

With The Gods 271

Chapter 271

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His eyes burned.

The humidity had reached its boiling point. Even Surt, who had experienced the sensation of unbearable heat, couldn't withstand the intensity of the heat.

The humidity heated up rapidly and began to bubble and boil.

And then...

Boom!

Surt's eyes burst.

"Gaaah!"

Boom, boom, boom.

Purple flames erupted from his eyes.

Feeling the heat, his body involuntarily recoiled. To avoid Surt's contorting body, YuWon activated the Yata Mirror once again.

Surt screamed in agony.

Yuwon was certain he had succeeded.

"It worked."

This was the part where opinions were divided.

"The eyes."

"Nothing but the eyes."

When it came to fighting Surt, the eyes were the only weakness mentioned. Surt had an almost invincible resistance to fire. Moreover, it was nearly impossible to harm him in hand-to-hand combat. Unless it was a High-Ranker around the top 10, inflicting a wound on him was almost impossible.

"But will targeting the eyes really be effective?"

"It would be possible if we could obtain the 'Fire'."

"No, it would be difficult."

"Anyway, we should give it a try, shouldn't we?"

"Yes, I suppose so. After all, if we obtain the Fire, we should be able to withstand Surt's fire..."

When opinions were divided...

"Simply enduring won't be enough."

Someone gave a clear opinion.

Odin.

He was more competent in magic and magical power than anyone else in this Tower. Therefore, he could also guess how to safely inflict damage on Surt.

"For that to be possible, we would have to at least dampen (extinguish) Surt's fire."

A fire of a higher level than Surt's. That was the condition for inflicting fire damage on Surt.

But in reality, that premise was ridiculous.

Indeed, in this Tower, there were hardly anyone who could handle fire at a higher level than Surt.

"Surt tends to overestimate his own strength. He believes he cannot be burned by fire and relies on his physical abilities, so he tends to ignore most attacks."

Odin knew more about Surt than anyone else in this Tower.

After his defeat in the first Ragnarok, Odin had been tirelessly working to defeat Surt.

Therefore, he could also suggest various ways to confront him.

"We must use everything we have. For example..."

Boom!

"Why?!"

Surt angrily slammed the ground.

"Why, why, why?!"

He couldn't understand why his fire wasn't working while YuWon's burned so intensely.

His cry of anger made everything around him tense.

"Aaahhh!"

"Stop whining."

Yuwon jumped onto Surt's head, who was struggling with his anger.

"I can't believe Odin lost to someone like you."

Crack!

Faji-Jijijjik-!

Then, a red sword gleamed in YuWon's hand.

The hardest and sharpest sword in the Tower.

It was the Kusanagi Sword.

Furthermore...

[The Uranus Heart emits a dark light]

[Tartarus is invoked]

Fajijjik-!

The power of Tartarus enveloped Kusanagi.

Dark magic with corrosive power was effective in breaking the defenses of opponents who came into contact with the sword.

When these two things were combined,

"With the combination of Kusanagi and the Divine Stone of Darkness, we can easily break Surt's defense. The problem is the fire surrounding him..."

[Golden Cinder Eyes control Surt's Annihilation]

[Heart of Fire resists Surt's Annihilation]

[Holy Fire devours Surt's Annihilation]

Hwaah!

YuWon's sword pierced through Surt's body.

Chhhhh!

He could feel something at the tip of the sword... it was the cut.

The Heart of Fire and Holy Fire cut through Surt's flames, and Kusanagi's magic and Tartarus split his skin.

But it was only for a moment.

"It was cut, but not deep."

It was cut, but it was just a small cut considering Surt's size.

It wasn't enough to say that they had "cut" him.

It was just a scratch.

But it was enough to fulfill their objective.

Chyaaa-!

YuWon cut through Surt's body, which felt like steel, and walked on it.

Feeling pain throughout his body, Surt screamed while covering his eyes with one hand.

"This annoying insect!"

Swish, swish...

Surt swung his hand randomly as he lost sight of YuWon and his wounds increased.

Growing more and more enraged, Surt exploded in increasing rage.

"Aaaah!"

"He can't control his anger, that's his biggest weakness."

That was a common trait among players who wielded elemental fire magic. Unknowingly, they assimilated to the nature of magic and were unable to control their boiling fighting spirit. That's why players who used elemental fire magic learned to be patient for a long time.

But Surt was different.

He was the King of Muspelheim. He was also unbeatable in this Tower. He didn't need to be patient with his anger. He had lived that life.

And that was his one and greatest weakness.

"If someone takes away his Fire and attacks him with a sword like a mosquito, Surt won't be able to endure it. He'll probably get angry and lose his mind."

Swish-.

Flames erupted once again from Surtr's body.

It was a force he hadn't used since realizing his fire didn't work on YuWon. But even that thought faded in Surt's mind as he completely lost control.

YuWon crossed his hands to protect himself from the flames and felt the suffocating heat like in a hot bath.

[You begin to resist Surt's Annihilation]

[Resistance is partially successful]

The content of the message has changed.

To say that the resistance was "partially" successful. That meant some failed.

"Do you intend to ignore what's behind?"

Behind this was Odin. Surt knew it, and he couldn't help but think of holding back some power.

But now it seemed to matter little.

Hwarak-.

YuWon, covered by Surt's flames, felt a burning sensation.

Suddenly, he remembered the Tutorial.

Surtra. The 176th son of Surt.

This fight was a continuation and expansion of the fight back then.

"Wouldn't it be safer to first increase your strength?"

Hercules, being cautious by nature, questioned the idea of fighting with such restraints/conditions. Because he solely relied on his body.

And the same was true for Son OhGong.

"By building power, one can become as strong as Surt... but it would take too much time for that. The scale of Ragnarok would be even greater than that."

If Ragnarok couldn't be stopped, then it was better to start it as soon as possible.

And win the fight.

Odin thought that was the formula for winning this fight.

"Therefore, we must prepare. Prepare to defeat the strong by being weak."

With those words, Odin looked at YuWon.

"That's why you are the right person for this fight."

Odin knew it.

Maybe on other occasions not, but in a fight for which he is prepared, YuWon is invincible.

"You just need to distract Surt's attention along with Hercules and retreat. That's enough..."

"But that's easier said than done."

Hwarak-.

The purple flame that sprouted from YuWon's body pushed against Surt's flame.

'There is still more to gain.'

[The 'Holy Fire' exposes its fangs towards the 'Surt's Annihilation']

[The 'Holy Fire' devours the 'Surt's Annihilation']

The Holy Fire devoured the flames.

The more he tried to force his power, the more YuWon felt his mind drifting away.

And the original owner of that flame. Surt realized that his flame was fading away into the air.

"The flame?"

The flames were being devoured. Usually, fire was meant to be swallowed by a bigger fire. Even if it was magical fire, it was no different.

However, in this case, the fire followed a fire of a higher level.

"It's incredible."

Fwuuh-!

A small flame had an Arcane Power higher than its own flame.

Was it thanks to the 'Fire' he had gathered and collected?

No.

It was just a large conglomerate of the flames of Muspelheim. Obtaining greater power wouldn't change the nature and composition of the power.

Suddenly, he realized there was a familiar sensation somewhere.

"This sensation is..."

A name floated in his mind.

Foolish Chaos.

It was similar to the power he had faintly sensed from him.

"You..."

Surt narrowed his eyes.

"Were you allied with him?"

Gwaaah-!

The flames coming out of Surt's body grew larger and larger.

His pride wouldn't allow him to lose in terms of flames. In terms of flames, Surt believed he wouldn't lose to anyone in this Tower.

And so it was.

[State Anomaly: Burn will begin].

[State Anomaly: Burn rises to Stage 2].

['Holy Fire' Mastery increased by 1,213%].

['Holy Fire' Mastery increased by 1,012%].

['Holy Fire' Mastery increased...]

['Holy Fire' is satisfied].

[State Anomaly: Burn rises to Stage 3].

['Heart of Fire' is full].

[State Anomaly: Burn rises...]

A series of messages came to his mind.

Ji ji, ji ji, ji-.

The Holy Fire let out a laugh.

The sound resonated clearly in his ears. The fire had grown stronger and was spreading faster than YuWon expected, fueled by his energy.

Yuwon writhed in pain from the burns all over his body, but still asked:

"Are you satisfied now?"

He didn't receive an answer, but he could feel it clearly.

Is it because the Heart of Fire is full?

The Holy Fire, which had been craving more fire hungrily, finally calmed down, satisfied.

'I have what I wanted now.'

Yuwon's head tilted upward.

It was true.

Now was the time.

Pazhi, pazhi zhi zhik-!

In the clouds, far away, beyond his reach, he sensed a surge of Arcane Power.

"What...?"

Surt also noticed the presence and looked up.

And at that moment...

[The "Yata Mirror" is activated]

[Move to the designated place reflected in the mirror].

["Sky Steps" is activated]

[Increase movement speed by 100% for 5 seconds].

[You can walk in the sky for 5 seconds]

YuWon quickly activated his skills and moved away from Surt.

"Hercules-!"

"If you make it that far, I'll take care of the ending." (Odin)

YuWon shouted, recalling the planned end of Ragnarok.

"Get away from here right now!"

"I'll have enough time to set Gungnir in motion." (Odin)

Fazik, fazik, fazik-!

Sweat broke out on YuWon's forehead from the massive flow of Arcane Power he had never felt before.

If he got caught in it, he could literally die.

Gungnir.

One of the largest and most powerful items in this vast tower.

"If I'm given enough time, there's no opponent I can't pierce through with Gungnir." (Odin)

The item would soon come crashing down on Surt's head.

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Creack, crackle-.

A pair of white wings crashed to the ground. Thor realized for the first time that the electricity emitted by a single person's body could spread to this extent.

"I heard he lost the Lightning..."

The power was so strong that not even Thor, holding the finest item, Mjolnir, could imagine producing such an electric shock.

"But a king is a king."

Even if he fell from grace, he was once the leader of a Great Guild and the king of Olympus.

Thor looked at Zeus, who had moved alone towards the angels, stirring up the battlefield.

"It won't be easy to interfere."

Brunhilde was also surprised.

He enveloped his body in a golden aura of power, clenched his fist, and formed a spear of lightning. Zeus's fight would not allow the intervention of anyone else.

His attack didn't discriminate between friends and enemies.

"Brunhilde."

"Yes, Prince."

"Let's move in small groups. Exclude those who are not Rankers from the battlefield."

"Understood."

It was difficult for non-Rankers to stay together on the battlefield, let alone fight under Zeus's lightning.

Brunhilde also agreed with Thor's opinion and nodded.

"Let's go."

With a bang, Thor leaped over the walls and joined the battle. Brunhilde led a small group of Valkyries and unsheathed her sword.

The battle between the Heavens and Asgard.

Amidst it all, Zeus finally faced an Angel at the peak of the Heavens Guild.

As the battle between angels and Asgard was in full swing...

Kwalung-

Zzz-!

An angel appeared with a pure white light.

Zeus stared at the angel who had blocked his lightning and asked.

"Are you Michael?"

"I couldn't believe it, but if you're Zeus."

Michael was surprised that the High-Ranker standing before him was Zeus, despite supposedly being locked in Asgard's prison.

"Why did you join Asgard? You should hold resentment towards them."

"How could you simple plebeians beneath Metatron understand me?"

"You have no reason to fight against us right now. There's no need to face us."

"You probably don't have enough confidence in yourself."

Pajijik!

A burst of yellow lightning erupted from Zeus's body.

Crack-!

Michael, who had been thrown backward, extended the sword that had blocked the lightning forward.

It was a brief conversation, but it was clear that there could be no communication between them.

"...I see."

Boom-.

Michael's sword moved.

Whoom-.

With the flapping of his wings, Michael's divine form began to fade.

"Then I will kill you."

Creack-.

Hwahhhhh!

The wind started to blow around Zeus. Michael, known as the swiftest warrior, accelerated his speed.

Swoosh, swoosh-.

The sword flew towards Zeus.

Too fast to be seen.

Spit, spit-.

