

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 241 - Chapter 240

Chapter 241: Chapter 240

A world of pure white.

He had only blinked once, and now Suho was standing here. He was used to this situation now.

The moment 'Baran's Horn' appeared as a quest reward.

The moment he held that horn in his hand.

He had expected this to happen.

'Priest for the Dead Monarchs'

Although there were exceptions, most of the dead Monarchs Suho had met so far had bestowed upon him the role of a priest. What they wanted from Suho was one thing. A ritual to pass on their power to a suitable successor. They had chosen Suho to officiate that important event.

But why?

Why Suho?

Why did they have no choice but to entrust the important role of a priest to the son of the Shadow Monarch who killed them?

"Because there's no other option." The Dragon King Antares recently answered Suho's question. Unlike other Monarchs, Antares had many opportunities to chat with Suho since he was always by his side.

"Now there's only you. I don't know how it happened, but..." The Dragon King told Suho the story of the Monarchs with a bitter expression.

"Originally, when a Monarch dies, the succession ceremony for the next Monarch takes place under the supervision of the priest of that race. But sometimes, the power is passed on automatically even without any assistance. That's the 'natural order'."

The one who decided that 'natural order' was, of course, the now-deceased 'Absolute Being.' In the beginning... The so-called 'Primordial Darkness' was split to create eight kings, who were the Monarchs.

"So when we die, the 'Primordial Darkness' we hold naturally seeks out the next successor and passes on."

But now, the Absolute Being was dead in this universe. It seemed like the laws he created were also broken.

"...It's so broken that even a nobody like you can reawaken the souls of us who have returned to nothingness."

1

[Kieeeeeek! How dare you say such blasphemy...!] Although Beru was outraged by the words, the Dragon King wasn't trying to belittle Suho.

Rather, he was curious. How did Suho come to possess such an ability? The Dragon King continued his explanation, enduring Beru's anger.

"Of course, your father is one of the eight fragments of brilliance, the eight Primordial Lights created by the Absolute Being, and also the ninth Monarch. A shadow that embodies both light and darkness at the same time. That's your father. But even the Shadow Monarch couldn't control the spiritual bodies of the Monarchs, who were his equals."

If that were possible, the Monarchs would have already been reduced to shadow soldiers. Knowing this fact, the Dragon King was extremely wary of the power Suho possessed.

"It would be good to be careful of that 'Unknown' skill. No matter how I look at it, that power doesn't seem to be something your father passed on to you." The Dragon King repeatedly warned that it was even more dangerous because it was a passive skill that activated automatically.

3

Suho heeded his advice, but it was no use, no matter how much he prepared. It was a skill he didn't even know the name of. Knowing this fact as well, the Dragon King emphasized one last thing to Suho.

"Remember one thing. Not all Monarchs will be friendly to you. Just like I was. Especially the Demon King

Baran..."

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, Baran, is watching you.]

'...So you're Baran.'

He looked up at the edge of the pure white land. There stood a demon clad in luxurious armor that only royalty would wear. A demon with a bluish tinge. The light of blatant hatred flickered in his wide-open eyes. Suho was used to this situation as well. Come to think of it, it was the same when he met the Queen of Insects, Querehsha, as well as the Dragon King. It wasn't something he couldn't understand.

'Revenge against his father.'

1

It was only natural, wasn't it? If they didn't have the desire to pass on their power to a successor like the Dragon King, it was perfectly fine to express their revenge towards the son of the one who killed them. But Suho already knew the story of Baran from the Dragon King. Strictly speaking, Baran wasn't killed by his father, Sung Jinwoo. The one who killed him was the previous Shadow Monarch, Ashborn. First of all, the 'Baran' that Sung Jinwoo killed in the Demon Castle when he was young wasn't the real one but a replica, and the real Demon King Baran was a Monarch who betrayed Ashborn a very long time ago and was executed by him. This meant that Baran here had never even met 'Sung Jinwoo'.

'But the fact that he's showing this much hatred means...' Suho gritted his teeth.

Rumble!

Crackle!

Lightning struck the barren sky. This was Baran's expression of anger and hatred.

Crackle! Rumble! Crash!

The thunderbolts striking down from the sky were rapidly expanding their range around Baran. As if to fill this entire world of pure white. Suho had seen this kind of sight only once before. It was performed by none other than his mother when Cha Haein held the 'Demon King's Longsword' and killed Itarim's apostle. But the energy of the lightning emanating from Baran's body was far more terrifying than back then. And at the center of that natural disaster Baran was glaring at Suho with bloodshot eyes. Especially towards Suho's chest. To gauge the identity of the power hidden within.

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, discovers the 'Dragon King's Heart' within you.]

'Damn it.' So it had come to this. Suho let out a small sigh and inwardly cursed the Dragon King.

[Lowly human, I'll ask you one thing.] Baran finally spoke.

But this wasn't a question he asked because he wanted an answer.

[Are you a descendant of Ashborn, or a descendant of Antares?] He was already certain.

[Why do I sense both of their powers within you?]

'Didn't you say you would only ask one question? And if you look closely, you'll also feel the blessings of other Monarchs...'

[You talk too much.]

'...' Actually, Suho knew that this conversation was a waste of time.

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, realizes that you are the successor of the Dragon King Antares.]

2

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, recalls the atrocities of Antares.]

...The system messages were kindly informing Suho of Baran's inner thoughts one by one.

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, remembers that it was the King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, Antares, who instigated him to betray Ashborn.]

There were two targets of revenge for the Demon King Baran. The Shadow Monarch Ashborn and the Dragon King Antares, and Suho happened to inherit the powers of both of them. Therefore, instead of answering, Suho raised his magic power to the maximum. He couldn't summon shadow soldiers in this world, so he had to fight Baran alone.

3

Fwoosh!

The Dragon King's heart boiled. Suho's entire body was engulfed in black flames resembling the Dragon King. That sight was the perfect answer for Baran, his eyes widened.

[As I thought! You bastard—!]

Flash—!

'...?!'

He turned into a bolt of lightning and shot towards Suho.

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, uses Skill: 'White Flames'.]

'What the...?!' There was no time to be surprised.

Crash—!

A speed he couldn't react to, even though he was prepared. Suho's body was thrown in the opposite direction by the flash of light that stretched in a straight line. This was only the beginning.

[Kraaa—!]

Baran, who charged at Suho, opened his mouth wide, and shark-like vicious teeth tried to swallow Suho's head whole.

Crack!

He barely managed to avoid the attack, but he had to give up his shoulder instead. It hadn't even been a second. In that short time, Suho was hit and bitten on the shoulder.

Crackle—!

'Kugh...!' His vision flickered. Tremendous lightning pierced Suho's body through his shoulder. He felt like he was going to lose his mind from the pain of literally being struck by a thunderbolt.

[Die! Die! Die! Die!]

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Baran bit Suho mercilessly like a true demon. As if to chew and swallow his flesh and bones.

'Kyaaa...!'

Suho gritted his teeth, enduring all the pain, and attempted to counterattack.

[Using Skill: 'Tenacity'.]

[Using Skill: 'Giant's Armor'.]

[Using Skill: 'Storm of Black Flames']

Rumble—!

He confronted Baran using all his skills. But The Demon King didn't even try to avoid any of the attacks and took them all head-on. And he grinned.

[Khehehe! Good, good! You are deciduous!]

1

'...!' Suho's eyes widened at that insane sight. It wasn't that he didn't feel pain! Baran felt joy precisely because he felt pain.

[A demon's life is a struggle!]

That's right. He was the one who reached the pinnacle. And demons were a race that found the value of life in cruel struggles with blood and flesh splattering. Especially Baran, he was a true predator who devoured more demons than anyone else.

Crackle!

Crash! Bang!

Suho and Baran's fierce clash dyed the world of pure white with madness.

Gaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaak—!

The white flames flashing from Baran's mouth intensified. Suho also expanded his senses to the maximum and launched a fierce attack.

'This isn't easy.' He realized how much his father's illusion had helped him during his battle with the Dragon King. He knew it wouldn't be an easy fight from the beginning, but the reality was even harsher. After countless exchanges, Baran chewed and swallowed Suho's flesh. And as if realizing something, he looked at him with a wide smile.

[Khahaha! Now I understand! Why a lowly human like you has become so strong!]

He finally realized the foundation of the power engraved in Suho's body.

[This is the taste of magic used by the demonic spirits! Did a shaman of the magic world imitate our demon race's growth method in a human body? I thought I felt someone ripping off my spiritual body!]

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, realizes the principle behind the creation of the level-up system.]

2

'What?' This time, even Suho couldn't help but be surprised. He had been wondering why the system messages were unusually chatty today. Could the material of that system be...?

[Khehe. There's only one guy in the magic world who would research such sorcery. The Great Spellcaster Kandiaru! He was always desperate to surpass Yogumunt and become the Monarch of transfiguration!] Baran couldn't help but discern a lot of information through his battle with Suho.

Strangely, there was an unknown wound on his spiritual body from the moment he woke up in the world of nothingness. As if someone had forcibly ripped off a part of his soul. But only after directly tasting Suho's blood and flesh did he become certain. The only one who would want to research the spiritual body of a dead Monarch to this extent was Kandiaru, the eternal second-in-command of the magic world.

2

[Yes, it's certainly possible with that guy's magic! But how greedy can he be, to not only rip off my spiritual body and create a replica of me, but to completely apply the demon race's growth method to a lowly human?]

Baran was truly dumbfounded as he realized the hidden truth. Yogumunt, the Monarch Transfiguration. The Great Spellcaster Kandiaru, who was always aiming for Yogumunt's position right under him. He had tried everything to grow his own rank, even when the tide of the war was turning.

[And the result is you?] Baran looked at Suho with renewed interest. More precisely, at the demon race's growth method, the 'level-up system,' engraved within him.

No. Not demon race's.

The growth system of the 'residents of the gap,' who killed living beings, absorbed the nutrients of their souls, and grew infinitely.

Smirk.

Realizing this fact, Baran licked his lips ominously as he looked at Suho.

[I'm curious. What would happen if I devoured the nutrients you've consumed so far?]

2

Crackle!

Electricity flowed through his saliva covered teeth.



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Was it because he chewed and swallowed Suho's flesh and blood? Baran was suddenly recalling a very old memory that had been forgotten deep within him.

[...Did you know?]

That memory was from a time long before he became the King of Demons, even before he was a demon, an incredibly old recollection.

[I was once a resident of the gap.]

...There was a time when he too was one of the scraps discarded by the Absolute Being.

[As all demons were.] As he muttered those words, Baran's gaze suddenly lifted and reached the vast sky.

Crackle!

Crash—!

A blue storm raged across the pure white sky. At its center, Baran continued to speak as if he didn't care whether Suho was listening or not. Recalling the memory of 'that time.'

[Did you know? The residents of the gap have no soul. Therefore, they cannot be killed. They were never born in the first place. So they are not even allowed to die. Therefore, if you want to kill us, just tear, burn, and destroy us.]

Yes.

That was all they were. The scraps of the universe that weren't allowed life or death. That was what the residents of the gap were. That was his true form before he became a demon.

...That's why Baran was realizing his situation anew.

[So, maybe I've returned to that time again?]

The spiritual body of a Monarch who died and returned to nothingness. The contaminated spiritual body of the Demon King that even the World Tree wouldn't accept. What was the difference between this and when he was a resident of the gap?

[So...] Baran's gaze lowered again and he looked at Suho.

Crackle!

Snap!

Blue sparks flickered fiercely in his eyes.

'Terrible hunger' That intense and pure desire captured Suho's form in an instant.

[...Maybe even I, if I absorb enough nutrients, can be reborn as a gap demon once again?]

