

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 251 - Chapter 249

Chapter 251: Chapter 249

Suho was ecstatic.

"That's insane."

A 3x experience boost? He felt dizzy seeing the reward that was beyond his imagination.

"Esil." Suho placed his hand on Esil's shoulder and looked into her eyes with a burning gaze.

3

"Congratulations on becoming king. We're together for life."

8

"Master...!" She understood his sincerity. Esil also teared up with a deeply moved and overwhelmed expression at Suho's words.

1

Wasn't it true that...

She was a disappointment who had already failed the succession ceremony once due to lack of qualification.

She was a sinner who dared to try to become king without the necessary capability.

As punishment for that sin, she was destined to be devoured by Nidhogg, sucked into the Primordial Darkness, instead of becoming king. But it was Suho who suddenly appeared and overturned all that fate. It was him who forcibly grabbed her soul by the scruff of its neck and pulled it up, making her a king! Esil rose with tears in her eyes, clenching her fists.

"Master! I will do my best from now on!"

[Kieeeeeek—! How dare you! To say such an obvious thing now! How incompetent have you been until now!] Beru, the senior, who suddenly appeared, was aghast. But Esil was already a soldier with a strong sense of duty.

"No! I will do better!"

[Your voice is too small!]

"I will do much much better!"

[Not enough!] Beru and Esil were passionately singing their loyalty with veins bulging in their necks.

Esil had evolved into the Demon King, becoming much more glamorous and dignified than usual. But her mindset was more humble and sincere than ever. Suho standing before her was the savior of her soul, the master she had to serve for the rest of her life!

3

[Louder!]

1

"I will serve you with all my loyalty! If you wish, my body, mind, and soul! I will dedicate everything I have...!"

1

"Ok, then let's draw some blood."

1

"...What?"

"Blood." Suho, who gladly accepted Esil's heart, was smiling brightly.

"I'm asking for a blood donation." He had been waiting for this moment.

[Purified blood of the Demon King]

One of the three ingredients for the Holy Water of Life. Now that Esil had become the Demon King, he could draw an 'unlimited' amount of Demon King's blood. Of course, Suho knew how important 'blood' was to the demon race. But if Esil had any conscience, it was time for her to earn her keep. Actually, he hadn't mentioned it, but a significant portion of the money Suho earned as a Hunter went to Esil's food expenses, or rather, meat expenses. Perhaps the reason why she was called the 'Monarch of Gluttony' was because of that.

1

Which was greater, the number of leaves of the World Tree that Esil ate? Or the amount of meat she devoured like crazy to recover her diminished strength? The latter was clearly the winner. No wonder the butcher in Suho's neighborhood became the building's owner. That butcher hadn't even awakened as a Hunter, yet he made as much money as one. And that was even after giving Suho a huge discount at wholesale price because he was a regular customer.

1

'Actually, instead of the Monarch of Gluttony, maybe she's the Monarch of eating.' Suho truly thought so.

3

But in any case, wasn't it all right if the result was good? It was all an investment for this moment. Those meat expenses...? They were nothing compared to the Holy Water of Life.

"I-I will give it to you! If you want my blood!" Esil replied with a determined look at Suho's first order.

"Purify it before you give it to me."

"Yes!"

Whoosh—!

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of Gluttony, uses Skill: 'Blood Crystal'.] Fortunately, there was no need to draw blood with a syringe.

Swoosh! A fist-sized drop of blood appeared on Esil's palm.

Originally, the blood of demons was black. But perhaps because of how much Esil refined her blood, the Blood Crystal she created was shimmering red. And even the smell wasn't fishy but rather fragrant.

Ooooooh—!

All the demons trembled with emotion at that marvelous sight.

"It's Blood Crystal!"

"Blood Crystal!"

"As expected of the Demon King!"

"Oh, King!"

If 'Bloodstone' was the exclusive property of nobles, 'Blood Crystal' was its superior version. It was the unique power of the Demon King to highly refine demon blood. The Blood Crystal had various uses, but for now, they focused solely on drawing blood.

Pop!

As Suho bought a transparent glass bottle from the shop and pulled out the stopper, Esil's Blood Crystal immediately flew into the air and was sucked into it.

Ding!

[Obtained Item: 'Purified Blood of the Demon King'.]

[Material Item: Purified Blood of the Demon King]

[Acquisition Difficulty: ??]

[Type: Material]

[A liquid made by refining the blood of the King of Demons, Esil Radiru.]

[Although it contains strong magic power, it still is toxic even after purification]

[To use it as medicine, you need the 'Fragment of the World Tree']

[And 'Spring Water of the EchoForest' to neutralize the toxicity.]

"This is the Demon King's blood..." Suho smiled with satisfaction.

The red liquid in the transparent glass bottle sloshed around. Looking at it like this, it seemed like a fancy perfume bottle, but its value was incomparably greater.

[Holy Water of Life]

[Ingredients:]

[Purified Blood of the Demon King (1/1)]

[Fragment of the World Tree (0/1)]

[Spring Water of the Echo Forest (1/1)]

[Kieek! Now there's only one ingredient left! You can craft the Holy Water of Life if you just have the Fragment of the World Tree!]

"Tsk. That's a shame. I should have brought those branches somehow."

[Kiek?] Beru tilted his head.

Suho was frowning and clicking his tongue when he should be happy. Recalling the branches of the World Tree that were falling from Nidhogg's struggles, he felt regretful. But he didn't have the time to do that back then. Nidhogg's six giant heads were snapping their mouths here and there to devour him, and it was already overwhelming just to dodge their bites and collect the leaves. He needed to think positively and reconsider. Even if he had managed to get his hands on those branches, it might have been impossible to bring them to reality. Only his mind had crossed over to the Sea of The Afterlife due to the 'Unknown' skill. When he returned after fighting Querehsha, not even a single wing fragment of those swarming poisonous insects was attached to his clothes. ...That was Suho's best attempt at positive thinking. But it was too early to give up.

"Master! Do you have any more orders?"

[That's a good attitude!] Beru finally gave her a passing grade.

Even after handing over the Blood Crystal to Suho, Esil's eyes were burning with a sense of mission. Seeing those eyes, Suho had a good idea.

"Esil." His eyes sparkled.

"Can you go back to that place?"

"Are you talking about... the World Tree?"

Esil frowned and tried to recall her memories. The thing that emitted light in the darkness. The impact of the World Tree was so strong that she couldn't clearly remember what the surroundings were like. But...

"Maybe... it should be possible."

"Oh, really?"

"Yes. The scent of the World Tree still lingers in my mouth."

Even if her eyes couldn't remember, her other senses could. This was the dignity of the Monarch of Gluttony, the one who devoured countless leaves of the World Tree. Smacking her lips, Esil proudly pointed at her chest with her thumb and said,

"And that scent is also flowing in my blood."

"No wonder the smell of the Blood Crystal was fragrant. Then if you let other demons smell your blood?"

"Then, of course..."

Smirk. Before he could even finish his words, Suho and Esil smiled meaningfully at each other. They understood each other's thoughts.

"All the demons under my command will be able to wander the Sea of The Afterlife and track the scent of the World Tree."

Demons were sensitive to the smell of blood. Moreover, any demon who couldn't remember the smell of the Demon King's blood deserved to die. If the scent of the World Tree was mixed with Esil's blood, the demons would be able to search for the World Tree much more effectively than the shadow soldiers who were currently wandering the Sea of The Afterlife.

"Demons wandering the Sea of The Afterlife... That's a real hell." It was a strangely fitting combination.

"But are you really okay with this? The weeds will target you if you go there."

In fact, the residents of the gap had just invaded the demons gathered here. But going to the Sea of The Afterlife, which was teeming with not only the residents of the gap but also weeds, was like walking into their own graves. But...

"The demons who overcame the trial are... strong."

The demons gathered here were all warriors who survived the trial. Representing them, Esil dismissed Suho's worries with a confident expression.

"The reason we're strong is that we realized how weak and insignificant we are through the trial."

Rumble!

At Esil's words, the energy of the surviving demons quietly flared up like flames.

"That's why we desire to become even stronger. We are still weak. If there's a way to become more powerful than we are now, not being picky about the means or methods is the foundation that governs the demon world." And Esil had now realized...

'The leaf of the World Tree'

"Since I have personally confirmed that the legend of the 'Demon of Greed', Vulcan, evolving after eating the leaves of the World Tree is true, we demons will definitely find it no matter where it is."

To become stronger!

That one purpose would be enough. For demons, strength was survival. Moreover, most of the demons Esil commanded were low-ranking.

"For the survival of the demon race, not just me, but all demons must become stronger than we are now."

"Then we need to divide the roles." Suho couldn't sacrifice innocent demons to the weeds, so he came up with a strategy.

"The demons will track the scent, and the shadow soldiers will escort you."

"No. We will fight as well. We cannot entrust our survival to others."

"It's a sea there. Do you have wings?"

"...Ah." Esil had forgotten an important point. Looking back, there weren't many demons with wings. As Suho said, even at this moment, the shadow soldiers wandering the Sea of The Afterlife were all winged.

"Then we will fight even if we have to swim..."

"Wait. There's a better way." Having already been to the Sea of The Afterlife twice, Suho brought up the idea he had been thinking about.

"We'll build a ship."

'...!'

Esil's eyes widened at the unexpected words.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

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"Is... Is that possible? To build a ship that floats on the Sea of The Afterlife?"

From Esil's perspective, having just been there, Suho's words were incomprehensible. The Sea of The Afterlife was a spiritual universe where dead souls drifted. Despite its name, it was different from the ordinary sea, existing as a completely different concept. Suho's plan to build and sail a ship in such a place was a notion far beyond her comprehension.

"Would a ship even withstand that place? No matter how strong the materials are, the moment they come into contact with the air there, they will instantly rot." But Suho immediately shattered Esil's concerns.

"The materials are scattered all over the place here, aren't they?"

"...What?" Esil's head turned to follow Suho's gaze. And there...

"Ah!" A gasp escaped her lips.

This was the demon world where the trial had just ended. Thanks to that, the corpses of the 'residents of the gap' that the demons killed were scattered all over the place. Actually, the expression 'killed' was inaccurate. The residents of the gap were completely destroyed and had returned to their original form, 'piles of weeds.' Suho shrugged.

"I fought there myself. I saw them all floating on the Sea of The Afterlife. How about it? Aren't they good enough as materials?"

"..." Esil was speechless with admiration.

Of course... It was enough! These weeds were literally 'lumber' that sprouted and grew in the Sea of The Afterlife!

[Kieeeeeek! As expected, our liege is brilliant! Of course it's possible!] Beru appeared majestically.

He was so proud of Suho that his lips were practically touching his ears, and he clung to Suho's head, stroking it vigorously. He hadn't been this overjoyed since baby Suho first called him 'Anp' Perhaps that was when it all started. Beru began to actively teach Suho Korean. And it was the same now.

Sniffle.

Beru's narrowed eyes gleamed like that of an intellectual and cold-hearted tutor. The 'Explanation Bug' had appeared.

[In fact, when you think about it, there's no race more suitable for traveling the Sea of The Afterlife than demons.]

[Debuff: 'Death']

This curse of death, activated upon entering the Sea of The Afterlife, was the worst hindrance that consumed one's lifespan in real-time. Even just by breathing, a whopping 100 HP was drained every second, and no matter how many potions Suho drank, it only barely slowed that down. Moreover, if he fell into the 'water', the amount and speed of HP drain increased tremendously in proportion to the depth. But this only applied to Suho, a living human.

The Debuff: 'Death' had no effect on the shadow soldiers escorting Suho at that time. The reason was simple. They didn't have HP to lose in the first place. The shadow soldiers, who were already dead souls, maintained their existence with MP, Suho's magic power, not HP. Therefore, they were immortal as long as his magic power remained. They were an immortal army that wouldn't be eroded by the Sea of The Afterlife.

[...But although the principle is different, demons are also a race that isn't eroded by the Sea of The Afterlife!]

Not all things could be compared to the game system, but if he had to find an analogy, the demon race also lived with MP rather than HP. In other words, the demons were fundamentally accustomed to spiritualization. Moreover, weren't they originally the residents of the gap, the souls contaminated by the 'weeds' that grew in the Sea of The Afterlife?