Zeus moved to dodge the sword but still received minor wounds. Just scratches, but it was clear that he was bleeding.

Zeus's eyes shifted.

"Did you know?"

The cutting wind blew.

Swoosh-.

Zeus's hand extended.

"There is nothing faster than lightning."

Kwak-!

".....!"

The wind around them stopped, and the figure of Michael, who had been hiding his presence, appeared before Zeus' eyes. With his neck grasped by Zeus' hand.

"You can't hide from me. Instead of speed, it would have been better to fight with strength..."

Paffff!

A bolt of electricity burst from Zeus' fist through Michael's body.

"Gwaaaaaaah!"

"You're a foolish angel."

Michael's eyes turned blank.

In an instant, his white wings burned and turned black. Zeus' other hand rose and grabbed one of Michael's wings.

Crunch.

Michael's wings were torn off, and he fell to the ground, stripped of his wings and bleeding.

Swish~

Zeus threw away Michael's torn wings.

He placed a hand on his facial wound and muttered.

"I see that I need to find something to replace it."

The Lightning Bolt.

The item that Hephaestus had made for him, his symbol.

The lack of that item truly pained him. Even Michael, whom he didn't even consider as Metatron, inflicted wounds upon him.

"Well... it doesn't matter."

The disappointment was fleeting.

"I have many things that I can replace."

Zeus' mind was already running through a list of ways to regain his power.

To regain his freedom.

That was the most important task given to Zeus.

And now...

After this fight ends, Zeus would reclaim that freedom.

Gungnir.

It was an item that Odin had acquired a long time ago, through a wager with an Administrator.

A spear that could be activated by drawing upon Odin's magic, although its power was normally sealed and dormant.

Odin never used it, except in special battles.

This was partly because there were no worthy enemies to use Gungnir against in the first place, and partly because the time it took to activate it was quite long.

That's why YuWon deliberately positioned himself in front of Surt.

To ensure that Odin could throw the Gungnir Spear with greater accuracy.

And the fruits of his labor were before him.

Kwagwagwagwagw-.

Hercules and YuWon stood together, looking at the landscape stretching far away.

A column of white Arcane Power rising toward the sky.

Although some time had passed since the spear fell, the aftermath was still felt.

"...Impressive."

Hercules was just as amazed as YuWon.

Well, his awe couldn't compare to YuWon's, who had already witnessed Gungnir being unleashed several times.

"Is that Gungnir?"

As the pillar rose up, he felt a surge of Arcane Power on a scale he had never felt before.

Hercules' body bore the scars of being struck by it, although he had managed to keep his distance.

Not by the direct impact of the spear, but simply by being caught in it.

"It's a catastrophe."

Even the simple act of getting injured in his solid body was impressive, but he couldn't imagine the power if someone were directly hit.

But...

"It hasn't fully activated yet."

YuWon told Hercules, increasing his astonishment.

"It hasn't reached even half of its power yet."

"...Ah, really?" Hercules asked incredulously.

It was hard to believe that there existed an item with such power, but it was equally hard to believe that there existed an item that Odin himself couldn't use.

'You wouldn't believe it.'

YuWon shuddered at the thought of Gungnir activated by future Odin instead of the one they had before them.

In comparison to that moment, the Gungnir they had in front of them now was nothing.

"Gungnir is a massive mass of Arcane Power in the form of a spear."

That was Odin's explanation of how to handle Gungnir.

"Items that receive power from the Administrators amplify their power infinitely based on the user's abilities."

What is the end of Gungnir?

That was something not even Odin, the Master of Gungnir, knew.

An item of such infinite power.

Gungnir's reputation among YuWon's comrades was unparalleled.

"That guy is addicted to powerful items." That was Son OhGong's evaluation after losing when challenging Odin.

"Even I would be in danger if I were pierced by that spear." Hercules could only say in surprise at the display of Gungnir's power.

"That's not a weapon at all. Just like my father's Lightning Bolt, it's made of a special material... and I'd like to take a good look at it." Hephaestus looked at Gungnir with curiosity.

Everyone said different things, but they all agreed on one thing.

"If we had two or three more items like Gungnir, the fight against the Outer Gods would be much easier."

Kak~

YuWon looked at Hercules' club, which had been observing Gungnir with fascination.

An item crafted by Hephaestus from the branches of Yggdrasil.

Though the circumstances were a bit different, that item was not an ordinary item.

"Your weapon is the same."

"What are you saying?"

"You're still not using it correctly."

"This...?"

Hercules made a perplexed expression as if asking what he was talking about while swinging his club in the air.

The club seemed like a weapon that only needed to be grasped and swung.

How am I supposed to use this?

Hercules waited for YuWon's next answer, but YuWon didn't respond.

No.

He couldn't respond.

'I also know little about it...'

Only those who have handled the club know how to use it.

YuWon had never handled the club, and he didn't possess Hercules' strength.

The reason why YuWon gave him the branch of Yggdrasil in the first place was because it was an item that Hercules could handle.

Furthermore...

"Even if I knew, it would be better not to tell him."

The use of items can only be understood through personal discovery rather than being taught by someone else. Sometimes, teaching can create limitations and patterns instead of fostering complete understanding. Hercules had just acquired his own weapon. From now on, it was entirely up to him to familiarize himself with the item and its use.

'The same goes for me.'

Raising his hand, YuWon looked at the glove he was wearing.

The Uranus Heart.

An item forged from the combined power of the three Olympian gods, it was in YuWon's possession.

"And this too."

Power and items were only as good as their owners.

The Uranus Heart was no different.

Yuwon knew the value of his powers and items.

No matter how fast his abilities grew, he still couldn't handle a power like the Uranus Heart.

Not yet.

The Gungnir in front of him made that clear.

He was still unable to properly wield this item.

Woo-.

The pillar of Arcane Power that had risen into the sky gradually dissipated.

"It's over."

Hercules was certain, not even Surt could survive a hit like that.

That would be true for anyone in this Tower.

But...

"If it were that easy, we wouldn't be in this mess. Odin wouldn't have gone to such lengths."

Surt was not weak enough to be killed by a single blow from the Gungnir.

"The angrier and more injured he is, the stronger he becomes. It's not just because he's a pacifist that Odin sided with peace."

Thud-.

A heavy sound came from where the Gungnir fell.

A wounded beast is the most terrifying.

And Surt, the king among those beasts, was considered the strongest.

"To kill Surt, you will have to risk your own life."

Surt's hand extended from the deep pit, where it was difficult to gauge the depth.

Finally, Surt resurfaced, with red blood dripping from his entire body.

"Finally, it has come..."

Bloodshot eyes, injected with blood.

Crimson vapors evaporated by the flames that burned all over his body.

Sizzle~

Surt. With the corner of his mouth lifted, he looked at Odin riding on his flying horse.

"Finally, this moment has come."

The encounter with Odin.

It was the moment that Surt had been waiting and longing for a long time.

Crack.

Surt opened his arms wide.

Showing his snow-white teeth, Surt smiled and shouted:

"The destruction of Asgard, Odin!"

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The world trembled.

The earth shook incessantly. The air burned with heat, and numerous presences could be felt along with the scorching air.

"They're coming."

Thump-.

Through the rumbling earth, YuWon could understand what this phenomenon meant.

"The children of Muspel."

Surt, the ruler of Muspelheim.

He and the hundreds of Surt's descendants were preparing for Ragnarok.

Upon hearing his cry, the giants began moving towards Asgard.

"Wasn't a single Gungnir enough?"

The odds were 50%.

There was no certainty that Surt, who lost his fire, could withstand Gungnir.

But there was no other choice.

¡Kwaang-!

Odin and Surt clashed.

Unless it was Hercules himself, once Odin appeared, Surt could no longer afford to worry about YuWon.

Kugugugu-.

Jiik-.

The collision of both caused YuWon's feet to retreat. The aftermath of their collision was too much for him to remain standing on his own, and he was not in the best condition either.

"...What a disaster."

Finally, the Sons of Muspel moved.

The giants moved towards Asgard, and soon, they would wreak havoc on many worlds.

"In the end, we couldn't stop them."

Hercules' voice sounded desperate. He did everything he could to prevent this moment. To prevent the scheduled disaster, and the only way to stop it was by capturing Surt.

But in the end, he couldn't, and the battle between Odin and Surt had begun.

No one knew how long the fight between the two would last. It could be days, or even months. Or maybe, like their fight in ancient Asgard, it would never come to a conclusion.

¡Kwaang!

Odin and Surt clashed.

Despite bleeding profusely, Surt moved much faster than before.

Every time he landed on the ground, the world trembled as if the sky was about to collapse.

Then, Odin used his magic to bind Surt's body and resist his strength.

"This is Ragnarok."

Hercules, who was watching the fight, was amazed.

He was also known as the giant slayer and had fought against many other high-ranker warriors. He was born and raised in the vast Olympus, and he had even fought against Zeus.

But the fight between the top ten high-ranker warriors was on a completely different level.

And Odin and Surt were among the top high-ranker fighters, even among them.

This fight was the true Ragnarok.

"It's still too early to say."

Ragnarok had only just begun.

The Sons of Muspel, the ones who had caused the most damage to the Tower, still relied on Surt as their spiritual leader.

When the order was given. YuWon's task had not changed yet.

"If we hurry and eliminate Surt, the others will stop."

"Is there a way?"

¡Jweo-eong!

¡Crack!

The sky opened.

It was a sight different from mere cloud parting. Spaces opened up and separated in different directions.

It was Odin's magic.

Surt blew fire to avoid being sucked in.

It was an incredible fight.

"I have no place in this fight."

Hercules could have intervened, but there was no way YuWon could do it.

Not only was he not in a good physical condition, but if he got entangled in the battlefield with Surt's fire and Odin's magic, he would be doomed to die.

To assist Odin in the fight, he needed to withstand his magic with his body.

But...

"It doesn't mean there's no way."

"Really?"

Hercules nodded, feeling curious. He knew very well that YuWon was not someone who spoke without basis due to his previous experiences.

That meant there really was another way.

"Then, please."

Chuck-.

With a firm grip on his newly held club, Hercules looked at Surt, who was fighting Odin.

"I'm going to fight however I want."

He had to bring down Surt as soon as possible.

In that moment, as he moved hastily...

"Where are you going?"

YuWon grabbed Hercules.

"Come with me. There's something you have to do."

Pajjik-z-zk-!

Odin fell to the ground and the earth flipped. Odin, who mitigated the impact by infusing Arcane Power into his feet, lifted his head.

He couldn't see the sky.

The only visible thing was Surt's red skin.

Buuung!

Kwang!

Surt fell down and stomped on Odin.

No.

He thought he had stomped on him.

Kiiing!

Odin's magic circle unfolded. The round blue magic circle pushed Surt in the opposite direction, protecting Odin's body.

"You have weakened greatly, Odin."

"It's not that I have weakened, it's that you have grown stronger."

Kuuuk~

Odin tightened his hand and blinked.

"And that means you are tired."

Chik, chik, chik-.

Thud-.

The Arcane Power transmitted through the magic circle twisted Surt's body.

Bones broke and contorted. Feeling the pain in his legs, Surt dropped his foot and grabbed the fire sword.

And in response, Odin drew his sword from his waist.

Buuung!

Kwang!

The two swords clashed.

"Ha ha ha! Good, good!"

Clink, clink!

Surt laughed as he swung the enormous fire sword.

"You have no idea how long I have waited for this moment, Odin, me, me!"

Hiss-!

The flames burned fiercely.

This time, Odin decided that he was also in danger and instead of confronting with his sword, he crouched down and raised his shield.

Clang!

Fwooosh!

"I really hate you and Asgard so much!"

Craaack!

Surt's sword left a fiery mark on the ground.

Odin raised his golden shield and pushed it aside as he looked at Surt.

"Remember, you were the one who started all this."

Long ago, Surt had brought the Giants from Jotunheim to challenge Odin.

"You should have challenged me alone."

Odin was furious with Surt's behavior. Not only had he betrayed him, but he had rebelled.