Gulp

'Ahh, I can't hold back my drooling.'

Blatant gluttony. His smile as he looked at Suho became ecstatic. His mind had already completely returned to the time when he was a resident of the gap. Baran declared.

[Therefore, from now on, you are my nutrient. I will personally chew and swallow you, and I will finally become 'you.']

Gulp

At that moment. Suho's flesh and blood that Baran swallowed were finally digested within him. And then something strange happened.

Ding!

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, uses Skill: 'Doppelganger'.]

"...This is crazy." Suho couldn't help but let out a groan.

Baran's smile towards Suho became grotesquely distorted, and his face began to change little by little. But his appearance... Was becoming more and more like Suho!

Crackle!

A thunderbolt struck behind Baran. Who, clad in splendid full-body armor, was still smiling brightly. With half of his face transformed into 'Suho's' .

[I earnestly wish and desire...] He reaffirmed his craving as if chewing on it.

[I will become 'you.']

...It was chilling. Baran's voice had also changed to sound like Suho's.

Crash!

'...!'

Baran's new form once again turned into a bolt of lightning and charged towards Suho.

Crack—!

His shark-like teeth mercilessly attacked Suho.

Like a predator hunting its prey.

No, with the momentum of one devouring prey that had already been captured. He simply opened his mouth wide and bit and tore.

Crack! Crack!

But Suho's response was completely different than before. Unlike the first time, he could now see Baran's attacks with his eyes and dodge them by a hair's breadth.

Gaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaak—!

A monstrous roar erupted from the open mouth, and blue flashes rained down like a shower.

Flash— Flash— Flash—

Baran flinched at the unwavering reaction speed despite the concentrated attacks.

"Why? Are you surprised?" Suho could sense his agitation. He smirked.

"...Did you think I was just taking hits all this time?"

Certainly, the damage he had taken so far was significant. But Suho didn't gain the 'Dragon King's Heart' just by overcoming the trial. The moment he first faced the Dragon King and barely endured that overwhelming power.

'I have the complement, no, the title, that my father gave me!'

[Title: Overcomer of Adversity]

[A title given to those who have overcome adversity splendidly.]

[Stats increase in proportion to lost health.]

[1% stat increase per 1% lost health]

A buff that increased his stats as his health decreased! And it boosted all his stats!

Beru always said that the more you suffer, the more you grow.

'I'm confident in my durability.'

So if you want to devour me, go right ahead, try it.

'Let's see who becomes the prey. I'll face you with all my might from now on.'

Crash! Crash! Crash! Crackle—!

A tremendous storm raged, centered on Suho and Baran.

[Struggling is useless!] As his prey struggled, Baran raised his hand with an even more frantic expression.

[You are already within my domain!]

Crackle—!

That's right.

This was Baran's realm. If he wished, he could cover this entire space with his energy. Just like all the other Monarchs.

Flash—!

The moment his hand pointed at Suho, dozens of lightning bolts struck his body.

Crackle—!

[Got you!] Baran had an ecstatic expression. It was a terrifying thunderbolt with terrible destructive power and even a stun effect.

But...

'Is that all?' Suho was fine.

[Resisting abnormal status with the effect of Buff: 'Immunity'.]

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[Resisting abnormal status with the effect of Buff: 'Immunity'.]

Baran's expression crumpled.

[Kandiaru, you bastard! You even put this kind of petty trick in place?!]

[Blessing: Blessing of The Great Spellcaster Kandiaru]

[Continuous effect 'Health and Longevity':]

[Immune to all diseases, toxins, and abnormal status effects]

[Regeneration ability increases exponentially during sleep.]

The stun effect of the lightning was completely blocked by the status immunity buff. But Baran knew Kandiaru's petty tricks well.

[But it won't block the pain!]

The damage definitely worked. Even though he boasted tremendous durability, if pushed continuously, Suho would eventually reach his limit. The fact that someone who was a resident of the gap became the Demon King meant that Baran was that tenacious and Grayy. He didn't know the meaning of giving up.

[I'll sink my fangs into you and suck your blood like before!]

Crackle!

This time, all the lightning bolts struck Baran's body instead of Suho. With the power of all that lightning, his attack reached an even greater speed. At that moment, Suho saw the terribly pure desire deeply engraved in Baran's eyes.

'Yes, I admit it.' And he truly reflected.

'I underestimated the Monarchs because I leveled up a bit.'

Suho had obtained the Dragon King's Qualification and even defeated Itarim's apostle alone. He had well-founded confidence. But that alone wasn't enough to fight a Monarch.

Come to think of it, the only Monarch Suho properly fought and defeated was Querehsha. He only overcame the Dragon King with the help of his father's illusion; wasn't that just luck? And the rest of the Monarchs were all reasonable and open to conversation due to their own circumstances.

'Maybe Querehsha was the weakest among the Monarchs. Well, she was a collective of insects.'

[The Queen of Insects, the Plague Monarch, clenches her fists with a surge of emotions.]

Suho acknowledged his arrogance. 'I still have a long way to go. I thought I could fight him head-on at my current level.'

Having seen Baran's eyes, he realized that it was disrespectful to just rely on his level and attack.

"I'm sorry. I was rude. From now on, I won't be picky about the means or methods." That moment Suho's eyes changed.

"So please understand if I'm a bit of a mixed bag from now on.'

1

Baran chuckled at the gazes he suddenly felt from all directions.

[The King of Beasts, the Fang Monarch, is watching Baran.]

[The Queen of Insects, the Plague Monarch, is watching Baran.]

[The King of the Snowfolk, the Monarch of Frost, is watching Baran.]

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, is watching Baran.]

[Ha! You managed to persuade the other Monarchs! So what changes? This is my domain anyway! Even if other dead guys intervene...!] Before he could even finish his words.

Ding!

[The spirit of Pet: 'Gray' possesses the Priest's body.]

A sacred wind blew from somewhere and swirled around Suho's entire body.

Whoosh—!

His hair turned white and fluttered in the strong wind.

[Using Skill: 'Grasslands Wind'.]

[Movement speed temporarily increases by 30%.]

[Attack speed temporarily increases by 30%.]

Snap!

Suho finally caught up with Baran's speed properly.

But Baran still mocked him.

[The Fang Monarch's blessing? Even if you've become this much faster, nothing will change...!]

"It will."

[Using Skill: 'Blizzard of Frost'.]

Whoosh—!

[...?!] A sudden cold wave poured onto Baran's body.

[The King of the Snowfolk, the Monarch of Frost, smiles.]

[Sillad, you bastard—!]

1

Baran erupted in anger on the frozen snowfield.

Crack—!

By the time he broke the ice and escaped, Suho's blade had already reached his neck.

"Gotcha, you bastard."

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash—!

[...!]

Two swords slashed at Baran, who hurriedly raised his arms to block. But that wasn't all. He realized that all the attacks pouring onto him were laced with deadly poison.

[Th-this power... Querehsha?!]

[Using Debuff: 'Paralysis Poison'.]

[Using Debuff: 'Kasaka's Venom'.]

[The Queen of Insects, the Plague Monarch, scoffs at Baran.]

Suho smirked.

"That's why I said it from the beginning. I'm a bit of a mixed bag. So what if I'm cowardly? I'm desperate too, just like you." Just as Baran was desperate to live, Suho also had a goal he must accomplish.

"To save my grandfather and go help my father, I can't fall to the likes of you."

But that was the same for Baran.

The desire to live. That primal instinct was the driving force that moved him, who was once a resident of the gap.

[Kraaaaaaaaaaaaaak!]

In pain and screaming, Baran opened his mouth wide, eyes filled with venom.

Crash!

'...!'

Suho's eyes widened. Baran's teeth bit into his blade.

'Vulcan's Horns,' which were slashing at him, shattered!

And at that moment. Baran realized a surprising fact.

[This is... a demon's horn!]

There were an awful lot of demon souls devoured within Vulcan's Horns. And Baran was still the king of all those demons.

[Sealed souls! Gather before me!]

[Demon King Baran uses Skill: 'Hell's Army'.]

'...!'

'Hell's Army.' It was the power to gather the demon army to the Demon King's location.

Shatter!

Whoosh—!

At that moment, countless demon souls began to spring up from the shattered blades of Vulcan's Horns. They were all already dead, but this world also happened to be a realm of the dead.

[Khahahahahaha!]

[Demon soul is summoned.]

[Demon soul is summoned.]

[Demon soul is summoned.]

[Demon soul is summoned.]

[...]

Countless demon souls gathered before Baran. All in the same form as when they were alive.

[Khehe. Thank you. Now the real war begins.]

Baran smiled.

'Oh dear.'

Suho's eyes deepened at that sight. He had suddenly lost his weapon and even provided Baran with an army. But in this moment, he also realized something.

"Now I understand." Suho smirked as he looked at Baran's army.

"Baran, you said you double-crossed the Shadow Monarch Ashborn before? Even if the Dragon King instigated you, I now understand why you betrayed him so readily."

Come to think of it, it didn't make sense. Even though the contaminated demon souls were the only counter to the Shadow Army, the difference in power would have been clear. Yet Baran willingly betrayed Ashborn. Suho finally realized the reason...

"Was it an inferiority complex?"

[...What?] Baran's eyebrows twitched at those words.

"Now that I see it, the power the King of Demons possesses is clearly a lower grade version of the Shadow Monarch's ability. A poor copy of the Shadow Army."

[Shut your mouth!]

Baran yelled at Suho's chilling words and attacked him with the demon army. But Suho wasn't afraid.

"Thank you. Now there's really no way for me to lose." Suho revealed his power.

[Using Skill: 'Monarch's Domain'.]

Whoosh—!

Suho's shadow expanded its domain. Of course, summoning shadow soldiers within this place was impossible. But there was something else he could do. He was... the successor of the Monarch of Destruction.

"Burn. Flames of Destruction!"

Fwoosh—!

Craftyprogamer

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Rumble!

The pure white ground began to boil like lava under Suho's black shadow.

Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

The sight of demons writhing in pain and melting like wax in the crimson inferno...

Was truly hell.

Crackle!

Crash!

Above their heads, the blue storm created by their king still rained down thunderbolts. But even Baran, their king, couldn't help them.

[What the...] Baran was also in shock at the sudden situation unfolding before his eyes.

[This is absurd...] His eyes shook violently.

It was truly ridiculous.

The crimson ground turned into lava.

The sky with a blue storm raging.

Seeing the demon souls dying helplessly between them, Baran couldn't help but be astonished.

[How can a mere human wield such destructive power—!]

He had a hunch based on the energy he felt that Suho might be a descendant of Antares. But even if he was a descendant who inherited the power of a Monarch, Baran didn't care.

No, it was rather good news. The weakened ultimate soul had walked in on its own. But... an incomprehensible situation occurred.

[A mere descendant of a Monarch...!] It was absurd that he could fight on par with him, a true Monarch!

[Moreover, this world is solely for me!] The anger he spewed echoed resoundingly from the depths of hell.

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, grins with a ferocious glint in his eyes.]

The Dragon King couldn't help but laugh in satisfaction. No matter they all were defeated and died in the war, there was a clear hierarchy among the dead Monarchs. And excluding the irregular Shadow Monarch, he, the Monarch of Destruction, was the apex. He was the leader of the Monarchs. So, shouldn't his successor, who inherited his heart, show this level of performance to save face as the Monarch of Destruction?

Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

Even as this was happening, numerous demon souls were screaming and melting from the destructive mana emanating from the 'Dragon King's Heart'!

[Ugh!] Baran quickly came to his senses and shouted at the soldiers again.

[What are you doing! Endure and persevere! You are already dead souls! What are you so afraid of, that you stop your advance?!]

