son's right arm, the one holding the sword, and spoke seriously:

"What's your plan? You're not thinking of doing something to your mother, are you? That's not right."

"You still have feelings for her, I see."

"I'm doing this for you. She's still your mother, after all. Not my wife, but..."

Jeonggu, for all it was worth, was still Yeongwoo's father.

So he was trying to give his son some advice.

"But Mother's too strong. If she really tries to kill us, I won't have a choice."

If it weren't for Yeongwoo, Seoul would have already been destroyed the moment Song Jiseon appeared.

Her power was beyond what a mere "Strongest Sword" could handle.

'What kind of monster appears just one week after the last one? What's going to show up tomorrow?'

As Yeongwoo frowned at the thought, another spear of energy formed in the sky.

Fweeeeeeeeeeeee!

"Mother! Are you really going to kill both your son and your former partner? We're still family, aren't we?"

Yeongwoo hid behind Aratubank, shouting up at the sky.

Enraged, Song Jiseon bared her enormous fangs.

—You damn bastard!

Without a moment's hesitation, she plunged her spear down again.

Kwaaaak!

"It's coming again!"

Despite Yeongwoo's urgent cry, all he had to do was hold up his shield.

Thunk!

Once again, an enormous pressure fell on the protective barrier, but neither Yeongwoo nor the Aratubank budged.

"Whew."

Calling out to the Negwig who had been running around in the distance, Yeongwoo then spoke to his father, Master Bang, and the two slaves.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

"Ride Negwig and escape. I'll handle my mother somehow."

Immediately, as another ominous presence surged from above, Jeonggu and Master Bang silently climbed onto the Negwig.

"Yeongwoo! Take care of Jiseon!"

From atop the swiftly fleeing Negwig, Jeonggu left behind an ultimately useless plea. Naturally, this drew attention.

—Where the hell does he think he's going?

Song Jiseon, the ice dragon, turned her massive head and couldn't help but notice the high-speed escape of the Negwig.

To her eyes, it looked like her son was being abandoned as they fled.

—Stop right there!

In the end, Song Jiseon, having resolved to put her past to rest once and for all, opened her jaws wide and began preparing a breath attack.

At that moment, Yeongwoo launched his first-ever attack against his mother.

"Forgive me, Mother! But abandoning your child is no small sin either!"

Taak!

As Yeongwoo swiftly moved forward, removing his guard, Song Jiseon detected his fast, albeit small, presence and rolled her eyes.

—This little brat... he's quick...

But before she could finish her thought, Yeongwoo's sword aimed directly at one of Song Jiseon's arms, which was resting on the ground.

Sssssssh!

Especially notable was Yeongwoo's sword, Bastard , a weapon meant for those of lower status.

【challenger】

|Combat abilities increase dramatically when fighting beings of higher rank.

Thanks to the Challenger effect, Yeongwoo's amplified attack power was something even the dragon Song Jiseon could clearly feel.

—...!

Suddenly aware of her son's enhanced presence, Song Jiseon's eyes widened as The Bastard's blade slashed across her foot.

Ssssssh!

As expected, even his mother's body wasn't quite at the level of "myth."

'Her size makes it easy to hit no matter how I swing!'

As Yeongwoo admired his mother's enormous form and prepared to swing his sword again, Song Jiseon's entire body, covered in semi-transparent scales, emitted a dazzling light.

"...Ugh! Is she transforming?"

The light was so blinding that Yeongwoo could barely keep his eyes open, but even then, he stabbed The Bastard into the spot where he'd swung earlier.

Thwack!

"Are you really going all out against your own son? Are you actually trying to kill me?"

Finally, from within the brilliance, Song Jiseon's voice echoed out.

—If you truly are my son, then you're my biggest mistake... no, my flaw!

Mistake.

".....!"

At that word, Yeongwoo could only grit his teeth.

After all, he had heard the same words from his maternal uncle: "You are the Jinhyeon family's mistake."

"You guys are making a big mistake with me."

With these words, Yeongwoo yanked the sword from where it was embedded.

At the same time, Song Jiseon's massive form began to shrink rapidly.

'She's doing it.'

Swoooooosh!

Polymorph.

His mother, like his maternal uncle Song Taeho, was capable of transformation.

Swish!

Now, standing before him was Song Jiseon, transformed into a swordsman standing at a towering height of 3 meters.

Clad in grayish-white armor with long white hair flowing in the air, Song Jiseon reappeared in a form that made it clear she was an opponent no one should dare to face.

Her helmet was adorned with a dragon head design resembling her form as an ice dragon, and in her right hand, she wielded a massive sword seemingly made of ice.

Thud!

After completing her transformation, Song Jiseon thrust her sword into the ground, and an icy coldness shot up like a fountain.