It was quite common in the old world, so Odin thought it was fair for it to happen.

But he was wrong.

"We shouldn't involve the people of Asgard in this."

Surt seemed more tired. But that made Surt at his strongest.

A characteristic of growing stronger the more tired and wounded he feels.

That was the most terrifying part of Surt.

"You still have that arrogance with your words."

Surt was still ignoring Odin.

He hadn't fit in with him for a long time.

"Anyway, this will condemn Asgard to destruction. Your era is over."

"Yes."

Odin nodded without hesitation.

"My era is over. Now is the beginning of the next era."

Zzzzt~

The corners of Odin's mouth lifted. Even though it wasn't a situation to laugh, he laughed.

"Times are changing. Asgard and this Tower have been stagnant and in decline for too long."

The water that had been blocked by a solid dam began to flow again. It also flowed with a strong jet, as it had been blocked for a long time.

"It's time to step aside, Surt."

"What nonsense...?"

Ssss-

A familiar flow of Arcane Power.

Feeling a chill run down his spine, Surt involuntarily turned his head.

"No way."

"Is this... really possible?"

Thump...

Hercules gripped the silver spear in his hand.

It was so heavy that it seemed like he could drop it at any moment.

[Cannot be held]

[Cannot be held]

[Cannot be...]

A message resonated in his head.

The message made it difficult for Hercules to lift the spear.

Gungnir.

The most powerful spear in the world thrown by Odin, the only one in this Tower.

Hercules was struggling to hold it.

"It is possible."

Watching as Gungnir slowly lifted, YuWon even bit his lip. Hercules said he would try, but he couldn't believe that he was actually lifting that thing.

"An item restricted by the system. You have lifted an item that cannot be lifted."

The power to make the impossible possible, a miracle.

He realized how brutal Hercules' strength was.

'I don't have that kind of strength.'

And nobody else did either.

Even Hercules could barely lift it, let alone swing or throw it.

The system couldn't be defeated. Therefore, what one had to do was satisfy the system.

"You don't have to make it so difficult. I will use it myself."

"It will be difficult."

He said it would be difficult, but Hercules was certain that YuWon wouldn't be able to lift the Gungnir.

"The message 'Cannot be held' appears. This is an item that I cannot even use."

No matter how powerful Hercules was, he couldn't defy the System.

The System was an absolute law.

Even lifting the Gungnir halfway was strange.

But...

"You said it cannot be lifted, but it doesn't say it cannot be used, right?"

YuWon reached for the Gungnir that Hercules was struggling to lift with both arms.

"This hasn't been activated yet."

The Gungnir reacted to Odin's magic. First of all, it was an item linked to Odin, and only he could wield it. But that didn't mean there was no way to activate the Gungnir.

With one hand pointing at the Gungnir and the other in the inventory, YuWon gave it a try.

Zalgraak~

A familiar sensation enveloped his hand.

As he pulled it out, he saw a clock that looked even more damaged than before.

[Clock Movement in ruins]*A clock that has lost its power and its purpose is unclear. It has lost most of its power and only a little remains.??????*

An item that was now truly garbage.

Using the Clock Movement was no longer possible, and it seemed to have no use other than being an old item. But according to the description, there was one thing it could do.

There was a way to use it.

"The Clock Movement was created by Odin, Mimir, and Chronos."

Even a little power was fine.

After all, the purpose was to fulfill the activation conditions of the Gungnir.

Tick-tock.

The clock began to sound in his hand.

A little magic leaked from it, but it wasn't enough for the clock to function.

But...

Tick-tock.

That was enough for the Gungnir to react.

"...?"

Hercules watched with a bewildered expression as YuWon slightly lifted the Gungnir.

No, he was horrified.

"You... how?"

YuWon lifted the Gungnir. Much more easily than he himself did. Then he looked at the trembling Gungnir in his hands.

"It's draining my Arcane Power."

Since the Gungnir was activated, it had been absorbing his own Arcane Power and increasing in power. The concentrated Arcane Power within the spear gradually amplified and became increasingly difficult to hold in the hand.

"Wait."

The Gungnir was an item that had to accumulate energy for a long time after activation before it could unleash its power.

And there was still enough Arcane Power for the Gungnir to absorb.

Crackle~.

The Heart of Fire. Inside it, the Gungnir consumed the purple flames and grew stronger.

How much time had passed?

Flick-.

Surt noticed his presence.

Chapter 274

C274

BANG-!

Feeling the presence of Gungnir, Surt began to move.

It was impossible for anyone other than Odin to wield Gungnir.

Due to that brief doubt, his movement was delayed for a moment.

But...

"Hercules."

Even if he was late, a little more time was needed for the ignition and launch of Gungnir.

And it was for this reason...

"Please hold on a little longer."

"Hurry up."

Kujik-!

Hercules planted his feet firmly on the ground.

"I may not last much longer."

Kwang!

Hercules blocked Surtr rushing towards him.

After the attack was blocked, Surtr staggered for a moment and looked at Hercules with red eyes.

"This guy..."

"You shouldn't show me your back."

Crackle!

Odin appeared behind Surtr.

With Arcane Power of electric attribute in his hands.

"I was careless."

Crunch!

The blue lightning pierced Surtr's body. Blood dripped from his chest, and his body trembled.

There was no time to look back.

Odin was also Odin, but now there was a bigger problem in front of him.

"Hand it over!"

Gungnir was supposed to be an item that only Odin could use. But that item was functioning in front of him.

Surtr didn't know why. But he couldn't let his guard down just because he couldn't understand it.

YuWon, in front of him, was someone who had stolen his Fire, someone who had done the impossible.

"It was mine, it was mine!"

Gungnir.

An item Odin obtained in his hands after passing the Administrator's trial right after the foundation of Asgard.

Surtr had always thought that Gungnir was his ever since Odin first obtained it.

"So..."

Surtr reached out his hand towards YuWon.

"Let it go!"

Thud-

Surtr lowered his gaze in the face of the strength that held his body firmly.

Hercules.

The man who had stopped him once was standing in front of him, holding his legs to the ground.

"Stop Surtr."

Hercules knew exactly what his role was.

A strength that could match Surtr.

That was his greatest advantage.

"That's all I need to do."

Crash, crash.

Zzzz.

Gungnir fed on YuWon's Arcane Power, amplifying it. Soon, the growing strength became too much to bear, and YuWon quickly assumed a throwing posture.

Tremble-.

Just assuming a throwing posture made his body tremble.

For YuWon in his current state, Gungnir was a difficult item to handle.

"Originally, it was Odin's position."

Creak~

Some faces appeared in his mind at this moment.

"Damn bastards."

"It may not be enough with just one strike."

Odin's statement caused the conference room to panic.

"Will not even Gungnir stop him?"

"Then what can we do?"

The discussion continued.

Or rather, it was about to continue.

"There is no other way."

Until Odin quickly interrupted everyone's discussions like a knife.

"Gungnir is the best way. To cut off the breath of that tough guy, Surt, we need to use Gungnir."

"Even with you there?"

"I would probably be there at that moment."

When Son OhGong shrugged and spoke, Odin raised his head.

"Winning is one thing, losing is another. If we encounter Surt, the Sons of Muspel will be set in motion, and I wouldn't be surprised if the fight with him lasts for days and days."

"...true."

"If it's Surt..."

Surt had a monstrous vitality, as evidenced by the fact that the battle between Odin and Surt was never resolved.

Perhaps during that time, the Sons of Muspel would paint the Tower red.

"Therefore, we must use Gungnir. That is the fastest and safest way to cut off his breath."

"Weren't you talking about what if Gungnir didn't work?"

"Well, if it's just one shot."

If one shot doesn't work, you can throw two.

But Gungnir could only be thrown once a day.

Furthermore, if that single shot failed, there wouldn't be enough time to ignite it and throw it again.

"So in that case, you have to throw it yourself."

Pashit, Pashiji-.

Fwaaaah-.

The spear, infused with the Arcane Power of the Heart of Fire, expelled fire.

Suddenly, the Arcane Power of Gungnir itself surged, and YuWon was caught in it.

Crack, crack-.

He was already at a critical level for his body.

Now, it was truly time to throw Gungnir.

Woooooosh-.

The spear left his fingers.

Waaah-!

YuWon checked the direction in which the spear went.

"It hit."

With a sense of relief, his consciousness began to slowly drift away.

And at that moment...

Zzzzang-.

A blue barrier created by Odin covered YuWon's body.

Waaaah-!

Gungnir, released from his hand, turned into an even larger fire than Surt and pierced through his body.

"They're giants!"

"The giants have arrived!"

Asgard.

The guild and the wealthiest, most prosperous nation in the Tower.

There, finally, the disaster that was destined to come arrived.

Thump-.

The burning giants crossed the walls of Asgard.

The demonic giants tore down the walls with their hands and began turning their city into a sea of fire.

"Prepare for defense!"

"And the Rankers? Where are the Rankers?"

The chaos didn't last long.

The Giants that had been breaching the walls hesitated.

And at that moment...

It happened in several similar places.

"The giants have stopped!"

The cry of a Valkyrie made Brunhilde turn her head.

The multitude of giants approaching from afar.

They faltered.

There can only be one reason to think of it.

"Surt... died?"

The Sons of Muspel followed Surt as their father and as a god. The demonic giants were beings capable of sacrificing their lives as cannon fodder if it was an order from him.

"Did my father do it?"

Thor also felt something strange.

He applied pressure with one hand on his solar plexus and muttered as if something was wrong.

"So fast?"

In the days when he hadn't become a Ranker yet, Odin and Surt had fought for a long time in Asgard.

A fight without a decisive outcome. He remembered that fight so vividly in his head that he still trembled if someone mentioned Surt.

But how did they bring him down so quickly?

He couldn't imagine what had happened.

Kwang!

Zeus' lightning bolt struck the battlefield again.

The angels of the heavens burned as they couldn't defeat this one man. As if it wasn't tough enough, reinforcements arrived.

"Is that... the Bull Demon King?"

Gugu-gugu-.

In the distance, a red wave approached from another direction, along with the giants.

Rankers and Players from the Bull Demon King's Guild had arrived.

"Fortunately, it ended quickly."

A chaotic battlefield.

Fortunately, Zeus' intervention allowed the Golden Castle to end the fight early.

Now all that was left was to clean up the battlefield.

Sigh-.

It was like waking up early, even before he opened his eyes, he could feel it in his confused mind.

"You've woken up early," a familiar voice said.

His blurry vision slowly cleared up. Odin was standing in front of him, looking down. He was still lying down, feeling the weight of exhaustion in his body.

"Stay lying down a little longer. If you wait a couple more hours, your body will recover," he said.

"But how long have I been lying down?" YuWon asked, frowning as he propped himself up on the ground. He tried to get up, but his body didn't respond.

Odin simply clicked his tongue at witnessing this. "You're stubborn."

Ung-.

Then, a blue power barrier enveloped him, healing YuWon's wounds and restoring his energy. Despite his injuries being quite deep, he recovered at an impressive speed.

"Good job."

"Yes. Hercules and I did all the hard work."

"I didn't ask you to do that."

"Then what about Hercules?"

At that question, Odin realized why he woke up so early.

Tilting his head, Odin pointed to the side. Behind him, a mass of muscles lay inert on the ground.

"Has he woken up already?"

Hercules managed to cling to Surt, and together they were dragged by Gungnir. Although he didn't receive a direct blow like Surt did, the damage was by no means small.

"Don't worry. He's in better shape than you."

"But why?"

"Your condition was so disastrous that I healed you first. That guy can probably recover on his own."

Looking at Hercules, Odin shook his head in disgust.

"That guy is a monster."

Hercules was strong, Odin knew that.

And if anyone knew it better, it was YuWon. That's why he asked for Hercules' help in the end, probably why it hurt his heart a little.

"How long has it been since I saw that guy go all out like that?"

There was a reason Hercules was known for having the strongest body in the tower. His endurance had steadily increased to the point where no one could compete with him. Even Son OhGong would have a hard time hurting him unless he put all his power into it.