[Tracing back, the Sea of The Afterlife is practically the spiritual homeland of the demon race.] Harmakan also subtly joined in the explanation.

The Demonic Spirits were originally a sinister race that enjoyed experimenting with souls. Numerous wicked ideas were already popping up in his mind as he glanced at the demons gathered here. He licked his lips. Things like the 'evil spirit's armor'.

[Heh. My hands are itching. If you leave it to this Harmakan, I will build the 'demon ship' that you desire, Master. However, it will take some time to construct something that can carry everyone here.] Harmakan was confident that he could build anything as long as he had enough time and materials.

Then, not to be outdone, Beru pushed Harmakan's face aside and added, [My liege, the Demonic Spirits are good, but there's also another race that's perfect for this. And as it happens, this time...]

"I saw them too."

Smirk.

They grinned at each other. He already knew which race Beru was going to point out. People usually couldn't remember everything they saw as babies. But there were fragments of memories that occasionally surfaced. Among the souls of the mixed world that Suho pulled from the Sea of The Afterlife this time, there were a variety of races. Not all of them strong and extraordinary. The truly powerful ones were sinking deeper, rejecting the shadow power because Suho's level was insufficient. But amidst those successfully extracted, there were quite a few races that Suho had seen in his father's shadow world when he was young. For example,

"Bearded dwarves."

Swoosh!

At those words, shadow newcomers appeared from under Suho's feet. Beru's smiling eyes narrowed even further.

[You're exactly right. The bearded dwarf race, although their combat abilities are poor, are blacksmiths with exceptional talent in crafting.]

They saw them having bushy beards overflowing with black energy, those short but sturdy blacksmiths with thick bodies.

[Shadow Dwarf Lv.1]

[Normal Rank]

[Shadow Dwarf Lv.3]

[Normal Rank]

[Shadow Dwarf Lv.1]

[Knight Rank]

[...]

But levels didn't matter for these guys as he wasn't going to make them fight. The shadow dwarves had more fiery personalities than expected. Those with low soldier ranks couldn't speak, but those who could were voicing their opinions one after another.

[Uhaha! You're going to build a ship to sail the Sea of The Afterlife?]

[Kraa! To think I'd be tasked with such an interesting job after dying!]

As soon as they heard Suho's objective, their bushy beards bristled in all directions with burning enthusiasm and fighting spirit. Their eyes sparkled like stars.

[If you're in a hurry, is it really necessary to build it all here?]

[That's right. We have enough materials, so how about building a lot of rafts and setting off right away?]

[We can each ride on a raft and gradually expand it on the Sea of The Afterlife.]

[That's right! If the materials are weeds that grow there, we can procure them on site and grow the ship.]

[Alright! Let's build it right away!]

They rolled up their sleeves in earnest.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

Before he knew it, Suho's plan began to materialize before his eyes through their words and hands.

[Hey, you demons!]

[Stop just standing there and carry this!]

'...?'

[Uh-huh! What are you saving your strength for?! Aren't you going to work?] The demons inadvertently became their assistants and were put to work.

"...But I'm the king." Esil was a little sullen.

She suddenly realized that all the demons who were supposed to serve her as king had become servants of the dwarves. But apart from that, the crafting speed of the shadow dwarves was astonishing.

Saw Saw Saw

[Uhaha! Rafts are a piece of cake!]

[It's just a matter of tying logs together!]

[Master! It's complete!]

Just like that, in the blink of an eye, numerous rafts were completed before Suho.

Ding!

[Crafted Item: 'Raft of the Afterlife'.]

[Acquired: 'Raft of the Afterlife' crafting skill.]

Eventually, a line was added to the [Crafting Skill] section at the very end of Suho's skill window.

[Crafting Skills:]

[Holy Water of Life]

[Raft of the Afterlife]

When Suho looked at the 'Raft of the Afterlife', its description appeared.

[Item: Raft of the Afterlife]

[Acquisition Difficulty: E]

[Type: Mount]

[A crude raft made by weaving weeds that grow in the Sea of The Afterlife.]

[Although its weak defense is a drawback, it is a ship that can move on the Sea of The Afterlife.]

"This really works..." Looking at the last line, it seemed like the plan was a success.

[For now, this should be enough to carry the demons and set off!]

[Let's go see if it actually floats!]

They were so excited that their beards were bristling. The shadow dwarves were eager to see if the ship they built would actually float on the Sea of The Afterlife. But in the meantime, one of them showed a little more enthusiasm than the others.

[Oh my, what should I do with this? I may have worked too hard on it because I had time left.]

Ding!

[Crafted Item: 'Rowboat of the Afterlife'.]

['Raft of the Afterlife' crafting skill is upgraded to 'Rowboat of the Afterlife'.]

[Uhaha! It's nothing much! I just made one to show you how we're going to gradually expand these rafts later.]

"...!"

The other shadow dwarves glared at that sycophant who was flattering Suho while stroking his beard. His excuse was plausible, but anyone could see that he was just trying to show off! Who couldn't build a rowboat and had to make crude rafts? Wasn't the purpose to make as many as possible! The shadow dwarves gritted their teeth at that flatterer and continued their explanation to Suho.

[Anyway, we'll build a bigger and sturdier ship on the Sea of The Afterlife like that.]

[To start, one of our kind and ten demons to use as workers are enough to put on a raft.]

[And until our ship has its own attack and defense capabilities, you can put soldiers in charge of combat on board.]

[Once the warship is complete, even that won't be necessary. Ah, should we also make cannons for the warship?]

3

The moment someone suddenly mentioned 'cannons', Harmakan appeared as if he had been waiting.

[If it's cannons for the demons to use, this servant of yours has already taken care of it.]

Flash—!

Harmakan spread his palms and unfolded a sinister magic circle.

[Hellsteel. A hard metal imbued with magic that can only be found in the demon world.] He wasn't just playing around while the shadow dwarves were building the rafts. He was fulfilling his own ambitions behind the scenes to gain favor with Suho.

[Using this Hellsteel, we can create cannons that gather and fire the magic power of the demon race, Master.]

Flash!

[Harmakan crafted Item: 'Demon Cannon'.]

[Well, it's just a trivial skill. Heh.]

An invisible battle of nerves unfolded between Harmakan and the shadow dwarves. Watching them, Suho suddenly had a good idea.

"Ah, wait. Then, if that's the case..." Suho took out 'Kamish's Wrath' and showed them to the shadow dwarves, asking,

"Can you guys fix this dagger too?"

'...!'

At that moment. The beards of all the shadow dwarves who saw Kamish's Wrath bristled.

[A sword made from dragon's tooth?!]

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



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[Item: Kamish's Wrath (Damaged)]

[Acquisition Difficulty: ??]

[Type: Dagger]

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

[S-such a precious treasure...!]

[...It's damaged—!]

The shadow dwarves trembled with shock and horror, their beards quivering. The most joyous and heartbreaking moments of their lives happened simultaneously.

[To think I would see a weapon made from a dragon's tooth in my lifetime!]

[I finally got to see such a beautiful treasure after death! I'm glad I died! It's an honor to my family!]

[But how many fierce battles did you go through with this to dull the blade so badly?!]

The beards of the shadow dwarves, talking all at once, fluttered. It was truly amazing. For ordinary dwarves who weren't part of the Shadow Army, crafting something with dragon teeth would have been something only possible in their wildest dreams. Where and how would they even get dragon teeth in the first place? It wasn't like a passing dragon would generously pull out its fangs and give them away. Perhaps the only time dwarves could see dragon teeth in their lives was right before being devoured by one. But... Those ferocious things had actually appeared before their eyes. And even in the form of well-crafted daggers.

[Khahaha! Magnificent! Truly magnificent!]

[Even with the blade dulled like this, the sharpness is outstanding! This is a dragon's tooth...!]

[Kieek! Enough with the chatter!] Beru's shout made the shadow dwarves come to their senses.

"So, can you fix it?" When Suho asked again, they eagerly offered their opinions.

[Of course we can!]

[If the blade is dull, we just need to sharpen it again!]

[However, a dragon's tooth won't be sharpened with an ordinary whetstone.]

[We need a hard whetstone!]

[If you bring us a material harder than a dragon's tooth, we will do our best to repair it!]
Suho had a confused expression at their words.

"...A material harder than dragon teeth? If there's something like that, can't I just use it to fight?"

[Haha, you misunderstand.]

[Not everything hard can be made into a weapon.]

[The harder it is, the easier it is to break. But this dragon's tooth is hard, doesn't break, and has good mana sensitivity...!] The bearded dwarves were once again noisily praising the weapon.

Beru clicked his tongue and advised, [They're like this... Always so noisy, but they're excellent blacksmiths that can create anything if given the time and materials. And it just so happens that I know a material harder than a dragon's tooth.] Beru had been

following Sung Jinwoo for a long time and had seen countless times how the blacksmiths of the army repaired his weapons and created stronger ones.

"There's a material harder than dragon teeth?"

[Yes. There are many, but the easiest one to obtain now would be dragon bones.]

"Ah."

Come to think of it, it was a very simple principle. Dragon's teeth and bones were fundamentally the same material. If they used harder bones from different parts, it would be possible to sharpen the dulled blade of 'Kamish's Wrath.' The shadow dwarves were delighted at those words.

[Ooh! Do you have dragon bones, Master?!]

[Kraa, as expected! Our Master is an amazing person!]

"No, not me, my mother has them." Suho, the unfilial son, suddenly wondered how his mother was doing.

* * *

A while later.

Flash—

[The King of Demons, the Monarch of Gluttony, enters Gate: 'Sea of The Afterlife'.]

A sticky, pitch-black sky, a boundless expanse of melting darkness.

Splash.

A small raft was launched onto it.

[Row!] The shadow dwarf's command fell behind Esil. And the ten demons who boarded the raft together split into two sides and began to row vigorously.

Splash—

As the raft finally cut through the sticky black water and moved forward, the shadow dwarf cheered.

[Alright! It's a success!] The raft he built had successfully begun sailing on the Sea of The Afterlife!

[Oh, King of Demons! Choosing my raft over that shabby rowboat was a wise decision.]

The shadow dwarf approached the captain of this ship, Esil, who was silently staring ahead, and subtly flattered her. He was extremely pleased that She chose his raft over the upgraded version, the 'Rowboat of the Afterlife.' The shadow dwarf gritted his teeth as he thought of his despicable kin who built the rowboat just to gain favor with the master.

[The rowboat might seem much sturdier now, but in the long run, it's right to start with a raft. Because if you start with a wide base, you can build a much larger ship later.]

"..."

[You're a quiet one, aren't you?] The shadow dwarf was embarrassed as he received no response from Esil.

"..."

Esil hadn't said a word since entering the Sea of The Afterlife, just staring straight ahead.

Breathe in — Breathe out. She quietly inhaled and exhaled.

Debuff: 'Death'

As expected the death energy flowing in the Sea of The Afterlife didn't harm the demons, just as Beru said. '...It really feels like I've come home.'

This sticky, ominous air wasn't 'death' to demons. Rather, it made them feel a cozy sensation as if they had returned to the time before they were born. Not only Esil, but also the ten demons who followed her felt the same way. However there was a fine line between 'cozy' and 'dizzy.'

Splash—

This was the abyss. Unknown ripples were appearing here and there on the black surface. The creatures had already noticed the demon's arrival.

"Good." Esil finally smiled. The smirk of the one who became the Demon King shone white in the abyss.

Splash—!

[It's the weeds!] With the shadow dwarf's cry, numerous weeds sprang up from the sea around the raft. And hideous tentacles stretched out from all directions to grab the demons, clinging to the raft.

[They're trying to destroy the ship! Stop them!] The shadow dwarf fussed.

But the demons didn't rush. They were all survivors who endured the trial. And Esil was their king.

"We've confirmed that the ship floats. So..."

Swish.

Esil raised one hand to the sky and commanded, "All demons. Gather before me." The King of Demons was here, and wherever the king was, that was the demon world.

"Hell's Army."

Flash! Flash! Flash—!

Hundreds of magic circles were created simultaneously around Esil's raft, which was under attack by the weeds. Those formations forcibly twisted the dimensional wall and summoned all the demons who pledged allegiance to the king to the Sea of The Afterlife.

...Flash!

Through those Gates, countless rafts appeared all at once.

