

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 281 - Chapter 279

Chapter 281: Chapter 279

He was insane.

Absolutely insane.

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'Does that guy even know the value of the fruit he's talking about?' Contrary to the shock the market people received, Suho was actually waiting for this moment.

'This is perfect. I've made quite a bit of money, so I was about to move on to the next stage.' Rather, he was grateful for Hasul's sudden appearance. His plan to rake in as much currency used in the market as possible was quite successful. As expected, the response was even more explosive when he introduced competition. Besides, he still had 'a lot' of bread left.

'So now it's time to sweep up other things.' And Hasul, the most famous Reaper in the city, who appeared just in time, had plenty of fruits. It was much easier and simpler than mingling with people and participating in the auction...

In the end, Hasul silently took out the 'fruits of Alfheim' from her pocket and held them out to Suho at his request. And there were...

Six of them.

Suho grinned as he accepted what she offered. "Oh my. Thank you, valued customer. Choose anything you like. You can have up to three strawberry cakes for six fruits."

Swish.

Hasul strode towards the shelves where the cakes were displayed as soon as Suho gave her permission. But although he called them cakes, they were all just slices. Unfortunately, Suho had swept up all the leftovers the bakery that was closing last night had. But Hasul began to carefully choose the pieces with the most vibrant and beautiful strawberries.

"...!" Everyone in the market was shocked at the sight.

Profiteering.

Tyranny.

And Hasul's behavior, silently accepting that absurd demand, was incomprehensible. The fruits of Alfheim were the most precious item in this city. No matter how many the Reapers had, they wouldn't exchange them for just a few pieces of bread. But Hasul, not caring about people's reactions, carefully chose three pieces of strawberry cream cake that she liked the most and put them in the plastic bag Suho handed her. And she left the market as silently as she came...

Once Hasul left, a sigh of relief swept through the market a beat later. It felt like a typhoon had passed. It was a testament to how many individuals had their necks sliced by Hasul's scythe. Anyway, people who were relieved that Hasul had left once again jumped into the competition for Suho's bread.

But Hasul's appearance, which seemed like it would end as a minor event, had already changed quite a few things. Suho, watching her retreating figure for a moment, smirked and changed the auction rules once again.

"Now, I'll change the auction rules a little. For those who have run out of money, you can now participate in the auction with the fruits of Alfheim."

"...Crazy!"

"Who would use fruits...!"

"Of course, I don't know when the price will go up again."

Pause

Suho's last words were decisive. At that moment, people realized. As long as there was bread left in Beru Baguette, And as that resource decreased, The competition would only become fiercer... Extreme scarcity. But now, it wasn't just a price war, the unit of trade itself had changed. Because of Hasul's appearance. In the end, Suho's bakery not only emptied the pockets of the market merchants but also made them take out their precious fruits.

'...I dedicate all this glory to Hasul.' And Suho,

"Beru."

[Yes, my liege.] Asked Beru in a low voice, watching the direction Hasul disappeared,

"Was she S-rank?"

[Indeed. But more importantly...] However, what Beru noticed wasn't the fact that Hasul was an S-rank villain, but the giant scythe she was carrying on her shoulder.

[I felt the energy of the outer gods from that scythe.]

Sirka also nodded in agreement. "I saw it too. That was definitely a weapon made with a starpiece. The same as the ones embedded in the high elves' eyes..."

Was she really an Enforcer? He needed to look into this.

"Beru, follow her. See what she's up to."

[Yes.] Beru immediately disappeared at Suho's command.

'And while we're at it...' Suho also gave separate orders to the other soldiers hiding in his shadow. To hide in the shadows of all the villains gathered in this market.

...And just like that, Under the vast shadow of Alfheim, Suho's own shadow began to spread throughout the paradise city without anyone knowing.

* * *

And a while later,

The executives of the Free Market Alliance finally gathered in one place. It was none other than the 'bank manager' who summoned them.

"Is everyone here?"

"..."

The bank manager clicked his tongue as he looked at the unusually gloomy faces of the fruit merchants. They were truly pathetic. Those who were always so confident and full of themselves had become like this overnight.

"...Beru Baguette."

Flinch.

All the executives flinched at that single phrase. Seeing their reactions, the bank manager sighed and said,

"Is this even possible? For the city's economy to be shaken by just one bakery?"

"..."

No matter how rare a 'bakery' was in this land, it was absurd for the city-scale economy to be jeopardized by just this. But it actually happened. Because...

"...He pulled out another container later."

That's right. It turned out that the newbie had not one, but two 'bakeries.' After the market merchants spent a considerable amount to buy the bread from the first container he took out. He suddenly summoned the second container. Everyone was shocked...

"...I don't know what kind of skill that is." Should they call him a container summoner...

But the problem at hand wasn't his title nor skill.

"That newbie swept up too much money in just one day."

"And he disappeared without spending a single penny."

Yes. That was the issue. There was no problem with someone earning a lot of money. That was the purpose of the market in the first place. But if he only earned money and didn't spend it, holding onto it, it became a big problem. The economy of this city was practically maintained by 'debt,' not money. No matter how much the debtors wanted to repay their debts, if there was no money itself, only the interest would continue to increase. And no one wanted the result of the debtors going bankrupt and exploding with their debts unpaid. Even the bank didn't want that. If all the debtors went bankrupt, the bank would also collapse.

"...At this rate, within a few days, the city's currency circulation will be severely contracted, causing major disruptions in transactions. As you all know, the amount of currency circulating in our city is very limited, and if that much money is tied up in one place, there won't be enough for other people's transactions, inevitably shrinking the market." Everyone nodded at the bank manager's lengthy speech. This city, with its small market size, was inevitably sensitive to such changes.

"And if transactions decrease due to lack of currency, prices will also..."

Mr. Park, the fruit merchant, who couldn't stand the seemingly endless lecture, finally spoke up. "Bank Manager, do we really need to worry about that now? Wouldn't that newbie eventually spend the money if we wait a little?"

"And how long will that be?" The bank manager glared at him with sharp eyes and retorted,

"First and foremost, when would that newbie alone spend all that money? No, does he even need anything? He even earned a lot of fruits at the end, what else would he need here?"

"..."

That's right. Actually, they all knew. What people needed to live was 'food, clothing, and shelter.' Here, 'clothing' meant armor. Not clothes to adorn, but armor to protect oneself. And realistically, there was no way to solve this because of the unique circumstances of North Korea. They had to procure it themselves. They had to fix the armor they were wearing before coming to North Korea.

Next was food. This usually meant magical beast meat or fruits. And the fruits of Alfheim. That was why things were so complicated today. Because of the sudden appearance of the bakery.

And the last one was 'shelter.' Lodging. The citizens of this city didn't have the concept of 'owning a house.' Everything was monthly rent. No, to be precise, it was 'daily rent.' Since they didn't know when they would die, all the lodgings in the city charged their guests daily.

"How about telling people to charge him a higher price for lodging?" Mr. Choi offered a good suggestion.

But that was the biggest problem. The bank manager's gaze swept over the executives of the alliance and asked sharply, "That's a good idea. So, does anyone know where that guy is now? Which lodging is he staying at?"

"..."

"Didn't you say you lost track of him as soon as he left the market after selling all the bread?"

"..."

That's right. He disappeared last evening, and he disappeared again tonight. He was truly elusive. A real ghost of a guy.

"Could it be related to that container skill...?"

"Maybe he's hiding somewhere and sleeping in that container that was filled with bread." The bank manager clicked his tongue in annoyance at someone's uncertain mutter.

"Then you should at least find that container! It would be a jackpot for you if you run into him outside the market!"

"...The Hunter Guild is already searching the entire city. We've also put out a separate request to the skilled ones."

The bank manager's words hit the nail on the head. Indeed, that newbie was practically a walking treasure chest. Today, that guy's container would be filled with shiny coins

instead of all that bread. And since the use of force was allowed outside the market, whoever found and killed him first would become the owner of that vast fortune. Of course... the problem was what would happen next.

They all knew what would follow. Whoever caught him first would eventually be caught and killed by someone else. Then the money would go to someone new, and that person would also be caught and killed by someone else... An endless massacre would unfold in the city. This was literally a city of villains. In the end, the money would either end up in the hands of the strongest villain or the strongest faction, and only then would the incident be over. ...And all those outcomes were the worst for the city. No, it was a catastrophe.

"It doesn't matter who that newbie is caught and killed by anymore. The city's balance has already begun to crumble." A sigh escaped his lips.

The most absurd thing in all this was that this whole thing started with an incident caused by just one person in a single day. As the bank manager, who had to maintain the balance of the city, he couldn't help but sigh.

"Hmf. In the end, the best way is... to make the money he has flow back into the market. We have to make him spend that money somehow. Whether through the bank or other means." Yes. This was the best the bank manager could come up with.

"First of all, none of us gathered here have proper knowledge or banking experience. We just created this system to survive. The economic system we built is standing on a precarious balance that could collapse at any moment."

"..."

That's right. None of them had anticipated a situation like this. No... Actually, they all already knew that no matter how much they boasted about manipulating the city's market economy, their true nature would be revealed when something like this actually happened. No matter how much they acted high and mighty, they were just ordinary murderers who were chased and chased by the Association and eventually fled to North Korea. Rather than discussing difficult market logic or balance, they were people who were most comfortable just catching and killing someone.

"So what are we going to do?" Mr. Choi, unable to bear it any longer, finally spoke up.

"What you're saying, Bank Manager, is to find that guy and make him spend money, right? Even if it means using some drastic measures."

"Hmm. Drastic measures... That's a very good idea." As if waiting for those words, the bank manager's eyes gleamed like a snake's. And he shrugged with a hypocritical expression as he glanced at the other executives of the alliance.

"I never imagined something like this, but would it really be okay? Only this time, of course." The executives of the alliance inwardly gritted their teeth at his shameless expression.

'This snake-like bastard.'

'He was waiting for us to say it first.'

The bank and the Free Market Alliance never crossed the line they drew. That was the rule, the secret to how this city precariously maintained its balance. But to make an exception this time, regardless of the city's crisis or whatever, was practically ignoring the existence of the alliance. As the atmosphere ripened to his liking, the bank manager clasped his hands and said with a satisfied smile,

"Alright. Then according to your opinions..." It was then...

The door suddenly burst open, and a debtor rushed in.

"Bank Manager! It's terrible!"

"What? What's going on?" The bank manager turned his head with an annoyed expression, and the debtor shouted urgently,

"B-Beru! That newbie...!"

1

"Don't tell me! You found him?!" Everyone at the table was startled and jumped to their feet. But the debtor's answer was absurd.

"Th-that's... We found him, but he came on his own."

"What? Where?!"

"To the bank. He came to buy fruits."

"...What? Fruits?" The bank manager's expression hardened at those words.

'Don't tell me that guy?'

The debtor, intimidated by the bank manager's fierce gaze, replied nervously, "Yes. H-he asked how many fruits he could buy with the money he has..."

"..."

'Ah, I see.' A madman. The bank manager became certain at that moment.

Beru, that guy was definitely a madman.

"S-stop him! Go and stop him now!"

The bakery villain who appeared in the market was now targeting the fruits stored in the bank!

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CREATORS' THOUGHTS



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His breath caught in his throat. The bank manager ran and ran. He sprinted through the city at a breakneck pace. Towards the bank where Suho appeared!

Thud! Crack! Bang! Bang!

His legs, taut beyond reason, kicked off the ground, cutting through the wind. The ground he stepped on caved in. All the citizens of this city were Awakened. The bank manager was also a B-rank villain. But it was the first time since 'that day' that he ran this fast. The moment he heard that Suho appeared at the bank, the hair on his body stood on end like that day.

'I have to stop that bastard!' He was impatient. Were the employees handling things calmly? He was worried. He hadn't trained them for a situation like this. He felt uneasy relying solely on the employees' discretion.

'...Should I just ignore the rules and kill him with a joint attack?'

Crunch!

As killing intent surged, a red aura spread through his body along his bulging veins. In any case, the bank manager was also a villain. Rather than racking his brains, it was much easier to just kill someone and be done with it.

And, he arrived.

Bang!

The bank manager, who arrived at the bank in an instant, kicked the door open and entered.

"B-Bank Manager..." An employee's eyes widened as he saw the bank manager, who was unusually disheveled. His face was pale.

'What? What happened?!' The bank manager, catching his breath, quickly surveyed the office. A chaotic atmosphere. A desolate air lingered as if a storm had just passed. And at the center of it...

'Money!' The bank manager's eyes widened. A tremendous amount of money! A massive pile of coins was stacked before the employees, flaunting an overwhelming presence. The money they were discussing with the alliance executives just moments ago had been recovered to the bank on its own. But instead of rejoicing, the bank manager hurriedly passed by the pile and checked the most important fruit warehouse first. It... was wide open.

"...These fucking bastards." Confirming that the warehouse was empty, he gritted his teeth and looked back.

Whoosh—!

In an instant, his arm stretched forward and grabbed an employee's neck at terrifying speed. It was the staff member closest to the 'money.'