"So Surt is..."

If Hercules was in such a bad state without being hit by Gungnir itself, what had happened to Surt?

He didn't need to hear the answer to that question.

Turning his head, YuWon spotted a giant towering in the sky like a mountain.

A giant with a huge hole in his chest, motionless.

"He's dead."

At Odin's confirmation, the power in YuWon's body surged and receded once more.

He felt relieved to see that he really wasn't going to move.

"Has it all ended here...?"

"If this is 'here,' is there something beyond it?" Odin casually asked, and YuWon nodded his head as he lay sprawled on the ground.

"Yes, there is."

"What exactly happened in the place where you were?"

"Later. I'm a little tired now."

It was better for people not to know too much about what had happened outside the tower, especially if they were in the presence of someone like Odin, who listened and saw everything.

Anyway, he was grateful. They had successfully overcome Ragnarok, which had been a major crisis.

"The next event will probably be Armageddon." (Note: Wow, war after war in this novel)

Yuwon shook his head at the immediate thought.

It was pointless thinking about it for now. The aftermath of Ragnarok would have its toll on Foolish Chaos, and there was still a long time until Armageddon.

"For now..."

The tension he had been feeling gradually dissipated, and sleep began to invade him.

He couldn't remember the last time he had slept so soundly since Ragnarok began.

"Let's rest a little."

The war between Muspelheim and Asgard. The battle between the Heavens and the Demons. The intervention of the Dragons. Each of these events was news that shook the Tower.

"Hurry up and put out a bulletin, Surt is dead, deader than dead, super dead, mega dead, right now!"

"What about the battle between the Demon Kings and the Heavens?"

"Do you think I know everything?! Ask someone else and publish it as quickly as possible!"

"What will be the title of the article?"

"Michael injured! Did the Great Celestial War erupt? The Tower is dyed in blood. How does that sound?"

"Fine, publish it!"

"Zeus has also been released. It seems his whereabouts are unknown..."

"Is the investigation important now? Are you an investigative team? Publish the article first!"

The reports from the Tower were insufficient even after working through the night.

This conflict between Muspelheim and Asgard was a major event, involving not only large guilds but also races like dragons, demons, giants, humans, and various others.

Continuous news reports.

During the process, a reporter obtained another story.

"Team leader, what do you think of this?"

"What is this?"

The team leader quickly scanned the article and nodded.

"Publish it for now."

A news too insignificant compared to other news.

Or rather, an unbelievable story that no one would take seriously.

[Kim YuWon managed to throw the Gungnir, Will His Ranking Rise?]

In times when major events were happening, it was natural for smaller news to be overlooked.

But at this moment, any news related to this event could turn into money.

"Let's publish everything and see what happens."

Chapter 275

C275

It was a series of scandalous news.

One by one, the different guilds in the Tower went into a frenzy.

"Zeus has been released?"

Hades frowned upon hearing this particular news.

This was the news he feared the most.

"Will there be bloodshed again...?"

Zeus regained his freedom.

Now Hades was the leader of the Olympus Guild, and he had a great deal of mistrust towards Zeus.

First of all, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Olympus was created by Zeus' force and prodigious mind. His abilities were within the category of the three gods, but even Hades couldn't stop him.

The term "three gods" was just a title given to them because they were siblings, not because they were exceptionally powerful.

Furthermore...

"Surt is dead..."

"I can't believe it."

"That beast?"

Among the Giants, there was talk of Surt's death.

Surt was a symbol of terror for the Giants.

The news of Surt's death was as shocking to the Giants as if the sky were to collapse and the earth were to rise.

The Giants and Asgard.

The collision of the Demon Kings and the Heavens.

The appearance of the Dragons.

Among the astonishing and impactful news, the Heavenly Demon Cult focused on a single piece of news.

"Is this true?"

Gwang HaMuk, a Pura Sagra of the Heavenly Demon Cult, asked after seeing the news on his player kit.

He had recently reached the 50th floor and had gone straight to see Pung BaekRim when he heard the news.

At that moment, he was also sitting on the floor watching YuWon's news.

In response to Gwang HaMuk's question, Pung BaekRim laughed and shook his head.

"I don't know."

Actually, the news was ridiculous.

Even if he was their Cult's Vice Leader and the person they should worship, this was doubtful.

"It's not just any weapon, it's the Gungnir."

The Gungnir.

The most powerful spear in this Tower.

It was said that even the top-ranked Odin had difficulties handling that item. It is even harder to believe that YuWon used it to kill Surt.

"Have the guys at the Tower Station gone crazy?"

Pung BaekRim shook his head at Gwang HaMuk's question.

"Although it may be exaggerated, it won't be completely unfounded. They are not people who spread completely non-existent news."

The Tower Station is a public institution. Just like the Rank Management Office, they also worked under the supervision of the Administrators and had a track record.

Obviously, they never reported on events that don't exist. Although sometimes they exaggerated a lot.

"So, it's real..."

"Well, we must check what really happened."

His voice was surprisingly calm.

For some reason, Pung BaekRim, who normally praised YuWon too much, was already laughing.

"No one will probably believe it. They will think the Station made up something or exaggerated something."

Most people might think that, but not Pung BaekRim.

"Whose side are you on?"

Crack!

Pung BaekRim, who was excited, clenched his fist tightly.

It felt like his body was filled with energy, as if he had to fight someone at any moment.

When he fought YuWon for the first time, he remembered the time he had given him a test to see how many moves he could get, and he had fought with over a hundred moves.

At that time, he thought he was just a new monstrous player, but now...

"I believe in him."

His thinking had completely changed.

"Because he is our god."

YuWon woke up two days later.

He frowned as he looked at the golden ceiling of the castle. No matter how hard he tried, Valhalla wasn't an ideal place to sleep.

There was no night here.

Ugh...

The first thing YuWon did with the food Odin sent him was to chew on the bread.

Hunger overwhelmed him. He hadn't eaten in a long time.

"I heard you woke up."

Hercules had woken up before YuWon and was by his side.

YuWon, who chewed and swallowed the bread that entered his mouth, asked as he ate the soup.

"When did you wake up?"

"A while ago."

"How is your body?"

"A little stiff, but fine now."

"It feels a bit unfair."

"There's nothing that can be done. The difference in our stats is the reason."

If Hercules' brute strength was due to his strength stat, his defensive stupidity was due to his health stat.

And the higher the health stat, the faster the body recovers.

It was natural for Hercules' recovery to be faster than YuWon's.

"Uncle (Hades) is resentful of you. He told me that if he had you in front of him, he would give you a good punch."

"Is it because of Zeus?"

"Yes."

"Where is that guy now?"

They said they can't locate him. It seems that when everything was over, he disappeared."

The news that Zeus had protected Valhalla and the Golden Castle had already spread. Some even said that Zeus had obtained citizenship in Asgard, but those who truly knew Zeus knew that couldn't be true.

"We can respond that his whereabouts are unknown."

"There probably won't be much trouble."

"How can you be so sure?"

"We have the same goal."

Zeus' goal had become Foolish Chaos.

Furthermore, based on what he had discovered through OhGong, Zeus was fighting against the Outer Gods in the future.

It was certainly easier knowing the outcome. Although they didn't know which path to take to get there, they knew where they were headed.

YuWon shrugged and stuffed the rest of the bread into his mouth.

"Right now, the most likely thing is that he's furious and wants to grow stronger."

YuWon glanced at Hercules while speaking.

The person most wounded by those words would undoubtedly be Hercules. Although he had accepted Zeus' release, he was also his father and enemy.

How did Hercules feel about Zeus?

"Is that so?"

Fortunately, the response wasn't bad.

Hercules raised his hand towards YuWon, as if surprised, and said, "Everyone has their own desires. I have no intention of imposing my will on him."

Yuwon had thought that Hercules would react that way.

Of course.

"But..."

Hercules wasn't foolish enough to simply forgive.

"If he does the same thing again, I will kill him with my own hands."

A heavy silence hung in the air. Hercules' hidden anger was reflected in his eyes.

"I won't let him go to jail again."

"Understood."

The air felt stifling. Hercules still didn't fully trust Zeus nor completely forgive him. It was understandable. Although he didn't know what would happen in the future, what Zeus had done to Hercules had not been forgiven.

'I'm sorry.'

Yuwon closed his eyes and exhaled his frustration.

'We probably have differences of opinion this time.'

Hercules, the Giant Slayer and a High-Ranker hero. He had no mercy for those he deemed unworthy of his will and justice.

Zeus was the same.

With this incident, Yuwon had confirmed that there was a weakness he could exploit in Zeus. He verified what he had learned from the information Son OhGong had brought.

It was a great opportunity.

He was a top 10 High-Ranker and had enough strength to reach the top 5 in the future.

It would be a waste not to take advantage of this weakness.

There was a brief silence.

"You don't have to worry so much."

Upon hearing those words, Yuwon realized that he had closed his eyes and avoided looking at Hercules for some time.

When he opened his eyes again and looked at Hercules, he had his usual expression.

"I know you're preparing something, and I'm not stupid enough not to realize that you need Zeus for that."

With that, Hercules stood up.

"And that goes for me too."

YuWon couldn't respond.

It was the truth.

Hercules had acted for him, knowing all of this.

And YuWon believed that his judgment and results would be correct.

"I hope not to disappoint you. Please."

Just as Hercules was about to leave the room, he paused for a moment.

"Oh, and..."

Hercules stopped for a moment and spoke.

"My ranking has gone up. Check it out."

"Your ranking?"

"I'm leaving."

YuWon, who was left alone, took out his player kit and checked the many stories that had spread over the past two days.

The most notable of all was that the 'Dragons' had been revealed. It was a story that many major guilds would be nervous to hear, as until now, except for a few players, they had not shown their presence.

Then, he checked the rankings that the Ranking Management Office updated daily through his player kit.

There were definitely many changes in the ranking due to the recent event. There were several standout players, and as a result, there were many changes in the list. Hercules' ranking had risen to 13th place. If he learns how to use his club properly, he will likely rise quickly within the top 10.

And YuWon wondered:

"...Why has he risen so much?"

Floor 80.

It is the floor where only selected players who approach the rankings can reach.

Of course, the trial on the 80th floor, which is only 20 floors before the end, is famous for being difficult.

But even in that trial...

A man with golden hair stood alone there.

Then, a yellow lightning bolt created a round field by pushing the trees. The ambushed players were dragged away by the lightning.

The overwhelming difference in power was impressive.

"Wow."

"Our leader is truly a monster, isn't he?"

"What the hell..."

The trial, which was considered difficult, was solved by him alone.

Even the highest-ranked players were starting to feel powerless.

"It started after the destruction of Olympus, right?"

"He has definitely been much stronger since then."

"Even his personality has changed a bit."

The destruction of Olympus was a significant event.

Only one team member, Harggan, participated in that fight. But after surviving, he became a different person.

If he was monstrously strong before, he was now nearly unbeatable.

Harggan, who had single-handedly led the trial with a golden burst of lightning, soon dissipated his magic and stepped away.

The number of his team members decreased significantly, and only five people remained, including Harggan.

"Let's go."

The trial was far from over.

There was still work to be done, so Harggan didn't stop.

As if they were following him, he hurriedly climbed the stairs.

"Understood, team leader."

"Let's hurry."

"Paladinthe, what's our next target?"

"The next one is..."

Tuck-.

The elven player, Paladinthe, stumbled over something while walking.

"Team leader?"

"Don't move."

Gulp-.

Drops of sweat ran down Harggan's cheeks.

Harggan's body stiffened as if he were nervous.

The team members felt something strange.

No opponent could have made him so nervous in this trial field.

"Why are you here?"

In the seemingly empty forest, Harggan's golden cinder eyes gleamed, and his voice trembled.

"Father."

Chapter 276

C276

Harggan's words startled his companions.

"F-Father?"

"Team Leader?"

"So then..."

Harggan's father.

They had heard many stories about him. Even if he wasn't Harggan's father, his name was inevitably known to those who were born and raised in this Tower or to those who had just arrived.