Sssshhhh!

‘Phew, her aura is different from Uncle’s.’

Yeongwoo had encountered many powerful opponents before, but this was the first time an enemy had looked this overwhelmingly strong.

It made sense, given that the power in her former massive form was now concentrated in this body.

And then, suddenly—

Swoooooosh!

Two beams of light shot from the direction of Gangnam-gu and fell directly on both Yeongwoo and Song Jiseon.

Bang! Bang!

—What is that?

".....?"

For the first time, both of them were simultaneously shocked, and the source of the light soon revealed itself.

「Due to the detection of a dragon in the area, the Guardian Dragon function has been activated.」

"Huh?"

【Guardian Dragon】

This was a special function tied to the iron core of the Toma.

【Guardian Dragon】

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

'Wait, why is this affecting me too?'

Looking up, Yeongwoo saw a dragon-shaped mark above his head.

It signified that his stats had been boosted by 20% since he was currently classified as a "dragon" in Metal Seoul.

Song Jiseon was just as confused by this fact.

—Why are you classified as a dragon?

In other words, she was asking how he had inherited the privileges of a powerful family.

In response, Yeongwoo carefully placed his hand over his heart.

'Uncle?'

The only explanation was that he carried the blood of his maternal uncle Song Taeho, who had left behind the heart of a great dragon.

"Ah... so blood is thicker than water, after all?"

As Yeongwoo looked up at the sky with eyes filled with madness, dark clouds began to gather within the icy heavens of Gwangjin-gu.

—...?

This caused Song Jiseon to look up as well, and soon she saw it too.

Krazzzaaat!

A storm of iron rain began pouring down, breaking through the cold sky.

This was the dragon etiquette tied to the heart of a great dragon, Iron Rain —a strange weather phenomenon.

"Mother! Uncle sends his regards!"

—What?

"He says, 'Don't make your son too angry! I learned that the hard way!'"

—Wha... What is he talking about, this madman?

As Song Jiseon gripped her sword tighter, taking a battle stance, her son, Jeong Yeongwoo, lunged at her like a demon.

"Mother! It's time to face your karma!"

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 308: The Successor (7)

A Huge Karma.

In the case of Jeonggu, Yeongwoo's biological father, it was natural that his son's existence hadn't felt real for a long time.

Though it was true that he had unwittingly created a person named Jeong Yeongwoo, he had never actually seen the result.

Thus, while Jeong Yeongwoo's existence was undeniable, Jeonggu had no knowledge of it.

However, Jiseon, Yeongwoo's biological mother, was different.

As the one who physically gave birth to Jeong Yeongwoo, Jiseon knew well that her son existed in this world.

Yet, she hadn't anticipated that her son, grown and strong, would one day come to find her.

She had discarded both her past and the illegitimate child along with it.



By doing so, Song Jiseon accumulated a significant karmic debt, and now that karma was returning to her in this new and more brutal world.

“Motheerrrr!”

As the Conqueror King, supported by 76.8% of the Korean Peninsula’s population, charged at her, even Song Jiseon, who didn’t know the true extent of her opponent’s power, felt a chill down her spine.

—W-What’s going on with this guy?

The movement of the illegitimate son, wielding a blazing red sword, was far from ordinary.

Swiishhh!

The red blade came toward her faster than she could comprehend, and Song Jiseon hurriedly raised her great sword to block the attack.

Clang!

Yeongwoo’s eyes widened in surprise at the impact.

“As expected...!”

It was no wonder.

His mother, once a conglomerate chairwoman, had been sent here equipped with the means to counter mythical powers.

“You still hold onto privileges, even in this world!”

As Yeongwoo prepared for a second attack with his eyes glinting fiercely, Jiseon retorted in an extremely irritated tone.

—What are you talking about? I haven’t even regained half the power I lost.

Before Yeongwoo could launch his second attack, Jiseon swung her sword first.

Swish!

A massive diagonal slash from bottom to top.

“Ah!”

Sensing the ominous energy, Yeongwoo pulled his Aratubank shield toward him before he could even check the holographic guide.

And then—

Crash!

His mother's blue great sword scraped roughly across the surface of Aratubank.

'Has she gone mad?'

Yeongwoo realized that his mother's attack speed had been faster than the holographic guide's warning.

Without Aratubank's unreasonable defense, he wouldn't have been able to block the attack.

—Damn it.

Song Jiseon also felt frustration when she saw Yeongwoo's strange shield.

Despite returning with the prestige of a conglomerate head, she couldn't even cut down her illegitimate son.

—If you really are my son, shouldn't you let your mother pass?

Finally, instead of attacking, Song Jiseon began to talk.