Kikekekek—!

Rafts of the Afterlife, each carrying ten demons. The weeds, witnessing that amazing sight, cheered and shook their tentacles. A terrible hunger welled up. Unable to bear that greed, the weeds stretched out their tentacles without hesitation. It was only natural. No matter how many demons there were, would they be more numerous than the weeds here...? Besides, the demons didn't seem that strong individually. But...

There weren't just demons on the rafts. There was one shadow dwarf on each and there were also escorts to protect them until the raft grew larger.

Whoosh—!

The black shadows crouching on the raft stretched out in all directions, numerous creepy legs touched the ground and rose. A massive body the size of a house with dozens of eyes, a hideous mouth and a pair of giant pincers. Its identity was none other than the boss monster that Suho defeated and extracted in the Sanctuary of the Fang Monarch.

'Tomb Spider Arachne'

Among the creatures Suho retrieved from the Sea of The Afterlife this time, there were many spiritual bodies of magical beasts that were the same race. And they were some even stronger individuals than Arachne.

[Shadow Spider Lv.1]

[Elite Rank]

[Shadow Spider Lv.1]

[Elite Rank]

[Shadow Spider Lv.1]

[Elite Rank]

[...]

[Kraaaaaaaaaa*—!]

Splash— Slash! Slash!

Black spider webs spread out from the raft in all directions like a net.

[Alright! Sweep up all the materials! We need self-sufficiency!]

[The corner of the raft is torn! Wrap the ship tightly with spider webs!]

[As expected, it's perfect as an adhesive!]

The shadow dwarves were very excited. The demons' raft that appeared on the vast sea began to grow larger and larger.

* * *

The Tomb Berserk Dragons.

In the middle of wasteland, where gray ashes were fluttering, the ribs of dragons that died during the war were buried.

"Cha Hae-In." Cha Hae-In, sitting blankly on the giant dragon bone, turned her head at Sirka's sudden call.

"We have contact from Suho."

"From my son?" Cha Hae-In's eyes sparkled as she brushed back her messy hair and replied.

[The King of the Snow Folk, the Monarch of Frost, uses Skill: 'Echo'.]

Sirka, the descendant of Sillad, could communicate with the dead Monarch through 'prayer.' But despite calling it prayer, its actual use was more like a direct phone line to Suho.

[The King of the Snow Folk, the Monarch of Frost, grumbles about the lack of respect for one's ancestors.]

"...Anyway, so Suho needs the dragon bones here?"

"Hmm." Cha Hae-In and Sirka, having learned about Suho's situation through Sillad, looked around with slightly awkward expressions.

"...Will this be enough?"

"I wonder."

The dragon bones that had been left in this desolate land for a long time were severely decayed due to the aftermath of the war and the passage of time. Perhaps even more so than 'Kamish's Wrath,' which Suho used as a weapon. If the goal was to sharpen the blade, it seemed like these bones would be ground down first.

"But just in case, shall we look for the most intact ones?"

"Let's do that. It's good timing since we have nothing to do."

4

Cha Hae-In and Sirka were still in the Tomb Berserk Dragons because the shadow wyvern, Kaisel needed to recover. As a result of that, they were receiving the necessary supplies from outside the Gate and leisurely enjoying camping in the middle of this desolate dimension. But camping should have good scenery; in reality, it was more like staying in outdoor lodgings.

Yawn—

Kaisel, who had been curled up and sleeping next to them, suddenly stretched and spread his black wings wide as they energetically got up. But his size...

"Huh?"

"Oh."

Cha Hae-In and Sirka's eyes suddenly sparkled. Kaisei had grown tremendously! A smile appeared on their lips.

"With this, we can bring them ourselves."

The gift for her son, whom she hadn't seen in a long time, was decided to be dragon bones.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 254 - Chapter 252

Chapter 254: Chapter 252

"Whoa! Wh-what is all this?!" Lim Dogyoon couldn't help but exclaim in shock.

Thud—Thud—

Countless porters were bringing in a mountain of gifts into the Woojin Guild office right before his eyes. Yoo Jinho, the CEO, smugly wiped his nose in front of the ever-growing pile of presents.

"Heh. I pulled some strings." It had been a while since he felt this way. Yoo Jinho, setting aside his usual calm and intellectual CEO image for today, was fully enjoying the memories of his younger days.

He couldn't help it. Seeing Sung Suho and Lim Dogyoon running the guild together in this office he prepared naturally overlapped with his own youth spent with Sung Jinwoo and the Ahjin Guild. So, seeing Lim Dogyoon, who was left alone in the office and taking care of things while Sung Suho was away on important business, made him feel a sense of camaraderie.

"Speaking of which, Vice President Lim Dogyoon?"

"Y-yes!"

"Keep your mouth shut and just listen. I'll give you a brief overview of the current situation."

"- - -!" Lim Dogyoon, standing at attention at Yoo Jinho's words, hurriedly pretended to zip his mouth shut. To receive a briefing directly from a remarkable person like CEO Yoo Jinho, without going through anyone else! This wasn't just a simple matter.

'Embargo!' It meant that it was a confidential and important issue that Yoo Jinho had to address personally.

"First, let's start with what you already know. The national vote was confirmed as expected." There were no surprises. Suho's entry into North Korea was finally decided.

But the repercussions were enormous. All the media, from the political to the economic sections, were in a frenzy.

- (Breaking News) Hunter Sung Suho's decision to enter North Korea!

- (News) S-rank Hunters' declaration of full cooperation!

- (Urgent) International Hunter Association's political cooperation begins!

- (Politics) The president expresses his position to provide supplies to Association President Woo Jinchul through this opportunity!

While Suho was exploring the Sea of The Afterlife with Seo Jinwoo and sending the demons on rafts to search for the World Tree, Many things were happening outside the Gate. Yoo Jinho was moving to help Suho in his own way. He resolved all the political and economic issues that were entangled with his entry into North Korea. By any means necessary...

"Remember this." Finishing his explanation, CEO Yoo Jinho's sharp gaze pierced Lim Dogyoon's eyes.

"If Suho wields a sword and defeats countless magical beasts, people like us have to use everything we have to take care of all the other miscellaneous tasks. This is a matter of speed." Yoo Jinho knew it well.

"If you're slow, you fall behind." To keep up with the speed at which people like Sung Jinwoo and Sung Suho were getting stronger, they had to support them at a tremendous pace.

"If you fall behind even for a moment, unnecessary miscellaneous tasks will pile up like bad stock and eventually hold Suho back. And if his growth is slowed down by troublesome things, for example international law or public opinion like this time, it will lead to a global loss and a crisis for Earth."

"...!" Lim Dogyoon fully understood what Yoo Jinho, the veteran of support, was saying.

True support wasn't done from behind, but from the front! It wasn't simply following behind, but clearing the path ahead that Suho wanted to take! That was the true role of the pillar supporting Woojin Guild, the vice president.

"In that sense, these are the gifts I personally squeezed out of the S-rank Hunters. The news is saying it's full cooperation, but in reality, it's full-scale extortion."

"...!" Ah, so it is an embargo! Lim Dogyoon ended up learning a tremendous truth that the public didn't know.

'This is the tyranny of a large corporation! A righteous bully...!'

Snap

"I'm going to do an unboxing now." Yoo Jinho's hands were covered with white gloves made of luxurious material. And with delicate movements like a tech YouTuber, he began to open the gifts that the porters had left one by one. Lim Dogyoon felt like he was going blind from the shiny lights leaking from within.

"Crazy." He could tell it was expensive equipment at a glance. Lim Dogyoon's jaw dropped.

"I-Is this the new longsword 'Callion' released by Mayas? And this is the Royal Series shield made by Master Gredos?!"

Smirk. A satisfied smile appeared on Yoo Jinho's lips.

"Yes. You know your weapons. A masterpiece transcends time and history."

Memories were faint... In an era that no one remembered now. Even in that forgotten history, there were luxury brands recognized by all Hunters. And there were genius master craftsmen who personally crafted those items. Decades later, a world where they once again fought magical beasts with primitive weapons like swords and shields had arrived, but there was a clear difference from that time. Humanity's scientific power.

'Even though the master craftsmen have aged, technology has advanced many times over. This means that we can create much more delicate and durable weapons with the same materials.' Yoo Jinho smiled with satisfaction, feeling that it was worth squeezing the large guilds as much as possible.

"H-how much is all this...?"

"Roughly 10 billion won, I guess."

"Gasp."

"Why are you so surprised? There are still items that haven't arrived yet."

"...!" Lim Dogyoon was shocked.

Expensive weapons made using magic stones and valuable materials worth hundreds of millions of won. These were treasures of tremendous value that could make a C-rank Hunter B-rank or higher, and a B-rank Hunter A-rank.

"But will Suho take all of this to North Korea and use it?"

"You can never have too many weapons. Even if Suho doesn't use them himself, it will be a great help just by equipping his soldiers with them."

"Ah, as expected...!"

As expected from the head of a company. CEO Yoo Jinho's thoughts were on a different scale. He wondered why there were so many weapons, but the plan was to arm not only Suho, but the entire army he led!

"Besides, being expensive doesn't matter as long as they can protect Suho's precious life, even if he needs to use them as disposables. We can't provide any supplies once he crosses into North Korea. We need to make thorough preparations before departure..."

[Kieek! What a great mindset!] Beru, who appeared just in time, grinned wickedly. As expected, he was taking care of things without even being asked! It was worth restoring his memories. Yoo Jinho suddenly handed Beru the smallest box among the numerous gifts and said,

"Especially this. It was really hard to find..."

[Kiek?] Beru's eyes narrowed in satisfaction as he recognized the item. It was really worth restoring his memories.

* * *

The front line.

'Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)' This place, which once served as the border between South and North Korea Was an area known as the 'last paradise for wild animals on the Korean Peninsula' because it had been untouched by human hands for over 100 years. Hence the nicknames 'primeval forest' or 'natural forest.'

"...Originally, this place had countless landmines buried under the grass." Soldiers greeted Suho, as he arrived at the front line.

"The DMZ was a place where civilian access was strictly prohibited, surrounded by numerous landmines and barbed wire fences. But now it's prohibited for a completely different reason."

Kyaaa—!

Kraaaaaaaaaa—!

In short, beyond the barbed wire fence was a wasteland.

"That day, all the landmines here exploded simultaneously." Captain Kim, who had been serving on the front line for five years, swallowed dryly as he recalled the horrific events of 'that day.'

"To put it bluntly, the landmines didn't kill the magical beasts, but only enraged them. As a result... the sky was torn, and the earth split open." This was no exaggeration. Suho followed Captain Kim's gaze beyond the barbed wire fence.

"If we were to classify the types of magical beasts, they were 'spirits'."

Spirits.

Beings he had seen once in Sillad's sanctuary. Only ice spirits lived there, but the types of spirits that rampaged beyond this barbed wire fence were diverse.

"The rampaging spirits caused earthquakes and flooded the boiling river. Some areas froze over, and in other places, trees sprouted from the cracked earth, forming a rainforest."

"The terrain itself has changed."

"Yes. Beyond this barbed wire fence... is literally hell. It makes us think it's fortunate that the two Koreas weren't unified before." Captain Kim let out a small sigh.

As he explained, a wide river, as vast as the sea, flowed in front of the barbed wire fence leading to North Korea. Although he had been serving here for several years, it was a sight that never ceased to amaze him. The outside of the fence was so ordinary, but just a few steps beyond, a river was flowing, boiling with terrible heat like lava. Even at this moment, the sea was ordinarily flowing along the east-west direction of the Korean Peninsula. But the river in this area, covered in blue mist, was boiling.

'It's much worse than I thought.' Suho had seen this bizarre phenomenon several times before.

'Void Gate' A dimensional gap created by the overlapping and intertwining of numerous dungeons. This place was no longer just a field-type dungeon; it was practically a double dungeon on an enormous scale, dangerously dangerous.

"It's a miracle that people in our country can still live peacefully despite this area existing on the Korean Peninsula, even though there were no casualties because it was originally uninhabited land." And that miracle was created by the efforts of one man. Woo Jinchul.

"If Association President Woo Jinchul hadn't sent Hunters with numerous protection skills at the right time, our country would have probably become like North Korea. At least up to the Han River." Captain Kim, having finished his explanation, suddenly sensed the atmosphere surrounding Suho. The gazes of the soldiers guarding the barbed wire fence were all focused on him.