[...!]

Those words were actually true. The demons whose bodies were melting in the hellfire barely regained their senses. The pain was still terrible, and their whole bodies were burning, but they couldn't disobey the king's order.

[Kill him!]

Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

The demon souls, engulfed in flames and turned into even more horrifying figures, rushed towards Suho, screaming. Like a horde of zombies.

But in the midst of that madness, Suho was still leisurely smiling with hands behind his back. Because the victor had already been decided. He looked straight at Baran, who was across from the demons, and said,

"Yes, you're right. You can't kill a dead soul again. But you know what?"

Baran suddenly felt a sense of foreboding. Suho's eyes were gleaming intensely.

"I am the son of my father before I am the descendant of the Dragon King."

2

Just then, Suho's gaze fell upon the demon souls that had reached right in front of him.

[Extraction is impossible due to mana contamination.]

[Extraction is impossible due to mana contamination.]

[...]

[Extractable target.]

[Extractable target.]

[Extractable target.]

[...]

The demon souls engulfed in flames were rapidly being 'purified' by the power of destruction one by one. Suho, who was watching the scene, finally extended his hand, which had been behind his back, slowly forward. And...

"Listen carefully. My name is Sung Suho. I am the son of Sung Jinwoo, the Shadow Monarch, the king who rules over death."

Therefore...

"Arise."

Using his father's name. He simply gave the order and then, a miracle happened.

2

Whoosh—!

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[...]

Suho's shadow swallowed the demon souls that were engulfed in the flames of destruction whole. And then they began to be reborn on the spot.

[Shadow Demon Soldier Lv.1]

[Shadow Demon Knight Lv.1]

[Shadow Demon General Lv.1]

[...]

Crackle! Crackle! Crackle—!

The demons, emitting black steam, stopped attacking Suho and instead knelt before him.

Like knights serving a new liege.

[N-no...! How can this be...!]

There was nothing the Demon King Baran could do. All he was capable of was despair and rage. Even during the war between the Rulers and Monarchs, this had never happened. The demons were a superior race that couldn't be taken away by the Shadow Monarch. But with the appearance of a being who possessed both the power of destruction and shadow, such an absurd result occurred!

[No! Th-this can't be happening!]

"Why can't it?" Suho smirked and beckoned his finger towards the shadow demons waiting for his orders.

"All forces, charge."

Following Suho's finger, the shadow demons simultaneously turned their heads glaring at Baran. Then they rushed, as if to devour him like true demons.

Kraaaaaaaaaaaaa!

[Kyaaaak—!] Baran completely lost his mind at that sight.

[Who dares rebel against the king!] In the end, Baran, enraged to the limit, reached out and grabbed the demons that attacked him first.

Crunch!

Baran's teeth swallowed the demon soul whole. And after gulping it down, he spread his hand to find the demons that hadn't been purified yet.

[Come to me, all of you! Become one with me!]

[Demon King Baran uses Skill: 'Blood Crystal'.]

Whoosh—

Blood Crystal.

An ability superior to the Bloodstone, the unique ability of demon nobles. That power sucked in the souls of the demons that hadn't been purified by the power of destruction into Baran's body. Then, he began to grow larger, and his huge fist struck down towards Suho.

Crash!

But...

"Oh...? You desire a contest of strength?"

[...]

Suho didn't dodge, it was a contest of strength that he wanted.

"Are you sure about this?" Suho, who easily withstood Baran's giant fist with just his strength, glared.

[...Kyaaaaa! How dare a mere human—!]

Crash!

Bang! Bang! Bang—!

The enlarged Baran went berserk and began to launch a fierce attack.

[Demon King Baran uses Skill: 'Blood Crystal'.]

[Demon King Baran uses Skill: 'Blood Crystal'.]

Even as this was happening, Baran continued to grow larger, absorbing the demon souls. But Suho fought him head-on without retreating a single step. Of course, he wasn't alone...

Kyaaaaa!

[You insignificant insects!]

Attacks from the shadow demons poured in from all directions towards the enlarged Baran. A bloody battle where neither side yielded an inch. And there was a being who was most delighted by that sight, the Dragon King Antares.

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, feels his blood boil as he watches the fierce battle.]

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction's hands are itching.]

At this moment. The Dragon King was recalling when he, who had died and returned to nothingness, first met Suho. The conversation he had with the 'Sung Jinwoo's' illusion who stood before him.

— Antares. — Sung Jinwoo made him an offer.

– I know that my son's vessel is far too lacking to inherit your power. He's not even a dragon. So I have a proposal.

– Proposal? – Antares frowned immediately at that time.

But thinking back...

Sung Jinwoo was the one who knew his personality better than anyone in this universe.

Who was he?

The great King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, a terrible battle maniac who only felt the thrill of life in bloody battles. The true embodiment of destruction. That was Antares, a clear identity he defined for himself. That's why Sung Jinwoo was certain...

– You must be bored after dying, don't you want to run wild outside?

...That he would never refuse this attractive offer.

Ding!

[Pet: 'Ragnar' is summoned.]

[The spirit of 'Antares' possesses the Priest's body.]

In the end, the Dragon King descended into the Demon King Baran's world.

[Khahahahahaha! This is fun! Sung Jinwoo! It was a good decision to accept your offer!] True destruction had come to this land, which had turned into hell due to Suho and Baran's battle.

1

Gray, the descendant of the Fang Monarch, could only do this because Suho allowed him to possess his body, but comparing the little wolf's level to the Dragon King's was a great insult to Antares. Moreover, he was the only one among the dead Monarchs who obtained a new body and proudly escaped death. Of course, in the real world, he was struggling with mana deficiency, but that didn't apply here because Suho's mana was the Dragon King's mana.

2

[Sung Suho, my successor.] With a wide grin The Dragon King, so pleased with this world full of destruction, said to Suho, fiercely fighting Baran,

[I'll show you how to use the true power of destruction.]

Ding!

"Huh?" At that moment, a quest window popped up before Suho's eyes.

[Job Change Quest: Dragon King's Trial-3]

[The Dragon King Antares wants to teach you how to wield the power of destruction.]

[If you succeed in destroying the Demon King Baran's soul with the power of destruction...]

[You will receive a great reward.]

[However, if you fail, the 'Dragon King's Heart' will once again burn your body.]

Suho had a puzzled expression. He thought the trials were over after reaching level 100, but the third one suddenly began.

"What? There was another trial?"

[Of course there was!]

'Well, if the job change quest was over, my job title wouldn't still be empty.' Suho quickly understood and shouted at the Dragon King,

"Okay! What do I have to do?"

[Watch and learn. This is how you use my power.] The Dragon King's eyes gleamed.

Flare!

At that moment, Ragnar's small body, which he was possessing, slowly floated into the air, and crimson flames swirled around him. His small mouth opened wide.

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, uses Skill: 'Breath of Destruction'.]

Kraaaaaaaaaa—!

'...!' At that moment, Suho confirmed that a large portion of his mana was drained.

And at the same time, the Breath of Destruction that erupted in a straight line from the Dragon King's mouth pierced a huge hole in Baran's side.

[Kyaaaaaaaa!] Baran, half of his body charred black, flinched and retreated, belatedly realizing that the small dragon in the distance was the Dragon King Antares, whom he hated so much, he erupted in fury.

[Dragon King, you bastard—!]

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

Baran abandoned Suho and ran towards the Dragon King at terrifying speed to attack him. Even as he watched that intimidating form, Antares just smirked.

[You dodged well. I was aiming for your heart.]

As expected, it was impossible to exert the same power as in his prime with Ragnar's body. But wasn't this rather good for educational purposes?

[Now, try dodging this one too.]

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, uses Skill: 'Breath of Destruction'.]

Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

The Breath of Destruction once again erupted in a straight line from Ragnar's small mouth. But this time, Baran wasn't going to just take it. Baran's fist, barely dodging the Dragon King's attack, struck Ragnar's tiny body.

Crash—!

The ground cracked and shattered from the tremendous attack. But the Dragon King was safe. Suho had the shadow demons quickly evacuate Ragnar, who had no defense compared to his attack power. Even though he almost died, Antares was just giggling incessantly, held in the arms of a shadow demon. He turned his gaze to Suho and asked,

[Now, I've shown you twice. You can do it now, right?]

His tone was light, but Suho knew that its meaning wasn't light at all.

'However, if you fail, the 'Dragon King's Heart' will once again burn your body.'

He had personally experienced how painful the aftereffects of failing the quest were.

[Why? Can't you do it? Then I'll be a little disappointed.]

"No, it's enough." Suho was already moving.

[Don't get in my way!]

Dash—!

Baran swung his arm at Suho, who was blocking his way to the Dragon King. Jumping high, he ran across that giant arm, and concentrated his power in one hand.

"I've roughly grasped the trick."

[Oh?]

Just like when he defeated Siddharth Bachchan in the Loktak Field, but... After concentrating the power of destruction in one point, much more precisely and perfectly than back then. He opened his hand towards Baran's face, which was glaring at him.

4

[Skill: 'Breath of Destruction' has been learned.]

At that moment Baran's eyes widened as he saw the mighty force of destruction flying towards him in a straight line.

1

[Using Skill: 'Breath of Destruction'.]

Kraaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

[...!]

[The soul of Baran, the King of Demons and Monarch of the White Flame, has been defeated.]

[Calculating experience points.]

[It may take some time as a large amount of experience points is being processed.]

'Huh?' Suho's eyes widened.

Ding!

Ding!

Ding!

Ding!

...

The mechanical sound continued endlessly.

Suho could see countless system messages filling his vision.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Edited by Silvct with the teams input.

Reedited by Fotnmc

1/23/25

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 244 - Chapter 243

Chapter 244: Chapter 243

Thud—!

In the middle of the pure white land, Baran's massive, headless body collapsed.

Flare!

The Demon King's soul, his head completely blown off by the Breath of Destruction, was engulfed in crimson flames and began to boil.

Whoosh—!

Steam, the Demon King's energy, rose from there in droplets and was sucked into Suho's body. The result was astonishing.

[Level Up!]

[Level Up!]

[Level Up!]

[...]

[Level Up!]

[Level Up!]

[Level Up!]

[...]

"Wh-what is this?" Suho couldn't help but be bewildered.

A feast of tremendous level-ups that he had never experienced before! He could feel his strength increasing in real-time. And it wasn't just his level that was rising.

Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!

[Level of Skill: 'Storm of Black Flames' has increased.]

[Level of Skill: 'Giant's Armor' has increased.]

[Level of Skill: 'Martial Arts' has increased.]

[Level of Skill: 'Tenacity' has increased.]

[Level of Skill: 'Dual Wield' has increased.]

[...]

It was truly amazing. Seeing Suho's impressed expression, the Dragon King smirked and replied,

[What else would it be? Baran is experiencing what he tried to do to you, in reverse.]

Baran tried to devour Suho and absorb all the high-quality nutrients contained in his soul. But in the end, it was Baran himself who was devoured.

[Baran was a soul that started as a resident of the gap and became the Demon King. All the nutrients contained in that soul are now being absorbed by you.]

Originally, there was no way a mere human could absorb the power of a Monarch created from the Primordial Darkness. However, the level-up system created by Kandiaru was designed to allow a weak human to accept the 'power of death.' There was no reason why the masterpiece, which could even accept the power of the Shadow Monarch, couldn't handle the power of the 'mere' Monarch of White Flames.

[Tsk. A damn memory surfaced.]

If the level-up system didn't exist, the second Shadow Monarch, Sung Jinwoo, wouldn't have been born, and he wouldn't have suffered that humiliating defeat. Antares, suddenly recalling the memory of the day he was defeated by Sung Jinwoo, gritted his

teeth as he looked at Suho's face, which greatly resembled his damn father's. All the Monarchs died, and with the Shadow Monarch's victory, all wars ended. But...