A being who called himself Zeus, one of the Three Gods of Olympus and the king who founded Olympus, had appeared in the players' trial room.

"If you have something to say, let me know only."

Harggan's reaction was unexpectedly calm.

It was as if he had known in advance that Zeus would come to seek him out.

A reaction that seemed stoic.

But Paladinthe, the one closest to him, could sense the opposite.

'Is he afraid...?'

Harggan was scared.

And it wasn't just because Zeus was standing in front of him.

'What exactly has happened...?'

Suddenly, when Paladinthe glanced at Zeus, he was smiling.

It was an appearance that contrasted with Harggan's.

"It is true that I have something to say only to you."

Zeus asked Harggan, who was tense.

"Do you think I'm going to harm you?"

Harggan stiffened at the direct question.

Instinctively, he protected his teammates. But even if he protected them, he knew he couldn't stop an opponent like Zeus.

And as he looked at him, Zeus said, "You don't have what it takes to be a King."

His evaluation was harsh.

"Abandoning your own worth for insignificant bastards like them. That is neither bravery nor justice. Sacrificing one generation for the next is simply foolishness." **(Note: Sacrificing one generation for the next can also mean sacrificing the great for the small)**

With those words, Zeus turned around.

"I have no intention of killing you. Follow me."

With those words, Harggan's rigid body relaxed a bit.

At the moment of the destruction of Olympus, Harggan joined forces with Hades and YuWon to drive out Zeus.

Naturally, the relationship between Zeus and Harggan was not good, and Harggan thought that Zeus held a grudge against him.

But...

"If he wanted to kill me, he wouldn't have come to me in the middle of a trial."

Players in the middle of a trial were protected by the Administrators. It was a Tower law to ensure that the trial was fair, and it was also something that the Administrators were very sensitive about.

"I'll be back soon."

Tap~

Harggan left his teammates behind and began to follow Zeus.

It felt like entering the mouth of a giant monster. However, Harggan had no choice but to go because if he didn't walk directly, he would be devoured.

Inside a room in the Golden Castle.

Someone was tossing and turning on the bed where YuWon was lying, eating grapes and muttering to themselves.

"What are we going to do now?"

It was Son OhGong, who was quite bored and had come to see YuWon.

Now that YuWon had just recovered, he was ready to leave.

"We have to climb."

"Climb?"

"Today is a trial day. We have already wasted a lot of time, so it's time to climb."

The Ragnarok took its toll, as the top of the tower was their destination, and YuWon knew exactly what they had to do.

Take the trial and climb.

They had finished their task on the 60th floor. Now they had to solve the problems beyond that.

"You're very relaxed."

"Because I'm already a Ranker, unlike you."

OhGong shrugged and grabbed another fruit.

Seeing how relaxed he seemed, YuWon frowned.

"That's better, I have another job for you."

"Eh?"

Son OhGong stopped with a fruit in his mouth. He knew that this feeling was not good.

"There's something you have to do up there first."

"Fight?"

"I wouldn't send you if it were that."

"Ugh..."

Son OhGong frowned as if he was already annoyed. YuWon didn't want to send him to a place where he could cause trouble.

"Why don't you try trusting me a little?"

"I've sent you before, and you only made the situation worse. I don't think I can trust you unless it's a big matter."

"Am I like that? I'm not like before."

"I don't believe it. If I send you, there might be another event like Ragnarok or the Gigantomachy."

"....."

He had nothing else to say. In fact, Son OhGong liked it when things got tense. Moreover, Son OhGong was a High-Ranker who was recognized even in this Tower.

With his unique strength, he could take on a major guild. Therefore, his movement couldn't be treated simply as an individual's.

It could turn into a "war" rather than just a "fight" depending on his actions.

"What happened to Fafnir and Vritra?"

"I let them go after 'defeating' them. They said they would return."

"They will return..."

"We'll see later, something like that."

Although he said it casually, his voice was tinged with disappointment.

"Speaking of which, does it have any meaning to let them live?"

"Are you talking about the Dragon race?"

"Yes."

"It has its meaning. It's to preserve the power of a race."

"Do you want to rehabilitate them?"

"It's not like there isn't a way."

Son OhGong's expression became perplexed upon hearing YuWon's words.

At least in his memories, there were no stories related to rehabilitating the Dragon race. It was probably something that YuWon was imagining on his own.

"If you're thinking like this on your own, it means there's some variable..."

The YuWon that Son OhGong knew wasn't someone who acted without a basis.

Rather, he tended to overthink.

"Then, why Zeus?"

"Zeus?"

"Can you think why him?"

After considering the question for a moment, OhGong shook his head.

"No, it hurts my head to think about that."

Anyway, he now knew that there was some basis for it. That was enough for him. Son OhGong sighed and got up from the bed where he was lying down.

"So, what do I have to do?"

"You..."

YuWon explained to Son OhGong what he had to do first at the top.

It wasn't something complicated.

First of all, Son OhGong was better at physical action than thinking.

Son OhGong, who was trying to remember YuWon's words, scratched his head and responded.

"Well, if it's something like that..."

Although he still felt a bit bored, it seemed like the feeling of boredom had diminished a bit. Until a moment ago, he was lazily lying down with nothing to do, but now he quickly got up from his place.

"See you upstairs then."

Thud.

Credit must be given for his action. When the task was decided, Son OhGong immediately jumped out of the window and hopped onto the Flying Nimbus (筋斗雲, **Kintōun**).

Soon he disappeared from sight.

YuWon looked at Son OhGong and nodded.

"That's right, let's do it."

A delayed response.

As the time to start the trial approached, YuWon also began to move.

"Then, I'll leave that to OhGong..."

From now on, he would have to climb up and do what he had to do first.

"Where are you hiding, Zeus?"

That's exactly what he had to do, find Zeus, who had disappeared.

Muspelheim, examination room on the 65th floor.

The Trial that took place in the scorching land was a challenging obstacle for players climbing the Tower, spanning across 10 floors. The environment was so unfavorable that players wished to pass the Trial as quickly as possible and ascend higher.

There were about 50 players participating in the Trial.

Undoubtedly, the number of participants was much lower than on the lower floors.

However, unlike them...

"It's a headache."

YuWon was separated and faced someone.

The person YuWon faced was not a trial supervisor.

He was a young dwarf about 1 meter tall with snow-white skin.

He was the Floor Administrator.

"You're an anomalous creature that is upsetting this tower. Until now, we tolerated it to some extent, but now you have crossed the line."

He could understand it.

Indeed, until recently, it seemed like the Administrators turned a blind eye to many things.

YuWon had already crossed the gap between floors. From the lower floors, YuWon's power was equivalent to that of a High-Ranker. But now, he had far surpassed the level of a High-Ranker Player and had entered a grand battlefield called Ragnarok.

"That thing you carry..."

Zzzz...

Along with the administrator's words, the fire burning in YuWon's heart reacted.

It was a magical energy of an size that was hard to estimate. Even for YuWon, who possessed it, it was difficult to determine its size.

"What am I supposed to do if the person, who was already problematic, comes charging in with something like that?"

"Then, why don't you just let me pass and let me ascend?"

The Administrator shook his head at YuWon's complaints.

"We can't do that. It would be a privilege."

"But that's what they want."

YuWon pointed to the players gathering far away, preparing for the Trial, unaware of the situation.

"I will make them all fail, this time too."

The Administrator frowned.

If anyone knew what YuWon's statement meant, it would be the Administrator in charge of supervising the Trials.

Most of the Trials YuWon participated in were like this.

To achieve the best results and increase the rewards, YuWon eliminated other participants from the Trials.

If ten trials were conducted, in seven or eight of them, YuWon would pass alone.

And that's precisely why the Administrators called YuWon "an anomalous creature that disrupts the system."

"Are you threatening me now?"

"I'm simply stating an obvious outcome."

"This guy..."

The administrator, who had been concerned, turned around.

"Wait for me a moment."

Creeaaak...

As the administrator moved, a door opened in the direction he was heading.

YuWon stood in place, waiting for him. Although he said "a moment," it took quite some time.

"What's the matter? Why don't we start?"

"Why are you in such a hurry? We're ruined anyway."

"Still, what if there's a chance?"

"There's Kim YuWon. We're ruined. It won't work."

"Let's hope for a team play."

"Hasn't it been canceled?"

"Do you really think the Trial would be canceled?"

When the trial didn't start for a while, the participants felt frustrated.

They had already lost their enthusiasm when they learned that YuWon was participating in the trial, and all they hoped for was to team up with him for the trial.

How much time had passed?

The Trial Supervisor, who had disappeared, appeared before the participants.

He was an intimidating-looking supervisor with an imposing figure and scars tattooed on his face.

"Are we starting now?"

"I'm nervous."

The participants became tense.

Among the Players who had made it this far, there was none who didn't dream of becoming a Ranker. Naturally, the expectations and tension surrounding the Trial were different from those in the lower zones.

But...

"There will be no Trial today."

The words of the Trial Supervisor extinguished the tension they felt.

"Return the way you came."

"What?"

"No Trial?"

"They suddenly cancel the Trial, what the hell...?"

Protests were heard everywhere.

But the words of the Trial Supervisor remained unchanged.

"Return the way you came."

Those were his final words.

The points spent to participate in the Trial were refunded, and the participants, complaining, turned around and left.

Yuwon stood there, separated from the group, observing the scene.

"That's how it turned out."

Poof...

The Administrator reappeared, breaking through space.

Yuwon looked at him as if expecting an explanation.

"We are going to open a new Trial."

It was a sudden conclusion.

Canceling the Trial they had in front of them at that moment and opening another Trial.

Clearly, it wouldn't be a normal Trial.

"What kind of Trial is it?"

"From floor 65 to 79."

Letting out a deep sigh, the Administrator looked at YuWon as if he were a problem.

"It will be a Trial to take you alone to the next level at once."

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Ascending multiple floors at once.

"I've never heard of such a trial. But if such a trial exists, it would save me a lot of time."

YuWon was intrigued.

"Of course, the difficulty level would be high. It will be a trial that requires you to ascend multiple floors at once, and it will be open to other players on the same floor."

If they couldn't prevent YuWon from participating in the Trial, they planned to send him quickly upward to balance the game.

The Administrators always thought in that direction. They had a keen mind for increasing the game and rewards, and balancing the System.

"Will you accept the challenge?"

Since YuWon was in a hurry to climb as quickly as possible in this situation, there was no reason to refuse the proposal.

"Yes, I will."

It was an offer he had no reason to reject.

"It will take about ten days before the Trial begins. We need to prepare and give enough time for others to find out as well."

"Understood."

Ten days.

Since he was currently trapped at the base of Valhalla, it was the perfect time to test his new power.

Player kits received messages.

"Hmm? What's this?"

Even in the kit of a player who was deeply asleep.

"Who is it?"

Even in the kit of a player who had just started eating.

"I don't recognize this number..."

From floor 65 to 79.

The same messages with the same content arrived in the players' kits who were climbing the Tower and waiting for the Trial.

They were messages from the Administrator.

[In ten days, a special Trial awaits you. The reward will be...]

"A special Trial?"

"Suddenly, is this some kind of event?"

"What kind of reward will it be...?"

It was an exciting event.

Moreover, it wasn't just a simple event like the Murim World Martial Arts Tournament.

"If you obtain permission to ascend to the top..."

"Isn't this simply a Trial?"

"It's a great challenge."

"But the content of the Trial..."

The Trial that would take place at the top of the Tower drew the attention even of the Rankers at the summit.

It was on a massive scale like the Murim World Martial Arts Tournament, but the Players participating in this Trial were much more competent.

The Trial turned into a festival, and rumors spread quickly.

The ten days passed swiftly.

Boom!

Behind the golden castle, the Valkyries' training fields were boiling.

Fire!

Purple flames dissipated, revealing the figure of Hercules. Black soot clouded the air as Hercules lowered his arms to cover his face.

"Hot."

It was a comprehensive evaluation considering the intensity and heat he had released. But it was enough to satisfy YuWon.

"The important thing is that it works."

"It's not an ordinary fire."