She had finally recognized Yeongwoo as someone she couldn't easily step over.

At last, she had a reason to communicate with her son.

"And what exactly is your path? Isn't it just turning Seoul into a sea of ice or fire?"

As Yeongwoo asked, staring at his mother's cold blue sword, the former "Iron-Blooded Empress" and Ice Dragon Song Jiseon sneered.

—Ha, Seoul? You really think I care about something as trivial as Seoul at this point?

"...What? Weren't you here to take revenge on the people?"

Yeongwoo's eyes widened in surprise at the unexpected answer, and Jiseon continued.

—What's the point of venting my anger on those worms now? It's only natural that they hate us, like breathing.

“.....!”

Yeongwoo couldn't help but be shocked by her words.

Among all the dragon-blooded conglomerate heads he had met, Jiseon was the first who didn't harbor resentment toward the world.

“If you're not here for revenge, why did you return? You could have chosen not to mutate in the first place.”

Yeongwoo asked, and Jiseon raised her left hand as if to slap him.

—Ugh, you brat. Who said I wasn't going to take revenge? Are you insane?

“...What nonsense? You just said taking it out on people was pointless.”

—Exactly. Why take revenge on the wrong people?

“...What?”

—Do you blame the water if a dam breaks and a flood happens? You should catch the one who broke the dam and beat them to death.

“.....!”

It made sense.

As someone who had fought through fierce sibling rivalry to rise to the top, her mindset was different from the dragons Yeongwoo had encountered so far.

‘...Her perspective is out of this world.’

To Jiseon, the public wasn't even worthy of any emotional consideration.

Just as water flows from high to low, it was natural for hatred to rise from the masses to the elite in her view.

Yet in the “real world,” this hatred couldn't materialize on its own.

But now, someone had caused a crack in the once-impenetrable dam, allowing the masses' hatred to take physical form.

That's what Song Jiseon was pointing out.

‘There really is a madwoman here. No wonder everyone else seemed like background noise to her.’

It made sense now.

That's why she could throw away even her own son, as if he were just part of the background.

'Did she see her son as background too? And just toss him somewhere far away?'

"....."

He felt like he couldn't breathe.

Swish.

In the meantime, Jiseon raised her sword, which had been pointed at Yeongwoo, toward the sky.

Swiish!

—Seoul is just a stepping stone. The ones I must take revenge on are the ones who caused this reset!

Declaring war on the heavens themselves.

"....."

Watching his mother ranting furiously, Yeongwoo sensed an opportunity for negotiation.

"But?"

—What?

"How exactly are you going to take that revenge? You don't even know who your enemy is or how to meet them, do you?"

—Well...

Hearing Yeongwoo's words, Jiseon finally took a look around at the unfamiliar landscape of Metal Seoul.

It occurred to her that she knew nothing about this strange world.

Had her goal been simple revenge on the masses, it wouldn't have mattered—after all, it was a world she planned to destroy anyway.

But everything changed if her goal was to find and kill the root cause of all this.

—Then what about you? Do you know the way?

Jiseon asked, and instead of lying, Yeongwoo responded honestly.

“No? Not yet.”

—What?

“But I’m the one with the highest chance of finding out. By an overwhelming margin.”

And this choice was quite astute.

Song Jiseon, a born businesswoman, felt a strange trust in Yeongwoo's manner of expression.

—Overwhelmingly likely? Why do you think that?

Song Jiseon asked, giving Yeongwoo another opportunity, and this time, Yeongwoo, the ‘mistake’ of the Jin family and an illegitimate child, finally pulled out the name of Dogo.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

"Dogo."

—...What?

"I'm the only one bringing 「Dogo」 to Seoul as a sponsor, aiming to elevate the status of our planet."

—The status of... the planet?

From inside her solid helmet, Song Jiseon’s look of bewilderment was clear.

Without flinching, Yeongwoo raised his sword skyward, following his mother.

Swoosh.

"Yes. I'm the human closest to space. So who else but me could find the culprit of this?"

This was mostly true, but it was a claim Song Jiseon, who had just arrived in this world, found hard to accept all at once.

Could that newborn she abandoned decades ago have grown into such a terrifying being?

—He's... insane.

Song Jiseon swallowed hard within her helmet.

Yeongwoo's claim was absurd, but she couldn't ignore the vast meaning embedded in the name 「Dogo」 he had just spoken.

So she couldn't outright deny it.

This madman, the existence of Dogo, Seoul's sponsor, and the strange structure of the universe.

"Crazy? Of course. What did you expect from a child abandoned in this world without parents?"

When Yeongwoo shouted like this with the title of orphan and son, even the formidable Song Jiseon hesitated.

—Well...

And wasn't he the human currently closest to space?