[Sigh.]

[Well, it doesn't matter now.] Antares soon chuckled.

Yes.

What did it matter?

Since when did he care about other Monarchs?

He was Antares.

The 'first Monarch' and the 'strongest Monarch' born from the Primordial Darkness.

That meant he had experienced countless victories and defeats in the war against the Rulers that had never ended since the beginning of time.

Death?

Defeat?

What did they matter?

'The war will never end anyway.'

Because Antares was the first Monarch, he was the one who fought most fiercely and for the longest time in the midst of that cruel and endless battlefield. That's why the most important thing to him wasn't the victory or defeat in the war. Even death wasn't something scary. There was only one thing he feared.

'Not being able to fight again' Hellfire blazed in Antares' chuckling eyes.

[I don't care as long as I can fight again.]

That's right. He was the king who reigned over all dragons, a being who symbolized fear and destruction. He was simply frustrated that he could no longer go out and fight on the battlefield filled with blood and screams because he had died. But not anymore...

[Now that I have been resurrected like this, I can fight again.] The Dragon King's lips curled up as he looked at Suho.

[So, is that damn level-up over?]

"Yes." Suho nodded, and Antares could see his status window.

[Level: 122]

[Tsk.] Antares clicked his tongue with a dissatisfied expression.

[You've become quite strong, but you're still weak. You're insignificant compared to your father.]

Truly insignificant. Probably because he was a dead soul, even after absorbing the entire Demon King, he had only grown this much.

[It seems like it's because Kandiaru ripped off Baran's spiritual body and created a replica to raise your father... Well, if it weren't for that, you wouldn't have been able to defeat Baran so easily.]

But this was only from his perspective. The Dragon King Antares was a rival who had competed with Sung Jinwoo for decades, so he knew Shadow Monarch's power better than anyone. That's why it was only natural that no matter how strong Suho became, it wouldn't satisfy him. Suho also knew this fact, so he could sense that there was a considerable amount of praise mixed in Antares' harsh criticism. He chuckled and asked him,

"But I passed the trial, right?"

[...Well, a promise is a promise.] Antares waved his hand as if he was reluctant.

Ding!

[You have met the completion conditions for Job Change Quest: 'Dragon King's Trial-3'.]

A quest completion window popped up before Suho's eyes.

[Quest completion reward has arrived.]

[Would you like to check the reward?]

[Y/N]

"Check reward! Accept!" Suho snatched the reward as if he had been waiting. And then something strange happened.

Ding!

"...?!"

Suddenly, Suho's inventory opened on its own, and the Item: 'Javier Soulstone' that was quietly placed inside popped out.

[Item: Javier Soulstone]

[Acquisition Difficulty: ??]

[Type: Gem]

[A gem made by compressing a magic spirit.]

"Ah, Father?" Suho's eyes widened.

But despite his expectations, what happened last time didn't repeat itself.

– Just in case, put it in your inventory.

Sung Jinwoo's illusion had placed various magical devices on the soul of the demonic spirit named Javier in preparation for when Suho met the Dragon King. And unlike the decisive battle with the Dragon King... This time, it spat out something completely different instead of Sung Jinwoo's illusion.

Flash!

A tremendous energy erupted from the soulstone, swirling and compressing to a high density.

What appeared were two daggers.

"This is...?" Suho was mesmerized and grabbed the weapons with both hands.

His main weapons, Item: 'Vulcan's Horns,' had been shattered by Baran. The fact that a new weapon appeared at the perfect timing felt like Sung Jinwoo's illusion had prepared it for this moment. But...

Grit!

[...This crazy bastard!] The moment he confirmed the identity of the daggers that appeared before Suho, Antares couldn't help but explode in extreme irritation.

[Item: Kamish's Wrath (Damaged)]

[Acquisition Difficulty: ??]

[Type: Dagger]

[Attack Power +1,500 (-1,000)]

[The sharpest fang among the dragon's teeth.]

[Crafted into the finest dagger by the hands of a master craftsman.]

[Its sharpness is unmatched, and its sensitivity to mana is also outstanding]

[Which can make it much more powerful depending on the user's ability.]

[However, the blade is currently dull due to numerous battles.]

A long description. The identity of that weapon was none other than Kamish's Wrath, which Sung Jinwoo used as his main weapon during his long battle with the Dragon King...

Antares felt as if Sung Jinwoo's illusion was waving at him with a grin from somewhere far away in the universe.

"If it's Kamish, could it be Ragnar's...?"

Grit!

The Dragon King couldn't help but grind his teeth even more at Suho's gaze, which suddenly turned to him.

[How far are you going to mock me, you damn bastard!]

But regardless, Suho couldn't help but be astonished by the attack power of the item in his hand.

'Is this for real?'

This was crazy.

'1,500? Just the attack power?'

The base attack power was 1,500 without any modifiers! Unfortunately, it was reduced to '+500' because the blade was quite dull. But still, this was amazing. Suho checked the information of the Item: 'Vulcan's Horns' he had been carrying. Although the blade was completely shattered by Baran, leaving only the hilt, he could still check the stats.

[Item: Vulcan's Horns (Damaged)]

[Acquisition Difficulty: ??]

[Type: Sword]

[Attack Power +40 (-40)]

[A sword made from the horns of the greedy demon Vulcan.]

[Inflicts more damage with Vulcan's power imbued within.]

[However, it is completely destroyed and cannot be used as a weapon.]

[Effect 'Destruction Desire': Increases physical damage by [300%.]

[Effect 'Demon Devourer': Vulcan's power grows stronger as it devours demon souls.]

Gulp.

'...It's embarrassing to even compare.'

Attack power 40. Even with the option that tripled the attack power, it was only 120. And even that was an effect that only increased physical damage. But Kamish's Wrath, even with a dull blade, had a base attack power of 500, so it was almost shameful to compare the two. Besides, it wasn't just the attack power that was outstanding.

'Excellent mana sensitivity?'

Mana was magic power. To see what it meant to have excellent mana sensitivity, Suho immediately channeled his magic power into the dagger. And then...

Whir—

The dagger 'Kamish's Wrath' trembled as if greeting its new owner. And at the same time, black-red aura began to blaze from the entire weapon, flowing from Suho's hand.

Flare!

'It's Kamish's Fang... It's reacting to the Dragon King's Heart.'

It wasn't just the aura that was changing. The weight of the dagger that had been filling his hand disappeared in an instant. Like magic... The dagger became lighter than a feather.

"Wow..."

A weapon which weight could be freely adjusted according to the user's will. Suho's heart pounded as he gripped the handle.

Thump! Thump!

He wanted to fight with this dagger.

He wanted to wield this dagger.

He didn't know if it was the dagger's will or his own, but...

According to that will, the system responded.

Ding! Ding!

[Skill: 'Dual Wield' is upgraded to Skill: 'Advanced Dagger Mastery'.]

[Learned Skill: 'Vital Strike Lv.1'.]

"Hmm?" Suho couldn't help but have a puzzled expression.

The skill suddenly changed on its own. As if asking him to use daggers from now on. Suho couldn't help but chuckle, feeling as if he could hear his father's voice from somewhere.

"Daggers aren't really my style... but with a dagger like this..." Antares gritted his teeth at that sight.

[That damn bastard...]

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Chapter 245: Chapter 244

Whoosh—!

Frozen time began to flow again. Suho's mind returned to reality. To the middle of the dimensional gap where the shadow soldiers were sweeping away the gap demons. To the side of Seo Jiwoo, who was arguing with Harmakan. And at that moment...

Snap!

Suho's eyes flashed, and he disappeared from the spot. And when he reappeared, he was in the middle of the remaining gap demons.

Flare!

In an instant, 'Kamish's Wrath' emitted a black-red aura from his crossed hands.

'Advanced Dagger Mastery'

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash—!

The black-red energy filled his entire vision. The newly acquired skill expertly tore through the air.

Crackle!

And when Suho's feet, which were invisible to the eye, finally stopped...

[Gap Demon has been defeated.]

[Gap Demon has been defeated.]

[Gap Demon has been defeated.]

[Gap Demon has been defeated.]

[...]

All the demons along the path he passed were slaughtered on the spot without even being able to scream. The one whose eyes widened at that sight was none other than Beru.

[Kieeeeeek?! Th-that is...!]

"...Hunter Sung Suho?!" Seo Jiwoo, who was behind him, also looked at the daggers in Suho's hands with a shocked expression.

"Where did those weapons suddenly come from...?"

From Seo Jiwoo's perspective, it was truly magic. It seemed to her that the demon horns suddenly appeared in Suho's hands and then instantly transformed into two daggers which exuded magic power at a glance.

[My liege! Where did you get these precious items?!] Suho chuckled and replied to Beru's question,

"My father gave them to me."

[...]

"...Father?" Seo Jiwoo tilted her head.

On the other hand, Beru's eyes glistened with a deeply moved expression. There was no way Beru wouldn't recognize Kamish's Wrath, which was once Sung Jinwoo's main weapon.

[My liege! Do you know what Kamish's Wrath is? These daggers, so to speak, are the weapons that Master used to defeat other Monarchs!] Beru began to passionately talk about his memories with Sung Jinwoo with a wistful expression.

Kamish was a dragon that ranked at the top among magical beasts, excluding the Monarchs. 'Kamish's Wrath,' made from the sharpest fang among his teeth, could cut the bodies of even Monarchs. Except for one...

[But Kamish's Wrath, which slit the necks of other Monarchs, was useless against the Dragon King.]

It had difficulties piercing his hard scales, and even if it did, it only left a small scratch on his skin. Kamish's Wrath couldn't inflict a fatal blow on the Dragon King. There was even a situation where one of them broke during the battle. But when Sung Jinwoo used the Cup of Reincarnation to turn back time, he sought out Kamish and created Kamish's Wrath once again because there was no better weapon for everyday use.

"Oh, as expected of the Explanation Bug."

[Ahem. I apologize. I am indeed a bug that's good at explaining.] As Suho gave him a thumbs up, Beru proudly puffed up his chest and continued his explanation.

[But after decades of war, the blades were damaged like this. Especially when fighting the Dragon King for the second time...]

Nod. Nod.

"Hmm. That's only natural." At Beru's words, a small lizard was nodding with its arms crossed.

Antares had a very satisfied expression on his face. He clearly remembered the moment when Sung Jinwoo dared to attack him without knowing his place and the blade broke.

"In the first place, it's impossible for a dagger made of a dragon's tooth to pierce this Dragon King's body. I am Antares, the strongest dragon, and..."

[That's why the King is currently using a dagger made of 'Antares' Fang'.]

"Wh-what?!" Antares' jaw dropped at Beru's words, and his eyes widened as if they were about to pop out. His small, protruding fangs that were visible in his open mouth

felt strangely sore... Of course, it must be his imagination. But the clueless ant Beru gave the Dragon King a thumbs up and praised him.

[I've made weapons with many dragon fangs, but yours were by far the best.]

"..." Was this a compliment or an insult? Antares gritted his teeth with a very complicated feeling and growled lowly at Suho,

"...Stop chatting and get on with the purpose of coming here."

"I should." Suho turned his head at those words.

'Sea of The Afterlife'

The original purpose of coming to this dimensional gap with Seo Jiwoo was to find the way to the Sea of The Afterlife, wasn't it?

[I shall guide you!] Beru guided Suho in the direction where the 'purified demon souls' were headed.

The dimensional gap was full of cracks. The unknown place called the dimensional gap was a space where those cracks changed in real-time, constantly appearing and disappearing. In short, it wasn't easy to find a hole that directly connected to the Sea of The Afterlife even if they knew the direction. That's why they needed bait... That was the role of Seo Jiwoo that the Dragon King suggested.