"...G-Gasp!" The deputy manager, whose neck was caught in the bank manager's hand, choked and desperately struggled with his feet. And the arm that was easily lifting him...

Surprisingly, instead of human muscles, numerous vines were intertwined and wriggling like tentacles. Like... the branches of Alfheim.

"Speak." The bank manager spoke in a chilling voice to the terrified employees,

"Tell me what happened here immediately." Madness flickered in his bloodshot eyes.

* * *

A little while ago.

At the sudden appearance of Suho, who walked into the bank, all the employees and the citizens who visited for requests and debts were greatly agitated.

"I-is that...?"

"Could it be?"

Murmurs sounded. Because Suho came with a huge bundle slung over his shoulder. Receiving all those gazes, he walked towards the bank counter. People unconsciously stepped back and cleared the way for him. Thanks to what happened at the market this morning, there was no one in this city who didn't know about Suho. Even those who weren't at the market knew the pseudonym 'Beru,' even if they didn't know his face. And there was no one here who couldn't recognize that the guy who appeared at the bank with such a huge bundle was the main character of that rumor. In this land, a clueless villain couldn't survive.

Rustle—

'...!'

As Suho opened the bundle he was carrying on his shoulder before the bank employee, Everyone's jaws dropped at the brilliant light of the coins inside.

'Crazy.'

'No way, no way...!'

'Is that all the money he earned in just one day?!'

It was truly overwhelming! For any citizen of this city, greed should have been the first thing that came to mind when they saw someone's money. But the amount Suho took out was so astonishing that it surpassed even greed.

"I'm here to buy fruits."

"Th-that..." The bank employee was flustered by Suho's straightforward request and the sudden dazzling light before his eyes. Then, the deputy manager, who was behind him, quickly pushed him aside and skillfully responded to Suho.

"Hello, customer! If it isn't Mr. Beru, who came to the city last night! You said you want to buy fruits?"

"Ah, yes. How many fruits of Alfheim can I buy with this much money?"

"Hmm. Are you sure? This much... It will be difficult to store the fruits if you buy them all..."

"It's fine."

"Is it really necessary to buy so many fruits at once? It will be inconvenient to store them, why don't you deposit this money in the bank and receive fruits only when you need them..."

"I need them now."

"..." The deputy manager couldn't say anything at Suho's firm will. He glanced down and estimated the amount of coins gleaming before his eyes.

'With this money...'

Gulp.

Actually... anyone could tell, not just the employee. No... everyone in the bank knew for sure.

'With that much, he can buy all the fruits in the bank and still have some left...'

'Did he come to rob the bank?'

2

...this-this was no different from a bank robbery. But this bank robber was trying to rob the bank's warehouse fair and square with a massive amount of money as his weapon instead of guns and knives.

"Ahem, ahem!" The bank employee, responding to Suho under everyone's gaze, coughed and desperately racked his brain.

'Damn it. For the bank manager to be away at a time like this.' And it had to be because he went to meet the alliance executives to solve the problem of this 'Beru' who appeared before them.

'For now... Let's stall. The bank manager will be back soon.' He desperately maintained a relaxed expression and continued the conversation.

"Haha, Mr. Beru! You're truly amazing! I heard rumors that you made a lot of money at the market today, and as the rumors say..."

"Fruits."

"Ah, yes! Of course, I'll give them to you! But..."

"Fruits."

"..."

This was bad. Nothing worked. No matter what he said, Suho just calmly pointed at the price list of the fruit on the wall and repeated his purpose for coming here.

"Bring them all. I have plenty of money."

"..."

"The bank needs this money too, doesn't it?" The deputy manager closed his eyes tightly at those last words.

'...He knows everything.' This guy wasn't just acting on a whim. He came here knowing their situation. And all the villains, no, the Hunters, who visited the bank were watching their conversation with interest. The bewildered look in their eyes gradually disappeared, and greed began to creep in.

'With that much money...'

'We can get a good share.'

Gulp.

Their mouths watered. Just like when they saw Beru Baguette at the market. Just as the use of force was prohibited in the free market, it was the same in the bank. But from the moment they stepped out of the bank's door, it was a lawless zone. No matter what kind of transaction that Beru guy made here, he would become their target the moment he stepped outside. Now that they had seen that money with their own eyes, There were no surprises.

'First, we'll all attack and kill him.'

'And then we'll split the money.'

A strong desire was burning in the eyes of the Hunters as they exchanged glances. And the deputy manager could clearly see their thoughts.

'If I refuse this money here, it will go to those guys the moment he steps outside.' And that could lead to the collapse of not just the bank, but 'Paradise' itself. But handing over all the fruits in the warehouse to this crazy guy named Beru would also lead to the same ending. It was truly a dilemma.

'There's no choice. I'll use my discretion.' He finally made up his mind.

Rip!

The deputy manager, who was dealing with Suho, suddenly stepped to the side and tore off the price list of the fruits that was attached to the wall.

"...?"

While everyone was puzzled, The deputy manager answered Suho with a firm expression,

"I'm very sorry, but the price of the fruit has just gone up."

"Suddenly?" Suho tilted his head and looked at him.

"Yes, it has, so please understand."

"So how much is it?"

"Ten times the market price."

"...?!" At his shocking declaration, the eyes of the other villains in the bank widened, even more so than when Suho appeared.

"What? Did you hear what that bastard just said?"

"What the hell is that crazy guy talking about?"

Their blatant killing intent poured out towards the deputy manager, but his expression didn't waver as he stared at Suho.

"...Mr. Beru, you may not know this yet, but in this city, we, the bank, manage the money and fruits. We have the authority to change the price of the fruit as we see fit for the safety of the citizens and the balance of the city."

Yes.

A rule was a rule. He wasn't wrong. The price of the fruit did change frequently. And it was the bank that set the price. But suddenly raising the price tenfold like this crossed the line. Everyone in the city needed the fruit.

'But what if I do this?' The deputy manager spoke with determination. His plan was to reverse what Suho did at the market today. In short, it was 'abuse of power.'

"In that sense, we have decided to sell the fruit at ten times the market price only to you, Mr. Beru, from now on."

"Hmm?" Suho's brow furrowed, and

"Of course, other citizens can still purchase at the original price."

"...Oh?"

Now things were different. The villains' lips curled up simultaneously. All their dissatisfaction disappeared in an instant. As public opinion changed, the deputy manager smiled triumphantly and drove the wedge further.

"I, the deputy manager, will take full responsibility for this. However, I'm only concerned for your safety, Mr. Beru. This is a city of villains. It's too dangerous to carry this much money without depositing it in the bank." He grinned. Good. Even the justification was perfect.

'Now, what are you going to do?' He waited for Suho's answer with a meaningful smile. The stage was perfectly set. There were now only two options left for this arrogant newbie.

'Buy the fruit at ten times the price and leave all this money at the bank.'

'Or try to save some money and take it outside, only to be killed by those hungry Hunters!'

Brilliant. His own genius in handling the situation impressed the deputy manager.

But why?

Why was that guy... smiling?

"Hmm. I see. Alright." Even after suffering such biased and absurd price manipulation, Suho remained calm. He nodded obediently without any sign of frustration or discomfort.

'What? Is he bluffing?' But they soon realized that it wasn't a bluff. Suho didn't argue with the bank employee's decision at all and just turned his gaze behind him. And he spoke to all the villains who were staring at him.

"You all heard, right? That the fruit is ten times more expensive only for me, and the price remains the same for you."

"Heh."

Sneers could be heard from everywhere. Was there anyone here who didn't hear that? However, the problem was what came next. Suho chuckled and announced to all the villains in the bank who were watching him,

"From now on, I'll buy any fruit you bring me at twice the market price."

"...What?" The bank employee's triumphant smile faltered. The villains who heard that also doubted their ears.

"Wh-what is that guy saying..."

Suho drove the wedge further, "Ah whatever, since I have a lot of money, let's make it five times."

1

"...?!"

'W-wait? What's this?' The deputy manager didn't even have time to panic.

"Now, begin."

1

"...Uwaaaaaaaaaaaa!" As soon as Suho finished speaking, all the villains in the bank rushed towards the bank employees.

"Fruits!"

"I'll buy fruits!"

"Me first!"

All miscellaneous thoughts disappeared from their minds. If they could just buy fruits, the money they had would be multiplied by five; how could they resist?

"You know this is only until I run out of money, right?" As Suho added fuel to the fire, it became a first-come, first-served battle.

"Give it to me! Now! Give me the fruits!"

"W-wait! Just a moment, everyone!"

"Please calm down...!"

This was practically a revolt. The rioters with money began to grab the bank employees by the collar and pester them.

Only to resell the fruits to Suho!



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It was an obvious choice.

"I'll buy fruits!"

"Give me the fruits now!"

"Fruits!"

Even if they killed 'Beru' outside the bank and stole all the coins, it was clear that those who remained would fight over the coins again. And it was virtually impossible to avoid getting hurt in that process. In other words, they would eventually have to come back to the bank, bleeding, to buy fruits. Then what would be left? Only the bank would benefit. Compared to that, what about the other option? To get that huge pile of coins gleaming before their eyes? All they had to do was buy the fruit at the regular price and resell it at five times the value; how could they resist?

"Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

"Fruits!"

"Give me the fruits!"

They were no different from rioters. Madness could be felt from the villains who were scrambling to pressure the bank employees into selling them fruits. The citizens of this city were already brainwashed by debt and coins. They wouldn't hesitate to kill to pay off their debts or to get coins...

Just killing? First and foremost this was a city of villains. Especially the debt-ridden Hunters wearing bomb chokers, they blatantly threatened the bank employees with killing intent, grabbing them by the collar.

"What are you doing! Hurry up and bring them out!"

"What's the problem with me buying fruits from the bank with my own money!"

"How much more loan can I get?!"

"Yes! Let's get some loans while we're at it!"

"Give them to me! Now!"

They didn't hesitate to buy fruits, even by taking out loans. If they resold it immediately, the money would be multiplied by five, so what was the problem? With such a guaranteed investment, how many people would refuse a loan?

"W-wait!"

"Just a moment!"

The bank employees couldn't help but panic at their explosive momentum. But there was no other way. Of course, they could refuse the transaction under the pretense of maintaining the city's balance, but if they restricted the purchase of the essential fruit for survival in this apocalypse, all the villains in the city might riot. If it was just 'Beru' alone, it would be fine, but if all the villains in the city rose up, there was no way for the bank to subdue them.

'That crazy bastard...' The deputy manager, with a defeated look, looked blankly at 'Beru,' who was leisurely watching this chaotic scene beyond the crowd. And...

* * *

...Crack—!

The bank manager, after hearing the whole story, snapped his employee's neck and killed him. The deputy manager died without even screaming. And then something amazing happened.

Whoosh—!

The bank manager's 'root,' which was made of hard bark and wriggling vines instead of an arm, began to suck the red energy from the dead deputy manager's body.

Thud!

The corpse, devoid of life like a withered tree, rolled powerlessly on the floor. The expression on the bank manager's face as he stomped on the remaining shell of the corpse with his foot was, surprisingly, 'satisfaction.'

"Ugh. You little shit, you ate a lot. Did you steal fruits behind my back?"

Hiccup.

Someone hiccuped. The faces of the employees who had a history of secretly stealing fruits from the warehouse turned pale at the bank manager's words. As far as they knew, the bank manager's awakening rank was only B-rank. But at the same time, he was the bank manager who ate the most fruits of Alfheim in this city. They didn't know what would happen or how strong they would become if they ate that many fruits. Alfheim itself was an unknown existence. They couldn't understand what effect it had on the body until they tried it themselves. But there was one thing. They knew that the bank manager was most wary of anyone eating more fruits than him.

Rustle.

His arm, which had turned into vines, returned to its original state. The bank manager nonchalantly stroked his hand, which had returned to its normal skin color, and asked the employees, who were trembling in fear,

"So, where is he?"

"Th-that... He disappeared again. Suddenly, as soon as he stepped out of the bank."

"Then what about the others who were here?"

"They all resold the fruits to him and scattered."

"Well, that's understandable. They would have made a lot of money thanks to him, so they'll probably hide and be wary of each other for a while. Haa, this is troublesome." The bank manager, who regained his composure after venting his anger and feeling a sense of fullness, organized his thoughts for a moment.

"Hmm. First, we need to refill the empty warehouse. If rumors spread that the bank doesn't have any fruits, the debtors will attack us."

1

Gulp... The employees' expressions became determined. The reason why the bank could exist as a bank in this lawless wasteland was thanks to the 'fruit.' No matter how much the debtors were struggling with debt. No matter how much they were threatened with death every day with bomb collars around their necks and treated like slaves, The reason why they could never challenge the bank's authority was that the bank stored the 'fruits.'

With all the fruits that healed all wounds gathered in this place, what madman would try to rob the bank just to earn some money? While everyone else could be easily killed, the bank employees who possessed the fruits were practically holding countless spare lives in the warehouse. But the situation was completely different now.