It wasn't the first time Hercules had tested the Holy Fire. But it was the first time he felt something strange through it.

"It's an unpleasant sensation. And if this discomfort cannot be overcome, it will feel even hotter. Usually, that doesn't happen with a normal fire."

"Really?"

YuWon's eyes sparkled.

What Hercules felt wasn't just heat; the "unpleasantness" he referred to was something entirely different.

The Holy Fire was a fire that grew by feeding on the emotions of its opponent.

And the essence of its power lay in instilling fear in its opponents. If the flames couldn't instill fear, they would simply be colorful flames and slightly hotter.

However, those flames had instilled fear in Hercules.

"The power of the flames varies based on my skill and the user's capacity. The fact that the flames worked on Hercules means..."

The place where Hercules stood. The distance that seemed far away shortened, and it felt as if he had taken a step into Hercules' realm.

"Does that mean I'm starting to enter his territory?"

It was good news.

He had obtained the 'Fire' he had long desired, and his Holy Fire had grown significantly.

If it was good enough for Hercules, it could be assumed that it would also affect most of the higher-level top Rankers.

"Is the trial tomorrow?"

To Hercules' question, YuWon responded while changing his clothes.

"Yes."

"I guess I'll have to take a look."

This time, the trial was much bigger than the Martial Arts Tournament of the Murim World.

Several outstanding players would participate and engage in a sword dance together.

"I'm looking forward to it."

When the details of this trial were revealed, the attention in the Tower soared.

"I wonder what will happen when all those players gather."

Hercules was also intrigued by the trial.

Almost 10,000 players would join as a team. YuWon, on the other hand, would have to face them alone.

One man against ten thousand.

It was a ridiculous structure. First of all, trials are either team-based or solo.

A trial that was sure to be controversial.

But there was no other choice.

"It's because my ranking has become very high."

[Kim YuWon: Rank 88]

Rank 88.

In the blink of an eye, he had entered the top 100 in the rankings.

It was solely because of that news (Throwing Gungnir) that his ranking had risen.

The Station and the Ranking Management Office had a fairly close relationship under the administration of the Administrators.

"Still, it's an exaggerated setup. We're not in the lower levels."

The players who had reached Floor 79 were the upper-level ones, those on the verge of becoming Rankers.

Of course, some of them would have abilities nearly comparable to those in the higher ranks. The number 10,000, composed of those players, would be a burden even for the High-Rankers within the top 100.

"The goal isn't to fight and win anyway. I believe I can do it."

He spoke with a confident attitude.

Indeed, YuWon wasn't worried about the content of the Trial. He had already decided in his mind that he would pass the Trial and hasten his ascent.

"By the way, what's with that attire?" Hercules asked as he looked at YuWon's change of clothes.

It wasn't the clothes he usually wore, but a thin yet sturdy iron armor.

It was a different kind of garment from what YuWon typically wore.

"This?"

It was an item made by Hephaestus at YuWon's request.

"I plan to participate in the sword dance later."

The training ground after Hercules left.

YuWon had asked Odin to lend him the training ground for another hour.

The training ground was empty.

"Come here."

Whiss-.

A figure larger than YuWon rose twisting in the shadow.

"Susanoo."

Shhhh-

Another person appeared in the empty training ground. It was a pale undead with a cold and unpleasant appearance.

-So you have finally called me.

"You haven't forgotten our previous promise, have you?"

-Are you saying that you'll make me your master if you defeat me?

"That's right."

Creak-

The armor trembled on YuWon's body.

It was quite heavy and seemed sturdy. The moment Susanoo saw it, he recognized it as a creation of Hephaestus.

-It seems you have prepared in some way.

The Sacred Spirit Vestment was an item that had strong resistance to various magical attributes.

However, since the fabric of the clothes itself was of quality, the resistance to magic could be high, but the defense and durability themselves were not as high.

On the other hand, the armor YuWon was wearing was focused on defense against 'swords' only.

"I have to be prepared at this level."

YuWon looked into Susanoo's eyes that were already filled with a killing intent.

"It won't be easy to defeat you with just a sword."

Susanoo was a skilled Swordsman in this Tower, where it was difficult to find suitable opponents when it came to swords.

His sword was dangerous.

More than anything else.

"This time, we will have a truly thrilling fight."

Fwoosh-

Flames ignited on Susanoo's body.

A massive amount of Arcane Power filled his body. It was clearly a different amount of magic than he had used before.

And Susanoo also realized that fact.

"No tricks. It's only half the Arcane Power I have."

YuWon and Susanoo were connected by their souls. Although it was a subordinate relationship, Susanoo couldn't help but wonder how much magical power was left in YuWon.

It was a greater amount of magical power than before, after obtaining the fire from Surt.

With this, Susanoo could showcase his ability at its peak, as he did in his glory days.

The Spirit called Susanoo was reborn here in his perfect form.

"Do you like the dance of swords?"

-I do.

Woong-.

The excitement and thrill of Susanoo could be felt in his soul.

Until now, due to the lack of Arcane Power, he had only shown much weaker skills than when he was alive.

But now.

He felt that his body was light and full of energy, as if he could fly at any moment.

Now, there was only one thing left.

He, who was an undead, awaited YuWon's order to find his freedom.

And for that, YuWon opened his mouth.

"Kill me, Susanoo."

At that moment...

Shhhhhh-.

The corner of Susanoo's lips lifted, and a fierce energy burst forth from him.

-I obey your order faithfully...

Swoosh-.

-I will kill you.

YuWon nodded as he saw Susanoo's sword approaching his face directly.

"As you wish"

He had only seen Susanoo's Sword once before. In the battle against Amaterasu, one of the Three Precious Children.

At that time, Susanoo had set aside his pride for the first time since becoming undead and helped YuWon.

The power of an undead depended on the degree of submission of their soul. That's why YuWon tried to gain Susanoo's obedience.

Defeat him with a sword.

That's what YuWon wanted.

Clang, clang-!

The swords clashed against each other.

Every time the sharp line of energy passed in front of them, they felt a chill running down their spines.

Amidst that...

YuWon found Susanoo's face smiling.

"Although it doesn't feel the same wielding a sword now as when I was alive, but..."

A fight between life and death was insignificant for someone who had already died.

There were only fights to win or lose.

"Still, it's not bad."

YuWon's eyes sparkled.

Among the swords that were merely swift, the tip of a sword with extraordinary power could be seen.

Shukkaaak-!

Kwagakak-!

A massive sword strike tore through the middle of the training ground.

If he had evaded as passively as before, he would have been cut in half.

Was it due to a failure in his counterattack motion?

Unlike before, Susanoo frowned.

"That look of yours really annoys me."

Hwaryuk-.

Golden Cinder Eyes.

An ability to comprehend the opponent's weaknesses and the essence of the attack. Furthermore, YuWon was using his expanded Sensory Field throughout the training ground.

"You have been preparing a lot, haven't you?"

After exchanging sword strikes for about ten minutes, Susanoo, who had been enjoying the fight, gradually began to lose interest.

The sword frequently got stuck. He didn't feel the satisfaction of cutting through something or engaging in an exhilarating battle.

This sensation was something he had never experienced even in his past life.

Instead of an immense mountain impossible to overcome, it felt like he was swinging his sword in emptiness.

"I have prepared a lot, as you said."

The spirit/phantom Susanoo.

Undoubtedly, he was a more skilled Swordsman than YuWon.

This fight was not just about defeating him.

It was a fight in which he had to completely subdue him.

YuWon pondered and pondered.

"Don't you know it too?"

How he could win this fight perfectly.

How he could make him acknowledge him.

And now...

"I am not foolish enough to move without confidence."

YuWon faced him with conviction.

Chapter 278

C278

Susanoo's eyebrows furrowed. That was more chilling than any of the other terrifying words.

YuWon wasn't foolish enough to move without conviction. He knew YuWon very well, having witnessed how YuWon planned and executed his moves while bound to him as his spirit/phantom.

He knew it wasn't just a bluff.

However...

-And what does that matter?

Susanoo didn't care about that.

Boom!

Swinging his sword without hesitation, Susanoo unleashed a burst of Arcane Power.

-There's no fight with a predetermined outcome. I create the results.

Bwoooooong!

The power infused in his sword grew stronger, and the Arcane Power received by Susanoo quickly escaped.

-Conviction?

Skkkaaaang...

Hundreds of sword blades enveloped the surroundings. The strength hadn't changed one bit from the beginning.

-There's no fight I can't win. The same applies to you.

Clang!

The sword struck fiercely.

Countless sword marks appeared on the training ground floor. As he fought, YuWon thought that he would have to endure Odin's scolding later.

"He doesn't back down at all."

The amount of Arcane Power YuWon had given to Susanoo was limited. However, Susanoo was spending that energy without concern for the future.

"I can delay the time until you exhaust yourself... but..."

Ssshhhhh...

Jjeoong...!

Yuwon's sword pushed against Susanoo's. Susanoo's eyes widened as he felt the strength infused in the sword.

Wuduk...

"It's not as satisfying to do it this way."

Yuwon's arm swelled.

An unusual flow of Arcane Power.

Susanoo's eyes narrowed at the familiar technique.

-Gigantification.

There was no way to defeat YuWon, who possessed a giant transformation in terms of strength. There were no abilities that drastically increased power like the giant transformation.

A direct confrontation was impossible.

Susanoo's movement changed.

-It's not that there's no way to evade.

Sssh...

Susanoo's sword dodged YuWon's sword.

The swords did not clash.

Yuwon evaded Susanoo's sword, disturbing his eyes. It was clear what he was thinking.

"He's avoiding a strength-based fight and attacking with speed. He's planning to use his advantage in speed instead of his deficiency."

It was intelligent and wise.

Recognizing one's own deficiencies was the beginning, and efficiently utilizing one's strengths was the most effective way to do it.

But...

Sshh...

Yuwon's eyes shifted.

"Just being fast is not enough."

[Golden Cinder Eyes read the path]

[Sensory Field is activated]

He could see how Susanoo's sword moved. His body reacted before his mind, and the unavoidable sword struck forcefully.

"As you say, there's no such thing as a fight that must be won. That's true."

YuWon agreed with those words as well. In fact, he knew it better than anyone.

He knew he was facing an opponent who seemed impossible to defeat, no matter what strategy he tried.

YuWon received Susanoo's sword and lifted the corner of his mouth.

"But at least, it's not you."

The day of the Trial arrived

The wind blew on the upper levels of the Tower.

Muspelheim was hot and desolate, but this trial was special.

Countless Rankers and Players gathered.

"Special Muspelheim lava blocks for sale! Perfect for using instead of a stove!"

"The pride of Muspelheim, the treasure of the giants! Come, take a look!"

"Selling special beer from the dwarf race! Refresh yourself from the sweltering heat!"

Vendors raised their voices everywhere, offering the items they had brought with them. The prices were incredibly high, but the items sold relentlessly. That meant there was a high demand. The city of Muspelheim was filled with an innumerable crowd, with no room to move.

"Wow, this is incredible."

"This Trial is a great success."

The Trial organizers. Even the Administrator's messengers shed tears of excitement at the sight of those tourists.

"There is no other event like this apart from the Murim Martial Arts Tournament. This kind of event is an unmissable attraction for Rankers who live for hundreds or thousands of years."

The mischievous-looking messenger crossed his arms with a smile on his face.

"This Trial is a great success. We couldn't afford to fail, especially when the conflict between Asgard and Muspelheim has increased people's interest. This Trial was something we couldn't fail."

"Team leader, may I ask a question?"

"What is it?"

"Was it you who planned this Trial?"

"...Shut up, you idiot."

The messengers hurried to prepare for the Trial.

This Trial had to end successfully.

It was a mandatory task for the Administrator in charge of the 65th floor and his messengers.

Muspelheim, an arid and fiery world, had very few floating population.

An opportunity arose in that Muspelheim.

This Trial was an unimaginable event, and if this opportunity was seized well, it could change the image of the 65th floor.

And on the other hand...

"Does this trial even make sense..."