"Kuhk...!" While moving along the flow of the purified demon souls, Seo Jiwoo suddenly turned pale and collapsed on the spot. Suho turned to her in surprise.

"Hunter Seo Jiwoo? What's wrong?"

"Gasp... gasp... I-I can't... breathe..."

Something was strange.

Extreme fear. Seo Jiwoo was overcome with worry that she would die if she went any further, to the point where she couldn't even breathe properly.

"Harmakan! Find the cause!" Suho immediately turned to Harmakan and gave the order.

The fact that an S-rank Hunter like Seo Jiwoo was suffering such mental damage meant that there might be guys like demonic spirit shamans hiding somewhere. But even after hearing Suho's order, Harmakan had a troubled expression.

[Master, I don't think this is someone's doing. I think this is...] At those words, Beru quickly scanned the surroundings with narrowed eyes and said,

[My liege, I think we've come to the right place.]

Since a while ago, their surroundings were filled with numerous cracks like shattered glass.

[Among these cracks, surely...]

"There will be the Sea of The Afterlife." Antares finished Beru's sentence and glanced at Seo Jiwoo, who was hyperventilating.

"The fear this human is currently feeling is an instinctive aversion that any living being would feel. In other words, it's a survival instinct. No matter how strong a human's magic power is, they're all equal in the face of death."

"What...? Then what about me?"

"...You are not equal." Antares gritted his teeth with a rotten expression at Suho's reply.

This was probably the first time since the dawn of history that the Dragon King, Antares, discussed the unfairness of bloodline. Unlike Seo Jiwoo, who looked like she was about to faint at any moment, Suho was completely fine.

"Anyway, you're saying we've come to the right place." Having grasped the situation, Suho immediately tried to have Seo Jiwoo retreat. But then...

Crack—!

"...!"

Suddenly, above Seo Jiwoo's head a crack appeared in the empty air, and a giant bud popped out.

[Nightmare Bud]

Stretch—!

The grotesque bud that suddenly appeared split into four parts and opened its crocodile-like mouth wide towards Seo Jiwoo, who was crouching below.

"...!"

She couldn't scream, couldn't even breathe and her face was filled with terror.

'This is it.' She instinctively realized...

That this bizarre plant was the one that devoured her soul and dragged her to the Sea of The Afterlife. And that it was still drooling over her with lingering attachment.

'It's going to devour me again...'

Kyaaa—!

The despair that came over Seo Jiwoo didn't become reality.

"Where do you think you're going?!"

Slash—!

In an instant, Suho jumped up and cut off the stem of the thing that was about to swallow Seo Jiwoo whole in midair.

"Kyaaaak—!"

A bizarre scream that scratched the eardrums erupted from the creature as it rolled on the ground. But as the Dragon King said, the weeds that grew in Sea of The Afterlife were tenacious. Especially this one, the Nightmare Bud, was disgustingly tenacious.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Rustle—!

Even as its head rolled on the ground with the cut off, new stems, no, creepy roots grew rapidly from the severed end of the Nightmare Bud's stem.

Flash—!

And using those roots, it rushed towards Seo Jiwoo, crawling on the ground like a centipede with many legs.

'Ruler's Authority!'

Whoosh—!

At that moment, Kamish's Wrath flew from Suho's hand in a straight line.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash!

And this time, instead of the stem, it mercilessly slashed at the bud.

Flare!

"Kyaaaaa..."

In the end, the creature's petals, torn and tattered, burned.

[Nightmare Bud has been defeated.]

"Haa..." Seo Jiwoo finally felt like she could breathe again as she watched the creature turn to ashes and scatter before her eyes. An instinctive sense of relief washed over her as she saw the unknown being that had been constantly watching her disappear. Still sitting on the ground, she looked at Suho and asked with a weak smile,

"Did I... do a good job as bait?"

"Thanks for your hard work." Suho politely bowed and thanked Seo Jiwoo.

She shook her head.

"No. It was something I asked for."

Seo Jiwoo still felt indebted to her colleagues who were asleep with the Eternal Sleep Disease. Even at this moment, her friends were slowly dying, and the fact that she alone woke up and reawakened as an S-rank Hunter was incredibly remorseful and painful. But Seo Jiwoo's role ended here.

"Harmakan." Suho looked up, glared at the dimensional hole where the Nightmare Bud popped out, and ordered Harmakan,

"Fix the coordinates."

[Yes, Master.]

Flash—!

Immediately, a magic circle was created in Harmakan's hands.

The dimensional gap was highly volatile. Even if they found a passage connected to the Sea of The Afterlife like this, no one knew when the coordinates would suddenly distort and the connection would be cut off. But there was a being who could freely create passages connecting dimensions even in this volatile place...

It was Yogumunt King of Demonic spirits and the Monarch of Transfiguration. But the ability itself wasn't something only Yogumunt was allowed to do, just the level of skill differed. For example, The Great Spellcaster Kandiaru, who was the second-in-command of the magic world.

[Harmakan activates Instance Dungeon.]

The Instance Dungeon, Kandiaru's legacy, was a large-scale magic circle that created a 'reverse world'. This ability was to create a world beyond the dimensional gap by distorting it, but with a little modification, it was also possible to use it to create a simple 'door' instead of a reverse world.

Rustle—!

Chains woven with magic extended forward as Harmakan stretched out his hands. Those chains forcibly bound the irregularly broken cracks, widening the hole and fixing the coordinates. And as a result...

Flash—!

"...Oh my god." Seo Jiwoo's eyes widened in shock.

Before them, a giant Gate was created, emanating an ominous aura that felt suffocating just to look at.

Ding!

['Gate: Sea of The Afterlife' has been created.]

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 246 - Announcement

Suho decided to take care of Seo Jiwoo first.

"Hunter Seo Jiwoo, thank you for your hard work. We'll stay here and look around the Sea of The Afterlife, so please go back outside and rest."

Seo Jiwoo's role was essentially over. Since she was in a state where she couldn't even breathe properly just by being near the Sea of The Afterlife, it was urgent to send her out of the dungeon as soon as possible.

"Harmakan, guide her to the way out."

When looked at Harmakan, instead of personally escorting Seo Jiwoo out, used magic.

Flash—!

The magic circle created in Harmakan's hand compressed into the size of a fist.

[Master, there's an easier way.]

Suho accepted the item handed to him.

Ding!

[Obtained Item: 'Return Stone'.]

"Return Stone?"

An information window popped up before Suho.

[Item: Return Stone]

[Type: Consumable]

[An item created by Harmakan's magic.]

[You can return outside the dungeon by breaking the Return Stone.]

"Oh. You can make something like this too?"

[It's just a petty trick I learned while researching Kandiaru's legacy.] Harmakan spoke humbly as if it was nothing, but his lips and shoulders were already twitching with excitement at Suho's surprised reaction.

"Can this item be used by anyone other than me?"

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"Then please go back safely."

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Crack!

Seo Jiwoo broke the Return Stone with her hand as Suho explained, and she left the dimensional gap through the portal connected to the outside of Hapjeong Station.

[Master doesn't need to use the Return Stone; you can just use the Shadow Exchange skill.]

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[Shadow Demon's title has been changed to 'Shadow Gatekeeper'.]

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"Now, let's go in." Suho led the rest of his troops and stepped into the Gate.

[Entering Gate: 'Sea of The Afterlife'.]

Flash—

And at that moment...

"...!"

A sticky, pitch-black sky unfolded before Suho's eyes. A boundless expanse of melted, undulating darkness stretching in all directions.

Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!

Warning messages suddenly began to pop up.

[A living body has come into contact with the energy of the 'Sea of The Afterlife'.]

[Debuff: 'Death' is activated.]

[Health decreases in real-time.]

[HP -100]

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[...]

"Wow." This was crazy. His HP was steadily decreasing by a whopping 100 every second.

"So if I stay here, I'll eventually die. Even Kandiaru's blessing doesn't work in the face of death."

"Of course. Even the Absolute Being couldn't avoid death, so a blessing created by a mere creation is useless here." Antares, who had climbed onto Suho's shoulder, was scanning the surroundings with sharp eyes.

...It was vast. He couldn't spot anything like the World Tree no matter where he looked. All he could see was sticky darkness.

[My liege, be careful. Just because you can't see anything doesn't mean there's nothing here.] Beru also had an unusually tense look in his eyes.

[The moment you fall into this sea, the rate at which your health decreases will accelerate.]

Fortunately, there was no chance of Suho falling into the sea. He had a skill he learned from the Ice Elf Sirka, the successor of the Monarch of Frost.

Splash

[Using Skill: 'Elven Footsteps'.]

Suho's carefully extended foot succeeded in stepping on and walking across the black sea.

[Oooh!]

[Master walked on water!]

[Kieek! As expected of Master!]

The shadow soldiers cheered with their hands raised.

Suho was also relieved.

"That's a relief. If this skill didn't work, I was going to use the Ruler's Authority."

The Ruler's Authority was closer to the concept of floating in the air rather than walking. So Elven Footsteps were less burdensome to use in many ways. Anyway, Suho, having solved the movement restriction, looked at the soldiers, including Beru.

"But are you guys okay?"

[We are fine since we are already dead souls.]

"That's a relief."

The shadow soldiers didn't have the concept of HP, so there was no health to lose.

"Then what about Antares?"

"Beep?"

"Did you already run away? You little..."

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, urges Ragnar to take refuge in the shadow world.]

Ragnar, who was no longer possessed, was withering away on Suho's shoulder with a blank expression.

"Yes, you go in."

Suho sent Ragnar back into his shadow. And as he watched his HP decreasing in real-time, he bought a lot of healing potions from the shop.

[Purchased Item: 'Intermediate Healing Potion'.]

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[...]

"This... the cost of potions is going to be significant."

Suho wondered if there were any other places like this.

A place where you absolutely must drink potions regularly.

Because even if you drink several at the same time, they don't restore HP any faster. In the end, the potions here were limited to barely maintaining his current health.

"If a battle breaks out in this state, it will be absolutely impossible to recover with just potions."

[My liege, why don't you leave the reconnaissance of this place to the soldiers and stay outside safely?] That was Beru's advice.

"Let's look around as much as possible since we've already come this far."

Suho spread the shadow lizardmen, who could fly, in all directions to scout the surroundings. And he himself walked across the Sea of The Afterlife with Elven Footsteps.

[You must use Shadow Exchange with the soldiers outside the Gate whenever you feel it's dangerous.] Harmakan also spared no advice for Suho.

[No, it would be better to exchange with the soldiers you left on Earth. Considering the cooldown, that would be more efficient...]

It was then...

"They're here." Suho's eyes sharpened.

Splash—!

Giant tentacles shot out from the sticky, pitch-black sea, targeting Suho from all directions.

[Nightmare Bud]

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"This really is a flower garden."

Suho threw his dagger as if he had been waiting.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash—!

"Kiiiiii!"

The battle suddenly began. Starting with the Nightmare Buds, nameless weeds also appeared and attacked Suho. Now that a human with abundant life force had entered the Sea of The Afterlife, their goal was obvious.

Chomp! Chomp!

Chomp!

Numerous plants opened their mouths wide to devour Suho. Some even popped out from under his feet.

[Protect the Little Monarch!]

[Protect Master!]

Actually, these guys weren't a problem individually. What could mere weeds do against the mighty shadow soldiers? The real issue was completely different...

"...These weeds, it seems like they don't give experience points."

[Master, the Sea of The Afterlife is not a place for leveling up. It's an area that cannot be replicated even with Kandiaru's Instance Dungeon.]