She didn't fully grasp that this was her son, but if she had to have a child, better a special one than a normal one.

Although this wasn't just special—it was beyond that.

And more importantly, this monster was not easy to kill.

—Phew.

Finally, Song Jiseon let out a long sigh and uttered something shocking.

—Yeah. You've grown well. Becoming an astronaut without your mother's support.

"...What?"

Now it was Yeongwoo who was surprised.

Such a quick change of attitude?

"What are you talking about all of a sudden?"

—What do you mean, what? Didn't you just say it? I'm your mother.

Song Jiseon's voice didn't waver, and instead, Yeongwoo's pupils trembled.

"Right? It's been cosmically confirmed that I'm Kim Jeonggu's biological son, and so the Song Jiseon who met Kim Jeonggu in Bulgwang-dong is—"

—Ugh, damn it! That's right, you brat!

At the word "Bulgwang-dong," Song Jiseon momentarily lost her composure and waved her greatsword in frustration.

—I am! Your mother!

"Excuse me?"

Yeongwoo blinked, thinking he must have misheard, but Song Jiseon repeated herself in a clear voice.

—I'll give it a try! I'm your mother! And from now on, you're my son!

This was a huge decision for Song Jiseon, and she awkwardly spread her arms.

—W-Welcome! My son!

In her gesture, offering a hug, Yeongwoo stood there, dumbfounded, before taking a step forward.

Clank.

The boots of his Vesedel armor made a sharp metallic sound, and the red aura of the cursed sword, Bastard, moved closer to Song Jiseon.

Since his mother was holding a sword while offering a hug, Yeongwoo still had his own sword in hand.

"...Is this right? Hugging while both holding swords?"

Yeongwoo glanced sideways at his mother's icy greatsword and asked.

Song Jiseon chuckled from inside her helmet.

—We aren't exactly on terms to meet unarmed, are we?

"...True."

For some reason, Yeongwoo quickly accepted and nodded.

And then.

Clank.

He boldly took another step forward.

Ssshhh.

As he made a large step, the demonic energy of Bastard made Song Jiseon flinch momentarily, but she didn't retract her outstretched arms.

In fact, she even—

—My son, it seems you've grown strong.

With a firm resolve, she gritted her teeth and took a step toward him.

Now, the two were only about a handspan apart.

Yeongwoo carefully slipped his arms under his mother's, attempting a hug.

"Mother."

—Son...!

Perhaps for the first time in history, a fully armored hug.

This strange hug felt oddly unique for Yeongwoo, who had only ever shaken hands with mutants.

Clang!

And so, the mother and son of a fallen world succeeded in their cold embrace, allowing each to see the other's back.

Though fully armored, paradoxically, they were now more vulnerable to attack.

"You've acknowledged me as your son, though you probably have ulterior motives... What do you plan to do now?"

Yeongwoo asked, still holding his mother.

Looking down at her son's back, Song Jiseon replied.

—So, what can you do for me, this mother of yours?

"Me?"



Yeongwoo's gaze naturally fell upon the Aratubank he held in his left hand.

The myth-level casket for his kin.

"And what about you, Mother? What can you do for your son?"

—Me? Of course...

While Song Jiseon's cold mind was spinning, Yeongwoo's achievement system, which had been dormant for a while, suddenly activated.

「Achievement, 'Complete Orphan,' has weakened.」

「You can now start a new family achievement.」

‘Huh...?’

Then, beneath “Complete Orphan,” a new achievement appeared.

[Complete Orphan]

| Find and eliminate your parents. (0/2)

[Noble Family: Restoration of the Roots]

| Complete the following three tasks. (1/3)

- Find a mother and a father.
- Reunite your parents.
- Be blessed by your complete parents.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

Chapter 309: Noble Family (1)

'Wha... what am I supposed to do?'

While in his mother's cold embrace, Yeongwoo blinked in confusion.

Instead of the "Complete Orphan" achievement resetting again, a new achievement related to a family had appeared.

[Noble Family: Restoration of the Roots]

[Complete the following three tasks. (1/3)]

- Find both a mother and a father.
- Reunite your parents.
- Be blessed by your complete parents.

And the tasks for this achievement were clear to anyone:

'It's about recreating a family.'

It was unbelievable.

This mission directly contradicted his previous family-related achievement, the "Complete Orphan."

Instead of killing his parents, he now had to reunite them and seek their blessing...

At this point, what kind of absurd directive was this?

'No, seriously, how am I supposed to reunite them and get their blessing when the family is in this state?'

His mother, who had returned as a dragon and former head of a conglomerate, and his biological father, Kim Jeonggu, who was one of her worst nightmares.

Could he really succeed in "Restoration the Roots" with these two?