"I can't believe we're all on the same team except one."

The Players participating in the Trial expressed their astonishment.

The content of the Trial was as follows:

[Capture the Muspelheim castle]

[Kim YuWon and the other players will form teams. Kim YuWon will start as the one taking the castle]

[At the end of the day, the team that controls the castle will win the exam]

[Rewards will be given according to contribution]

The Trial itself was simple.

A Trial that took place during one day. Since it was a relatively long Trial, there was enough entertainment.

The problem was the balance of the Trial.

"Still, the opponent is a Ranker. And one ranked among the top 100."

Kim YuWon was a Ranker in the 80th rank. Originally, he was ranked around 400th, but thanks to his achievements in the war between Asgard and Muspelheim, his ranking rose rapidly.

There is an insurmountable barrier between Rankers and common players.

Let alone a Trial where a Player faces a high-level Ranker, especially one ranked among the top 100.

But his opponents were not ordinary Players.

"That's the first thing that doesn't make sense. What can someone do who hasn't even passed floor 65?"

Those who called themselves Reserve Rankers were at least on floor 65.

Some players, especially those who had reached floor 79, were even close to becoming Rankers.

"I heard that guy threw the Gungnir."

"Is there anyone who doesn't know that Kim YuWon is an Asgard player? It's just a way to promote Asgard Rankers."

"But how does the Ranking Office overlook that?"

"There's no way Odin doesn't have influence over the Ranking Office."

"Well, that's true."

"Still, he must have great talent. If you look at the content of the Trial, it seems that even the Administrator recognizes his ability."

The evaluation of Kim YuWon, the protagonist of this Trial, was divided into two main opinions.

Those who said there were too many inflated rumors, and those who believed it was time to acknowledge his ability.

Especially players who were attacking higher floors than Kim YuWon still tended to underestimate him.

But...

"Well, when the Trial begins, we'll find out."

Everyone shared a common opinion.

"Whether Kim YuWon's ranking is real or not."

The Trial was about to begin.

The theme of the Trial was Capture the Castle.

Whoever controlled the castle for the longest time.

Whoever was registered as the final owner of the castle.

In addition, the Trial was being broadcast live from the center of the city on floor 65.

"There are many outstanding Rankers."

"He's not exactly the type who usually stands out. But there aren't many opportunities to see him fight like this, right?"

A handsome man with golden hair and a middle-aged man with short black hair walked together.

As they walked, the crowd that was packed around them parted on both sides.

"It seems like we're causing trouble, don't you think?"

"It's because you stand out too much."

"No, I think it's because of the Elder Brother who's with me."

Hades and Apollo.

They were two high-level Rankers from Olympus. Especially Hades, who was said to hardly participate in public activities, and many feared him for being the king of the Underworld.

"Well, anyway, thanks to that, we were able to get good seats..."

Apollo looked at the enormous screen located in the center of the city.

It was as if there was a huge castle standing right in front of them. If you didn't pay much attention, you could mistake it for either a screen or something real.

"It seems like the messengers have invested a lot in this battle."

"Really? It looks quite impressive."

Hades carefully observed the numerous Players shown on the screen.

A swarm of people, like a group of ants. Ten thousand people, there were really a lot of them.

"It was even said to be a first-come, first-served registration request."

In this Tower, there were countless Players.

And only a minuscule minority could become Rankers, Players with the potential to do so.

The majority of Players couldn't even surpass Floor 10 and were eliminated.

In other words, YuWon was facing a selected elite of ten thousand people.

While Apollo continued to observe the screen for a moment...

"Senior, over there..."

Apollo touched Hades' shoulder with an uneasy voice.

"What's wrong?"

"That guy is here too."

"That guy?"

Hades turned his head.

The place Apollo was pointing at.

There was an empty circle with people moving away from a single individual.

People avoided getting close.

It seemed to be some kind of disturbance, but Hades understood when he saw who Apollo was pointing at.

"Asura...?"

Dark brown skin and well-developed muscles. A man covered in ten weapons all over his body.

He was staring at the screen.

"Why did Asura come here?"

Asura was a dangerous Ranker. He had skills, but he also enjoyed fighting and had no qualms about killing.

The number of high-level Rankers he had killed was in the double digits.

It was serious enough to receive warnings from an Administrator, as he challenged others to fight and killed them without any reason or justified cause.

"It seems that guy has also taken an interest in Kim YuWon."

"Isn't that dangerous?"

"It probably is, if it's Asura."

It wasn't just an ordinary level of danger.

The fact that he, who had been quiet after receiving warnings from an Administrator, was acting meant that he was going to put an end to something.

He had probably been looking for his next prey for a long time.

"I'll inform Hercules about this."

"Alright. Please do."

Asura's appearance made Hades realize that there were more Rankers interested in this trial than he had thought.

Even with a quick glance, he recognized several familiar faces.

'Asura, Tsukuyomi, Thor, Brunhilde, Merlin, Belial...'

It was as if all the stars were gathering to form a galaxy.

The powers gathered here were enough to provoke a great cataclysmic war.

If they came to this place, there was only one reason.

To test YuWon's abilities.

With the Trial open to Rankers, this was an opportunity to verify it.

"So, what will happen...?"

Hades' gaze returned to the screen once again. Toward the top of the castle that appeared on the screen.

"It's YuWon!"

"Is it starting already?"

"We've waited for so long!"

"Here! Bring three pitchers of beer!"

Cheers erupted everywhere when YuWon appeared.

The one-against-all Trial had begun.

Chapter 279

C279

"This is just taking advantage of others."

"That's right. But thanks to this, great fortune has befallen us."

The players gazing at the castle knew they had a sure victory.

From the beginning, this was a fight they couldn't lose.

"If we pass, will we go straight to Floor 80?"

"What kind of reward will we get?"

"Is the contribution also divided according to the siege strategy?"

"There's only one enemy. How is the contribution calculated?"

"I don't know. Just keep going, I guess."

At that moment, as they were about to begin the trial.

The participating players were relaxed.

Of course, not everyone was like that.

"Something seems off."

"Can it be this easy?"

"I can't believe it."

"The Administrators aren't so careless."

But this was a special trial without variables.

A battle of conquest.

Among the various existing trials, there was no trial as straightforward as this. They simply had to bring down the enemy defending the castle and take control of it.

"He's appeared!"

"It's Kim YuWon!"

"Is it starting already?"

YuWon appeared at the top of the castle wall.

There were already over ten thousand people here.

Strategy? Tactics?

They weren't necessary with this many people. Just attempting to devise strategies and tactics with this number was futile.

"Let's go."

"Is it true that the floor we ascend to varies according to our contribution?"

"I'll be the first to go."

"Do as you please. I'm satisfied with climbing just one floor."

"Even just leaving a good impression here will increase my value."

The players gathered noisily, and YuWon simply walked through the castle ahead of the players.

Then...

"Something seems... off."

"What's wrong?"

Some players with a keen eye stopped. A strange sense of anxiety spread rapidly. The players who were rushing stopped for a moment.

"It doesn't seem to be Kim YuWon."

"What are you saying?"

"There's only one opponent."

"There can't be another one besides Kim YuWon..."

The players who felt something off looked at the man standing blocking the castle gate.

It was strange.

As careless as they were, it was natural to know the information about the player designated as the opponent.

There was no one among the players participating in the trial who didn't know Kim YuWon's face.

But...

"Eh?"

"Is this for real?"

The opponent wasn't actually Kim YuWon.

It was an unfamiliar face.

At that moment, when everyone was surprised, some faces turned pale.

"S-S-Su..."

"Susanoo."

They were players who knew the story of the Three Precious Children.

Susanoo.

Being a former High-Ranker, his face had been forgotten over time, but his name remained vivid and deep in the Tower's history.

"Susanoo? That guy?"

"Why is Susanoo here?"

"Who's saying nonsense!"

"Isn't it just someone who looks similar?"

Step~

Susanoo walked forward. The distance shortened, and his face became clear. A purple aura rose from his body.

Keiiii~

The sound of a sharp wind spread from outside the castle.

"No, it's not just a resemblance..."

"He's identical to the records..."

"I've seen him before! It's Susanoo! It's really Susanoo!"

Among the ten thousand players, there were some who were contemporaries of Susanoo. Although they couldn't be nearly immortal like the Rankers, they had existed for a long time as players on the upper floors.

They remembered Susanoo's face, and that memory was not forgotten at all.

"I surrender!"

"Curse it! Susanoo wasn't supposed to be here! Didn't that bastard die?"

"Wait a moment! This is a deception! That guy can't really be Susanoo..."

Shwack-.

Kwaang!

A long line was drawn in the center of the place where the players had gathered. The earth was deeply excavated, and red blood splattered into the sky.

"Aaah!"

"M-My arm! My arm!"

"What kind of ability is this?"

"It's a sword!"

"A sword?"

"Is this what a sword looks like?"

The players were stunned.

Susanoo's sword quickly split the wide battlefield in half. According to their common knowledge, it was impossible to achieve something like this with just the movement of a sword, without special abilities.

Chulk-.

Susanoo continued advancing with two swords in his hands.

-My master has commanded me.

It was a voice that conveyed unease and great anger.

-No one can enter here.

Kihi-ii-ii-.

Sususus-.

A sharp intent spread from Susanoo. At the same time, some players noticed his pallor and the energy emanating from him.

"Undead...?"

"Then, does Kim YuWon control Susanoo?"

"Curse it."

Somehow, the trial seemed too easy. The players who thought that silently reignited their determination.

"If it's an Undead, there's nothing to fear!"

"That guy isn't the real Susanoo. Undead controlled by a Necromancer have their limitations."

"Overcoming that guy is the true objective of this trial. Everyone, stay focused!"

The thousands of players began to fan the flames of war.

The battlefield, which was tempered, ignited in an instant. Susanoo finally smiled as he faced the crowd head-on.

-That's right, this is what I want.

It wasn't exactly the form he preferred, but at least he had finally returned. In the battlefield soaked in the smell of blood. On the stage of slaughter.

Inside the enormous castle.

From the sofa in the living room, where everything was unusually large, YuWon murmured in response to the vibrations he felt from outside.

"This is getting chaotic."

Gwoooooong-.

The castle trembled slightly.

It was evidence of the fierce battle happening outside. Although individually the players were not so impressive, the Arcane Power emitted simultaneously by ten thousand people was something that couldn't be ignored.

Susanoo's joy could be felt through his soul.

Being able to confront such a large army was probably the best thing that could have happened to him.

Of course, it wasn't Susanoo's decision to fight here.

"Hold them off a bit while fighting them."

-Eh?

Susanoo froze at YuWon's command.

His face, which had previously shown a smile, turned stiff. It seemed as if his cry of rebellion could be heard. But YuWon's thoughts didn't change.

"It's an order."

-...Understood.

Susanoo, who was excitedly swinging his sword away from the castle gate, turned around.

Soon, he firmly blocked the entrance of the grand castle gate and began to wield his sword only against the approaching players.

Most of his movements were more for subduing than killing his opponents.

Among the two swords, Susanoo had chosen to deliberately use a blunt sword.

-How boring.

Susanoo's lament resonated in YuWon's soul.

Susanoo enjoyed the thrill of balancing on the edge between blood and death. However, now he found himself fighting in a battle where he shouldn't kill his opponent.

But he had already sworn loyalty to YuWon.

The day before, after losing in a fight against YuWon, Susanoo had made an oath of loyalty and became an undead completely submitted to YuWon's dominion.

There was no way to refuse. If he kept rejecting YuWon's orders, he would become an empty puppet without any consciousness.

"No matter how good this opportunity is, it's not good to have too many casualties here."

This was a trial in which YuWon would have to face ten thousand men alone.

He had to protect the castle from the enemies. But that didn't mean he had to kill them all to pass the trial.

"Players on floor 65 and above. Given enough time, more than 10% of them could become Rankers."

By simple math, that's nearly a thousand people who could become Rankers. Each one could be something, but a thousand Rankers was a lot of power.

"I can't kill them all here..."

That was the reason why YuWon gave that annoying order to Susanoo.