'The fruits are gone.'

'But instead, there's a mountain of money.'

...A bank without fruits, only money. Truly the worst. Was there a better situation to provoke the debtors?

1

"Everyone, be prepared for a raid. The debtors might attack if the rumors spread."

"...?!"

All the bank employees, who had been terrified, now had determined expressions. He wasn't joking. They had just experienced the momentum of the rioters who screamed for fruits. But that was nothing. Their goal then was to earn money, not to repay their debts. But how many debtors had they squeezed dry with the bait of debt? If all of them in this city found out about this situation, they would turn into bank robbers in an instant.

"And spread false rumors in the city as soon as possible. That the bank actually has another fruit warehouse."

"Y-yes."

"We have to buy time. Time to refill the warehouse with fruits." The employees began to move busily at the bank manager's orders.

"And summon the Reapers as secretly as possible. Tell them we'll double the reward for fruit harvesting for a few days. We have enough money thanks to that damned bastard."

"Ah, I underst..."

"If you understand, move quickly!"

"Y-yes!"

"...No, wait." The bank manager suddenly turned his head towards the window, feeling an ominous sensation.

Thud! Thud! Thud...

He could feel a faint vibration from under his feet.

"Don't tell me already...?"

Something was ominous. His expression hardened. No, that couldn't be. This was way too fast. Considering the size of this city, there was no way rumors could have already spread to the debtors.

'Even if the rumors spread, it's impossible for everyone to hear about it already. It's still too early for them to gather and attack...' But...

Ominous premonitions were always right.

"...Damn it. Everyone, stop what you're doing and grab your weapons!"

"...!"

The bank employees were startled and hurriedly grabbed their weapons at the bank manager's sudden shout. And then they also saw what he was looking at.

Thud! Thud! Thud...!

Far away, outside the window... Countless debtors were swarming towards them. With bomb chokers around their necks.

"H-how already...?!"

This was absurd. Even if there were many Hunters who earned five times their money and returned here, this was way too fast! But... They couldn't ever imagine that under the feet of the debtors who were rushing towards the bank with weapons, there were 'shadows' spreading rumors in real-time.

[Hey, did you hear? The bank ran out of fruits.]

[Ah, no way.]

[No, it's true! That bakery villain who appeared in the market earlier bought all the fruits from the bank.]

[What, really?! Then the bank right now...!]

[Doesn't have any fruits!]

[What? Then isn't this our chance?]

[What are you waiting for? I heard others already left, saying it's a chance to get revenge on those bank bastards!]

[How long do we have to live as their slaves?]

[Yes, that's right. We escaped to North Korea, do we have to become slaves to capitalism here too?!]

The identity of those voices was the numerous shadow soldiers that Suho planted in the shadows of the people gathered at the market this morning. And at this moment, the rumors about the bank were spreading throughout the city, following people's shadows.

"Damn it! What's going on?!" The bank manager couldn't believe it.

The situation in the city, which had been peaceful until now, had become like this in just one day. He had no choice but to resort to his last hope. When the city reached this state, there was only one thing to do.

"Block them somehow! I'll come up with something, so buy as much time as possible!"

"Y-yes!" The bank employees responded to his orders. And as if on cue, they began to draw out the energy of the 'fruits' they had eaten.

Crackle—!

Their skin instantly hardened like bark. Even if it wasn't to the extent that the bank manager showed, the bank employees gathered here were those who had consumed the most fruits in the city. And they could easily learn how to use this power from the bank manager's demonstration a while ago. It seemed like they could buy some time with this much power, as the bank manager ordered. Their defense increased as their skin hardened. But none of them knew what the bank manager was planning to do now.

Crack—!

The bank manager tore up the bank floor in front of everyone. And the 'vault' hidden underneath was revealed.

'A secret vault?'

'There was a vault we didn't know about?'

'Don't tell me the fruits are in there?'

'Or weapons?'

The first thing that came to mind were the fruits, but what the bank manager took out after opening the secret vault wasn't any of that.

'A stone tablet?'

It was a small stone tablet with strange patterns engraved on it. While everyone was puzzled, the bank manager gritted his teeth and gripped the stone tablet.

"Just hold them off. In the meantime, I'll... go buy fruits from another city."

"...?!"

The bank employees' eyes widened. This city was the last villain's paradise left in 'North Korea.' But... villains' cities didn't exist only in North Korea. Although they had only heard rumors, there were villains who escaped to avoid the Association into China and Russia...

"Huu. I'd rather die than ask those guys for help, but I have no choice. I'll have to go to either China or Russia and buy at least a few hundred from whoever sells the fruits cheaper." Again, thanks to that damned bastard, they had plenty of money. The bank manager sighed and activated the stone tablet.

Whoosh—

As the red energy emanating from the bank manager's hand made the stone tablet flash, the space before him distorted, and a 'Gate' opened.

* * *

At that time.

"Association President, we have a message."

"Oh?" Somebody approached Woo Jinchul, who was taking a breather on the pile of magical beast corpses. The Hunter handed him a walkie-talkie along with a water bottle.

"Thank you. I was thirsty."

Woo Jinchul gulped down the water and turned on the walkie-talkie. It looked old, but it was a state-of-the-art device that maintained communication even in this foggy apocalypse.

Static—

Static—

And a calm voice came from the walkie-talkie after a moment.

— Reporting. This is the Shadow of Paradise. An anomaly has occurred. A riot broke out in the city. It's because of a villain named 'Beru' who first arrived in the city yesterday...

"Pfft!" Woo Jinchul, who was leisurely listening to the report, suddenly spat out the water in his mouth in surprise.

The Hunter who brought the walkie-talkie couldn't help but be even more nervous at his visibly flustered appearance. Association President Woo Jinchul, who always calmly and coldly controlled everything... was this flustered?

'Just how serious is the situation on the other side of the walkie-talkie! No, wait. Is he laughing now?' The Hunter was momentarily confused. Woo Jinchul pushed up his black sunglasses and asked into the walkie-talkie,

"You're saying 'Beru' appeared there?"

3

Woo Jinchul's lips curled up into a grin as if he hadn't been flustered at all.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 284 - Chapter 282

Chapter 284: Chapter 282

An emergency alert was issued in the city.

Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

"Wh-what?!"

"Are those debtors crazy?"

"What's gotten into them?"

Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud—!

In Just one day. The peaceful city of Paradise was suddenly thrown into chaos in a single day. The market guys were making a fuss this morning, And now the debtors, consumed by madness, were charging towards the bank all at once.

Flash—

Kaboom—!

The debtors' momentum was ferocious as they wielded their weapons and unleashed their magic power. They still had the Credit Chokers that had been binding them around their necks. And even now, the LED numbers on the neck bands were counting up, as the interest was gradually increasing.

"Don't they value their lives?"

"Knowing that the bomb on their necks could explode at any moment!"

The citizens of the city couldn't help but panic at the sight. But they also knew... The Credit Chokers didn't explode at any time. They only exploded when one couldn't repay their debts. As long as they paid the interest on time, even the bank, boasting its mighty power, couldn't explode the device at will. Those debtors knew that fact well, so they could attack the bank so recklessly. But why didn't they do this before, even though they knew that? It was because they were scared, of course. More precisely...

"Aren't they scared of the bankers' fruits?"

The bank, which possessed a lot of Alfheim's fruits in this land where Healers were scarce, was truly invincible. How could they fight those who could instantly recover from exhaustion and heal from injuries just by eating the fruits piled up in the warehouse? Especially when they were determined to defend the bank like this, those bankers became immortals. Of course, if they kept fighting, they might win somehow. They could push through with greater power and numbers. But what would be left then? If they were injured during the battle, it would be an issue. But there was a more fundamental problem...

"If the bank disappears, where will they repay their debts?"

That's right. Even if the bank disappeared, the debt wouldn't. Instead, with nowhere to repay the debt, the interest would only increase with time. And boom! ...In the end, their heads would explode, and they would all die. But...

"...That sounds fun." Someone muttered.

The citizens next to him also began to watch the battle between the rioting debtors and the bank employees with smirks on their faces. That's right. This was a city of villains. If they were good people who cared about the lives of debtors, they wouldn't have been chased by the Association and fled to North Korea.

"Hey! Put some more effort into it!"

"You're losing ground!"

"Hang in there like a bulldog!"

There were even citizens cheering for their rampage. But they didn't truly want them to win.

Kaboom!

"Puhaha! One of them died!"

"How stupid! He should have blocked the choker, not the leg!" Laughter erupted at someone's death.

The debtors had a fatal weakness. The choker, it exploded if they tried to forcibly remove it or if it received a certain amount of external impact. The bank employees, knowing this, were attacking the debtors' chokers whenever they saw an opening. It was a very wise decision to overcome their overwhelming numerical disadvantage. And then the citizens, who were watching, began to notice something strange.

"Huh?"

"Why are the bankers' wounds..."

The bankers were accumulating more and more injuries as time passed. But none of them retreated to eat the fruit.

"Wait, don't tell me...?"

"Was that rumor true?"

The citizens' eyes changed. The debtors, who had long been tormented by the bank and filled with resentment, turned into rioters as soon as they heard the 'rumor,' but the citizens without debt inevitably received the rumor later. There was no reason for the ordinary people to suddenly become bank robbers just because they heard the rumor that the bank's warehouse had run out of fruits. But what if that rumor was true...?

"...Oh my, now things are different."

Lick.

"You're right. Heh."

The citizens who were just watching with their arms crossed began to salivate one by one.

"If that rumor is true, should I join in?"

"It seems like those guys are getting tired..."

No one in this city hated money. Even those who weren't debtors wanted more of it. And if the bank collapsed? It would actually be a good thing for ordinary citizens who didn't have chokers.

"Even if this city falls, the Enforcers will build another one."

"It's much more profitable to just take the money and move to another city."

To make matters worse, Even the citizens without debt turned into rioters. It was very unfortunate news for the bank employees who were increasingly exhausted from dealing with the debtors.

"A-are these guys all on drugs?!"

"Why are they like this today?!"

The bank employees gritted their teeth and mustered all their strength. Fortunately, they also had a last resort against the rioters. The ability to draw out the energy of the fruits they had eaten. They instinctively realized this the moment they witnessed the bank manager killing the deputy manager.

Crack—!

The bank employees' hands pierced through the chests of the dead debtors and grabbed their hearts.

Whoosh—!

And they sucked the power of the fruit accumulated in those hearts with their fingers. Like the roots of a tree absorbing nutrients from the surroundings.

Rustle—

"Ugh. Delicious. This really works?"

"Tsk. This bastard only ate five fruits." They could even tell the exact number of fruits that debtor had eaten.

And in proportion to that number, the injuries accumulated on the bank employees' bodies were healed. The remaining energy even amplified their strength. The bank employees grinned as they looked at their fingers, which had become hard and cracked like tree roots, wriggling grotesquely. Even if they looked like this, the effects were amazing.

"Wh-what is that?" The eyes of those attacking the bank widened at the sight of the grotesquely transformed bank employees.

But their surprise was short-lived. First of all, was there anyone in this city who hadn't eaten a single fruit? Now, not just the bank employees, but also other citizens instinctively realized the ability they possessed.

"Ah, that. I think I can do that too."

"Me too."

A strange light flickered in the eyes of the debtors who were attacking the bank employees. And without prompting, they scattered and tore open the chests of the nearby corpses, grabbing their hearts.

Whoosh—!

"Kyaa! It really works!"

"This is awesome! It's more efficient than the fruit!"

Those who joined the fray late trembled with an overwhelming sense of elation as they absorbed the power of the fruit, perhaps because they had no accumulated injuries on their bodies. They could feel the highly concentrated power within their bodies. And they realized a truth they should never have known.

"Kyahaha! What is this? I was a fool to pay money and buy fruits..."

Stab—!

"You're right."

"...?!"

The man who burst into laughter, intoxicated by the feeling of elation, suddenly widened his eyes and froze. A woman's hand, stealthily approaching from behind, suddenly pierced his back and grabbed his heart.

Whoosh—

The woman, sucking the power of the fruit from the man's heart, whispered in his ear like a devil,

"If you could have just killed anyone like this, why did you bother earning money all this time?"

"Y-you...!"

The man couldn't finish his sentence and withered away on the spot with his heart caught in the woman's hand. The bank employees who witnessed the whole scene sighed. This was truly a disaster.

"...We're all dead when the bank manager returns."

"The Enforcers might come by today."

"Should we run away now?"

Those who voiced these words were also those who lacked the ability to execute them.

Rustle—!

The quick-witted bank employees were already rushing inside the bank, scooping up money before running away. Even if a new city was built by the Enforcers, these coins would still be valuable there. There was also someone quietly watching the whole scene from afar. The Reaper, Hasul...

* * *

She didn't care what happened to the city. Because she had something very important to do now. Strawberry cake. There was only one piece left of the cake she bought at the market this morning. This was important. Should she eat the strawberry on top first? Or should she save the strawberry until the very end and eat it in one bite?

1

...Gulp.