"I can't level up here." Suho's expression turned serious.

This was a very, very serious problem.

Suho looked around again. Again, the Sea of The Afterlife was vast, a truly boundless expanse. He had his army thoroughly search the area, but there was no sign of the World Tree, not even a shadow. At this rate, he would end up wasting all his money on potions.

"Hmm. So it's that kind of place...? Let's change our approach." Suho's gaze suddenly lowered to his feet.

"Follow me, everyone."

[M-my liege?!] Beru was shocked.

Splash—!

Suho, who was safely walking on the surface, suddenly jumped into the Sea of The Afterlife.

[Everyone, follow the Little Monarch!!] At Beru's urging, the soldiers followed Suho and dived into the sea and killed any weeds they saw down there.

The problem was Suho.

Ding!

[Health decreases in real-time.]

[The deeper you go, the stronger the effect of Debuff: 'Death' becomes.]

[HP -100]

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[...]

This was truly death. The deeper he went, the more Suho's HP decreased.

'No wonder my father told me to level up first, before trying to find the World Tree.'

Fortunately, thanks to diligently leveling up as his father said, he still had some leeway. Besides, he had no problem breathing in this strange black seawater. It was thanks to learning the trick of creating a protective barrier on his face with magic power from Esil when he was wandering in the desert before.

As he left the small fry to the soldiers and swam deeper and deeper into the Sea of The Afterlife...

'...Found it.' Suho's eyes gleamed.

'Yes. The Sea of The Afterlife is where the dead wander.'

He was curious why he couldn't see anything, but they were all gathered down here. That's right. At the deep bottom of the Sea of The Afterlife...

There was literally 'hell.'

An awful lot of souls. Countless residents of the mixed world, including humans, were submerged like cold corpses. But no matter their appearance, their eyes, already dead, were simply empty. Even the souls that were already tattered from having their nutrients sucked out by weeds couldn't feel any pain and were simply one with this black water.

[My liege...] Beru, who was clinging close to protect him, looked at him with uneasy eyes.

Suho, who finally faced the terrifying reality of the Sea of The Afterlife after diving in...

"A big catch." But he was smiling... More brightly than ever.

"Arise, everyone."

[...!]

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[Shadow extraction successful.]

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[...]

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, grumbles that this is just so unfair...]

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 247 - Chapter 245

Chapter 247: Chapter 245

Suho decided to take care of Seo Jiwoo first.

"Hunter Seo Jiwoo, thank you for your hard work. We'll stay here and look around the Sea of The Afterlife, so please go back outside and rest."

Seo Jiwoo's role was essentially over. Since she was in a state where she couldn't even breathe properly just by being near the Sea of The Afterlife, it was urgent to send her out of the dungeon as soon as possible.

"Harmakan, guide her to the way out."

When looked at Harmakan, instead of personally escorting Seo Jiwoo out, used magic.

Flash—!

The magic circle created in Harmakan's hand compressed into the size of a fist.

[Master, there's an easier way.]

Suho accepted the item handed to him.

Ding!

[Obtained Item: 'Return Stone'.]

"Return Stone?"

An information window popped up before Suho.

[Item: Return Stone]

[Type: Consumable]

[An item created by Harmakan's magic.]

[You can return outside the dungeon by breaking the Return Stone.]

"Oh. You can make something like this too?"

[It's just a petty trick I learned while researching Kandiaru's legacy.] Harmakan spoke humbly as if it was nothing, but his lips and shoulders were already twitching with excitement at Suho's surprised reaction.

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1

"Arise, everyone."

1

[...!]

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[...]

[The King of Dragons, the Monarch of Destruction, grumbles that this is just so unfair...]

2

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 248 - Chapter 246

Chapter 248: Chapter 246

What was the shadow power?

It was the ability to pull dead souls drifting in the Sea of The Afterlife back from the depths. Although the 'shadow of the corpse' that the soul used in life was needed as a medium, that intermediate step could be omitted now that he had directly entered the

Sea of The Afterlife. All he had to do was grab the ghosts by the scruff of their necks and pull them up!

"Arise!"

With the shadow power that Suho unleashed, The Sea of The Afterlife surged.

Rumble—!

Large and small ripples began to appear on the surface of the pitch-black water that flowed like a single organism. The cause was the countless ghosts that were sinking like corpses in the deep abyss below.

...Flash!

Light returned to their unfocused eyes.

Their dormant consciousness revived.

Distant memories surfaced.

And finally.

Graaah—!

Kraaaaaaaaaa—

They rose vigorously.

Splash—!

But the Sea of The Afterlife had no intention of letting them go. The sticky, mucous-like black seawater clung tenaciously to the ghosts' bodies. The will to drag the dead souls back down. This force was what ruled this place. It was the gravity and natural order here... But the shadow power defied that natural order.

Splash—!

The ripples that started on the calmly flowing surface soon became waves surging into a tsunami. The black sea swirled...

Kraaaaaaaaaa—

And above that. The ghosts, who finally succeeded in rising, appeared majestically before Suho. Drenched in the seawater that was still pulling them towards death.

Rumble!

The sticky, pitch-black seawater of the Sea of The Afterlife was shimmering like black steam due to the fighting spirit emanating from their bodies.

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[...]

Along with countless system messages. Suho saw new soldiers composed of numerous races. Residents of the mixed world who lived in various dimensions. On Earth, they were called magical beasts or monsters, but their true nature was the souls of warriors who died nameless in wars and history over countless years.

[Kieeeeeek—! This is amazing! Truly a big catch!] Beru shouted with excitement.

[These are souls that couldn't be incorporated into the Shadow Army! How could we extract those we've never even encountered before as soldiers!]

That's right. From the previous Shadow Monarch, Ashborn, to the current Monarch, Sung Jinwoo. Even they couldn't turn all the souls that died in every dimension of the universe into part of their army. The ones that died without any connection to the war, without even knowing the Shadow Monarch, were all gathered here in the Sea of The Afterlife.

Smirk.

Suho's lips curled up in satisfaction as he checked each one of them. There were races he knew because he had encountered them as dungeon magical beasts, and there were also those he had never seen before. There were even races that were ridiculously weak, unable to fight on the front lines of the war, but some of them showed talents unrelated to combat. And in the midst of that...

"...Hmm?" Suho frowned with a dissatisfied expression.

Looking again, not all souls were successfully extracted.

[Attempting shadow extraction.]

[Extraction in progress...]

[Shadow extraction failed.]

[Extraction in progress...]

[Shadow extraction failed.]

[Shadow extraction failed.]

[...]

"Oh dear."

Suho tried to extract the failed ghosts again and again. But it was a complete failure.

[Shadow extraction failed.]

There were two reasons.

[The probability of extraction failure increases in proportion to the target's stats and the time elapsed since the target's death.]

First, the time elapsed since death.

The ghosts who came to the Sea of The Afterlife a very long time ago were tattered from having their nutrients sucked out by the weeds. And even if it wasn't because of them, they had melted into the Sea of The Afterlife to the point where they couldn't be resurrected even with the shadow power. If he forcibly extracted them, they probably wouldn't be able to function properly as soldiers. But that wasn't why Suho was frowning.

"The target's stats... You mean you won't acknowledge me as your master?"

[...]

There were ghosts who remained silent, not responding to his words. Each one of them seemed extraordinary. Just then, Beru, who realized the reason, patted Suho's shoulder from the side smiling warmly with an expression like that of a parent looking at their growing child.

[What can you do? It's because you're not the true Shadow Monarch, my liege. Of course, they would have jumped up at the slightest wave of the King's hand, but it seems that the Little monarch's shadow power is not enough to persuade them.]

2

Pat. Pat.

[Think positively. Doesn't this motivate you? Look. Those arrogant ghosts! Next time you come back after leveling up, those arrogant guys will welcome you with open arms, wanting to be part of your army.]

...Was this encouragement or teasing?

2

Suho, who would normally have been annoyed by Beru's words, glared at them with serious eyes.

'Yes.'

The Sea of The Afterlife was vast and deep. Among the countless souls sleeping here, there were plenty of extraordinary ones that he couldn't subdue with his current power. If he didn't have the qualifications to become their master yet, he just had to go and acquire those.

"Yes. Just you wait."

Suho decided to wait for the next time. And he reaffirmed his resolve to level up as soon as possible and extract those arrogant guys before these precious souls were devoured by the weeds here. The problem was that Suho's health was rapidly plummeting in the meantime.

[HP -514]

[HP -763]

[HP -989]

[HP -1,314]

[...]

[My liege, it's too dangerous!]

"...Yes. Let's go up."

Whoosh—!

As he surfaced again, the rapidly decreasing HP began to slow down. But when he came out, the speed didn't immediately drop to -100.

[HP -931]

[HP -819]

[...]

[HP -434]

[...]

[HP -100]

[HP -100]

[...]

Only after the black water clinging to Suho's body was completely gone did his HP start decreasing by 100 per second normally. He immediately took out a potion and drank it.

"It would have been a big problem if I came out too late."

[My liege, for now, why don't you go outside for a while, recover, and come back? In this state, it might be dangerous even if you find the World Tree.]

"Yes, let's do that. But first..." Suho looked at the newly acquired soldiers and asked,

"Do any of you know the location of the World Tree?"

[...]

Of course, there was no answer. They would have been unconscious from the moment they came here. Suho was disappointed and gave orders to the winged soldiers he sorted out separately.

"I'll be out for a while, so you guys with wings stay here and look for the World Tree. And if you see any weeds..."

[We will eradicate them thoroughly.] Sita's eyes flashed from among the shadow lizardmen.

[We can't let those weeds devour these precious souls.]

"Yes. Scatter if you understand."

As soon as Suho finished speaking, the winged soldiers immediately spread their wings and soared. He watched them for a moment.

[Using 'Skill: Shadow Exchange'.]

Snap!

* * *

At that time.

Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

A tremendous cheer erupted from Esil's territory.

"It's over!"

"We endured the trial!"

"We finally overcame the trial!"

The sight of the demons barely holding off the invasion of the residents of the gap was truly miserable.

Some had lost limbs, while others were on the verge of death with black blood flowing all over their bodies. They were completely battered. But despite that, they could rejoice at this moment. Because they had proven their qualifications as demons.

"Demons!"

...!

At the sudden resounding voice, all the demons turned their heads. Esil, the eldest daughter of the Radiru family.

No. Our King, Esil Radiru!

Receiving the passionate gazes of the demons, Esil stood firm despite her body looking like it could collapse at any moment. And she proudly faced the gazes of all the demons looking up to her. Smirking, she raised her lips, revealing her sharp fangs.

"...Yes. We won."

Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

At those words, the demon world erupted with cheers.

The moment the invasion began.

The moment they witnessed the residents of the gap suddenly invading the demon world.

The demons, who had been living without knowing anything, instinctively realized.

If they couldn't overcome this trial, their situation would be reversed with those residents of the gap. The absolute fear that they would no longer be able to exist as demons overcame them. But now they could proudly say,

"We are the true demons."

The demons were once again excited by Esil's declaration. They truly acknowledged it. The fact that the pure-blooded demon noble, 'Esil Radiru,' was their king.

But it was then...

Crackle—!

The sky collapsed.

"...?!"

Rumble— Crash!

Thunderbolt.

The fear of white flames suddenly struck down from the calmed sky of the demon world.

"Wh-what!"

"Is this a second wave?!"

"We don't have the strength to endure anymore..."

The demons despaired. And they instinctively looked at their king, Esil Radiru, with pleading eyes. She looked up at the sky with a stiff expression.

"...Don't worry. The trial is over."

...!