"....."

While some people were born into a complete family, Yeongwoo wasn't so fortunate.

What he had now were people who merely bore the label of "family" but were little more than strangers to him.

And Yeongwoo himself, who had to play the role of their son, wasn't even a complete human.

In other words, this achievement was not only a significant challenge for Yeongwoo, but also for the other two.

"Mother."

Feeling his biological mother's cold body, Yeongwoo called to her softly, and Song Jiseon, who was holding him, responded with a trembling voice.

—Y-yes, speak.

"If you really consider me your son, then give me a family."

—What?

Perhaps she hadn't expected such a serious conversation, and Song Jiseon instinctively pulled him away from her embrace.

—What exactly do you mean? You already have a family...

"No."

—...?

"What did you just call me earlier?"

At Yeongwoo's question, Song Jiseon fell silent for a moment, unable to understand his intent.

—...What?

Yeongwoo let out a shallow breath, as if his chest felt tight.

"You kept calling me your son."

—Well, of course! You are my son, whose son could you be?

When Song Jiseon raised her voice, feeling wronged, Yeongwoo shook his head.

"I'm also Kim Jeonggu's son."

—You son of a...

Song Jiseon's voice distorted instantly.

But Yeongwoo was firm.

"So call me 'our son.' That's where we need to start."

—Start? Start what?

Unaware of Yeongwoo's "Noble Family" achievement, Song Jiseon sensed something ominous and asked, and Yeongwoo responded while holding up three fingers.

"Becoming a family. The first step to being a family. I know it makes you sick, but please acknowledge Mr. Jeonggu as my father. And..."

—And?

"Recognize him as your husband."

As Yeongwoo added that last part, a sharp energy rapidly surged within Song Jiseon's icy armor.

Her blue blood was boiling with rage.

"...Damn it."

As Yeongwoo closed his eyes tightly, sensing what was to come, Song Jiseon's entire body turned blue as she gripped her greatsword with both hands.

Crunch.

—You crazy fool, you've finally crossed the line!

It was no surprise that suggesting she accept such a despicable man as her husband was a huge insult to her.

—I'd rather die than take that man as my husband!

As Song Jiseon ground her teeth and swung her greatsword wildly, Yeongwoo, also losing his temper, countered her attack as Bastard and shouted back.

Clang!

"Don't say too much you'll regret later! Kim Jeonggu can hear you from outside right now!"

And it was true.

As a dragon, her voice was reverberating not only throughout Gwangjin District but also to the outskirts of adjacent areas.

—Regret? Damn it, I already regret ever calling you my son! Die!

Swish!

Song Jiseon swung her sword with the intent to erase her son from existence, and Yeongwoo, overwhelmed by the new achievement, lashed back, heatedly.

"Damn it! Can't you act like a mother, even just now?"

Yeongwoo had been sensing it instinctively for a while now.

The "Noble Family" achievement that appeared with his mother's return was the beginning of something far bigger than what was immediately visible.

And more than anything.

'The achievement's name is literally "Noble Family." I'd bet my father that this has to do with establishing a cosmic family.'

Having seen how important status and background were in the universe many times before, Yeongwoo was determined to complete this achievement no matter what.

He had already completed one of the three tasks, after all.

"Listen to me! This is the first request your abandoned son is making!"

—Damn it, stop talking nonsense. You're not my son...

Just as Song Jiseon, exhaling a cold breath, tried to deny her son again while locking swords with him...

Flash!

For the first time, Yeongwoo unleashed the full might of the Ultimate Sword in front of his mother.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

"Twice is too much! I won't allow it again, ever!"

—Huh...!

Song Jiseon, seeing Yeongwoo's eyes gleam with a golden brilliance, couldn't help but let out a gasp.

She saw an overwhelming presence in his gaze.

Jeong Yeongwoo, the elected Strongest Sword of the Korean Peninsula and Mayor of Metal Seoul, Dogo Special City.

It turned out his ridiculous titles carried tremendous weight.

"You damn fools! You've neglected your child for decades—now at least fulfill your basic duty as humans...!"

As something beyond anger emanated from Yeongwoo, Song Jiseon couldn't move an inch.

—I...!

Yeongwoo's overwhelming presence completely crushed her blue heart.

"Let's just all die! I'll go back to being a complete orphan like I used to!"

As golden lightning began flashing from Yeongwoo's eyes and he prepared to strike his mother with his sword...

"Y-Yeongwoo!"

A faint, weak voice slipped through the immense sound of the golden waves and the sharp icy wind.

It was a force far too frail to belong in this place, and paradoxically, that was exactly why he couldn't help but listen.

It was such an alien sound.

"No! Yeongwoo! You mustn't do it!"

Tap, tap!