Hasul, who had been staring intently at the last remaining strawberry cake with a serious expression, finally made up her mind. She would save it for tomorrow since it was so precious. And to turn her attention elsewhere, she decided to carry out her mission first.

Swish

Hasul jumped onto the roof of a building, holding the strawberry cake in one hand and the giant scythe in the other, still slung over her shoulder. No one noticed her presence due to the swift movements. She entered a deserted alley and took out the walkie-talkie she had hidden.

Static—

After a while, the walkie-talkie turned on, and she calmly reported the situation in the city.

"Reporting. This is the Shadow of Paradise. An anomaly has occurred. A riot broke out in the city. It's because of a villain named 'Beru' who first arrived in the city yesterday..."

Pfft—!

"...?"

Hasul tilted her head at the sudden noise from the other side of the walkie-talkie. But then she heard Association President Woo Jinchul's voice.

– You're saying 'Beru' appeared there?

Hasul's ears perked up. Was it her imagination? There was a faint hint of laughter in Association President Woo Jinchul's voice. She pondered the report she just gave and faithfully replied,

"Yes. Of course, it's probably just a random pseudonym, so it doesn't mean much..."

– No. It does have meaning. It's very meaningful information to me. Thank you very much for sharing.

"...?"

Hasul was even more bewildered by the reply. It wasn't a city riot, but just a villain's pseudonym. That was valuable? She couldn't even guess the reason... It was then.

[Was it you?]

Chill—!

A voice suddenly came from behind Hasul. She got goosebumps. Someone who could approach so closely without her noticing!

Whoosh—!

Despite her inner surprise, Hasul's body was already swinging her weapon, following her ingrained survival instincts.

Crash!

The giant scythe cut through the air in a large arc. It was a powerful attack that cleanly cut a nearby wall in half horizontally. But surprisingly, there was no one there. Like it was a ghost that had spoken.

"Who is it?!"

[Shadows are everywhere.]

"...!"

Surprisingly, the answer to Hasul's question came from under her feet. As she hurriedly looked down, a pitch-black shadow, its mouth split wide in a grin, was looking up at her from under her feet.

"Kuhk!"

Hasul swung her scythe without hesitation and cut at the shadow.

Flash!

The scythe of harvest. The scythe made of a starpiece cut through space and attacked the shadow. But...

[Insignificant.]

Thud!

"...!"

Hasul was shocked. Her attack was blocked! So... easily!

Whoosh—

Surprisingly, the shadow that was grinning at Hasul suddenly stretched out a black arm and grabbed her scythe with two fingers. And then, starting with that arm, it slowly began to rise from the ground. Hasul lost her fighting spirit at that sight.

'What is this monster...'

Immeasurable. Hasul felt a bottomless abyss for the first time. And the most terrifying thing was...

'There's no... presence.' She couldn't believe it. Even though she was clearly looking at it, it was difficult to read its presence and grasp its location. An absurd difference in level.

[I'll ask you.]

A black ant. A humanoid ant magical beast with wings, its entire body emitting black steam, narrowed its white eyes and stared at Hasul. bLifting the scythe of harvest it grabbed with two fingers from Hasul's hand.

4

[Where did you get this weapon?]

The scythe of harvest, which felt heavy even for Hasul... looked like a trivial toy to that ant magical beast with its enlarged body. It was then...

"...You're saying Beru went this way?"

[Kieek?]

Whoosh!

Suddenly, at someone's voice from afar, the presence of the creature that had completely dominated the area disappeared like a lie.

"...Huh?"

Her blocked airway cleared. And when Hasul looked ahead again...

[Kieek! My liege!]

An ant, shrunk to the size of a fist, was flying out of the alley. It had a ridiculously cute head.

3

[You couldn't wait and missed me?!]

The ant was dragging the scythe of harvest, which was relatively enormous, on the ground.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 285 - Chapter 283 Chapter 285: Chapter 283

Beru had diligently accumulated magic power by consuming the Essence Stones Suho brought him. Of course, the efficiency was still low. It was a far cry from the energy he received directly from Sung Jinwoo. But what could he do? In Beru's current situation,

he had to be grateful for even this much and live as sparingly as possible. He had to suppress the urge to use his power, even though his hands were itching. If he recklessly consumed the magic power he diligently accumulated, he would have to ask Suho for more to recharge, and that was...

For Beru, who had been carrying Suho on his back since he was a baby, it felt like taking a child's pocket money to support the household, which didn't feel good. Each Essence Stone was precious and expensive on Earth. What a nuisance it would be to ask for more. But the situation was completely different if the opponent was an apostle of the Outer Gods. A weapon made from a sparpiece. How, and where, did they gather enough of them to make a weapon?

It was a reasonable suspicion. Beru, who was secretly following the Reaper Hasul, was convinced that she was either an apostle of the Outer Gods or a closely related pawn. She was even an S-rank villain. If she really was a force of the Outer Gods, it would be a greater loss to wait for Suho and miss the opportunity. So, if necessary, he was even willing to consume the magic power he had diligently saved to kill her himself. He could kill her to prevent her from escaping, and then either turn her into a shadow soldier or directly devour her brain to extract the memories. But fortunately, that didn't happen.

[Kieek! My liege!]

It was fortunate for both Beru and Hasul.

[You couldn't wait and missed me?!]

At the appearance of Suho, who came to the alley where Beru entered, he instantly shrank. If Suho was here, he could leave it to him. The best-case scenario would be to kill Hasul with Harmakan's help and gain experience points.

"...You are?" Hasul, overwhelmed by Beru's sudden presence, recognized Suho, who appeared just in time, and her eyes widened.

"The bakery?"

1

He was the bakery owner she saw at the market this morning. But why did he suddenly appear here? And why was that black ant magical beast clinging to that man and acting cute? No, was it just acting cute? Looking again, it seemed like it wasn't pretending, but being genuinely affectionate. In any case, in that moment of confusion,

Bzzzzzz.

– ...Did something happen there?

A voice came from the walkie-talkie in her hand. Hasul quickly stepped back and spoke into the walkie-talkie,

"That..." But she couldn't utter more. Perhaps due to the lingering pressure from the ant magical beast, she couldn't even organize her thoughts. It was then...

Swish—

"Ah?!"

The walkie-talkie in Hasul's hand suddenly floated in the air as if snatched by an invisible hand. It flew through the air and landed in the bakery owner's palm. She couldn't help but be surprised.

'Magic...' Strange. She couldn't feel even the slightest flow of magic power for a skill. But this was only natural. First and foremost, the 'Ruler's Authority' was a skill that didn't consume mana, it was practically Suho's third hand that he was born with.

Bzzzz—!

— Please respond. Shadow of Paradise, what's happening there...

"Hello, Association President Woo Jinchul. This is Beru."

"...?!"

Suho suddenly greeted the other side through Hasul's walkie-talkie. He could sense a flustered reaction, but Woo Jinchul, who quickly grasped the situation, asked in a calm tone,

— Is that Hunter Sung Suho?

"Oh, you recognized me right away?"

— Of course, your voice... is exactly like your father's.

As a son grows, his voice naturally becomes more like his father's. The moment Woo Jinchul heard Suho's voice through the walkie-talkie, he felt like he was talking to Sung Jinwoo.

— Besides, as far as I know, I'm the only 'human' in this world who remembers the name 'Beru.' — A faint longing could be felt from Woo Jinchul's voice, which had a hint of laughter.

That's right. Woo Jinchul was the closest friend and colleague who spent decades with Sung Jinwoo. And at the same time, he was the human who remembered all the lost

history that had become a forgotten past. Moreover, he didn't just have personal memories related to him. He knew everything. This was because Sung Jinwoo, in the world before the Cup of Reincarnation was used, directly transmitted all the memories of the Shadow Monarch he saw, that is, the truth about the war between the Rulers and Monarchs, into Woo Jinchul's mind.

– You used that pseudonym for this purpose, didn't you?

"Ah, yes. I thought if there was anyone who recognized the name Beru, it would definitely be you, Association President."

[I-Is that so?!] Beru was surprised at those words.

[I thought you used my name because you wanted to become a great ant like me one day...] Beru was instantly disappointed. Little Suho, who diligently drew only ants with black crayons on a white drawing paper since childhood, clearly wanted to become an ant.

2

– Hmm. As expected. But is Hasul safe? She's a spy we planted in that city.

"Yes, well..." Suho glanced at Hasul as he answered.

She was standing awkwardly, unable to do anything as Suho and Woo Jinchul suddenly started talking. At the same time, she was clearly wary of Beru, who was clinging to Suho's side. For her sake, Suho suddenly took out something from seemingly out of nowhere and handed it to her.

"Here, eat this for now."

"...!" Hasul's eyes sparkled.

It was strawberry cake! And this time, it wasn't even a slice, but a proper whole cake! Hasul, who gently received it with both hands, immediately calmed down. And she finally made the important decision. To eat the last piece of cake she saved right now.

2

– More importantly, I have many questions I want to ask Hunter Sung Suho. I don't know the exact situation in the city, but if possible, could you explain a few things?

"Of course. But please speak comfortably. You're my father's friend, aren't you?"

– Haha. It's okay. I'm comfortable with formal speech. I happened to see the weakest weapon of mankind, an E-rank Hunter, saving the world, so I've contracted a disease where I can't treat anyone casually anymore.

1

"Oh dear."

Along with appropriate jokes, Suho answered Woo Jinchul's questions one by one. The first was, of course, about Sung Jinwoo. But Woo Jinchul's expectations turned into disappointment at Suho's response. Nevertheless there was still hope.

– It's truly fortunate that Hunter Cha Hae-In, CEO Yoo Jinho, and even Thomas Andre have regained their memories. Humanity has gained great strength. Are there any others? And Hunter Sung Suho, can you restore anyone's lost memories if you want? – At Woo Jinchul's most essential question, it was Beru, not Suho, who answered.

[It's not possible for everyone. Basically, it's much easier to restore the memories of those who are directly connected to the Monarch, like you. Of course, in a broader sense, all humans on Earth have been saved by the King and are indirectly connected, but it's a bit difficult to do that.]

– W-wait! Is that really you, 'Beru'?! – Woo Jinchul, who recognized Beru's voice, showed an even more shocked reaction than when he spoke to Suho.

Shadow ant, with a very satisfied and smug expression, shrugged at Suho. [See? This is how great I am.]

3

– It really was you, Beru! – A relieved sigh came from Woo Jinchul.

It was unfortunate that Sung Jinwoo wasn't on Earth, but how amazing was it that Beru was here? Woo Jinchul remembered it clearly. The Jeju Island raid where numerous S-rank Hunters put all their effort! The natural disaster-level calamity that mercilessly slaughtered all those Hunters was the magical beast, Beru. But now he had reformed and become one of Sung Jinwoo's core forces, so it was truly a tremendous gain for humanity.

– This is a relief. Truly a relief.

"...Hmm." Suho looked at the mini-sized Beru with a slightly troubled expression at Woo Jinchul's relieved reaction, who was comforted just by hearing Beru's voice.

[Kieek? Why are you looking at me like that? You can admire me as much as you want.]

"..."

Woo Jinchul, who was passionately explaining Beru's truly amazing prime to Suho, probably wouldn't even be able to imagine. This shrunken form of his.

'...I need to get more Essence Stones.' Suho made a firm resolution.

And after hearing about various things he was curious about from Suho, Woo Jinchul asked his last question.

– Anyway, so what's the current situation in that city? You instigated the citizens and caused a riot at the bank in just one day? – Woo Jinchul had already heard about what Suho did from Hasul. It was truly amazing, even thinking about it again. But the important thing at this point was the strategy going forward.

– Do you have any plans? That city is a difficult place for us to touch, so we've only planted spies and are monitoring the situation inside. – The Association Hunters led by Woo Jinchul had been wiping out the villains' cities whenever they found them.

But there was a reason why they couldn't easily touch this one. The walls... The incredibly large and tall walls surrounding the city were extremely robust barriers that wouldn't burn even with Choi Jong-In's fire attacks. And perhaps thanks to those walls, all the villains who had scattered to avoid the Association were gathering to live in this city one by one. The combined power of those villains was overwhelmingly greater than that of the Association Hunters Woo Jinchul brought from South Korea. Of course, they could somehow deal with them if they pushed themselves, but the problem was what came after. It was relatively recent that Woo Jinchul realized that even though he had destroyed the villains' cities countless times, other ones were being built in new locations.

– In the end, to fundamentally eliminate all the villains, we have to catch the Enforcers. This is also information I learned thanks to having Hasul in that city. Our people's faces are already known to the villains there, so not just anyone can pass through the gates.

Crash Bang—!

Even as they had this leisurely conversation, This city was turning into a fierce battlefield in real-time. Blood splattered, screams erupted. A gory battle where it didn't matter who was an ally or an enemy. Because the villains, who lived for their own desires, realized that they could absorb the power of the fruit by killing each other. Their blood and flesh were splattered and scattered throughout the city. But there was one thing no one noticed even now... All the withered corpses were silently melting into the ground behind everyone's back. As a result,

Rustle

"...Ah." On the outskirts of Paradise City, Sirka, who was blankly watching the villains' war from outside the secluded alley where Suho and Hasul entered, looked up at the falling leaves.