Over time, they would become full-fledged Rankers who would participate in the war against the Outer Gods.

Although it was bothersome, he had to bring them along. That was the promise YuWon had made to his companions when he returned to the past.

Whenever possible, he would take as many players as needed to climb the Tower.

Even in this trial, YuWon had no intention of breaking that promise.

Of course.

"It seems too boring to consider it simply as a Trial that can be overcome with the passage of time..."

This was a trial to evaluate YuWon's skills, to showcase his power to the public, and an opportunity to promote Floor 65 to the world.

As such, it was designed to satisfy the eyes of the public.

YuWon didn't believe that the Administrators had organized the trial in such a straightforward manner.

"Because it's not too difficult for a High-Ranker Player to defend against tactical assaults from advancing players."

Unless the trial was not designed by the current Administrator but by players who doubted YuWon's abilities or well-frogs who couldn't evaluate the power of a High Ranker, the trial seemed to have some deficiency in its design.

"If this is a spectacle, then I'll accept it."

That's why YuWon was waiting. Until that void was filled.

"However, you will have to pay the price once I step onto the stage."

-You will have to pay the price once I step onto the stage.

YuWon lifted his head and spoke.

A group of Administrators gathered by the lake, observing YuWon's reflection in it.

"It seems what they said was true."

"Does he know that we're watching?"

"If not, he wouldn't be talking alone in such an empty place."

The eyes of the Administrators gleamed.

YuWon's words were not just a mere murmur. He was certain that the Administrators were watching him, and he spoke to them with that conviction.

It couldn't be determined whether YuWon had noticed the gazes of the Administrators or if it was just an assumption.

Either way, there was one thing certain.

"As you said, it seems it's not an ordinary gamble."

"That's right. Kuhuhuhu."

The Tutorial Administrator stroked his beard as he laughed.

He, too, was interested in this trial and had come to witness it.

Besides him, several Administrators and superiors were paying attention to this trial as well.

"Anyway, it seems he has already figured it out. The difficulty level of the trial seems too low..."

The Floor 65 Administrator turned his head and looked at the other Administrators.

"What if we speed up the pace a bit compared to the plan?"

"I agree."

"Otherwise, we won't have anything interesting if we only present an Undead swinging his sword left and right."

"Although I don't mind it as it is right now. I agree."

"Me too."

Everyone agreed.

The Administrators wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to see YuWon's current abilities. However, contrary to their expectations, due to the appearance of Susanoo as a variable factor, YuWon wasn't even moving.

To overcome the boring part at the beginning, they had to accelerate a little.

"Well, I see everyone agrees."

The Tutorial Administrator looked at YuWon's face reflected in the lake with an excited expression.

The boy who had faced Surtra, the son of Surt, during the Tutorial.

He couldn't help but wonder how much stronger he had become in the short span of a few years.

"Let's proceed quickly."

Dozens of Administrators.

The massive trial they had prepared.

"Let's see how far this boy can go."

Chapter 280

Chaaaaaak-!

A swift sword strike.

Susanoo swung his arm as if bored.

-How boring.

Not aiming for vital points and simply swinging the sword.

It wasn't challenging. Susanoo knew human vital points better than anyone and had always targeted them when swinging his sword.

All he had to do was the opposite. Yet, the feeling when swinging the sword was incomparable to before.

-I don't even feel the need to exert my strength against these insignificant losers, honestly.

Without the tension of battle, without the taste of blood, without the thrill of knowing whether he could live or die. It was an empty fight. The only thing left was the feeling of being on a battlefield, just that.

"Man, how are we supposed to get through to that guy?"

"He's on a completely different level, isn't he?"

"Is this the power of a High-Ranker...?"

There's no business in front of dishonesty. (?)

Although it wasn't a valid phrase for Rankers, the number was nothing short of ten thousand.

At this rate, they had enough strength to crush a Ranker even with numbers.

But the players were being overwhelmed by a single Susanoo.

"These fools."

From Susanoo's perspective, it was ridiculous.

"If they believed in numbers and all charged together, it wouldn't be impossible."

Of course, if that happened, he would have to use Kusanagi as well.

If the situation became truly desperate, he would prefer to wield his sword with determination.

-Don't think unnecessary things.

Surprisingly, YuWon's warning continued.

He had planned to kill some of them if the situation became urgent, but YuWon had just cut off his tail.

Susanoo frowned. Thus, he could only continue using a dull sword.

But...

Sigh-.

Among the players who had gathered in front of him.

He saw several people, they didn't look ordinary.

-Eh?

Susanoo's eyes gleamed.

The corners of his mouth lifted slightly. It seemed that he could finally enjoy himself a little.

Three players were approaching Susanoo.

Looking at those three, dressed in black armor and short in stature, Susanoo began gathering his Arcane Power.

-No objections, right?

Zas...

Susanoo drew another sword from his belt.

The Kusanagi Sword.

One of the Three Sacred Treasures, a gift from YuWon to Susanoo.

-Then...

-Just let them in.

Susanoo's hand, which was pulling out Kusanagi, stopped at YuWon's words.

It wasn't of his own volition. He was simply responding to YuWon's command.

-Really?

-This is my Trial. I don't want the fight to unnecessarily escalate.

-You're not letting me have any fun.

Although he complained, he couldn't resist.

Susanoo lowered the sword he had in his hand.

-Enter.

"...?"

The three approaching players looked confused.

They were suddenly told to enter.

After exchanging glances for a moment, they nodded.

Immediately, the castle door swung wide open, and the three players began walking inside.

"What's going on?"

"Why are they just entering like that?"

"Are they discriminating against us?"

"It's unfair!"

"Wooh-!"

Boos erupted from various places.

The veins on Susanoo's forehead bulged. He felt the sword in his hand grow more powerful on its own.

-How dare those insects...?

He wished to kill them with a single blow. But until he received the order from YuWon, he couldn't do it.

Realizing that no one was being killed, it was likely that they resorted to booing like this.

"I'd rather fight those guys back there than these."

Susanoo looked back at the players who had just entered the castle where YuWon was.

No.

In the first place, they were not Players, but outsiders.

"Envoys..."

[The first trial is on hold]

[The second trial begins]

A message crossed Yu-won's mind.

It was a separate message that didn't reach the other Players participating in the same Trial. It was natural since this trial focused on YuWon from the start.

"The first trial involved stopping the players gathered outside the castle."

It even had a time limit.

But suddenly, the time limit disappeared, and the second trial began abruptly.

The Administrator arbitrarily changed the contents of the trial.

"I thought there might be a second and third trial..."

Creeeeek...

The massive door began to open.

He already knew who would enter from outside.

They were the ones he sent himself.

"Although now that I think about it, it's not surprising that they sent the Envoys."

YuWon looked at the three people entering the room.

The men who had opened the massive door were, ironically, very short.

They reached his waist.

Unless you looked closely, they looked like children or dwarves.

Envoys.

Men who did the dirty work for the Administrators, planned and organized the Trials, and occasionally became their spear and shield.

They were the second obstacle in this Trial.

"It doesn't make sense, does it? That the Envoys are involved in the Players' Trial."

"If you find it difficult, you can give up right now. This is not a common Trial; it's more like an event."

The three Envoys looked at Yu-won.

YuWon stood on a sofa. Since this was the interior of Muspellheim's castle, the land of the Giants, the furniture here was several times larger than regular furniture.

Amidst that, the presence of the appearing Envoys felt very small.

"It's still too early to give up."

Three Envoys.

It was an unplanned encounter, but that was not a reason to give up. Of course, from the perspective of the Envoys facing YuWon, it was a challenging and risky task.

"You shouldn't see us as mere envoys."

The three Envoys chuckled and began to gather energy individually.

A considerable-sized energy filled the room.

A room similar in size to a small village sports field.

The energy filling the room was clearly difficult to consider as that of simple Envoys.

"Most of the Administrators' Envoys are composed of fairies. It's natural that the majority of them are short."

The flow of energy felt from the Envoys was, in a way, expected.

"Despite that, the fact that they are so tall means they possess powers that transcend their race."

An Envoy the size of YuWon likely held at least the position to lead a group of low-level Envoys.

Beings that possessed enough power to rival High-Rankers.

They noticed Susano'o's power and moved to break through it.

However...

"If you are the second, I can more or less imagine what will come in the third."

A much higher level of difficulty than he had initially thought.

This was a completely different level of difficulty from simply protecting the castle against players with mediocre skills.

Facing Envoys approaching a High-Ranker level was impressive.

Even if he climbed several floors at once, it still didn't make sense.

"I suppose I'll get a great reward for this."

"I heard you wanted to climb."

The Envoy clearly understood what YuWon was thinking.

"What matters to you is strength and time. We won't make a mistake in our assessment."

YuWon nodded.

Time and strength.

They were simple and straightforward explanations. In fact, YuWon considered these two things to be the most important.

To stop the Outer Gods, more strength was needed, and to strengthen the Tower's power, enough time was needed.

That's why YuWon needed to climb the Tower as fast as possible. Even the slight tingling sensation he felt when promised that he could climb several floors at once was for that reason.

"As long as you pass the Trial, you will achieve what you set out to do. Of course, the same will happen if you give up halfway."

"I suppose they considered that I already passed the first trial, right?"

"That's right."

Tsut, tsut-.

The energy emitted by the Envoys coiled around YuWon's neck.

The three Envoys did not consider YuWon an ordinary opponent.

YuWon quickly assessed the energy surrounding him.

"It's like gas."

The energy that was nauseating and dispersed around him was no different from some kind of gas. With a little pressure, it would explode with a blast.

There was enough Arcane Power around him to create quite a powerful explosion.

"Before we start the fight, I have one last question."

Before starting the fight, YuWon looked at the Envoys, who glanced at each other and nodded.

"What is it?"

"The outside scene is being transmitted. But probably, only the Administrators are watching the inside. Is that right?"

The eyes of the Envoys widened.

It was a correct assumption, but it was unthinkable that YuWon had considered that.

Convinced that the silence was an affirmation, YuWon continued.

"So, the situation here won't spread outside through the Administrators or those under their authority, right?"

"And what if it doesn't?"

"Then it's fine."

The corner of YuWon's lips lifted.

At the same time, the Uranus Heart in his hand emitted a light.

Chak~

In that moment...

Tak.

Boom!

Following the signal from one of the Envoys, the energy of the Envoys that was extending around YuWon exploded.

Ahhh!

The nature of the explosion was different from fire.

If fire generated intense heat, this was closer to icy cold.

Such intense cold that it seemed to freeze even time.

Due to the remnants of the explosion, blue smoke rose towards the ceiling.

"Those who wield fire energy are weak against ice. It's obvious and natural, but that also means it's equally effective."

The Envoys were filled with determination and energy.

The three wielded a type of magic that was the antithesis of YuWon and his natural enemy.

The sharp cold mist gradually dissipated over time. The envoys expected to see YuWon frozen within.

However...

Tap-.

YuWon, defying their expectations, emerged from the mist as if nothing had happened.

"So, they've even prepared this. Those Administrator lords are quite thoughtless."

Toc, toc-.

Shaking off the frost from his body, YuWon walked out.

His carefree appearance made the Envoys furrow their brows.

"How...?"

"The advantage of attributes only matters when there's a significant difference in comparison."

Creack-.

A Lightning Bolt leapt from the Uranus Heart to YuWon's hand.

Crack, crackle, crackle-!

Arcane Power began to fiercely burst.

[Tartarus has been summoned]

This time, the power of lightning, imbued with dark magic, started to fill the room.

The Arcane Power surging from YuWon's hand covered the lights on the ceiling. Dense debris of Arcane Power filled the room without escape, causing the Envoys to step back.

"You are not even worthy of a breeze from my fire."

Swoosh-.

Following the gesture of YuWon's hand, the Black Lightning that filled the room sprang into motion.

Zap, zap, zap-!

The Lightning Bolt headed towards the three Envoys.

"Attack them."

With those words...

Flash-!

[Lightning Bolt]

The second Trial came to an end.

Crash-!