'I told them to be polite. These guys really...' Captain Kim smiled bitterly, guessing the soldiers' thoughts. The emotions mixed in the gazes of the soldiers who had been guarding this place for two years were diverse, but they could be summarized in one sentence.

'So what can you do?'

The soldiers knew the reality of this place better than anyone. There was nothing an ordinary human could do in the face of this disaster-like phenomenon. Even when the great Association President Woo Jinchul and the strongest Hunter, Choi Jong-In, came, it was the same. The only thing they accomplished was reducing the number of magical beasts coming down south. Of course, that alone was a remarkable achievement. As a result, South Korea was safe, wasn't it? But that was all. They succeeded in reducing the number of magical beasts, but they ultimately failed to restore the Demilitarized Zone, which had turned into a wasteland, to its original state. It was only natural, because this place had already been 'eroded.'

"Beyond this, everything has already turned into the land of spirits. I don't know if you've ever fought spirits, but they not only cause weather changes..."

Rumble— Crash!

Lightning struck the boiling river water. Unpredictable weather changes. And...

Kyaooooo—!

"...Spirits directly possess wild animals and plants, creating mutant magical beasts. Tree-type magical beasts, large animals, even insects too small to be seen have turned into magical beasts. In short, this place is a land where nature itself has been completely transformed into magical beasts." Captain Kim wanted to give Suho, who came to go to North Korea, a strong warning. To be honest, he wanted to dissuade him.

He couldn't understand why a young man with a bright future would volunteer to go to such a dangerous place.

'If you were lucky enough to awaken as an S-rank Hunter, you should just stay in the south and rake in money...'

'It's recklessness.'

'It's bravado.'

From the soldiers' perspective, Suho's decision to come to this dangerous place of his own free will, was incomprehensible. But they wouldn't ever dream that Captain Kim's explanation, which was meant to caution Suho, was actually motivating him.

"That's good timing."

[The King of Beasts, the Fang Monarch, drools at the mention of many beasts.]

[The Queen of Insects, the Plague Monarch, smacks her lips at the fact that there are many insects.]

Along with the excited reactions of the Monarchs, Suho also had a triumphant smile. Nidhogg, the serpent that gnaws at the World Tree. To face that powerful creature again, he needed to defeat the remaining six heads first. And the way to do that was to have the other successors properly inherit the Primordial Darkness, just like Esil.

'I'll have to help Arsha and Gray grow this time.'

Crash!

But was it his imagination? There was too much lightning. And on top of the hot air coming from the river, he felt a chill.

"Uwaak!"

"Emergency! Emergency!"

The soldiers guarding the outpost suddenly started screaming and making a fuss.

Wooooooo—! The emergency siren sounded.

"The sky!"

"Look at the sky!"

The soldiers' horrified gazes were pointing overhead.

Crackle! Crash!

Along with the thunder and lightning, a magical beast with giant wings was descending from the sky.

"A giant magical beast has appeared!"

"Gather all the Hunters!" Captain Kim also panicked and grabbed his walkie-talkie at the sudden situation. But Suho was blankly looking up at the sky...

"Calm down. It's okay."

He quietly stopped the soldier and said, With a slightly embarrassed expression, "That's just my mother."

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 255 - Chapter 253

Chapter 255: Chapter 253

Suddenly, all hell broke loose.

WEEEEEE—!

Wail!

Waaaaaaaail—!

Chaos erupted simultaneously across Korea.

"...What's going on?"

"What's happening?"

Emergency alert messages flooded everyone's cell phones. And...

Whoosh—

'...!'

Black shadow loomed over people walking on the streets. Pedestrians looked up at the sky without prompting, and gasped in shock...

"Holy crap."

"What is that?!"

SWOOSH—!

Was it an airplane?

A fighter jet?

No.

KIAAAAAAAAAAAAA—!

"M-magical beast?!"

"It's a flying magical beast!"

Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

People's eyes widened. Screams erupted everywhere. A giant monster with large wings! It was flying over the city at terrifying speed, leaving a black trail!

— (Breaking News) Magical beast appears over Seoul?

— (Urgent) Where is the flying magical beast headed?

— (Important) The Hunter Association fails to respond. What about the citizens' safety?

Pictures of the black wyvern flooded portal sites in an instant. Even in that short time, someone must have chased its trail and frantically pressed the camera button on their phone. Fortunately, contrary to concerns, there were no casualties. The magical beast just flew past overhead at high speed. But this wasn't something that could be ignored. Even before the flying magical beast arrived on the Korean Peninsula, emergency alarms were ringing in all Hunter guilds and the Hunter Association in Korea.

"It's a magical beast attack!"

"The type is a dragon! Presumed to be specialized in flight!"

"It's charging straight towards the Korean Peninsula!"

It was like watching the Korea Meteorological Administration right before a typhoon. But the speed of that typhoon was way too fast.

"Find a way to stop it before it arrives!"

"It's flying too high!"

"It's too risky to have Hunters fight it over the sea!"

"How about shooting it down with a surface-to-air missile!"

"Even if we hit it with a missile, it will be difficult to damage the magical beast!"

"Who doesn't know that?! At least try to slow it down!"

"At this speed, it will arrive on the Korean Peninsula before government approval is granted!"

There was simply no way. If they recklessly fired missiles over the city to shoot down the magical beast, it was clear that only the citizens would be put at risk.

"It seems like we can only respond once it lands!"

"There's no chance of it just passing by, right?"

"It has already arrived!"

"Damn it! Chase it now!"

The moment the black wyvern arrived at the Korean Peninsula, All the Hunters and the Association rushed out with their weapons, as if on cue.

"Which direction?!"

"N-north!"

"Let's go!"

Towards the north, following the black trail! But it wasn't a problem that could be solved by just anyone chasing after it.

"Only A-rank or higher should follow!"

"I want support from B-rank Healers or higher!"

The opponent was a wyvern. A dragon, no less.

"At least A-rank! At this absurd speed, it's highly likely to be an S-rank magical beast!"

"If it's a magical beast specialized in flight, there's a chance its combat power is only A-rank!" It was a moment where everyone had to join forces, regardless of guilds.

"Contact the Association! Tell them to send an emergency alert to all nearby Hunters! It's a dragon raid!"

Dragon raid. The weight of that name was truly terrifying. They could only hope that there would be no casualties until the raid was safely over.

"I'll go myself!" As expected, the White Tiger Guild, which prioritized the safety of citizens, was the fastest to respond. Baek Yoonho gritted his teeth and unleashed his magic power.

'Beast Transformation'

Whoosh—

White fur covered his entire body. A pure white trail was drawn as he ran down the road with all his might. At this rate, there might be news about a white magical beast appearing in the middle of the city. But Baek Yoonho didn't care about anything.

SWOOSH—!

He gritted his teeth. The reason he was in a hurry wasn't just for the citizens' safety, but also...

'It's the direction where Miho is!'

The place where the black trail led happened to be where Baek Miho went early in the morning for an important event. Sung Suho's entry into North Korea! She was close to the Association, because she was tasked with escorting the cargo truck carrying the supplies that the government prepared for Association President Woo Jinchul. Since there were a lot of supplies and many valuable pieces of equipment, she went to support the Association in case of any unexpected situations. But an unknown magical beast was flying towards that very place?

'Could this be a coincidence? No way!' Baek Yoonho trusted his instincts. When he was a firefighter, How many lives had he saved with this sharp sense?

'Miho! Please be safe! Dad will be there soon!'

Growl—

The speed at which Baek Yoonho ran through the city, his white mane fluttering, was dazzling.

People, roads, cars, buildings, rivers, trees, mountains, mountains, mountains.

The scenery that passed by him changed endlessly in an instant. This was the full speed of an S-rank Hunter trying to save his daughter's life.

Thud—!

He finally arrived. Before any other Hunter.

'Demilitarized Zone'

Rumble! Crash!

The bubbling river with thunderbolts striking above it.

"...Miho!" Baek Yoonho roared. At the same time, a sharp light gleamed in the eyes of the beast as he quickly scanned the surroundings. Looking for his daughter, Baek Miho. And traces of the black wyvern that flew here.

'Found it!' It was the black wyvern!

Just then, a ferocious magical beast accompanied by white frost and lightning was landing in front of the barbed wire fence. To stop that one creature, non-Awakened soldiers were surrounding it, risking their lives... and standing awkwardly.

'...Huh?'

KIAAAAAAM—!

Flinch!

The black wyvern suddenly opened its mouth wide and yawned languidly. In case it breathed fire, Baek Yoonho instinctively jumped to the side. And he found Baek Miho, who was standing in front of a nearby truck, and blocked her.

"Miho! Dad's here...!" Just then, other Hunters who arrived a short while after Baek Yoonho also gathered.

"Here!"

"We found the wyvern!"

The proud Hunters who protected Korea. Even though they usually bickered due to their competitive spirit, they all united in times when the safety of citizens was at stake.

"Everyone, battle formation!"

"Hunter Baek Yoonho is here too!"

"It's Hunter Baek!"

Without even taking a breath, everyone naturally formed a formation around the S-rank. The Hunters, witnessing the true form of the black wyvern, surrounded it with determined expressions. But...

Groan...

'...?'

Something was strange. Despite being surrounded by Hunters and soldiers in an instant, the black wyvern was calm. As if stretching, it spread its giant wings wide, then folded them neatly and curled up its body. And then it respectfully (?) gathered its hideous front paws and prostrated itself on the ground.

'What the...'

Gulp.

While everyone swallowed dryly, Two people gracefully stepped down from the wyvern's back.

Thud.

At that moment, everyone's eyes were filled with a mixture of puzzlement and shock. Those two people were... Cha Hae-In and Sirka, whose faces weren't even properly captured on camera because the wyvern was too fast.

"Uh... should we have flown higher?" Sirka muttered awkwardly and looked at her friend's face. Cha Hae-In had a very apologetic expression as she looked at the people surrounding them.

"S-sorry! I thought no one would see us at that height!" Cha Hae-In hurriedly bowed and apologized, her face flushed red.

Was it because the only flying she had ever done was in the world of ice elves with blizzards? She had an expression that said she had caused the biggest disturbance of her life. But it didn't matter what Cha Hae-In said, the Hunters gathered here couldn't hear anything.

"Oh-oh my god..." The shield held in someone's hand dropped to the ground.

"The wyvern..."

"The dragon..."

"Brought people?"

Rumble! Crash!

Everyone froze at the shocking sight that defied common sense. But then. Baek Yoonho, the only S-rank Hunter here and the oldest...

"W-wait. Could you be..."

While everyone was in a panic, only he recognized Cha Hae-In's face. No, there was no way he wouldn't recognize her. The last time he saw Cha Hae-In was about 20 years ago. That is... When he went to the wedding of his respected senior's, Sung Il-Hwan's, son. She was the bride that day. But that wasn't the problem. Even before going to that wedding, Baek Yoonho had known Cha Hae-In's face very well for a long time. No, the whole country knew her. Because she was someone no Korean could ever forget.

"...Athlete Cha Hae-In?!" Baek Yoonho finally exclaimed her name.

The idol of the track and field world. Olympic gold medalist. As a pure Asian, she officially broke the 9-second barrier and set a new world record. The global sports star born in Korea. 'Cha Hae-In'

"...What?! That Cha Hae-In?" While everyone was shocked,

Click.

Click.

The shutters of the reporters' cameras gathered to cover Sung Suho's entry into North Korea clicked. Towards Cha Hae-In, who appeared like a comet riding a black wyvern.

* * *

The sudden wyvern incident that swept across the Korean Peninsula ended as a brief nuisance. But an even more shocking incident that would fill people with dopamine flooded the internet.

— (Breaking News) The shocking identity of the Awakened who appeared riding a wyvern!

– (Urgent) Cha Hae-In! What is the ex national athlete's rank?

The comment section exploded as well.

– But who is that Cha Hae-In anyway?

– Tsk tsk, kids these days.

– How fleeting time is.

– How can you not know Cha Hae-In?

– Well, I guess teenagers weren't around back then. I really feel the generation gap.

– It can't be helped. It's already been 20 years since Cha Hae-In retired.

– Wow, but she still looks beautiful even though she's 20 years older.