Red leaves were fluttering from the sky. Even those of Alfheim, which were green until last night, were gradually turning red. Under that beautiful scenery...

"...It smells familiar." Sirka closed her eyes and took a deep breath. She could feel the familiar winter air on the tip of her nose. She looked up at the sky and muttered,

3

"Winter is coming."

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 286 - Chapter 284

Chapter 286: Chapter 284

It was autumn.

Rustle—

The fluttering red leaves falling one by one eventually filled the entire sky.

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, warns that autumn has arrived.]

Autumn always came abruptly and left in an instant.

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, says that humans brought autumn upon themselves.]

Sillad was right. Autumn here arrived particularly fast. As if time had accelerated tenfold, the leaves that were lush green just last night were now dyed red and falling. This sight might seem wondrous and beautiful to some. But to those who knew even a little about Elvenwood, it was a terrifying spectacle. The red leaves, soaked in someone's blood... were falling because they couldn't bear the weight of that crimson. For the elves, autumn was an omen of destruction. A season to hurriedly evacuate to avoid being devoured. As it was for all the Elvenwoods that the Monarch of Frost, Sillad, experienced. The Alfheim that grew in this city also faced the same season, just with a different name.

Rustle Rustle—

Red leaves covered the entire sky and gently landed on the land that was once called paradise. The 'omen of destruction' appeared in the city where the whole world was dyed red like blood.

Whoosh—

Swoosh—!

"Keuk?!"

"Wh-what is this?!"

The roots of Alfheim, which suddenly sprouted from the red-dyed ground, began to attack the villains who were fighting amongst themselves. And...

Gulp! Gulp!

"Kuhk! Wh-what the...?!"

Sharp tentacles hidden in the ground pierced their bodies, and began to suck out their nutrients.

"W-wait! Stop attacking! Alfheim has gone mad... Kyaaa!"

Gulp! Gulp!

The villains, who were fighting amongst themselves, stopped in a panic. And they hurriedly tore off and cut the roots that Alfheim suddenly pierced their bodies with. But it was already too late...

Whoosh—!

Slash—!

Since the entire ground was covered with red leaves, they couldn't tell where the roots would sprout from. It was impossible even for villains with heightened senses. These weren't ordinary leaves...

[My liege! These leaves have a perception-impairing effect!] Beru recognized the true nature of the leaves at a glance and warned Suho.

"My senses have dulled. Did these leaves turn the entire city into a perception-impairing barrier?"

All the people in the city were suddenly trapped in a giant perception-impairing barrier. Even Suho's senses were dulled, let alone the other villains. They could only helplessly

die, pierced by the roots that sprouted from the ground. It began to take back even the power of the fruits it had fed them. The problem was that the Alfheim here was the largest and most well-grown tree Suho had ever seen. The speed at which its roots sucked out the villains' power was also terrifyingly fast.

"R-run...! Keuk!"

"Kugh...!"

The villains desperately fled from the roots, but even then, victims who withered away like mummies were appearing everywhere. As they died one by one and scattered to escape, They finally faced a shocking truth. Just like all the elves once did.

"Don't tell me all this time...?"

That's right. Alfheim was no longer on their side. It never was. Just food... They finally realized that they were nothing more than high-quality livestock that it had fattened up to consume.

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaa—!"

Screams filled the city. Red leaves falling from the sky still covered their vision. That scenery... was truly beautiful. But not everyone died in vain.

Whoosh—!

A half-moon shaped weapon cut through the air. Red leaves swirled, and the figure of the Reaper Hasul wielding a giant scythe was revealed.

"H-Hasul!"

"The Reapers...!"

Hope appeared in the eyes of the helpless villains who were running away. The Reapers, including Hasul, who had been harvesting at the bank's request, began to fight back! They had to climb the tall tree trunk every day to pick the fruits, so they skillfully dealt with the roots of Alfheim. And that was the same for the bankers who used the Reapers. They received all their salaries in fruits. Although some resold them to earn coins, they were the group who fundamentally ate more fruits than other citizens. Perhaps thanks to that power accumulated in their bodies, they had some resistance to the perception-impairing effect created by the leaves.

"Damn it! Run!"

"W-wait! Before that, those fruits...!"

Even in this urgent situation, some bankers spotted the fruits that fell among the leaves covering the ground and their eyes gleamed with greed. Having personally experienced the effects of the fruit, picking up those ownerless ones was instinctive.

"Keuhk!" Although some bankers died trying, most were diligently collecting the fruits that fell on the ground.

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, clicks his tongue.] Watching this whole series of events, Sillad felt a deep sense of sorrow.

The autumn that the elves experienced had come to humans as well. Even if they were a different race, it wasn't pleasant to see this sight again. It was then.

"...Damn it, has it already started?" The bank manager, who went to another country through the Gate, returned to this city.

Witnessing the city's situation belatedly, he gritted his teeth. He hurried as much as he could, but the Russians were greedy and delayed him. But even then, this speed was absurdly fast. Nothing happened until this morning.

'This is all because of that bastard Beru!' If he hadn't let that damned newbie into the city yesterday, this wouldn't have happened. But what could he do? There was nothing that could reverse things at this point. All he could do was to follow the natural order.

"Haa... How hard I worked to raise this place." The bank manager rubbed his face with his hands and sighed in frustration.

And he began to shove all the fruits he bought from Russia into his mouth. There were quite a few, but he didn't chew and just swallowed them whole. The bank manager's body gradually transformed. His entire skin was covered in hard bark like a withered tree, and all the muscles and fibers that made up his body split like tree branches.

"Bank Manager...!" The bank employees belatedly noticed his return and rushed towards him with joy. The bank manager, who had completely shed his human form, gave them orders with emotionless eyes,

"This place is done for. We're leaving immediately."

"Before that, let's take some of the fruits... Keuk!"

Stab—

The bank manager instantly stabbed and killed the employee who dared to interrupt him and continued speaking with a frown,

"Shut up and leave. If the Enforcers show up, we're all done for... Ah, shit." An ominous feeling suddenly washed over him. The bank manager hurriedly looked up. And there... Above the branches of Alfheim, stripped bare of all its leaves, five fruits were swelling.

"What's that?"

"Fruits?"

The bank employees, following the bank manager's gaze, widened their eyes. The size and shape were completely different from the fruits of Alfheim they knew. It was more like an 'egg' than a fruit.

"Shit, run!"

The bank manager's body sprang up like a coiled spring. It was now every man for himself. He didn't have the time to worry about others. The bank employees, seeing the manager running away without looking back, also sensed something and scattered in a panic. But it was too late.

Pop! Bang!

The abnormally swollen fruits began to explode like balloons simultaneously. And 'Enforcers' emerged from within. Although humans called them Enforcers, their true nature was neither human nor anything else.

Whoosh—!

What erupted from within was 'winter' itself. Or, as Sillad called it, a harsh winter.

Whoosh—!

Along with the sound of balloons popping, a tremendous blizzard erupted from within and swallowed the entire city. The red season instantly turned the entire world white.

"Uwaak! Bank Manager!"

"What is this?!"

"What else, it's the Enforcers! If we don't escape now, we'll all freeze to death! From now on, it's every man for himself!" With those last words, the bank manager disappeared into the blizzard. But...

"...Aak!" Hearing the manager's scream from beyond, the bank employees who were following him immediately turned around and scattered. They had caught a glimpse of something in the white blizzard! There was a giant monster holding the bank manager's head in its hand.

[Spirit of Frost]

[Spirit of Frost]

[Spirit of Frost]

[...]

The true identity of the Enforcers was finally revealed before Suho's eyes.

"Were the Enforcers spirits?"

Suho's eyes gleamed sharply. His sens stat was ringing alarm bells. Just how many nutrients had they sucked out of Alfheim all this time? It didn't feel right to simply call them spirits. Their level was completely different from those he easily defeated on his way here.

[Kieek! Don't tell me that's...?!] Beru called out to Suho with a serious expression.

While fighting alongside Sung Jinwoo in outer space, Beru was always surrounded by the Rulers' soldiers, the angels. That's why he immediately realized what was happening... How these Enforcers were born, as soon as he saw them.

[My liege! They resemble the angels being born from the fruits of the World Tree!]

"What?"

Suho's expression hardened at those words. The World Tree, rooted in the Sea of Souls, bore fruit using the souls of the dead as nutrients. And angels were born from those special fruits that contained the most energy. But to think that the Alfheim, no, the Elvenwood here was the same? The only difference was that it used bodies instead of souls as nutrients. It consumed living beings as nutrients, and the 'Spirits of Frost' were born from the most special fruits among the numerous others.

'Is Elvenwood imitating the World Tree? Or are they originally the same kind?' He was curious, but solving the immediate problem was the priority. Beru shouted, pointing at the Spirits of Frost that revealed themselves,

[Seeing this, angels are also just spirits in a broader sense! That means those Spirits of Frost are also...!]

They were on the same level as the Rulers' soldiers, the angels. Just five fruits. Only five were born, but the cold wave was enough to cover this entire area and freeze the whole world! Just then, warning messages began to appear before Suho's eyes one after another.

Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!

['Winter of Frost' has begun.]

[Debuff: 'Frostbite' is activated.]

[Movement speed is gradually decreasing.]

[Attack speed is gradually decreasing.]

[The effect of Debuff: 'Frostbite' continues to stack over time.]

It was truly a natural disaster. Like when he entered the Sea of Souls, powerful and chilling warnings were ringing. But...

Flare—!

It was different from then. Because the flames from the Dragon King's heart were blazing in Suho's entire body.

['Dragon King's Heart' negates the effect of Debuff: 'Frostbite'.]

Even in this world, Suho's body temperature was close to boiling with black-red heat. But it seemed like that fact was quite irritating to the Spirits of Frost.

Whoosh—!

[...Who is it?]

[The one who dares defy us.]

The five Spirits of Frost, who instinctively absorbed heat from all living beings with warmth since birth, simultaneously turned to Suho. As they swelled their bodies along with the surrounding blizzard, it was enough to fill the entire sky.

[We execute winter.]

Rumble—

The Enforcers. They surrounded Suho to execute the winter that was a disaster for the elves. But...

"So what do you think?" Suho was smiling. As if this was rather fortunate.

"Do they seem useful?"

Instead of answering Suho's question, Sirka said something unexpected,

Stretch—

"Haa, this is refreshing." She was stretching with a truly rejuvenated expression.

Whoosh—

In the blizzard where he couldn't see an inch ahead, The harsh winter, the curse and disaster that had always been the bane of the elves since the beginning of time, But what did that matter? Sirka was a child of winter who took her first breath and learned to walk in this cold from the moment she was born. If Suho overcame the cold with the Dragon King's heart, Sirka was the opposite.

"It feels like I've come home." She was smiling brightly, taking in the refreshing air.

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

That's right. Sillad, the first ice elf. His descendant grinned and ran towards the harsh winter without hesitation.

Lightly stepping on the blizzard.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 287 - Chapter 285

Chapter 287: Chapter 285

Whoosh—!

In the whirling snowstorm, Sirka's footsteps as she leaped from one pure white snowflake to another were light and cheerful, as if she was taking a stroll. But her speed increased rapidly, and soon she caught up to the speed of the raging blizzard.

[What the...!]

The Spirits of Frost were bewildered.

[How dare you defy us!]

Their enraged voices boomed through the blizzard. Their anger was justified. They were the Spirits of Frost, The executors of winter.

[How dare a mere elf defy winter!]

[Just accept it!]

[Submit and endure!]

Because winter wasn't something a mere creature could defy.

[That is the fate given to creations!]

Whoosh—!

The blizzard, raging from all directions, swallowed Sirka whole. White breath finally escaped Sirka's lips as she ran through the sky in the harsh cold.

[We execute winter!]

[We execute winter!]

SWOOSH—

But nothing could stop Sirka's steps. Even in that intense cold, she didn't flinch. Rather, the fiercer the blizzard, the faster she went. The pinnacle of 'Elven Footsteps'. And...

"Spirit Armament!" With each step forward, pure white snowflakes clung to Sirka's body.

Crackle—!

Giant ice armor began to form. As its size grew, she clenched her fist, and the Ice Tree Spear sprouted, transforming into a giant hammer. She swung it.

Whoosh— Crash—!

With that one blow, a tremendous explosion erupted, and the direction of the blizzard reversed.

[...!]

The Spirit of Frost, its size overwhelming enough to fill her vision, visibly faltered.

'It's working!' Sirka's eyes gleamed sharply. The giant hammer she wielded grew even larger, And she struck again.

Crash—!

The blizzard screamed. The harsh cold was mercilessly torn and scattered. Sirka's attack was that ruthless and relentless.

Crash! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

[Graaaaaaaaaaaaaah!]

The enraged Spirit of Frost's giant hand grabbed Sirka.

Whoosh!