Making a light tapping sound, someone dared to dash into the overwhelming presence of the strongest sword and the domain of the glacial currents.

It was none other than Kim Jeonggu.

A man whose title seemed laughable compared to the ones standing between the Sword of Korea and the Iron-Blood Empress, a man from Bulgwang-dong.

『The Strongest Sword of Dobong』

"Parent and child—it's a sacred bond! A sacred bond! You can't sever it like that! It will bring you terrible karma...!"

Karma.

At this word, something deep inside Yeongwoo's consciousness stung.

Perhaps it hit him harder because the one who said it, Jeonggu, was himself the person tangled up in more karma than anyone here.

"What do you know...!"

When Yeongwoo turned back with golden light gleaming from his eyes, he saw Jeonggu, skin frozen from the glacial currents.

His movements were slow, a weak "Strongest Sword" who barely managed to make it past the outer edges of the currents.

"Yeongwoo, let me apologize in this place. I'm sorry. I didn't know about your existence and repeatedly denied you."

"....."

"But even so, don't become the kind of person who kills their own parents. That, I cannot accept."

"...What?"

It was the very same line Yeongwoo had said to Song Jiseon earlier.

And it carried as much resolve as Yeongwoo had then.

"...Jeonggu."

For the first time, Yeongwoo felt like the man before him was truly his father, though ironically, he couldn't bring himself to utter the word 'father.'

Realizing that Kim Jeonggu had recklessly thrown himself into the glacial currents with no way out, Song Jiseon also...

—Damn it. It's always the powerless ones who try to solve things with melodrama.

She dissipated the glacial currents just before the frost could reach the base of Jeonggu's throat.

Sssshhh!

After all, he had come to save her, so it was only fair to return the favor.

Seeing this, Yeongwoo also withdrew the immense pressure of the strongest sword and rushed to his father.

Tap, tap!

“Why the hell did you come here again? Even if you save that person, they’re already coffin-bound.”

Jeonggu, now tinged entirely blue from the cold, trembled as he spoke.

“What are you talking about? What son carries their mother in a coffin? That’s not family.”

In response, Yeongwoo wrapped “Slime Core” around his father’s arm, healing him.

“This is all your fault anyway. My son is fine, but apparently our son isn’t.”

Even as Yeongwoo said this, he rechecked his family’s achievements.

There were only two tasks left to complete the achievement:

—Reunite your parents.

—Receive a blessing from both parents.

He wasn’t entirely sure what “reunite” meant, but seeing as the first task was fulfilled when Song Jiseon had, however reluctantly, acknowledged Yeongwoo as her son, it seemed...

—Obtain both a mother and a father.

“Once it’s done, the achievement will be complete.”

“...What? What will?”

“The reunion.”

“What are you talking about?”

Now that some vitality had returned to him, Jeonggu gave his usual fearful expression.

“What else is there? What is it?”

Even a dog learns from staying in a village for three years.



Jeonggu, having acted as Yeongwoo's father for a few days, had learned this much—whenever his son spouted nonsense, there was always a reason behind it.

There was always a reason, whether it was a quest from those Dogo freaks or an achievement system notification.

And finally...

"There's an achievement."

Yeongwoo confessed the truth to his father.

"An achievement? What kind of achievement all of a sudden?"

"It says I have to rebuild the family. A proper one. It feels like a chain achievement, like the Golden Ratio one."

"A proper family...?"

Hearing Yeongwoo's words, Jeonggu tilted his head in confusion with a complicated expression.

The achievements Yeongwoo had shared in the past were all a bunch of absurd nonsense.

"Well, isn't that a good thing? In the end, you've found both your parents!"

As Jeonggu looked at his son with a mixture of hope and dread, Yeongwoo, who had finally made a decision, nodded.

"Not everything's been resolved yet, but I've found them, yes. The problem is..."

"What's the problem?"

Jeonggu urged for the next line, and Yeongwoo, glancing at the towering figure of his mother in the distance, whispered so she wouldn't hear.

"It seems you'll have to get married. Just think of it as a political marriage."

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

## Chapter 310: Noble Family (2)

"What... what the hell, man? What are you going to do?"

When Jeonggu gaped, Yeongwoo raised a finger to his lips, signaling him to be quiet.

"Shhh! She'll hear everything from over there. Keep it down."

"What the hell, you lunatic! We're facing her anyway, so what difference does it make if she hears us?"

Jeonggu shouted, completely baffled.

Well, whether it was a political marriage or not, the ones involved were Song Jiseon and Kim Jeonggu after all.

"Ah, that's true."

As Yeongwoo nodded in agreement, Song Jiseon, who had been exuding a cold aura from a distance, slammed her massive sword into the ground and spoke.