– Do you not age if you run fast?

– No, she's become even more elegant.

– So who is Cha Hae-In!?

– If you ask who she is... One could say the brightest star. In terms of career, she's someone who achieved everything a track and field athlete could and retired.

As if answering the comments from teenagers, information about Cha Hae-In soon began to fill the news.

– (Information) Former national athlete Cha Hae-In's awards record

– (Information) Gold medalist Cha Hae-In's athletic career

– (Information) Cha Hae-In after retirement

– (Information) National pride, the living legend, Bright Hae-In

– Related searches: #Cha Hae-In, #Bright Hae-In, #Olympics, #100m sprint, #Track and field athlete, #Gold medalist, #World record

Even though it's been 20 years, 'Cha Hae-in' is still a true sports star from Korea. But as time passed, she was forgotten by the people because after retirement, she chose to live an ordinary life rather than being a celebrity or entertainer. Her daily life thereafter was kept completely confidential. Countless paparazzi tried to cover Cha Hae-In's life after retirement, but no one had succeeded yet. It was said that she had such skilled

bodyguards that even the few pictures they managed to take were all obscured by black shadows. Moreover, since Cha Hae-In didn't even use social media, the mystery surrounding her deepened. In the end, When people recalled Cha Hae-In's last appearance it was the interview video from the day she announced her retirement.

– ...As a senior who is retiring, could you share any special training methods for your juniors?

– Hmm. Well. I don't think my method will work for everyone. I just... ran hard to try and beat my boyfriend at least once, and before I knew it, I had set a new world record.

– Ah, you said your boyfriend is an ordinary public official, right? I've heard many interviews about how he always motivates you.

– Haha...

The announcer smiled softly at Cha Hae-In's humble smile, still awkward in front of the camera despite being so famous.

– Then now that you've set a new world record, you must have beaten your boyfriend.

– Yes, I won. Just once. It was a fluke, though.

– You're so humble.

The announcer's smile deepened at Cha Hae-In's simple smile, who was cutely proud of herself while still being conscious of the camera. This simplicity was her charm. A living legend who never lost her beginner's mind and remained humble despite her tremendous achievements.

– Anyway, it's a shame that you're already retiring. But since you've set a new world record... What are your plans for the future?"

– Since I won. I should get married.

– '...!'

The shocking interview video where she announced her marriage along with her retirement. At that moment, men across the country were determined to find out who that person was. But the identity of that ordinary man, a public official, remained a secret. And according to a source close to them, the couple was solely focused on raising their child. All that was conveyed was that their only wish was for their child to live an ordinary life, a simple dream.

* * *

"...This river looks too hot and dangerous. Mom will give you a ride."

"Ah, thank you, Mother."

KIAAAAAAAAAAAAA—!

...That wasn't ordinary at all.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 256 - Chapter 254

Chapter 256: Chapter 254

'What?!' Those who heard the seemingly ordinary conversation between mother and son were simultaneously struck with shock.

"D-Did he just call Cha Hae-In 'mother'?"

"Hunter Sung Suho... is Cha Hae-In's son?!"

A series of surprises. It felt like their brains were being melted by the overload of information. The fact that 'Cha Hae-In,' who was said to be living an ordinary life, suddenly appeared riding a black dragon was already a huge incident. But now, it was revealed that she was the mother of Hunter Sung Suho, who was the hottest topic in Korea until this morning.

'This is a scoop!'

'A scoop like this is a first-come, first-served battle!'

Flash! Flash! Flash! Flash! Flash! Flash—!

The reporters began frantically taking photos, keeping an eye on each other. To capture the image of Sung Suho and Cha Hae-In facing each other, with the giant black dragon curled up in the background, faster than anyone else.

Click Click Click Click—!

At the same time, their fingers spread this tremendous news to the public at an incredible speed.

- (Shocking Two-Shot) Hunter Sung Suho's birth secret revealed!

- (Exclusive) Cha Hae-In's son, Sung Suho!

The news spread incredibly fast. And the public, already focused on the black dragon, reacted with shock in real-time.

- What??

- Sung Suho is Cha Hae-In's son?!

- This is crazy. Truly crazy!

- (Meme) Sung Suho + Cha Hae-In two-shot, comparison image

- Wow. They really look alike.

- Seeing them side by side like this, he really takes after his mother!

- I can see Cha Hae-In in Sung Suho's features!

1

- No, really? How did we not notice this until now?

- Cha Hae-In was active 20 years ago?

- Wait, then how old is Cha Hae-In now?

- That face belongs to the mother of a son in his early 20s? Not an older sister?

- Did she even age?!

Cha Hae-in, who appeared after 20 years, looked so good that one would think she was in her 30s.

4

It was even more amazing when people saw her next to Sung Suho, who was in his early 20s and compared them to each other.

- They really do look alike.

- If it weren't for Sung Suho's slightly sharper jawline and eyes, he would be a carbon copy of his mother.
- Maybe his eyes resemble his father? I'm really curious about his father's face now.
- Looking at Sung Suho's eyes, his father must be really handsome.
- Well, there's no way Bright Hae-In would have married an ordinary man.
- Was it his looks?
- Yes! I knew something was up when she suddenly said she was marrying an ordinary public official!

The reaction was heated. No matter how much the river beyond the barbed wire fence bubbled like lava, the public's interest after hearing the news far surpassed that heat. Perhaps there was no other day as rewarding in the lives of reporters as today. Because the scoop wasn't over yet.

"Ms. Cha Hae-In. I apologize for interrupting..." Just then, a man suddenly intervened between Sung Suho and Cha Hae-In.

"I am Team Leader Han Jaehyuk of the Hunter Association."

As it happened, the Association staff were here to transport the supplies to be delivered to Association President Woo Jinchul. Team Leader Han Jaehyuk borrowed a magic power measuring device from the military unit here and politely handed it to Cha Hae-In.

"Looking at the records, it seems you haven't registered as a Hunter yet. If you have Awakened, could I request a magic power measurement?"

"Ah..."

'...!'

Everyone's ears perked up. Seeing the numerous reporters' eyes sparkling, Team Leader Han Jaehyuk carefully spoke again,

"Of course, if you find this situation uncomfortable, you can do it another day. If you want it to be private, we can arrange that. But it's difficult to allow you to take your son, Hunter Sung Suho, across this barbed wire fence on this black dragon..." Team Leader Han Jaehyuk had to choose his words carefully.

In fact, it was quite rude to publicly request a Hunter's personal information in a place with so many reporters. Especially since the person in question was Cha Hae-In, who was admired and supported by the entire nation. But the Association couldn't help it.

"To enter North Korea, you must go through a national vote, just like your son, Hunter Sung Suho. Moreover, it would be a violation of international law for someone who isn't even registered as a Hunter, to cross this barbed wire fence. Besides..." While speaking, Team Leader Han Jaehyuk's gaze glanced at the 'black dragon' yawning behind Cha Hae-In and closed his mouth.

1

The public's right to know was a matter for reporters, but Managing the Awakened was the role of the Association. Even though the sudden dragon raid ended as a brief event, nothing changed. From the Association's perspective, Cha Hae-In was still a suspicious person who arrived on the Korean Peninsula from across the sea riding this black dragon.

'There's no departure record. I don't know when athlete Cha Hae-In left Korea, where she's been and what she's been doing...'

...All of that was subject to investigation from the Association's perspective. But at the same time, because the person in question was Cha Hae-In, Team Leader Han Jaehyuk was extremely cautious with his words. Even though 20 years had passed since her retirement, countless citizens who remembered Cha Hae-In from that time still had a strong fondness for her. The so-called 'immunity from criticism' Especially in front of so many reporters, if he 'dared' to be even slightly rude to Cha Hae-In, he could be criticized by the entire nation. He was even afraid to imagine what kind of terror he would face from the public if he used the term 'villain.' But fortunately, she fully understood his position and nodded obediently.

"Yes, I understand. I'll take the magic power measurement right away. It's fine if the results are public."

This kind of attention was also a first in a very long time. For Cha Hae-In's personality, being this exposed to public attention was burdensome no matter how old she got. But discomfort aside, it was something she was used to. From her teens to her 20s, she lived a life receiving this kind of public attention throughout her career as an athlete. Fortunately, after retirement, she was able to return to an ordinary life that suited her personality, but the process wasn't easy.

'...His help was crucial.' Thanks to her husband using shadow soldiers to completely block the paparazzi, she was able to live a truly quiet daily life.

'Well... Actually, it wasn't that quiet. Raising a child was so hard.' A faint smile appeared on Cha Hae-In's lips as she reminisced about the past days. It was hard, but looking back, it was also a fond memory, wasn't it? But now Suho has grown up well. And since the world had returned to this dangerous state, She couldn't just cling to her desire for an ordinary life forever.

'Yes. 20 years is enough to enjoy it.' An ordinary life.

'It's time to use my power to protect the ordinary lives of others. Like before.' Suddenly, Cha Hae-In's calm eyes changed and she placed her hand on the magic power measuring device that Team Leader Han Jaehyuk handed her without hesitation.

Flash—!

A dazzling light emanated from the instrument. And...

"...S-rank." There were no surprises. Team Leader Han Jaehyuk swallowed dryly and announced the measurement results in front of everyone.

"Congratulations on awakening as an S-rank, Hunter Cha Hae-In."

Flash! Flash! Flash! Flash! Flash! Flash—!

As soon as he finished speaking, the reporters began frantically flashing their cameras at Cha Hae-In, as if in a trance. Just like when she became a gold medalist 20 years ago.

— (Exclusive) A new S-rank Awakened in Korea...

— (Urgent) Former national athlete Cha Hae-In confirmed as S-rank...

"Ah, but..."

Cha Hae-In didn't stop there. The fact that she set a new world record by diligently running to try and beat her boyfriend? That was truly embarrassing, and that was why she could be even more humble. But that was that. Now that she had returned as S-rank Hunter Cha Hae-In, not the gold medalist Cha Hae-In from a peaceful world, She knew her role and what she had to do very well. Therefore, looking directly at all the reporters and their cameras, she continued speaking with a slightly embarrassed but brazen expression,

"I know it's a violation of international law, but I'll just give my son a ride to North Korea."

'...What?' For a moment, all the Hunters and reporters, including Team Leader Han Jaehyuk, couldn't understand what they had just heard.

"Kaisel. Let's go."

[KIAAAAAAAAAAAAA!]

'...?' And they blankly watched as the giant black dragon spread its wings before them, and Cha Hae-In, who skillfully climbed onto its back, reached out her hand to Suho. But suddenly...

"...W-wait!"

"Mis Cha Hae-In! No, Hunter Cha Hae-In!"

"It's a violation of international law...!"

"You have to go through a national vote...!"

Belatedly realizing the situation, people rushed towards Cha Hae-In, who had boarded Kaisel, to stop her. But she just smiled at them and replied,

"Don't worry. I'll just drop him off and come back soon. I'll pay any penalty or fine after that. I have to protect the country in my son's place."

"No, wait! Wait!"

"You can't act so recklessly...!"

"...Oh my, Suho? Why aren't you getting on?" Despite Cha Hae-In's call, Suho himself remained on the ground instead of boarding Kaisel. People were greatly relieved by that sensible behavior.

'Y-yes! That's right!' They couldn't help but admire how well her son had grown. He was abiding by the Hunter law with common sense. But of course, they were mistaken.

"Ah, Mother. Just a moment." Suho was running in the opposite direction, not towards her but to Baek Miho.

"...Huh? Uh?" Baek Yoonho, who had been guarding his daughter, faltered as Suho approached.

"Wh-what? Why are you suddenly coming this way?"

"Hunter Sung Suho?" Baek Miho was also flustered and at a loss for words as Suho approached.

"Oh my, you must be Yoonho's daughter." Cha Hae-In's eyes sparkled as she saw the father and daughter from atop Kaisel.

But Suho's objective wasn't Baek Miho or Baek Yoonho. It was the thing behind them. The supplies that she had escorted here early in the morning. There was a cargo truck with supplies provided by the government to Association President Woo Jinchul in North

Korea. The original plan was to load the entire truck onto a military helicopter and cross this boiling river. And then, Suho would personally drive that truck to where Association President Woo Jinchul was... that was what the government and the Association asked Suho to do. But...

"Beru."