But she broke through and struck the creature's hand, arm, shoulder, and face. It was a truly astonishing sight. The harsh winter itself, born from the fruit of Elvenwood. Sirka's figure, bravely challenging those overwhelming beings, was like a single flower that bloomed through the cold, icy ground.

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, grins, baring his teeth.]

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, urges her to dominate the spirits instead of wrestling with them.] Sillad's nagging continued. To both of them. Sirka took his advice to heart.

"Like this?"

Grab—!

Sirka leaped to the very end of the sky and finally grabbed the head of the Spirit of Frost with her hand covered in a giant ice gauntlet.

[Graaaa! How dare you—!]

The Spirit of Frost resisted. And the blizzard in the area surged, trying to throw her off. No... to push her away. But, it couldn't push her away at all. Sirka, still gripping the creature's head, was looking down at it from that dizzying height.

"Shut up and submit."

With a haughty and domineering gaze like a queen.

"You're mine now."

[...Graaaaaaaaaaaaaah!] The creature shuddered under her firm gaze, it roared and resisted. Something was wrong. This was absurd. A mere elf!

[How can a mere creature...!]

"...Defy winter?" Sirka scoffed at the spirit's resistance.

These guys were mistaken from the beginning. The reason why the former Monarch, Sillad, created a sanctuary in the land of harsh cold and allowed the elves to live on that frozen land, It was all for this moment. So that any of his descendants, whoever succeeded him among the ice elves. Would never again submit to something like winter.

"Our winter started from the moment we were born. So even if it wasn't me, but any other ice elf here... you would be nothing to us."

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, smiles with satisfaction.]

"So, kneel..." Sirka, inheriting his will, continued firmly.

Whoosh—!

Holding the creature's head with one hand, she raised the other holding the hammer high in the sky.

"If you don't want to be beaten to death." And she struck down mercilessly.

...Crash! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

2

Countless times.

Repeatedly.

Until the creature's giant body was crushed and finally lay flat on the ground.

[Kieeeeeek...]

"...That must hurt a lot." Suho and Beru, who were watching from afar, were speechless.

The children born in winter were strong. Because they couldn't survive in this place without being tough. But there were five enemies. The Spirit of Frost that Sirka was personally beating to death was just one. Then what about the other four?

[Graaaaaaaaaaaaaah!]

Whoosh—

The blizzard swirled haphazardly. Judging from the direction...

"Hmm. Don't tell me they're running away?"

[It seems so.]

The remaining four spirits were scattering in all directions from where Sirka was. But it was too overwhelming and ferocious to be simply running away in fear.

[We execute winter!]

[We execute wint...!]

[Wint...!]

Well, it seemed like they had some justification. There was no need for winter to come only to this city. But if they let them escape like that, a harsh winter would surely come to every place they passed. The result was obvious.

"If we leave them alone, the entire Earth will freeze like the world of the ice elves, right?"

[That's right.]

"And we have to catch them to level up?" Beru nodded obediently at Suho's questions

[That's right.].

But there was a reason why they could afford to be this leisurely despite knowing that.

"Harmakan."

[Yes, Master.]

Whoosh—

As if waiting, Harmakan appeared at Suho's call. Last night, when Suho went to South Korea, he brought him, even though he was researching virtual reality with Yoo Jinho. So even if he left for a while, Harmakan still had plenty to do there. Although Suho gave him a lot of different tasks, Harmakan was fundamentally a demonic spirit shaman who enjoyed researching magic. And among that, what they enjoyed the most was playing with souls. Those rare spirits were also interesting test subjects, but even Suho couldn't have anticipated that such creatures would appear. So the reason he brought Harmakan to this city was none other than this.

[It took a while to create the magic circle because of Elvenwood's leaves, but I just finished it.]

"Well done."

Boom—!

[Guwaaaaak?!]

The Spirits of Frost, who were trying to escape from Sirka, were suddenly trapped inside the city, blocked by a transparent barrier. They were bewildered and enraged.

[What is this barrier!]

[How dare you try to trap us!]

Whoosh—! Crash Bang—!

The rage of the harsh winter struck the transparent wall. The barrier surrounding the city shook violently from the tremendous attack, precariously swaying as if it would break at any moment. But despite that...

[How can this be...!]

[How can a mere spell...!]

It didn't budge.

'Instance Dungeon'

This vast barrier, the legacy of Kandiaru, also known as the The Great Spellcaster Kandiaru and a candidate for the next Monarch, tore through the dimensional gap and dragged the entire paradise city into a different world. Once trapped here, even the harsh winter couldn't break through the dimensional wall and move to another dimension. But this wasn't because Kandiaru was superior to them. His blessing 'Health and longevity' didn't work on the Debuff: 'Frostbite,'

Their levels were similar. If Kandiaru was the eternal second-in-command of the magic world, who could never surpass the King, the Monarch of Transfiguration, The Spirits of Frost were the strongest spirits that Sillad forcibly subjugated to become a Monarch. They were similar in strength. But despite that, Most of the spells that Kandiaru enthusiastically designed for just one person, the Shadow Monarch, were techniques that worked even on higher-level beings like Monarchs.

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[Graaaaaaaaaaaah!]

[Let us out now!]

[We will execute wint...!]

Grab—!

"Where do you think you're going?"

One of the Spirits of Frost that was frantically striking the transparent barrier was finally caught by the hair by Sirka, who chased it from behind.

[...?!]

The creature turned around and was horrified. It saw what had become of the spirit that was caught by Sirka earlier. A pure white snowfield! That absolute being that was the executor of winter... Was completely crushed. Lying flat under Sirka's feet. It was the ultimate humiliation for the harsh winter that should be freely blowing across the world.

[How dare you...! Guwaaaak?!]

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Submit. If you don't want to die." Of course, it was no different for the second spirit. Violence and coercion began again.

3

* * *

And in the meantime, only the villains in the city were dying.

"Ugh..."

Those who were fighting amongst themselves to devour each other eventually collapsed on the snowy field one by one, unable to withstand the cold. Like the elves who froze to death while fleeing the winter. But there was no need to mourn their deaths.

[Evil spirits who committed murder. They're my favorite ingredients.] Harmakan was smiling.

Playing with evil spirits was always fun. Especially after seeing the villains' riot and the terrible chaos today, Harmakan added a spell when creating this instance dungeon.

Ding!

[Activating Skill: 'Mirage' throughout the Instance Dungeon.]

'Mirage'

The powerful illusion magic used by the demonic illusionist Javier, whom he fought in Haeundae, which extracted and showed the most terrifying or intense moments from the target's memories. Through that illusion magic, Javier enjoyed watching the various fears hidden within the lowly human heart. But Harmakan was the Grand Chieftain of the demonic spirits, far superior to him. If Javier used the sandstorm as material for his illusion magic, Harmakan could create an even more powerful spell using the blizzard here. As a result...

– Why did you kill me?

– I begged you to spare me...

"...!"

The villains who were losing consciousness on the snowfield couldn't help but open their eyes wide in horror. Before their eyes... were the people they killed. In the form of cold corpses, covered in dried blood.

"Wh-what? How...?"

"B-but I killed them..."

The villains instinctively wanted to back away from that terrible nightmare. But their bodies, frozen in the cold, wouldn't move.

– I begged you to spare meeeee—!

"Uwaaaak!"

"S-save me...!"

They died, trapped in the nightmares they brought upon themselves.

[Level Up!]

[Level Up!]

Was it because there were many villains living in the city? Or was it because of the evil deeds they had piled up? Suho leveled up. But his gaze wasn't on the status window. Was it because the leaves that caused perception impairment were covered in snow? Now that his dulled senses had returned, he could feel something. Suho suddenly raised his head, his sharp eyes glaring at the snowy sky, and asked,

"Who are you?"

Rumble—

[The Apostle of Paradise is watching you.]

Beyond the instance dungeon, an eerie gaze was watching them from somewhere far away.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 288 - Chapter 286

Chapter 288: Chapter 286

'Skill: Mirage'

A terrifying illusion magic that extracted and showed the most terrifying or intense moment from the target's memory. Just as Javier once did, Harmakan also created this powerful barrier and trapped all the villains in the city within the white blizzard.

Of course, this illusion magic was different from Javier's because it was cast by Harmakan. Even with the same spell, the result differed depending on the caster's preference. In short, Harmakan's preference were 'evil spirits.' Therefore, this recreation of Mirage had a stronger effect on evil souls, and all the villains living in the city faced all the evil deeds they had committed. Especially murder. They now received all the resentment of the countless victims they mercilessly killed. And it goes without saying that...

The Reaper Hasul was among them.

"Ah..."

Hasul suddenly came to her senses and realized she was wearing her school uniform. She looked around in surprise, and the surroundings were still winter. But instead of a harsh blizzard, snowflakes were gently falling. And before her...

Flare—

...Was an orphanage engulfed in flames.

"...Ah."

Like the other villains, Hasul's reaction to facing her nightmare was rather calm. She couldn't help it. Recalling this moment was an everyday occurrence. How could she forget?

"...This dream again." Winter of her first year of high school. Hasul awakened. And...

She killed the orphanage director. That woman who always forced the children to smile in front of sponsors... A two-faced person who turned into a demon behind their backs. The old woman who put on an angelic smile in front of the public and then turned around and hysterically abused the children after they left. Even in retrospect, she deserved to die.

[This nightmare seems familiar.] Suddenly, a voice chuckled in Hasul's ear.

[A sob story from a villain.]

Hasul replied as if entranced by that voice, "...I'm not trying to tell a sob story. I'm just an ordinary bad bitch. I killed someone and ran away. That's all."

Ah, and she set the orphanage on fire. Because the same thing would happen again if a new director came. But she had no regrets. Even if she went back to that day, she would do the same thing. However, there was one thing. One regret...

– Choi Hasul! – She instinctively flinched at the sharp voice calling her name. The 'director' was walking towards her. Opening the door of the burning orphanage.

3

– You should have smiled more in front of the sponsors! – Shouting at her with the usual vicious look in her eyes.

"..."

But Hasul didn't back down from that nightmare. She was used to this. This nightmare has repeated every night since that day. For some reason, it was much more vivid than usual today, but it was no different.

Was that why? Perhaps because it was a more vivid nightmare than usual, Hasul asked the director with a little more courage, "...Are you alive?"

She finally asked. Hasul had always been curious. Whether the woman really died 'that day.' Or if she was rescued later and managed to cling to her life.

"I didn't check and just came here..."

That's right. The origin of this nightmare was Hasul's one remaining regret. What if that director was still alive? That possibility was a truly terrifying horror for her.

"I should have checked..." Regret always came late.

Not many people could kill someone as soon as they awakened to superpowers. Hasul was one of them. So instead of killing the director directly, she chose to burn the orphanage. After evacuating her younger siblings, she set fire to the director's office. She didn't have the courage to kill her directly. She didn't even have the courage to go back and confirm the director's death.

Because she was scared. No matter how much she awakened to her powers, the moment she faced the director, she would surely freeze like a deer in headlights. And whenever she felt this way, Hasul had a phrase she compulsively muttered. Words she said to comfort her younger siblings who came to her every night in tears, and to herself. To her it wasn't comforting or anything.

"It's okay. It's not our fault. We were just... unlucky. There must be many ordinary and normal orphanages out there."

Yes. Looking back, it was all a matter of luck. That her mother, whose face she couldn't even remember, abandoned her at such a terrible orphanage was because of bad luck. And the gangsters who ran that orphanage were also just unlucky.

"It was just their bad luck that someone like me suddenly awakened as an S-rank in the orphanage they were running..."

[So you killed them all?] Someone whispered.

Hasul answered, "Yes, I killed them all. I even went to the gangsters' buildings and killed and burned them all. For my younger siblings who were left behind."

Whoosh—

The nightmare of the burning orphanage passed before Hasul's eyes. Actually, the real hell for Hasul started after that. After killing everyone involved,

"...I crossed the 38th parallel without hesitation." Towards North Korea, which had become a true hell. But Hasul wasn't afraid.

"It seemed easier to live in North Korea, which was already completely ruined, than to live in that damn South Korea. And it actually was."

Since she had burned away all her fears, there was nothing left to be scared of. The world she saw from inside the orphanage was extremely cold. A world where she could never live an ordinary life with ordinary effort. A world where the story of a phoenix

rising from ashes was unimaginable. She had gained an 'ability' that could help her escape from that world, so there was no reason not to leave.

Natural disasters?

Weather anomalies?

Strange magical beasts and aliens?

She had already learned what true fear was at too young an age to be afraid of such things. "Humans. There's nothing more terrifying than humans."

The strongest villain living in the city of villains smirked as she finished speaking. There was one thing she regretted. That it all happened before the Association was established, so she didn't know that the power she awakened to was S-rank. She only learned that an S-rank Hunter could enjoy immense wealth and honor from the villains who came to North Korea later. But she only regretted, not resented it. Wealth and honor, she could enjoy them anywhere as long as she had power.

"...This place is the same."

[Then shouldn't you protect it? Your paradise?] A voice whispered to Hasul like a devil.