The demons were greatly relieved at those words. But despite that, Esil's hardened expression as she looked beyond the cloudy sky didn't relax. The demons whispered in fear at that sight.

"If it's not a trial..."

"What's happening up there?"

But a while later Esil's eyes, which had been staring at the sky silently for a long time, widened.

"...He's here!"

Crackle!

At that moment black lightning bolts struck down from the sky to the ground. All the demons were astonished by that truly terrifying sight, but only Esil ran forward with an overjoyed expression, kicking off the ground.

"Sung Suho!"

It wasn't black lightning! Black shadows that transcended dimensions, centered on Sung Suho, who had returned to the demon world using the shadow soldiers he left there!

"Esil."

Suho found Esil at the center of the black energy-emitting shadow soldiers. And he opened his inventory, taking out a potion with one hand and putting it in his mouth. With the other hand, he took out another item he had obtained this time.

[Item: Baran's Horn]

After defeating Baran's soul, this was the only item left. But Suho knew how to use it. He handed Baran's Horn to Esil and said,

3

"From now on, you are the Demon King."

"...!"

Esil's body was engulfed in black energy as she received the horn.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 249 - Chapter 247

Chapter 249: Chapter 247

It was a truly magnificent sight.

Crackle—!

Underneath the thunder and lightning that poured down from the sky. The sight of Sung Suho appearing with numerous black legions and handing over the horn of the previous Demon King to Esil Radiru...

It was like a solemn and magnificent painting, reminiscent of a knight's inauguration ceremony.

Whoosh—!

And the moment Esil received 'Baran's Horn' with both hands, An old demon muttered in a trance as he saw her suddenly engulfed in black energy,

"...A new king has been born in this land that lost its master." With those words, all the demons began to prostrate themselves and worship, as if on cue.

"A new king has been born!"

"Oh, King of Demons!"

"Ah, Esil Radiru!"

Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

Everyone was united in heart and mind, shouting Esil's name as if in a frenzy. But...

"...Ugh."

The reality was completely different from what the demons saw.

'I'm going to be devoured if I'm not careful...!' Esil herself was in danger.

Rumble...!

From the moment she inadvertently received Baran's Horn from Suho, Esil's expression had been stiff. Baran's Horn was suddenly trying to suck her in with tremendous force! Like the residents of the gap. With the will to devour all the nutrients within her.

'This is succession...!' Esil instinctively realized...

At this moment, Baran's Horn was asking her if she truly had the right to become king? And if she wasn't a worthy vessel...

'Is it going to devour me and take my soul instead...!'

'I see.'

This was the Demon King's succession ceremony. The last struggle of Baran, whose spiritual body was destroyed and scattered as scraps. And then...

"You... are weak." A giggling, mocking voice whispered softly to Esil.

'...?!'

At that moment, she realized her fate.

"You are not qualified."

Ultimately, Esil's mind, which had been fiercely resisting the pull, was helplessly swallowed by the abyss.

Whoosh—!

'Uwaaaaaaaaaaaa...!'

* * *

In a bottomless abyss.

How much time had passed?

'...Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaa!'

Esil was endlessly falling into the deep abyss where even the flow of time couldn't be felt. While in that state for ages, Something began to appear at the edge of her vision, where previously nothing could be seen. At first, it looked like a hazy pillar. And after so long... Esil finally fell low enough that she could clearly see what it was.

'...Oh my god.'

All she could do was gasp in astonishment.

'Could this be...' Esil faced it.

In the deepest, widest darkness, a giant tree that grew with its roots at the edge of the Sea of The Afterlife.

'The World Tree?'

She didn't need anyone to tell her. Her instincts as a demon, no, the memories of being a resident of the gap before that, whispered the truth. This was it. This giant, emitting light even in this bottomless abyss, was the World Tree!

'But why?' Esil was puzzled.

How did her soul, which failed the succession and was eventually devoured by Baran's Horn, end up here before the World Tree?

'No, it wasn't even right to say she arrived.'

She was still falling. The size of the World Tree was so immense that she couldn't perceive it. But that didn't matter, because the moment she saw the World Tree, there was only one thought that came to Esil's mind.

'Suho!' She had to tell Suho about this.

'Suho! Here! The World Tree you're looking for is right here!'

But no matter how much she shouted, Esil's voice didn't come out. Even if she could make a sound, there was no way her words would reach Suho in this vast abyss. So she decided to change her approach.

'Since it's come to this, I'll bring it myself!' Esil thought.

First of all, what Suho wanted wasn't the location of the World Tree, but a branch of the World Tree, wasn't it?

'So I can break off a branch of the World Tree and bring it to him!' As she thought that, the name 'Vulcan' suddenly came to Esil's mind. What was the reason why Vulcan, who was a mere insect, could evolve into a demon noble?

The World Tree!

Wasn't it because he broke off a branch of the World Tree and ate its leaves! If that principle worked, then maybe...?

'If I grab a branch of the World Tree, can I... grab a new opportunity again? Like Vulcan?'

It was the moment when the most primal instinct that supported the demon race, the survival instinct, wriggled within Esil.

Stretch—

Esil, who was endlessly falling downwards, desperately reached out her hand. Towards the World Tree.

'Just a little bit! A little bit more!'

If she wished and desired, she would move. Esil's soul, reaching out with impatience, began to move towards the World Tree little by little. And finally...

Touch

The moment Esil's fingertips brushed the branch of the World Tree.

'I got it...!'

Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

'...?!'

Suddenly, with an earth-shattering roar, a giant snake appeared, coiling around the World Tree and blocking her path. Esil hurriedly withdrew her hand as if she had been burned. She was terrified to the core, seeing the monster that appeared before her.

'Oh my god. What is that?'

Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

An absurdly large snake... was coiling around the World Tree! And it had seven heads!

'Is it guarding the World Tree?'

'Is it just living here?'

'A snake living in the Sea of The Afterlife?'

She was full of questions. But Esil didn't have the time to solve those mysteries now. One of the giant snake's heads spotted her and suddenly turned...

Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

It opened its mouth to devour Esil.

'Oh no!'

The snake's mouth, wide open like a crocodile's, filled her entire vision. Esil's soul, still falling, couldn't escape and was destined to be swallowed whole. It was then...

Ding!

[Passive Skill '(Unknown)' is activated.]

'...!' Esil's eyes widened.

She suddenly saw a broad back blocking her path. A sharp jawline could be seen above it, muttering,

2

"...Hmm. This is a first."

'S-Suho?!' Suho suddenly appeared before her! Esil opened her mouth in surprise and excitement.

"Did you come all the way here to save me?"

"No, I was brought here too."

"What?!"

"I'm the priest, after all." Suho replied with a chuckle.

The moment Esil started falling into the abyss, Suho's time was stopped. But the difference was that he wasn't instantly falling; he was summoned right before her.

'...Just what kind of skill is this?' Suho looked ahead with a troubled expression. And he glared at the giant snake that was approaching with its mouth wide open to devour them.

Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!

A name tag appeared above the snake's head.

[Nidhogg]

'A snake living in the World Tree... I feel like I've seen a similar myth somewhere.' A snake with seven heads.

[The Dragon King, the Monarch of Destruction, smirks and says this is the true succession ceremony.] Antares immediately responded to Suho's words. But he wasn't the only Monarch who spoke.

[The King of Beasts, the Fang Monarch, says that this snake possesses the masterless 'Primordial Darkness'.]

[The Queen of Insects, the Plague Monarch...]

In short, this is what it meant: 'This guy devoured all the Primordial Darkness that the Monarchs spat out when they died?'

No, devoured wasn't the right expression. This guy was the Primordial Darkness that had been split into eight, now merged back into one. Wasn't the proof the seven heads attached to this snake, 'Nidhogg'? One Primordial Darkness fragment per head.

2

'But why seven? Where did one go?'

[The King of the Snowfolk, the Monarch of Frost, urges that now is not the time!]

That's right. Escaping from here was the priority. But it was too late, there was nowhere to hide.

Kyaaaaaaaaa—!

In the end, Nidhogg's mouth swallowed Suho and Esil whole. But at that moment...

...Gulp?!

The snake's tightly closed mouth bulged.

'Oh my god.' Inside, Esil witnessed it.

Suho... standing before her with his arms raised, supporting the roof of the snake's mouth!

Kraaaaaaaaaa!

Nidhogg's roar, trying to crush them with its strength, blew like a wind through its throat. But Suho just smirked.

'I'm confident in a contest of strength.'

It was a good thing that only his mind was dragged here; if his body had come along, his HP would be decreasing in real-time due to the Debuff: 'Death.' But just enduring like this wouldn't solve anything.

"Esil!" Suho shouted towards Esil while supporting the roof of the mouth.

"Uh, yeah!" She was frozen in fear behind him, unable to move.

This wasn't just being scared, but the manifestation of the Debuff: 'Fear' effect.

"Esil! I can't summon shadow soldiers here! We have to catch this guy ourselves!"

"C-catch? This guy?"

"Of course."

Smirk.

Suho had developed a strange habit. The worse the situation, the more his lips curled up. He learned it through experience that the greater the risk before him, the greater the reward he would obtain. Therefore...

"We have to cut off at least one of its heads for you to become king, don't we?" Suho decided to face the trial with a smile.

"It will be... a little hot."

[Using Skill: 'Monarch's Domain'.]

Whoosh—

Black shadows spread out from Suho in all directions.

Flare!

Crimson flames blazed on the shadow that filled Nidhogg's mouth.

Kraaaaaaaaaa—!

Even in this situation, Nidhogg's will to somehow chew and swallow them was admirable. Perhaps this level of pain wouldn't cause much damage. The opponent was a guy who possessed the seven fragments of the Primordial Darkness. But what if he did this...?

[Using Debuff: 'Mad Blooded Poison'.] Mad Blooded Poison seeped out from Suho.

[The Queen of Insects, the Plague Monarch, opens her eyes.]

[The Queen of Insects, the Plague Monarch, explains that Mad Blooded Poison is useless against Nidhogg.]

"I know... Who said I was going to use it on him?" Suho smirked and chuckled at Querehsha's words.

[Poison: Mad Blooded Poison]

[When ingested, it causes the blood to boil, temporarily amplifying strength.]

[However, it has the fatal side effect of causing extreme pain whenever magic power is used]

[It consumes blood, gradually reducing lifespan.]

"This poison... was originally made for demons." As soon as he finished those words. Behind Suho...

"Uwaaaaaaaaaaa...!" Esil was struggling to get up.

[Buff: 'Mad Blooded Poison' is activated on Esil Radiru.]

'...!'

[The Queen of Insects, the Plague Monarch, opens her mouth in surprise.]

Amplification of strength accompanied by pain!

Since the demon race was a race accustomed to spiritualization, the effects of Mad Blooded Poison were applied even in their spiritualized state. And, there was something else that was possible because of this world...

Esil's spiritual body.

The nutrients that made up her.

The 'blood' boiled, and her power as a demon noble was temporarily strengthened.

[Esil Radiru's Skill: 'Bloodstone' evolves into Skill: 'Blood Crystal'.]

"Th-this power..." Esil herself seemed bewildered.

But Suho just chuckled and muttered in satisfaction, "Did you finally realize it?"

Blood Crystal. The power used by the Demon King Baran's soul. Esil, who finally awakened that power herself, had earned the right to become king.

'It's because of the drug, so it's not really on her own. Well, anyway...'

"Esil." Suho shouted towards Esil, whose soul itself was firmly compressed and refined.

"You take over from now on."

"...!"

Crack!

At Suho's words, Esil immediately raised both arms and took over the roof of the snake's mouth that Suho had been supporting. She couldn't help but widen her eyes at the tremendous pressure she felt.

'To think Suho had been enduring this absurd power!'

"I can't hold on for long!"