[Yes, my liege.]

Suho's plan was a little different. His shadow was already covering the entire cargo truck.

"Put it all in the shadow dungeon."

Whoosh—!

'...!'

At that moment, Suho's shadow swallowed the entire cargo truck. He turned around without hesitation and climbed onto Kaisel's back.

"Let's go, Mother."

2

At that moment another scoop was added.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 257 - Chapter 255

Chapter 257: Chapter 255

SWOOSH—!

A black shadow cut through the wind. Three figures were riding atop the wyvern Kaisel, flying like a ray of darkness through the hazy steam. Sung Suho, Cha Hae-In, and Sirka. The boiling hot river water passed beneath them. But before the warmth could even reach them, the river was already far behind.

'Thanks to Mother, we crossed comfortably. I need to get at least one wyvern as a soldier instead of clumsy dragonids. Or I should raise Ragnar somehow...'

1

[The Dragon King, the Monarch of Destruction, nonchalantly perks up his ears.]

"Suho." Cha Hae-In looked back at her son and asked,

"Since we've already crossed the border, shall I take you straight to where Mr. Woo Jinchul is?"

Suho couldn't help but chuckle at his mother's casual tone. Just from her words, it sounded like she was offering to drop him off at the academy on the way to the market. But her 'car' was too extraordinary for that, to the point of wrecking everyday life. Just by appearing, she drew the attention of the entire nation. Recalling the reporters who were shocked to see Cha Hae-In earlier, Suho thought about his mother's prime again.

'I knew that Mother was a national level athlete in the past, but she seems to have been much more famous than I thought.' Of course, he had heard several times that his mother was really successful in her time. But as her son, how much could he relate to that? Especially since it was something that happened before he was even born. From Suho's perspective, twenty years ago was a distant past, just like the story of how his parents met and dated before marriage.

"But where is Mr. Woo Jinchul?"

"The Association gave me the most recent coordinates they received." While Suho was answering Cha Hae-In's question,

"...Cha Hae-In." Sirka, who had been silent since crossing into North Korea, suddenly called out.

"What's wrong?" Cha Hae-In looked back at Sirka.

"This place is strange." She was looking down at the ground with a scary expression, rubbing her arms.

"The spirits living here... they don't seem right."

"Don't tell me, here too...?" Cha Hae-In's face hardened at Sirka's words. They had experienced rampaging spirits before, hadn't they?

'Facade Island'

The ice spirits of the Echo Forest living in the sanctuary of the ice elves... What was the fundamental reason why the ice spirits, who should have been living peacefully in the sanctuary, suddenly went berserk and rampaged?

[My liege.] Beru also gritted his teeth, staring ahead with narrowed eyes.

[The energy of Itarim is spread widely across this land.]

As Beru said, after crossing the hot river, the blue mist from the outer universe was heavily concentrated throughout this vast North Korean land. The density was higher than in any place he had seen before. In some ways, even beating the Loktak Field.

'At least India still has a functioning government, but North Korea doesn't even have that.'

[If we leave this place as it is, in the worst case, a huge Void Gate could open on this land. Perhaps... it has already begun.] Suho felt the gravity of the situation.

"Mother, I think we need to put out the urgent fire first."

"Yes. Let's take care of the field we see before going to Mr. Woo Jinchul." Cha Hae-In also nodded with a serious expression.

Since they had the coordinates, finding the Association President wouldn't take long. The bigger problem was the blue mist area so concentrated that it was visibly forming clumps. In any case, Woo Jinchul's purpose for coming to North Korea was to rectify this phenomenon, so the order didn't matter.

"Kaisel, let's go down." But when the wyvern lowered its altitude just slightly,

Caw—!

Caw! Caw Caw!

The spirits wandering in the air immediately attacked them.

[Flame Eagle]

[Flame Eagle]

[...]

[Wind Blade Crow]

[Wind Blade Crow]

[...]

"They're wild animals devoured by spirits!" Sirka shouted urgently.

"It's similar to the ice golems that appeared in our sanctuary! As expected, this place also has...!" Before she could even finish her sentence, their entire vision was suddenly covered with numerous birds.

SWOOSH—!

FWOOSH—!

As Sirka said, countless eagles, possessed by the rampaging fire spirits, charged recklessly with their bodies engulfed in flames; their blazing wings were like that of a phoenix... In the case of the crows possessed by wind spirits, every flap of their wings unleashed sharp wind blades that tore through the air. But so what...?

[They must be crazy. How dare they come here without fear.] Beru openly mocked them.

This was the problem with those who went berserk. Mere birds daring to attack a wyvern? There was no need to even use mana against these guys.

[KIAAAAAAAAAAAAA*!] Kaisel opened its mouth wide and roared at them.

BOOM BOOM BOOM...!

Air cannons erupted from its mouth in a straight line and swept over them. Along the path of that wind, bird bodies exploded like balloons. But Cha Hae-In scolded Kaisel instead.

"Kaisel, you can't do that. If you kill them, Suho won't get any experience points."

[KII...] Kaisel, about to open its mouth fiercely again, quickly dropped its snout with a sullen expression. But Cha Hae-In was a firm mother serious about her child's education.

"Suho...?"

"Uh, Mother?"

Suho's eyes instinctively twitched at his mother's gentle voice. He knew what this was. It was like the night before an exam...

"Go do your best."

Thud!

"...?!"

Cha Hae-In's hand pushed Suho's back without hesitation. From high up in the sky. Into the middle of the still numerous spirit birds.

5

"No, Moth...—!"

2

'How could she do this to him...!' While Suho fell helplessly, his mother's gentle smile as she waved at him gradually grew distant. The story of lions throwing their cubs off cliffs to raise them strong suddenly flashed through his mind, but...

'This is too high!' Even lions would probably shake their heads if they saw this! But now, instead of feeling bitter, he had to move to survive.

3

'Rulers Authority!'

Thump! Thump!

Although he was momentarily surprised, Suho skillfully stepped on the air and slowed his fall. At the same time, 'Kamish's Wrath' daggers were grasped in both his hands.

[Using Skill: 'Storm of Black Flames'.]

Flare! Rumble—!

KIAAAAA...!

KEEek!

[Flame Eagle has been defeated.]

[Flame Eagle has been defeated.]

[...]

[Wind Blade Crow has been defeated.]

[Wind Blade Crow has been defeated.]

[...]

The forms of the spirit birds, helplessly dying from the black flame, scattered as ashes in the air. Even the Flame Eagles, although they were of the same fire attribute, they couldn't compare to the flames of destruction.

'Honestly, they don't seem like they'll give me a lot of experience points, but I like that there are a lot of them.' There were easily thousands of them at a glance. It was hard to even count. It seemed like all the 'birds' in the area flocked here after seeing an unfamiliar creature invade their territory.

Whoosh—!

[My liege—!] Just then, Beru, who flew towards the falling Suho, relayed Cha Hae-In's words.

[She says to catch them all before you hit the ground!]

"..."

[She says she'll give you dragon bones as allowance if you succeed!]

6

"Seriously." Suho finally burst into laughter.

1

"You were going to give them to me anyway!" And his eyes changed.

Slash—! His dagger cut through the body of a Flame Eagle that recklessly attacked from the side. And...

"Arise!"

[Shadow extraction successful.]

[Shadow Eagle Lv.1]

[Knight Rank]

His hand grabbed the Shadow Eagle's leg. And it glided with its black steam-emitting wings spread wide. Suho, now soaring towards the area crowded with spirit-possessed birds, shouted,

"All those with wings, come out!"

Whoosh—!

At that moment, the shadow soldiers came out as if they had been waiting.

[Don't forget, the loyal subject you can trust in critical moments is me.] Among them, Lee Minsung, no, the Shadow Lancer Que, smiled proudly and raised his spear enthusiastically.

[Follow me, everyone!]

SWOOSH—!

Led by Que, numerous Shadow Lancers shot towards the birds possessed by spirits like arrows. At the same time, the shadow dragonids, commanded by Sita, also appeared and began to mercilessly slaughter the spirits. In the midst of that battle, Suho leisurely glided and ordered the Shadow Eagle,

"Guide me to the Gate you spirits came out of!"

Craw—!

The Shadow Eagle immediately understood Suho's order and changed direction.

"Oh my." Cha Hae-In's eyes sparkled as she saw that from above.

1

"You've become quite proficient in battle."

"If that's proficient... he seems incredibly stronger than the last time we saw him?" Sirka looked at Cha Hae-In with a dumbfounded expression.

But she once was the vice guild-master of the No. 1 guild in Korea, the Hunters, in a forgotten time, and the strongest 'purely' human S-rank Hunter in Korea. Moreover, she had seen the battles of the true Shadow Monarch, Sung Jinwoo, several times up close, so her standards were inevitably high.

3

"Kaisel, let's follow him." Kaisel followed Suho at Cha Hae-In's words. And Sirka's expression gradually hardened.

"The spirits' energy is getting stronger."

"You're right. Even at the first glance it seems like we've come to the right place."

Whoosh—!

Cutting through the fluttering blue mist, something absurd was waiting right where the Shadow Eagle led Suho.

"...What is that?"

A city.

A giant city surrounded by blue mist existed there. But the problem was that its appearance and atmosphere didn't seem North Korean at all.

"Is this really North Korea?"

KIAAAAA—!

Suho, gliding with the Shadow Eagle, saw the city up close and his eyes sharpened.

'A barrier?'

A transparent, hemispherical barrier surrounded the city.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 258 - Chapter 256

Chapter 258: Chapter 256

It was a truly strange sight. Was this really North Korea? No, was this even Earth? The sight of the city being revealed as the blue mist cleared was so outlandish that it surprised everyone. The 'green' city, covered in a dome-shaped transparent barrier, was truly beautiful, yet alien at the same time. A sense of disconnect from reality. The first thing they saw was a giant old tree standing tall in the center. Of course, it wasn't as big as the World Tree, but it was enormous enough to remind them of it. The intricate branches and lush leaves covered the city like a roof. And below that, numerous large trees, shaped like 'buildings,' formed the vast cityscape. Looking at the windows dotting the tree trunks, it didn't seem like they were merely imitating buildings in appearance.

"Don't tell me that's..." Sirka blinked and muttered, clinging tightly to Cha Hae-In's clothes.

"Why? Do you know something?" Cha Hae-In looked back at Sirka.

"If I'm right, that's 'Elvenwood'."

"Elvenwood?" Cha Hae-In tilted her head.

Sirka muttered with an expression of disbelief, even as she looked at the city, "I heard about it from the village elders when I was young. Elvenwood, a village where 'high elves' live located somewhere in the world."

"High elves?"

Whoosh—

Even as they conversed, Kaisel had already reached the outskirts of the city. And seeing Suho, who was gliding in front, turn around and come back towards them, they slowed down and waited for him in the air.

"Elvenwood? You're saying that's a city where high elves live?"

"You have good ears." Suho had already arrived in front of Sirka. Even though battles between shadow soldiers and birds possessed by spirits were still raging all around, Suho had eavesdropped on their conversation.

"What's a high elf?"

"High elves are a higher tribe than us ice elves. If I'm the guardian of our tribe, high elves are all guardian-level."

"What? All guardian-level?" Suho's eyes sparkled. But Sirka had a slightly unsure expression.

"Yes. But I only heard about it from the elders, so I'm not sure. High elves are a tribe that's only spoken of in legends even among us elves."

"Sillad, do you know anything?" Suho directly summoned the Monarch, who would surely know more than Sirka or the elders who told her about high elves, and asked.

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, strokes his chin and acts all high and mighty.]

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, says that high elves are a gathering of losers who failed to become Monarchs.]

"Losers who failed to become Monarchs?" Suho tilted his head at the strange expression.

"That makes it sound like high elves are just a rank below Monarchs. Were you a high elf too, Sillad?"

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, nods.]

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, says that he is the only one among the ice elves who ascended to become a high elf, the king who rules and governs all ice spirits.]

"...!" Sirka was shocked by Sillad's words.

"Th-then what about me? What am I?"

[A nobody.]

5

"...?!" Sirka's expression hardened like stone at Beru's sudden interjection. She had always thought that she was the only descendant of the Monarch. But if the high elves, who were only known in legends, existed in that city, what would happen to her position?!