Thud!

— I heard everything from the beginning, you idiots.

"Ji... Jiseon!"

As Song Jiseon joined the conversation, Jeonggu instinctively hunched over in fear, like a shrimp.

Seeing his father like this, Yeongwoo looked puzzled.

'How did this guy...'

What on earth had happened that night?

Yeongwoo couldn't even begin to imagine.

Of course, it had been over 30 years, so their dynamics and characters might have been entirely different back then.

In any case, Yeongwoo had to reunite the two to revive their family's roots.

Even if they didn't want to.

'But why is the title of the achievement called "Noble Family"? Does it mean if I complete this series of achievements, it will automatically become a noble family?'

[Noble Family: Restoration of the Roots]

The name seemed puzzling, especially since the family didn't even exist yet.

'Well, I'll probably figure out the reason once I deal with the current issue.'

Moreover, today was the day the locations of Mara and Lemu's businesses were revealed, and the planet upgrade assessment was starting.

He couldn't waste too much time on this matter.

"Since you both are mature adults, I won't waste time explaining everything."

Yeongwoo pointed his sword at his mother and father in turn, causing both of them to flinch.

"W-what is it?"

— What nonsense is it now?

In response, Yeongwoo showed them his left ring finger and said,

"I don't care if it's just a marriage of convenience. Either way, you two are getting formally married. Like it or not, the three of us here are now a 'family.' Got it?"

"You... you want us actually to get married?"

Jeonggu stammered as he glanced sideways at his 'partner,' feeling her gaze.

Song Jiseon pulled her giant sword from the ground.

Thud!

— And if I refuse? Why should I marry someone like him now?

Yeongwoo had anticipated such resistance, so he pointed to the sky.

Swoosh.

"If you don't marry my father, I won't be able to help you. You'll lose the chance to see what's up there in the sky."

— .....!

At Yeongwoo's words, Song Jiseon's helmet tilted upward toward the sky.

The sky.

To be precise, the world outside this planet, where the source of this disaster resided in space.

What kind of place was it?

What monstrous entities lurked there?

Although Song Jiseon had returned seeking revenge against those responsible for all of this, beneath her declaration lay an unquenchable curiosity.

Like Yeongwoo, or perhaps more accurately, Yeongwoo's insatiable curiosity had come from her.

"Aren't you curious? About who turned you into a dragon and who made our planet like this?"

Clench.

Yeongwoo clenched his right hand, which was wrapped in the Vesedel armor.

"And why did they give us a chance after doing this to us? I'm dying to find out."

— A chance? What do you mean?"

"A chance to venture into space and challenge those who were once above us. Honestly, they could have just wiped us out. But instead, in that time, I've grown to be able to kill a lower-level official from space."

— .....?

And that, in just one week.

Sure, there had been some fortunate encounters and surprising achievements, but it had all happened because space had allowed it.

In other words, the existence of Jeong Yeongwoo<sup>07</sup> was the universe's inadvertent creation.

"Since we were given a chance, we have to seize it. I'm going beyond that sky. So, Mother, make your choice. Will you join me in a bigger world, or will you get beaten up by your son and end up in a coffin?"

However, to join this son who was preparing to integrate Earth into the cosmos, she had to become a married woman...

— You're seriously insane.

After listening to her son's speech, Song Jiseon gave a brief assessment, and Yeongwoo held up his birth certificate.

"As I said, this situation is all because of my..."

— Alright, fine! I get it, dammit! Stop talking! Why are you acting like being an orphan is some kind of badge of honor? What kind of person even does that?

Whoosh!

Song Jiseon cut him off by swinging her ice sword and then looked at Jeonggu through her helmet.

— So, all I have to do is be married to him in name only, right?

"Yes, for now. I'll figure out the formalities."

— The formalities?

"Yes, there must be some cosmic certification process. That's how I confirmed my paternity."

He could ask Kubu, the mediator and tax officer, for that.

"Alright, then it's settled? You two are getting married?"

As Yeongwoo's pupils glowed gold again, both of his parents remained silent.

"Alright, good."

Yeongwoo sorted out the situation on his own.

Then, he looked toward the outskirts of Gwangjin-gu, where his mother's icy aura had been raging until recently.

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]

"Did you kill something over there earlier?"

— What? I don't remember.

When Song Jiseon responded as if she truly didn't know, Yeongwoo summoned Negwig.

Then he peeled the slime core off his father's forearm and hopped onto Negwig's back.

Leap!

"My mother isn't a mutant from Gwangjin-gu. Someone else was supposed to show up."

— What? Someone else was supposed to be here?"

"Yes, but you already killed them."

— What are you talking about? I was just breathing."

"Exactly. You killed them with your breath."