"It's okay"

"Just a moment."

Thanks to her, Suho's hands were finally free.

Rustle—

And two Kamish's Wrath daggers appeared in those hands.

'I'll do the cutting.' Suho's eyes gleamed.

[Using Skill: 'Breath of Destruction'.]

Flare!

At that moment, one of Nidhögg's seven heads was pierced by the beam of destruction.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 250 - Chapter 248

Chapter 250: Chapter 248

2

Breath of Destruction.

The hellfire that boiled from the Dragon Emperor's heart erupted in a straight line through Kamish's Wrath.

FWOOSH!

The immense heat that surged forth was suffocating. If it had been a dagger made of ordinary materials, it would have melted, unable to withstand this firepower. But Kamish's Wrath, made from a dragon's tooth, had excellent synergy with the Breath of Destruction. After all, if a dragon's teeth couldn't withstand it, their fangs wouldn't remain intact every time they breathed fire. Perhaps it was the same for Nidhögg. However, while its bones and teeth might be able to withstand the Breath of Destruction, its soft palate was a different story.

BOOM BOOM BOOM—!

The Breath of Destruction finally melted through the palate of Nidhögg, which had swallowed Suho and Esil, and pierced a hole straight through its head.

KRRRRRRRRRR—!

But...

Was it because it had seven heads? Nidhögg didn't die just because a small hole was pierced in one of its skulls. Rather, it clenched its jaw even harder to chew Suho and Esil.

CRACK—!

"Ugh!" As a result, Esil's leg, supporting the mouth's roof instead of Suho, finally broke, unable to withstand the force. But she didn't even scream. Instead, the moment her leg broke, she gritted her teeth, bent the other one, and supported the palate with her back.

2

"I'm... still okay, so keep going!" Esil shouted at Suho's back, trying to endure as long as possible.

At her cry from, veins popped out on the back of Suho's hand, gripping Kamish's Wrath.

"Just a little bit! A little bit more!" Sweat trickled down Suho's forehead as he continued to unleash the destructive beam, cutting off the snake's head bit by bit.

This overwhelmingly powerful destructive beam consumed an enormous amount of mana. And its recoil was as great as its power. Even turning it sideways like this wasn't easy. But...

It was worth it. The hole in the creature's head was widening as Suho's destructive beam gradually moved sideways.

"I'm going to... cut it off...!"

KIIYAAAAAAAAAAAAA—!

"...Ah!"

'He did it!'

Finally, Nidhögg, with its neck half cut off, couldn't bear the pain, opened its mouth wide, and let out a scream. At the same time, Esil was freed from the pressure that was about to crush her whole body. And she could finally look ahead.

"...!"

A large hole was open, melted by the hellfire. Big enough to see the World Tree clearly! But an even greater crisis came through that opening.

KRAAAAAAAAAA!

KYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY—!

Nidhögg's other six heads, feeling the pain, began to take notice one by one. At that moment, a tremendous killing intent focused on Suho and Esil. And through the hole pierced by the Breath of Destruction, their eyes met.

[Nidhögg, the serpent that gnaws at the World Tree, is watching you.]

Shiver.

As six pairs of eyes simultaneously turned towards them, Suho stiffened. Just making eye contact, he felt his whole body tingling from the tremendous pressure.

[Effect: 'Fear' is activated.]

[All of the player's stats are reduced by 50% for 1 minute.]

"...Ha." Suho, facing those gazes, let out a hollow laugh in disbelief.

The Breath of Destruction was cut off due to the effect that temporarily reduced his stats. His mana was already half depleted, and now it was halved again. Even if he used the Breath of Destruction again, his magic power wasn't enough to deal with all six remaining heads.

[Potions and the shop cannot be used in the current location, and status will not be recovered even if the level increases.]

Moreover, the use of potions was restricted because he was dragged here by the 'Unknown' skill.

KRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA—!

Just then, Nidhögg's six heads roared at Suho simultaneously. At that moment, those who were most worried about Suho appeared. The dead Monarchs.

FWOOOOSH—!

[King of the Snow Folk, the Monarch of Frost, causes a blizzard to obscure Nidhogg's vision.]

A bitterly cold blizzard swept in, and one of Nidhogg's mouth, which had been melting from the intense heat, was now frozen by the cold.

[Queen of Insects, the Monarch of Plagues, attempts to poison Nidhogg but fails.]

[Queen of Insects, the Monarch of Plagues, attempts to poison Nidhogg but fails.]

[King of Beasts, the Monarch of Fangs, urges you to run away quickly!]

But then...

"Suho..." Esil, who had somehow approached Suho, spoke with difficulty. She crawled all the way here with her limb broken.

"R-run..." They had to run away now. She wanted to say those words, but Esil couldn't even finish her sentence because of her teeth chattering.

Even Suho was this way, so the fear Esil was feeling was indescribable. But the survival instinct engraved in her soul was making the most rational yet inefficient choice at this moment.

"Th-this..." Esil's trembling hand held out something towards Suho.

Rustle.

"...This is?" Suho's eyes widened as he confirmed its identity.

'A leaf of the World Tree' A small leaf that was attached to the end of the branch that Esil barely managed to touch with her fingertips while falling was held in her palm.

Ding!

[Obtained Item: 'Leaf of the World Tree'.]

Esil placed the leaf in Suho's palm with her trembling hand. Her fearful eyes looked directly at his as she spoke,

"E-eat this."

'...!'

Even at this moment, Esil's instincts were whispering that she, not Suho, should eat this leaf. That if she ate this leaf, she might be able to evolve into a stronger demon like Vulcan. But...

Esil knew herself well.

'I... am weak.'

This single leaf. How much stronger could she become just by eating this one thing? It wasn't like she was going to eat all the leaves on the branch like Vulcan. No, forget about getting stronger, could she even escape from here in the first place? But Suho would be different.

"You... eat it." Esil had no doubt that it would be different if Suho ate it, not her.

"At least you... run away." She didn't know how much it would help, but she wanted Suho to at least escape from this place.

Squeeze

With that feeling, Esil placed a small leaf of the World Tree in Suho's hand. And then...

Ding!

A miracle happened. The moment he touched it, an information window popped up before Suho's eyes.

[Item: Leaf of the World Tree]

[Acquisition Difficulty: ??]

[Type: Material]

[A leaf plucked from a branch of the World Tree.]

[The leaf of the World Tree possesses strong vitality]

[It is used as an ingredient for top-grade magic reagents.]

[It is a main ingredient for potions.]

'Potion ingredient?!' Suho's eyes widened. Was it a coincidence that he found an ingredient used to make potions in this place where he couldn't use the shop or potions?

'No.' Seeing Esil's current state, no one would dare to dismiss it as luck.

Crunch!

Suho unhesitatingly put the leaf of the World Tree in his mouth and chewed. Then something amazing happened.

Whoosh—

A blue energy enveloped his entire body. The feeling of fresh air entering and leaving his lungs. It was a familiar sensation that Suho experienced every day.

Ding!

[All abnormal statuses are recovered.]

Ah, so it was a potion ingredient. His depleted health and mana were fully restored. He felt that the reward for the daily quest created by Kandiaru might be based on the leaves of the World Tree. The proof was this:

[The effect of Kandiaru's Blessing: 'Health and longevity' is temporarily strengthened.]

[Resisting Debuff: 'Fear'.]

His body, which had become heavy from Nidhögg's killing intent, felt light again. At that moment, Suho realized what he had to do.

'Rulers Authority!'

Step! Step! Step! Step!

Suho boldly stepped on the air and soared.

Kraaaaaaaaaaaa!

Nidhögg's six heads opened their mouths towards Suho, emitting a more ferocious killing intent than ever. It was the moment when the creatures, who had been staring blankly at Suho, finally turned hostile towards him.

[Nidhögg, the serpent that gnaws at the World Tree, is wary of the Rulers Authority.]

[Nidhögg, the serpent that gnaws at the World Tree, is hostile towards you.]

Crack!

Crack!

Kraaa!

Suho twisted and turned in the air, dodging their bites by a hair's breadth. As a result, only the innocent branches of the World Tree that they were clinging to were snapped and fell, unable to withstand their struggles. That was exactly what he wanted.

"Come!" Suho shot Kamish's Wrath towards the falling branches of the World Tree.

Whoosh—

Although he called them 'branches,' that was only from the perspective of the World Tree. To Suho, each one of them was gigantic. He wasn't actually aiming for the branches, but the numerous 'leaves' growing on them.

Slash—!

Kamish's Wrath slashed through the air. And the leaves cut from the World Tree all flew towards Suho thanks to the Ruler's Authority.

Crunch!

Suho immediately chewed and swallowed another leaf.

[All abnormal statuses are recovered.]

It was the same this time. His health and mana were recharged as if he had leveled up. But there was a critical problem.

[The Dragon King, the Monarch of Destruction, urges you to look at Nidhögg's wounds.]

As Antares said, Suho wasn't the only one who could eat the leaves of the World Tree.

Crunch!

Munch! Munch!

One of Nidhögg's heads was already chewing and swallowing a nearby branch of the World Tree whole. And then, the wound where Suho had cut off half its neck earlier began to heal rapidly.

'So this is what it means to be a snake that gnaws at the World Tree.'

"Esil! Open your mouth!" Suho shouted towards Esil, who was still inside, before the wound completely healed,

"...?!"

Whoosh—!

Like a spring breeze, the leaves of the World Tree swirled and flew... Esil, prepared to die, was startled to see the numerous leaves flying towards her and opened her mouth.

Suho chuckled at that foolish expression and said, "Debt repaid."

A favor compensated a thousandfold... Just before the creature's wounds completely healed, all the leaves reached Esil.

Whoosh—

The wounds completely healed, and Esil disappeared from sight. But Suho wasn't worried.

"Come back stronger, Esil."

It didn't take long. The head of Nidhögg that swallowed Esil suddenly swelled up. And...

Crackle—!

With a tremendous roar, it burst. But there was no blood or flesh in that explosion. Just... darkness.

['Primordial Darkness' is inherited by a new Monarch.]

Whoosh—

Darkness swirled and beyond, Esil's eyes were gleaming.

[Nidhögg, the serpent that gnaws at the World Tree, retreats.] The six remaining heads hurriedly retreated.

Like a lizard cutting off its tail and running away, it abandoned one of its heads and was trying to escape without hesitation. The darkness that originally came from the King of Demons, the Monarch of White Flames, Baran, now had a new master.

Whoosh—!

At the center of the swirling black, Esil Radiru, who absorbed the Primordial Darkness, was floating in the air with her hair fluttering. Looking at Suho with a more mature and serious gaze than usual. But the title of the new master recognized by the Primordial Darkness was a little different from that of the Demon King Baran.

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of Gluttony, is born.]

'Monarch of Gluttony?'

It probably meant she was a glutton. Before he could even finish that thought, Suho and Esil's minds were ejected out of the Sea of The Afterlife.

Whoosh—!

"Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!" The sudden cheers of the demons resounded.

Suho and Esil had returned to reality in the same position as before, with Esil about to receive the Item: 'Baran's Horn' from Suho. But she didn't panic and knelt with grace.

"...Thank you, my liege." Esil lowered herself and bowed deeply to the priest who made her king.

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of Gluttony, pledges allegiance to you.]

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of Gluttony, offers you the 'Blessing of Gluttony'.]

[Blessing: Blessing of Gluttony]

[Blessing of the King of Demons, the Monarch of Gluttony.]

[The Monarch of Gluttony, Esil Radiru, pledges allegiance to you.]

[You can now absorb and digest the nutrients of the mixed world more efficiently.]

[Effect: 'Gluttony']

[Increases experience points gained by 300%.]

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



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