Whoosh—

A giant scythe made of a starpiece was once again held in her hand. The scythe of harvest that was taken away by the black ant magical beast was back. And the moment she held that weapon, a hot energy suddenly boiled within Hasul's body.

"This power..." Hasul instinctively realized the source of this power. The fruits of Alfheim that she had eaten so far. Excluding the bankers, she was probably the villain who ate the most fruits in this city.

[We'll lend you our strength. Protect this city with your own hands.]

...Flare—!

In an instant, a red aura enveloped Hasul's entire body, And she instinctively swung the scythe of harvest forward, cutting through the air. That power drew a half-moon and pierced a hole in the transparent wall of the 'Instance Dungeon' that covered the city.

[Well done.] The voice laughed.

Whoosh—!

At that moment, the blizzard that was trapped inside the city began to be sucked out through that hole. It was truly a tremendous force. And what was revealed were the red leaves buried under the pure white snowfield.

Whoosh—!

As Hasul swung her scythe again, the red and yellow autumn leaves fluttered beautifully in the air along its trajectory. Since those leaves fundamentally had a perception-impairing effect, Hasul's presence disappeared from the world at that moment.

SWOOSH—!

Concealing her presence to the point where no one could notice, she jumped high into the sky, stepping on the red leaves like stairs. And there was a being waiting for her at the end of that.

[Yes, very well done. You're a good child.]

The Apostle of Paradise.

He was waiting for Hasul outside the Instance Dungeon. With a bright smile.

[I hereby appoint you as the High Priest. From this moment on, you are the High Priest of the glorious Cult of the Outer Gods!]

Flash—!

At that moment, power concentrated in the scythe that Hasul held, And the Apostle of Paradise, as if manipulating a puppet, gave her an order,

[Heh. Can you feel it? The difference in strength? I will give you all the power that has borne fruit in this city...!]

Whoosh—!

Hasul raised the scythe of harvest with her usual expressionless face at those words. A tremendous power began to concentrate on the blade. The Apostle of Paradise smiled with satisfaction at that dependable figure and pointed to the center of the city with his finger, strongly commanding,

[Now, go! Towards the enemies who dared to destroy your city, my flowerpot...! What are you doing?!]

Whoosh—!

The Apostle of Paradise couldn't help but panic. Surprisingly, Hasul's scythe suddenly attacked him. And using the very power he gave her! The Apostle of Paradise barely dodged the attack and shouted,

[What the....?! What are you doing?!]

For the High Priest to dare attack the apostle! The Apostle of Paradise couldn't help but be shocked at the absurd event. It was then.

[You asked what I'm doing?]

[...?!]

Covered in goosebumps. The Apostle of Paradise hurriedly turned his gaze to the sudden voice. Hasul's 'shadow,' which was relentlessly attacking was abnormally elongated and grinning at him. At that moment...

[W-wait! Don't tell me you're...?!]

The Apostle of Paradise's eyes widened. An ominous yet familiar energy! The Apostle of Paradise instinctively recognized the identity of this sensation.

[C-Corps Commander, Mm-marshal Be...]

[Oh, do you know me?] Hasul's 'shadow' raised his eyes with joy at those words. And he continued with a grin,

[But sadly I don't know you at all. Well... each and every one of those who ever faced me are already dead.]

Those words could mean only one thing. Beru, slowly rising from Hasul's shadow, declared to the Apostle of Paradise,

[You... are a small fry. One who only watched me from afar.]

2

[Kuhk...! High Priest! Protect me!] The Apostle of Paradise gritted his teeth and tried to control Hasul. But...

"It's useless."

Shiver—!

[...!]

Suho, who had approached from behind, raised his fist and continued,

"Just in case, I applied the Spring Water of the Echo Forest to all the bread in Beru Baguette."

5

Crash—!

With that one blow, the Apostle of Paradise crashed to the ground.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 289 - Chapter 287

Chapter 289: Chapter 287

Again, Suho was really busy last night.

And not only him, the shadow soldiers were also active behind the scenes. First, they emptied a bakery in South Korea and filled a container. And inside that container, following Beru's command, the shadow soldiers sat in a row and began to open the individually packaged bread like bakery employees. It was a very delicate task, so the soldiers with clumsy hands were mercilessly caught by Beru and kicked out of the container.

— Kieeeeeek! Didn't I tell you to use the spray bottle for this bread?! — Beru, who once commanded a massive ant army, became a very strict and charismatic bread factory foreman.

— You clumsy oafs! How many times do I have to tell you! The shape and sealing of each bread is different!

— Use the syringe for this bread! Keep it crispy, but carefully inject only the Spring water of the Echo Forest into the filling!

Thud! Thud! Thud—!

In other words, it was manual labor. The shadow soldiers carried out the task in unison under Beru's command. That was how 'Beru Baguette,' where the Spring water of the

Echo Forest was applied to every bread in various ways, was born. The birth of Beru's bakery in the truest sense.

'...I really thought it might be possible.' Suho's plan was successful.

[Item: Spring water of the Echo Forest]

[Acquisition Difficulty: ??]

[Type: Consumable]

[The mysterious Spring water of the Echo Forest.]

[When drunk or applied to the body, it has the effect of neutralizing toxins.]

The Spring water of the Echo Forest was an ingredient for making the 'Holy Water of Life,' a very powerful antidote potion that could neutralize the toxicity of the 'Purified Blood of the Demon King.' And it goes without saying that if it worked on Monarch-class, it would also work on apostle-class entities. The Spring water of the Echo Forest could even purify the energy of the outer gods. However, the effect was a bit weak, perhaps because the amount applied to each bread was small. That was why Hasul was bewitched by the Apostle of Paradise's call and came to her senses late. But even if it was late, the effect was certain.

...Crash—!

[Keuk!]

The Apostle of Paradise crashed to the ground from Suho's powerful blow. The impact created a huge crater as his body was buried in the ground.

[...Ugh.]

The Apostle of Paradise groaned, and gritted his teeth. His expression was a mixture of anger, shock, and complex emotions. But he didn't have time to lie around leisurely.

SWOOSH—!

Suho's second attack was already upon him. But he was only caught off guard because he was surprised at first. He had no intention of being hit twice. The Apostle of Paradise raised his arm towards Suho and swiped his index finger horizontally in the air.

[Devour him. Mouth of the Void.]

VOOOOOM—!

"...!"

Suho's expression hardened. Following the Apostle of Paradise's finger, a giant mouth suddenly opened in the air between him and Suho!

Whoosh—!

At the same time, a tremendous suction force erupted from that opening and began to suck Suho in. With the added momentum of his charge, his body was sucked into the Mouth of the Void at terrifying speed.

[My liege! It's dangerous...!]

"Gray!"

Growl—!

At Suho's call, Gray appeared from under his feet, and carrying Suho on his back, he leaped in the opposite direction. He barely managed to avoid being swallowed... By a hair's breadth. But the Mouth of the Void, having already opened, began to indiscriminately suck in everything around it with terrifying force. Even the blizzard that filled the city.

Whoosh—!

It was a spectacular sight. The pure white blizzard formed a giant vortex and was sucked into the Mouth of the Void. Beru recognized what the Apostle of Paradise had done at a glance.

[It's a dimensional gap! That guy forcibly tore the dimensional wall!] To tear the dimensional wall with just a gesture. He had a unique ability despite his poor durability.

The dimensional gap. Suho had been there before, but beyond that was an unknown space that couldn't be defined in a single word. It was the universe itself. If you were sucked in there, you could wander aimlessly until you died if you were unlucky. And if you were really lucky, you might be able to find another gap connected to an unknown dimension, but no one could guarantee it.

[If he keeps doing that, the dimension that makes up Earth itself could collapse!]

Like the demon dimension that was fragmented and scattered, or the elf dimension where the sky collapsed.

[The best way to close that hole is...!]

"To cut off that damn finger!"

[Correct!]

Growl—!

Suho, riding on Gray, ran through the vortex of the blizzard. Towards the enemy, who was still pointing his index finger in this direction. The Apostle of Paradise, who had risen, glared at Suho and bared his teeth.

[Not bad. For a human to surprise me this much.]

"You're acting cocky for someone who's about to die."

[...Cough. I'm still fine.] The Apostle of Paradise wiped the blood flowing from his mouth with the back of his hand as he listened to Suho's retort.

But the fact that he was still pointing his index finger forward with his other hand made it seem like that really was the culprit. Suho already knew because he had hit him once.

'He's weaker than I thought.' Although he was an apostle-class, his main body's durability was abysmal compared to the others he had encountered so far. Even Beru criticized him.

[Judging from the distance, he must have been an apostle who supported from the rear with magic.]

In terms of class, he was a mage, not a warrior. But the power and versatility of his abilities might be superior to those of a fighter. But conversely, if they didn't give him time to use those abilities, it wouldn't be difficult to deal with him.

"Are you the one who planted Elvenwood on this land?"

[Yes, that's right. This is the garden I painstakingly cultivated.] The Apostle of Paradise glared at Suho, who was running towards him through the swirling blizzard.

[And you're the bastard who ruined my garden like this?]

His index finger now swiped vertically. And once again, the dimensional wall was torn, and the Mouth of the Void split open even wider in the shape of a cross. The impact was tremendous.

Rumble—!

The suction force instantly increased by three to four times, and it became difficult even for Gray to maintain his balance.

[The Dragon King, the Monarch of Destruction, advises you to use the Dragon's Breath.]

Flare—!

Actually, the Dragon King had been nagging him since earlier. But this damn suction force was the problem. The Breath of Destruction was such a powerful force that its recoil was also great. In a situation like this where he couldn't support his body properly, it was difficult to accurately hit with an attack that went in a straight line. But...

'I can create a way.'

"Suho! Use Elven Footsteps!" Sirka, who was fighting the Spirits of Frost on the other side of the city, could be heard shouting. And at once, Suho jumped off Gray's back and leaped, stepping on the blizzard.

'Elven Footsteps'

The skill that allowed him to walk on the snow-covered field and the calm surface of the Sea of The Afterlife. Since Sirka had already shown the pinnacle of that ability, Suho was confident he could imitate it to some extent. And he added a little trick.

"Gray, possess me!"

Growl—!

Suho's hair fluttered silver with a sacred wind.

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

[Using Skill: 'Grasslands Wind'.]

[Movement speed temporarily increases by 30%.]

[Attack speed temporarily increases by 30%.]

The beast's senses dwelled in Suho's body.

Thud!

He began to run across the swirling blizzard without hesitation. Although it looked treacherous, as if he would be sucked into the dimensional gap at any moment, Suho precariously slid towards the Apostle of Paradise like he was surfing.

[Level of Skill: 'Elven Footsteps' has increased.]

As expected, there was no better training than actual combat.

[You're using quite an interesting trick. Cough.]

The Apostle of Paradise seemed a bit flustered as he saw Suho gradually getting used to running on the blizzard. He was pretending to be relaxed on the outside, but he didn't have enough time to recover from the damage he received earlier.

Whoosh—

Even now, the power of the fruit harvested from this land was healing his wounds in real-time, but it seemed like Suho would arrive first. The Apostle of Paradise eventually diverted the power he was using for recovery back into attack.

[...Your struggles are useless. I can just tear open more Mouths of the Void.]

Swipe—

His finger drew a new line in the air. But before he could tear open the third Mouth of the Void...

Flare—!

Black-red energy was already boiling in Suho's entire body.

[W-wait...]

The calmness disappeared from the Apostle of Paradise's expression.

[What is that power?!]

Shock, Fear and terror.

Of course, he couldn't help but be surprised. The power Suho unleashed was probably very unfamiliar to the apostle of Itarim, who had only ever dealt with shadow soldiers, not the Shadow Monarch.

[Using Skill: 'Breath of Destruction'.]

The identity of this power's owner was none other than the rival who fought a bloody battle with the great Shadow Monarch Sung Jinwoo until the very end of that terrible war. The power of the Dragon King, the Monarch of Destruction, Antares.

Kaboom—!

The hellfire emanating from Suho's hand melted the swirling blizzard in a straight line and struck the Apostle of Paradise.

[Wh-what...!]

The Apostle of Paradise couldn't help but be terrified before that overwhelming power.

[Ugh!]

Crack—!

And he instinctively tore open the third Mouth of the Void, desperately trying to deflect the Breath of Destruction. But...

'Ruler's Authority!' Suho's eyes flashed intensely, And,

SWOOSH—!

[...!]

The Apostle of Paradise's eyes widened in horror. He saw two daggers, 'Kamish's Wrath,' flying towards him at terrifying speed through the swirling blizzard. But It was because he recognized the identity of the power carried in that attack, more so than the attack itself.

[No, how can you even have the Ruler's Authority...?]

This was absurd! What kind of hybrid was this?!

[Using Skill: 'Slaughter'.]

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

[Kyaaaaaaaaaaaa...!]

The first thing that was slashed off was the Apostle's of Paradise finger. And starting with that, his body began to be mercilessly cut down. Literally hacked to pieces.