[But my liege. Something is strange.] Beru added,

[In the past, that is, during the war between the Rulers and Monarchs, I never met the high elves.]

"...Hmm. That's certainly strange. Wasn't that war something all races participated in with their lives at stake?" It was certainly abnormal. Beru loved fighting, and was a vanguard actively participating in all battles. A race that even he had never encountered?

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, smiles faintly and says it's understandable for those guys.]

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, says that high elves are those who want to become Monarchs, but they are all cowards who want the current Monarch to die more than anyone else.]

"Ah, so they didn't participate in the war and hid because they could only become the Monarch if the previous one died? Even despite the fact that their race was being destroyed?" Hearing this, he couldn't help but feel a strange mixture of understanding and confusion. After thinking for a moment, Suho decided,

"...Let's enter the city first. I'll have to meet them to know what kind of guys they are."
The city was right in front of them. And it seemed like the battle in the sky could be left to the soldiers.

"Mother, let's go down together."

"Alright. Kaisel, can you drop us off and rest in my shadow for a while?" Cha Hae-In nodded and gently patted Sirka, who still was in shock.

"It's okay. No matter what anyone says, you're the descendant of the Monarch chosen directly by Sillad."

"..."

Cha Hae-In felt bad that her words didn't seem to be of much comfort. While living with the ice elves for the past few years, she was the one who constantly watched Sirka from the closest distance. That's why she knew better than anyone how much she struggled to protect the tribe with her small and frail body. Therefore...

"It will really be okay, Sirka."

Pat Pat

Sirka with her small back, covered in rich silver hair, looked like a frightened, cowering hamster, and it pained her heart.

Suho actually had a real plan as he entered the green city presumed to be 'Elvenwood.'

'This is good. It's a chance to help Sirka grow.' First of all, Suho didn't care what kind of guys the high elves were.

'If they're enemies, I'll just kill them.' They were all experience points anyway. That was the biggest reason he came to North Korea.

'It would be perfect to kill, then turn them into shadow soldiers, and have Sirka educate those to become proper high elves.'

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, smiles wickedly and says it's a very wise plan.]

'...Don't smile like that. It makes me feel like a villain too.'

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, tilts his head.]

But he truly didn't feel any sympathy for the high elves. No matter how much they wanted to become the next Monarch, they were just cowards who hid until the moment their race was destroyed.

Beru also gritted his teeth. [Those with power should rightfully fulfill their responsibilities. And if they had been defeated honorably and joined the Shadow Army, how much help would they have been to Master in the war against Itarim...] It was then...

"Welcome to Elvenwood, son of shadow."

"...Huh?"

The moment Suho and his party entered the green city, Tall elves, over two meters in height, greeted them with warm smiles. Leaving Sirka, who was intimidated, aside, Suho and Cha Hae-In glared at them with wary eyes.

"Son of shadow?"

"You know my identity?"

At Suho's killing intent, the old elf standing in the middle pointed outside the city with a troubled expression.

"How could we not know? If you intended to hide your identity, you should have done something about those shadow soldiers."

"Ah." Suho was a little embarrassed. Outside the city, his shadow soldiers were still busy hunting birds.

[Level Up!]

There were even enough of them to level up. The elves who came to greet Suho looked disgusted at the sight. But they didn't seem scared.

'They don't seem to want to fight?'

[My liege, I haven't felt Itarim's energy since we entered.]

[It seems to be the influence of the shield covering this city. I'll analyze what kind of barrier it is.] Harmakan also appeared in his small form and whispered in Suho's ear. As he said, this giant dome-shaped barrier was blocking the thick blue mist outside the city from entering.

"What is this barrier?"

"Huh. You seem to have a lot of questions. I'll tell you everything, so could you please withdraw your killing intent a little? I can endure it, but the young ones seem to be struggling."

Suho obediently withdrew his killing intent at those words. Even while receiving it head-on, the old elf who stepped forward maintained a benevolent smile. He didn't seem scared or flinch at all, so it was unclear whether he was confident in his strength or had no intention of fighting at all. Suho glanced up and checked the name tags floating above their heads.

[??]

'Unidentifiable? Does that mean it's a race the system can't interpret? Or...'

Suho scanned their appearance with suspicious eyes. Like their ice brethren, the appearance of the high elves here was also fundamentally gorgeous. Handsome men and beautiful women, even the elderly had attractive and charming appearances. But there was one noticeable difference: the pair of 'horns' growing from their heads. At first glance, they looked like deer antlers, but their material seemed unusual.

"They look unique. Are those horns or branches growing from your heads?"

"There's no point in distinguishing between them. Even if we're fundamentally the same elves, our appearance changes depending on where we live. It's common knowledge for us, but a tribe that lives in the same place all their lives might not be aware of that fact ." The old elf, answering with a chuckle, glanced at Sirka.

"...By the way, it's been a while since I've seen Sillad's bloodline. As you may or may not know, we are nomads who wander around, looking for good places to live. So we don't often go to cold regions." Cha Hae-In hid the intimidated Sirka behind her back and asked,

"Are you high elves?"

"Yes. My name is 'Forest'. We high elves don't have a separate chieftain, but I'm the oldest, so I lead everyone."

"But you guys... what happened to your eyes?"

Besides the horns, there was something he was most curious about from the beginning. All the high elves in Elvenwood, without exception, had their eyes covered with green blindfolds.

"Eyes..." At Cha Hae-In's question, the old elf Forest's lips turned downwards for the first time. He answered calmly,

"What good are they? We plucked out the eyes that only watched as our race perished."

4

"...!"

"Anyway, welcome. I'll show you around our village."

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 259 - Chapter 257

Chapter 259: Chapter 257

"How is it?" Forest suddenly asked Suho and his party for their impressions.

"..." No one answered.

Forest wasn't really curious about the answer either. He already knew, even without them saying anything.

"Isn't it beautiful?"

Suho and his party were currently touring Elvenwood, guided by the high elves. Suho's impression flowed from his mouth.

"Honestly... it's beyond that."

"Huh. Thank you." A smile appeared on Forest's lips at Suho's sincere answer. The other high elves walking with him also had proud smiles on their faces.

Elvenwood.

This green city where the high elves lived was more than just beautiful. How could the inside and outside be so different with just a giant transparent barrier between them? A fierce battle was still raging beyond the barrier, but within, a world that seemed to exist only in fairy tales unfolded. The fresh, green lawn cushioned their feet with every step. Lush trees lined the path on both sides.

"These trees are the houses we live in." As he said, each tree had large doors and windows with high elves coming and going. Suho asked,

"Did you build these structures yourselves? With magic?"

"It's not something grand like magic. Just 'harmony'."

"Harmony?" When Suho tilted his head at the strange answer, Forest spread his hands with a knowing smile. And then something amazing happened.

Rustle

Following his touch, colorful flowers popped out from the lush lawn and bloomed.

Even though the air was still, the stems swayed as if waving to him. A warm smile appeared on Forest's lips as he received that greeting. Even without eyes, it was as if he could actually see them.

"See? Everything in our village was created thanks to our harmony with the spirits. As I said, we are nomads who wander without a destination. But wherever we settle, the spirits come forward and prepare a place for us to live. It's truly harmonious."

"...Spirit magic?" Forest's words stopped for a moment at Sirka's sudden question, he looked back and smiled kindly.

"Huh. Calling it Spirit magic... I also went through that phase before becoming a high elf. It was so long ago that I hardly remember." Sirka's eyes welled up a little at his tone, which was like that of an adult talking to a baby. But it wasn't a good time to argue. A small stream appeared before them, and Forest stepped onto it without hesitation.

Rustle.

Tree branches sprouted from under his feet and intertwined. A rainbow-shaped bridge across the stream was created in an instant. Forest naturally stepped on it and went across. Sirka's eyes widened. It wasn't spirit magic! She couldn't feel any mana flow during the bridge's creation. Forest continued speaking like a grandfather reciting an old tale to his granddaughter,

"See...? Young elf who follows Sillad. For your tribe, living in the snowy fields all their lives, spirits would have always been a 'harsh cold' that you had to fight and endure to survive. But that's quite different from the truth."

"..."

"Since ancient times, we elves were not a race that fought against nature, but a race that lived in harmony with it. And the numerous spirits born from nature were our friends and kin."

"..." Sirka couldn't say anything. She felt the weight and experience of time in Forest's words. So she finally nodded and politely asked him for advice.

"How can I become a high elf?"

"Uhaha." Forest burst into laughter instead of answering. The other high elves around him also laughed.

"To ask such a question."

"Trying to run before you can walk."

"Haha. Not everyone can become a high elf just because they want to."

"There's no special method or trick."

As Sirka made a sullen face at being suddenly ridiculed, a luscious fruit sprouted from the end of a branch next to her. Forest handed it to Sirka.

"Here, eat this. This child wants to give you a present because you're cute." Sirka inadvertently received the fruit with both hands. The high elves around her began to offer words of 'advice'.

2

"This is it."

"It's not something you achieve through effort."

"You have to be chosen by the spirits."

"...Chosen?" Forest nodded at Sirka's question.

"Yes. It's not something that comes with effort. For an ordinary elf to become a high elf is a blessing from the spirits. Here, try it. The gifts from the spirits are sweeter than any other fruit."

"..." Just as Sirka was about to put the fruit in her mouth,

"Don't eat that."

Suddenly. Cha Hae-In's hand appeared and snatched the fruit from her.

"...Uh, why?" Sirka, bewildered at having the treat taken away, looked up at Cha Hae-In.

"You shouldn't eat food that strangers give you." For some reason, Cha Hae-In was looking at Forest with a slightly angry expression. He could sense that despite not being able to see, and assumed an awkward expression.

"Huh. The fruits that the spirits give are not dangerous to elves at all. Rather, they're a tonic that makes you healthier and more beautiful."

"Thank you for your kindness, but it's up to the guardian to decide what to feed a child."

"Guardian?" Forest had a bewildered expression, looking like he just had heard something very strange.

"Aren't you human? Why is a human acting as a guardian for an elf?"

"What does race matter? Sirka is like a daughter to me."

2

"That's absurd. Even if that child isn't a high elf, she wouldn't need protection from a human." Forest, from beyond the green blindfold, stared intently at Cha Hae-In. Then he glanced at Sirka again and tilted his head.

"Come to think of it, I didn't ask. Just who are you?" Forest was finally curious about Cha Hae-In's identity.

He already knew that the child of shadow, Sung Suho, was the Shadow Monarch's offspring. He also knew that Sirka was a descendant of the Monarch of Frost. But Cha Hae-In, who was between them, was just an ordinary human, so he didn't pay much attention to her. But how dare a mere human take away the gift of the spirits from a descendant of the Monarch of Frost? The fact that Sirka seemed to think it was natural was also incomprehensible.

"I am..." Just as Cha Hae-In was about to reply,

"Don't answer that." Suho's hand suddenly stopped her.

1

"You shouldn't carelessly give out personal information to just anyone. Especially to suspicious guys like them." Suho's eyes, which had been leisurely looking around Elvenwood like a tourist, were now filled with hostility.

"...Suho?" Cha Hae-In's gaze fell on the back of Suho's head.

[Well done. If it's revealed that Ms. Cha Hae-In is Master's lover, it will only endanger her. Of course, it will eventually be known, but there's no need for us to say it first.] Beru's small face suddenly appeared and whispered in a voice that the elves couldn't hear. Then he glared at Forest and the high elves with narrowed eyes and climbed onto Suho's shoulder.

Bzzz—

A flying insect suddenly flew from somewhere and landed on Suho's other shoulder. It was a bee with yellow and black stripes.

"...Hmm?" Forest's expression suddenly hardened when he saw the insect. It was natural for the child of shadow to have shadow soldiers around him, but that flying insect wasn't a shadow soldier.

"Why are you reacting like that? Have you never seen a bug before?" Suho smirked at Forest. But contrary to his tone, Suho's entire body was tense and ready. Forest and the other high elves' expressions hardened even more.

"W-wait. Don't tell me you..."

"Ah, well. I guess you might have never seen it before. I haven't noticed a single insect in Elvenwood so far. It's quite strange. No insects living in a place full of flowers and trees..."

Bzzz—

Even as he spoke, more and more bees were gathering on Suho's shoulder. And they began to transform into the form of a beautiful woman.

'...!'