Yeongwoo shook his head in disbelief.

Nonetheless, he steered Negwig toward the outskirts of Gwangjin-gu.

\* \* \*

Crash, crash!

There it was, just as Negwig had transported him to the northern outskirts of Gwangjin-gu.

The golden orb left behind by the death of a mutant.

'It really is here! I wasn't imagining things earlier.'

Earlier, as he crossed swords with his mother, he thought he saw a flash of blue light far off in his peripheral vision.

It turned out it wasn't just his imagination.

While the cold reunion between mother and son was happening in Gwangjin-gu, a mutant assigned to the area had descended.

And upon arrival, they were instantly swept away by a freezing current, strangling their last breath...

'They probably froze to death before they even managed to get out of the danger zone.'

Standing in front of the unknown mutant's remains, Yeongwoo couldn't help but feel a sense of guilt.

They were destined to die anyway, but this was someone who had waited in the dark for so long, only to return here.

And yet, as a mutant, they died without even voicing their aspirations, meeting a lonely end.

'Let's take it.'

When Yeongwoo pointed to the golden orb floating in midair, the Golden Goblin gathered the orb as if it were carefully collecting remains.

Screeech!

With that, the Gwangjin-gu problem for the day was solved.

The dragon assigned to Seoul was dealt with, and the orb of the Gwangjin-gu mutant had been retrieved.

Now, all that was left...

—What? So you're nothing more than a corpse cleaner now?

As she approached, Song Jiseon's massive shadow loomed over the spot where the orb once was.

"....."

Yeongwoo was suddenly gripped by the urge to unsheathe the Aratubank, but barely managed to restrain himself.

'I have to keep her alive at least until the Root Restoration is complete. And I need to pit her against Uncle.'

Only two conditions remained for Yeongwoo to complete his golden-blooded achievement, Golden Tempest.

-On the North American continent.

-While two individuals, both with the attributes of chaebol and dragonkin, were engaged in combat.

The condition that required two chaebol dragonkin to be fighting during the golden rain was something Yeongwoo couldn't achieve on his own.

"You should be grateful that I didn't have to clean up your corpse today, considering."

Yeongwoo retorted as he stood up, and Song Jiseon shrugged her shoulders.

—I'm just stating the obvious. So when do I get to see this 'universe' you keep talking about?

The very reason for Song Jiseon's existence was still to face the higher beings who had taken away the life of a chaebol head.

—Everything I built up over the years vanished in an instant. Does that make any sense? Who the hell did this?

"Nothing's been destroyed. It's just been exchanged."

As Yeongwoo glanced at his mother's towering body, Jiseon spat out her line, dissatisfied.

—Exchanged? Compared to what I had, this is nothing.

"Maybe the exchange rate wasn't in your favor. If you had seen the state of other mutants, you wouldn't be saying that."

Yeongwoo spoke in a calm tone.

In truth, neither the other mutants nor even the other chaebols came close to matching Song Jiseon's prowess.

Though he hadn't yet met all the chaebols, it was clear that Jiseon had returned with a level of power far beyond most.

If anything, it was akin to a form of "executive privilege."

"If I hadn't been here to protect this place, you could have easily taken Seoul... or even the whole Korean Peninsula. Although, I doubt that land would have meant much to you."

—What?

At Yeongwoo's words, Jiseon turned her head and gazed out over the other districts beyond Gwangjin-gu.

—So, you're saying that if I take you out, I'd have no real rivals in Korea?

" ....."



Yeongwoo shook his head at his mother's oversimplified interpretation but acknowledged her words.

"In other words, you're both lucky and unlucky. You're lucky because you gained a son you never had, but unlucky because that son stopped you from becoming the top dog."

—Who the hell is lucky?

"Well, the second place isn't so bad. After all, Jinhyeon Group was second in the business world, wasn't it?"

—You little...!

Just as Jiseon was about to fly into a rage again, an unsettling rumble came from beyond Gwangjin-gu.

The Strongest Swords from across Seoul were racing toward Gwangjin-gu with the mutant in tow.

Ruuummbble...!

"Huh, guess they had a tougher time today."

Yeongwoo muttered knowingly as he glanced toward the source of the noise.

Jiseon, lifting her massive sword, asked,

—What's this now?

Yeongwoo stabbed Bastard into the ground as he answered,

"Go say hello. They're your old colleagues, after all."

—...My colleagues?

"Yes. But don't use your freezing current. The ones they're chasing are valuable benefactors who will fund our journey. They must survive."

When Yeongwoo mentioned 'funding,' Jiseon tilted her head in confusion.

"Yes, the funds. For our trip to the universe. In fact, we're going with their money."

[Translator - Night]

[Proofreader - Gun]