[Kyaaa! Uwaaaak!]

Screams endlessly erupted from his mouth. And in the midst of that pain, he realized that half of his body had already melted. He managed to barely deflect the Breath of Destruction, but he couldn't block it completely.

[H-how dare a mere human...]

But. It wasn't over yet.

[D-do you think I'll die... in my garden...]

Even in that state, the Apostle of Paradise glared at Suho with a venomous expression and spoke. A vicious curse was embedded in his voice. At that moment, the system, realizing the gravity of the situation, urgently displayed a message to Suho.

Ding!

[The Apostle of Paradise recognizes you as the enemy.]

His eyes, burning with flames, glared at Suho and he gritted his teeth.

[You, you, I will definitely kill you.]

Crackle

[You can look forward to it. By any means necessary... I will definitely...]

With those words, the remaining body of the Apostle of Paradise began to crumble. Not burned by the flames of destruction, but crumbling of his own will and scattering in the wind.

[Did you finish him off?]

"Hmm. I think he managed to save himself."

[Kieek?]

The winter city, blazing with hot flames, The Apostle of Paradise escaped from Suho there. Vowing revenge.

* * *

Bang!

[Hand over the information on Sung Suho!]

"What's with you? Did you change bodies?"

Yuri Orlov of Russia frowned at the sudden appearance of the uninvited guest. He smelled something burning...

"So, did you check what you wanted to check? What is the Shadow Monarch anyway?"

[Shut up and hand over all the information on Sung Suho. I told you to find it by the time I came back, didn't I?]

"...Hmm."

Yuri Orlov sipped the wine and leisurely savored the Apostle's expression, which was filled with hatred. To see this guy with his eyes so filled with fury, He had definitely failed, and it made him curious.

[Ah, right. Humans! Humans have families, right? Sung Suho wouldn't be an orphan like you!]

"Hmm. Family?" Yuri Orlov's eyes gleamed like a snake's. Filled with pure curiosity.

"I didn't expect you to go after them. For someone who wasn't interested in the human race to utilize the concept of 'family'?"

The Apostle of Paradise gritted his teeth and glared at Yuri Orlov's retort.

[I told you to shut up, didn't I? Before I deal with him directly, I'll prune all his underlings first. Thoroughly, like he did to my broken flowerpots!]

'...It seems he really was defeated. This is unexpected.' Yuri Orlov inwardly raised Sung Suho's threat level by one notch as he watched his guest flare up like fire at the slightest provocation. But it didn't matter anyway. This guy before him was as tenacious as a weed, so with a little push, he would be infinitely useful.

"Don't get so worked up."

Yuri Orlov leisurely savored his wine and handed him a thick file from his desk.

"The information I found is about them anyway."

[Family Matters]

"Unlike you, an apostle, I was planning to deal with it 'humanely' from the beginning."

Yuri Orlov smiled and pointed to the first page of the file.

"Yangpyeong. Go there. All of Sung Suho's weaknesses happen to be gathered there."

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer

Solo Leveling: Ragnarok [FAN TL] Chapter 290 - Chapter 288

Chapter 290: Chapter 288

Whoosh—

As the Apostle of Paradise fled, the dimensional gap he tore closed on its own. Beru, confirming the complete disappearance of his presence, narrowed his eyes.

[He must be alive somewhere. The fact that despite knowing me he is still breathing means he's a tenacious one who cherishes his existence.]

The apostles of Itarim that Beru faced in outer space had various forms and abilities. This was because Itarim wasn't just one being, but many. Since the outer gods that the apostles served were all different, the abilities of the creatures they created were also diverse. Therefore, whenever a new outer god arrived late and joined the battlefield, the nature of the war changed,

And from Sung Jinwoo's perspective, who had to block them all, it was practically like endlessly facing a giant allied force with constantly increasing numbers. But although he called them an allied force, there was actually an invisible conflict between the Itarim. They only joined forces temporarily because their goals aligned; they weren't true allies. They were briefly united as one team in the face of the powerful enemy Sung Jinwoo, but their original purpose for invading this universe was 'monopolization.' Even if they somehow defeated the Shadow Monarch's mighty army and succeeded in occupying this universe, their war wouldn't end...

In that case, the victorious outer gods would compete with each other to monopolize the vast, masterless magic power remaining in this world. In the process, this universe, and the dimension surrounding Earth, would be torn into thousands of pieces and forever wander the dimensional gaps.

[...That's why they're good at scheming behind each other's backs even during battle. It's basic for them to send the forces of other outer gods to the front lines first and keep their own troops back to preserve them. They use all sorts of methods to stab each other in the back.]

In short, Beru's explanation described a three-way battle. No, perhaps it was more like a battle of dozens, if not hundreds. One of the reasons why Sung Jinwoo could hold his ground against the endless allied forces without retreating was because of this factor working in his favor.

"Thanks for the explanation, but can you tell me all that later?" The situation before Suho wasn't leisurely enough for him to calmly listen to Beru's lengthy explanation.

Graaaaa—!

KIAAAAAAAAAAAAA—!

Even though the Apostle of Paradise fled, the battle wasn't over yet. The apostle's burning, melting body was scattered throughout the city as fertilizer, accelerating Alfheim's rampage. This also had a significant impact on the Spirits of Frost, who were being overwhelmed by Sirka.

Graaaaaaaaaaaa—!

The enraged Spirits of Frost grew as if to freeze the whole world, and for the first time, they repelled Sirka's hammer. And that wasn't all.

[Using Skill: 'Breath of Destruction'.]

BOOM—!

The Breath of Destruction that Suho unleashed pierced a large hole in the giant Spirit of Frost's body. Rather than burning, it melted. Like cotton candy in water. It was truly the ultimate counter. But surprisingly, that large hole was quickly restored.

Whoosh—!

The surrounding blizzard instantly flew in and filled the wound. The Spirits of Frost weren't magical beasts, but the season itself. In the end, to completely defeat them, he had to burn down the entire winter that had struck this city, this instance dungeon.

"Come out, everyone!"

Whoosh—

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

Black shadows spread from Suho's feet, covering the entire city, And the Shadow Army, blazing with black-red flames, rose in unison.

"All forces, charge!"

[Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaa!]

At Suho's command, thousands of shadow soldiers roared and charged forward. The once splendid city of villains began to burn. But their target wasn't the Spirits of Frost.

"Those are for Sirka to devour."

Suho and the Shadow Army aimed for something else... Alfheim.

"We're taking that tree."

He had found the mastermind and uncovered the city's secret, so there was no need to hold back anymore.

Whoosh—!

SWOOSH—!

From underground to the sky, Thousands of hideous branches and roots attacked from all directions. Alfheim, struck by winter, was a nightmare for the elves. But at this moment, That nightmare was reversed. Befalling the tree.

[Follow me!]

[That tree is ours!]

[Uproot it, cut off its branches!]

Fwoosh—!

Black-red flames blazed from the shadow soldiers' bodies, covering the entire city. They charged towards Alfheim in the blazing flames.

Rumble—

The ground shook with their footsteps, and the city melted from the flames they breathed.

Crack—!

Alfheim's roots were pulled out and cut down one by one by the shadow soldiers' attacks. A sea of fire unfolded on the cold winter. It was then.

[My liege! Look over there! Alfheim's roots are covering the entire city!]

Beru pointed at the walls surrounding the town .

[It seems like it used the corpses of all the dead villains as nutrients!]

As Beru said, Alfheim's roots were now covering the entire city like a spider web, and those roots were sucking out all the nutrients from within the walls.

Crack— Crackle—!

Every time the shadow soldiers cut off a root, the corpses of devoured villains poured out from within. They looked like withered bellflowers.

"It really was a flowerpot." Suho frowned.

It was no exaggeration to say that this city itself was a giant flowerpot for growing Alfheim. Looking again, it seemed certain that the Apostle of Paradise was better at this kind of manipulation than actual combat.

Whirl—

On the other side, Sirka was engaged in a bloody battle with the Spirits of Frost.

Crash—!

Her giant ice hammer cut through the blizzard and crushed them.

[How dare you... us...!]

"Shut up and submit!"

Whoosh—!

With each blow, the spirits' bodies shattered and then reassembled.

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, clenches his fists.]

He could practically hear Sillad's cheers. The fertilizer scattered by the Apostle of Paradise made the Spirits of Frost go berserk, but the tide had already turned. Sirka had already completely dominated four spirits, and now only one remained.

"That side will be over soon." Suho muttered.

Most of Alfheim's roots were cut off, and Sirka devoured the Spirits of Frost. All that remained was...

"Haaa!"

Crack—!

The moment the last root caught in Suho's strong grip was torn off,

Rumble—!

Alfheim's trunk fell and split the city in half. A shockwave that shook the heavens and earth struck. But even in that moment, Alfheim attempted one last struggle. Seeing that, Hasul, who had approached Suho, shouted with a tense expression,

"This is bad! Alfheim is attempting the 'last harvest'!"

"Last harvest?"

Hasul, who was a Reaper, knew the nature of Alfheim better than anyone. First of all, one of her most important missions when infiltrating this city under the orders of Association President Woo Jinchul was to learn about the characteristics of the tree.

Whoosh—!

New rootlets sprouted from the trunk of Alfheim, which had all its tentacles torn off and burned, and began to take root in the ground. They started to absorb all the surrounding nutrients at an incredible speed. The corpses of the elves hunted by the villains were buried in this land, And as all those accumulated nutrients were concentrated in one place...

"Ah." Suho also saw the result.

The 'last fruit' was sprouting from Alfheim.

"Is it trying to give birth to another spirit?"

"Yes! The final Enforcer! If that is born, we'll all...!"

Crack—!

Before Hasul could even finish her sentence, Sirka's hand was faster. She grabbed that last fruit and crushed it without hesitation.

"Don't waste time being born. You're the only one left anyway."

"...!"

Looking back, the blizzard had subsided. Instead, there were five giant Ice Golems standing behind Sirka. She had finally succeeded in dominating all the Spirits of Frost. And the moment she crushed the last fruit that Alfheim created with all its might,

BOOM—!

"...!"

What erupted from within wasn't a Spirit of Frost, but a scream. A terrifying scream, beyond the range of human hearing, exploded in all directions. At that moment...

Ding!

[An urgent quest has arrived.]

"Huh?" Suho let out a hollow laugh at the sudden quest window.

[Urgent Quest: Defeat the enemy!]

[Beings with murderous intent towards the 'player' have surrounded the area.]

[Defeat them all and secure safety.]

[Number of enemies to defeat: 2,918]

1

[Number of enemies defeated: 0]

What was with this number? It meant that nearly 3,000 enemies were surrounding him. Without emitting any presence.

"...Ah, was it because of the leaves?"

As the blizzard subsided, winter lifted, and the land returned to autumn. The snow-covered field melted under the flames of destruction, and the red and yellow leaves buried beneath also burned. But even as they turned to ash, those leaves became smoke and covered the sky, still bestowing the effect of 'perception impairment' on this land. Of course, it was only a temporary effect and would soon disappear, but the problem was that there were those who flocked here after hearing Alfheim's scream in the meantime.

Grining, Suho looked around and couldn't help but laugh at the absurdity. On the burning walls, There were 3,000 'high elves' standing, aiming their bows downwards. And they were high elves whose skin was hardened with bark, their erosion complete.

"Sillad, were high elves always this common?"

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, clicks his tongue.]

[King of the Snow Folk and the Monarch of Frost, explains that they are half-baked high elves forcibly evolved by the contaminated Elvenwood.]

Those were also the Apostle's of Paradise doing.

'Just how many flowerpots did he create on this land?'

"..."

Meanwhile, Hasul, surrounded by the overwhelming killing intent emitted by the high elves, gripped the scythe of harvest with a determined look. With her other hand, she

grabbed the round strawberry cake Suho gave her and took a big bite. Even if this was where she died today, wouldn't it be okay to at least have a bite of strawberry cake before going?

But Suho, called out to Arsha as if this was a good thing, "Arsha."

[Yes. You called?]

Buzz—

Countless bees flew up from under Suho's shadow as she answered. They gathered in the air, forming Arsha's face adorned with a respectful expression. Hasul flinched at the sight but took another bite of the cake. She seemed determined to stuff her cheeks, no matter what happened.

Suho ordered Arsha, "This is good timing, right? Spread the bees to backtrack their traces. And..."

[I'll locate all the Elvenwoods at the end of those traces.]

They understood each other perfectly. With that answer, Arsha dispersed into countless bees again and flew towards the sky.

"And those guys."

The Instance Dungeon was already broken because of the Apostle of Paradise. But those high elves were all experience points, weren't they? Suho grinned, revealing his teeth.

"I was wondering how to find them all, this is perfect. Don't miss a single one."

[Yes!]

Suho's Shadow Army erupted with energy and sprang towards the 3,000 high elves. And in Sirka's body, who was facing all those enemies... A change was occurring.

Whoosh—!

A chill began to emanate from her entire body.

CREATORS' THOUGHTS



Craftyprogamer