"Th-the Plague Monarch?!"

"How is the Queen of Insects here?!"

[Ah, that's a good title. I'm destined to become that soon.] 'Queen Bee Arsha' responded with a delighted smile to their openly flustered reactions. She looked at Suho again and pointed at the lush trees around them. At the numerous buildings where the high elves lived.

[As expected, there are humans trapped in the basement of those buildings.]

As soon as she finished speaking, the expressions on the faces of the high elves, smiling kindly until now, disappeared. Turning into those of soulless puppets.

"Ah, dear. So it has come to this." Forest muttered in a troubled voice.

Whoosh—

A chilling silence fell. The warm and cozy wind that was swirling within Elvenwood had stopped. The lush leaves withered and turned desolate at a rapid pace. The paradise on earth turned into a barren wasteland in an instant.

"...It would have been easier for everyone if you had just passed by quietly."

"Really? I had a feeling it would be like this."

Slash! Slash! Slash—!

Kamish's Wrath appeared in Suho's hands. Two daggers slashed at one of the tree buildings, creating black trails.

Crack—!

And what was revealed inside...

"S-save..."

"Ugh..."

The screams of people dying, bound by tree roots, filled the place.

"Oh-oh my god." Sirka's eyes widened at the shocking sight.

On the other hand, Cha Hae-In, who hadn't let her guard down even for a moment since entering this place, already had Baran's Longsword in her hand. And Suho, who had Arsha scout the surroundings early on, was also ready for battle.

"They said high elves were a gathering of losers who failed to become Monarchs. What the hell were you doing here?"

"Losers? That's an interesting expression, child of shadow."

"Losers? Are you in a position to say that to us?"

"Losers? You're the one who can never become a Monarch unless your father dies."

"What? Why are you suddenly so angry? Did I hit a nerve?"

Whoosh—!

A ferocious energy erupted from the high elves, whose expressions disappeared in an instant, filling Elvenwood. As if to confront it, the shadow that spread from under Suho's feet also spread on the ground.

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

In this tense situation where a fight could break out at any moment,

"...Ah." Sirka finally realized what Sillad meant when he said that they failed to become Monarchs. No wonder she felt intimidated from the moment she saw the high elves.

"You guys... have already been devoured. By the spirits."

The moment she said those words, For the first time, real expressions appeared on the faces of the high elves.

"Devoured?"

"Devoured, you say?"

Smirk— A cruel smile appeared like that of a person savoring something. And at that moment, their faces,

Crack! Crack!

The slender and beautiful bodies of the high elves began to be covered in dry bark.

"We... will devour you."

Crack!

And the blindfolds they were wearing until now were torn off, revealing the eyes hidden beneath. Instead of useless eyeballs, Starpieces were embedded there. Two highly refined Starpieces were shoved in.

1

"Even if you're the Shadow Monarch's offspring, you're just a human."

"You're not the Shadow Monarch himself."

"Regret setting foot in Elvenwood."

Whoosh—!

At that moment, all the flowers and trees of Elvenwood, which was a paradise on earth, attacked Suho and his party from all directions.

"Even your father, the Shadow Monarch, will never know what happened here."

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 260 - Chapter 258 Chapter 260: Chapter 258

The change happened abruptly.

Rumble—!

[Th-this is...!]

The shadow soldiers hunting the spirit birds outside were greatly flustered as the giant dome-shaped barrier covering Elvenwood suddenly turned gray.

[It seems like something happened to Master!]

[Everyone, return to Master!] At Sita's and Que's shouts, all the soldiers immediately stopped fighting and turned around. But... They realized a shocking fact.

[...!]

The rippling transparent barrier leading into the city repelled them. Its type, previously allowing Suho and his party to pass through just moments ago, changed in an instant! The shadow soldiers' expressions became urgent.

[This is bad! The barrier!]

[This barrier is rejecting our entry!]

[Break it down by force!]

[Master is in danger inside!]

Crash! Crash! Crash—!

The shadow soldiers tried their best to destroy the barrier. But it wasn't easy.

Ripple.

[N-no! Our attacks aren't working!]

This giant barrier surrounding the green town seemed to completely separate it from the rest of Earth. The inside and outside, clearly visible before their eyes, were divided into completely different dimensions by a thin membrane.

[Don't stop attacking!]

[We have to break through somehow!]

Crash! Bang!

[Harmakan!]

[Where is Harmakan?!] Someone called for Harmakan. That's right. This was the time for the shadow demonic spirit to step forward. But Que answered the soldiers' urgent calls,

[Harmakan isn't here! He went inside with Master!]

[What?! Then we have to wait here and just hope they open the door from the inside?!]

The soldiers were frustrated but didn't stop attacking the barrier. They couldn't just sit back and do nothing. The purpose of the Shadow Army's existence, their top priority mission was ensuring Sung Suho's safety. And behind them,

SWOOSH—!

The spirit birds flew in and attacked from the blind spots.

Cackle! Cackle!

Que gritted his teeth.

[...Could this have been their strategy from the very beginning? To separate us from Master?]

[If that's the case, we've been completely fooled. To think this barrier was for that purpose!] Sita was also frustrated. But thinking about it logically, something was strange.

[But this is weird. Did they set a trap in advance, knowing we would come here? For what purpose?]

It didn't make sense. It was purely by chance that they, no, Sung Suho, discovered this place. So how could they have set a trap in advance, anticipating their arrival?

[...There's definitely another purpose. The guys living in this city must have created this barrier for a different reason, not for us.]

Slash! Slash! Slash—!

Sita, who tore apart a flock of spirit birds that dared to attack with one hand, soared high into the sky. And with his arms crossed, he took in the entire landscape around the giant barrier spread out below. His eyes narrowed.

[There's definitely something here.]

[What are you talking about?] Que quickly flapped his wings and flew to Sita's side. Following his gaze downwards, his eyes widened. Having climbed this high, the true landscape, hidden by the lush rainforest, finally came into view.

[Ah, I see. This whole area was once a city?] And he wasn't talking about the green town. Even outside this giant barrier, there were traces of a large settlement that existed in this area.

[Let's see...] Que, who lived as a Korean before becoming a shadow soldier, recalled the map of the Korean Peninsula in his mind. And he figured out roughly where this area was. His eyes widened.

[It's Kaesong! The place where a large-scale industrial complex used to be.]

North Korea.

A land where everything was destroyed and withered due to numerous dungeon breaks. This rainforest was the result of countless people perishing and plants taking over after their deaths. But there was one strange thing...

[I don't see any corpses.]

[Yes. I find that strange too.] Sita was Siddharth Bachchan, who was active in India's large-scale field-type dungeon during his lifetime. So he had common sense.

[The corpses lying around in field-type dungeons are usually eaten by magical beasts. But they don't disappear without even a single bone fragment left behind. Monsters aren't that thorough.]

[And they couldn't have all rotted away in just two years.]

The number of North Koreans who died without escaping their country at the time of the Cataclysm was estimated to be over ten million. But it was impossible for all those corpses to disappear without a trace in just two years.

[Maybe they all managed to escape...?]

[Of course, there would be Awakened survivors. But... It's normal for traces of the dead to be scattered everywhere. Even if they became Mist Burns, they would have at least left ashes.]

[Then that means...]

[Someone must have collected the corpses. And perhaps those who aren't 'dead' yet.]

[...We have something to do for Master.] Sita and Que looked at each other with gleaming eyes.

[We dragonids will keep hitting the barrier.]

[Then we'll search the ruined industrial complexes. We might find something useful for our Master if we look around.]

[Can I trust you with that?]

[Of course. I might look like this, but I used to scout land to make some stardust.]

[If that's the case, then I...]

[Wait, are you bragging? Then let's switch.]

[...Shut up and let's just start.]

The former villains glared at each other and then simultaneously scattered in opposite directions. It was the so-called 'Contempt for one's kind'.

* * *

Meanwhile, inside the barrier, the world had turned into a thorny jungle.

Whoosh! Slash—!

Sharp spikes sprouted from the dry lawn attacking Suho and his party.

"Struggle like insects!"

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh—!

Thick, sharp roots rapidly grew branches and, crawling on the ground like snakes jumped up like coiled springs.

"There's nowhere to run...!"

At the same time, the high elves also launched attacks. Their white, smooth arms stretched out like tree branches, slashing through the air like whips. Their beautiful, slender fingers turned into sharp, dry branches, scratching the ground.

Whoosh— Crash!

Slash— Crash!

Grotesque attacks from all directions came at them simultaneously. In the center of the onslaught, Suho and his party, suddenly reduced to fish caught in a dense net, responded without hesitation.

"Suho." Cha Hae-In's eyes flashed blue as she raised the Demon King's Longsword.

"Dodge them."

Crackle—!

Storm of White Flames.

Thunderbolts rained down from the dry sky, intercepting the thorns that filled their vision.

"...?!" The expressions of the fiercely attacking high elves wavered.

"This energy?!"

"White Flames?!"

Even without eyes. No... because they didn't have eyes, there were things they could sense better. The high elves, who plucked out their eyeballs and replaced them with Starpieces, recognized the identity of the sword in Cha Hae-In's hand at a glance.

[Item: Demon King's Longsword]

[Acquisition Difficulty: S]

[Type: Sword]

[Attack Power +350]

[A longsword containing the power of the Demon King 'Baran.']

[The 'Storm of White Flames' effect is activated every time the sword is swung.]

[Effect 'Storm of White Flames':]

[Creates an area where lightning strikes endlessly.]

"How?!" It was truly shocking.

"Baran should have died a long time ago!"

"Why does a human have a Monarch's artifact?!"

Baran was dead, but his symbol, the 'Storm of White Flames,' was wielded by Cha Hae-In. And... The moment she began to move as if dancing,

[Skill: 'Sword Dance']

[Skill: 'Storm of White Flames']

Whoosh—!

Hundreds of split lightning bolts covered the surroundings.

"I got used to this magic power." Cha Hae-In's voice reached Suho.

"I also practiced how to use the sword." She had many nicknames, but there was one that was particularly famous.

'Training Addict'

Cha Hae-In, was once a world-class athlete and then Korea's representative S-rank Hunter. While she had nothing to do in the Tomb Berserk Dragons, she did more than enough training to use the 'Demon King's Longsword' effectively.

"I spread the attack wide and shallow and applied a wide-range status effect, so I'll leave the rest to you."

Crackle—!

Conserving magic power was basic when dealing with a large number of enemies. It was an action that also showed consideration for not stealing Suho's experience points.

And his eyes, springing forward through his mother's storm-like lightning, blazed with the flames of destruction.

"Burn."

Flare! In an instant, Suho's shadow, which had already swallowed Elvenwood whole, blazed hot. At its center, he sincerely mocked the high elves.

"You dried kindling."

Whoosh—!

"How dare you!"

"Creatures who defy the will of the spirits!"

"Become our nutrients obediently!"

"Elvenwood, arise!"

It seemed like the name Elvenwood referred to the huge tree standing tall in the middle of the city. That mountain-like giant tree caused an earthquake, raising its massive roots all at once. Forest laughed maniacally in front of it.

"How ridiculous! Child of shadow!"

"We have taken over the bodies of the high elves!"

"Unless you're at least Monarch-level, we will never...!"

"That's what..." Suho grinned, revealing his teeth.

"I am."

Whoosh—!

Suddenly, a black-red energy swirled from all directions and gathered around Suho. Forest's expression changed drastically as he witnessed its true nature through the Starpieces.

"W-wait! That energy, don't tell me?!"

"Yes."

"No, but how can the child of shadow...!"

"Well, it just kinda happened."

2

[Using Skill: 'Breath of Destruction'.]

FWOOOOOOSH—!

"...!"

Being surprised by Baran's White Flames was just the beginning. The sight of the hellfire, the energy of destruction itself, stretching towards the giant tree Elvenwood in a straight line was a shock and terror beyond comprehension.

"Noooo...—!" The horrified high elves rushed towards Suho, unleashing all their power.

Reacting to them, 'Kamish's Wrath' in Suho's hands began to move. That technique was the small gift that Yoo Jinho gave to Beru before departure. The 'rune stone' that he finally extracted after thoroughly squeezing the large guilds and their wealth for Suho. The skill he learned from it was finally unleashed...

[Using Skill: 'Slaughter'.]