

With The Gods 441

Chapter 441

C441

Yggdrasil.

Also known as the Tree of the Universe, it is the largest and most magnificent tree in the Tower.

It is said that all life in the world, including all trees and plants, originates from Yggdrasil, making it the source of life.

"Mimir."

"Yes."

"I had a dream."

It was an ordinary day when Odin, climbing the Tower as usual, mentioned bewildering words on the 65th floor.

"What's your dream about?"

"There was a giant tree."

"A tree?"

"It was enormously large, so much that I can't describe it with words. I'm not exactly sure, but it could probably traverse several Floors."

"That's nonsense. How can you see it with your own eyes?"

"Exactly, that's what I thought too. It surprises me as well."

At first, he thought it was just a dream, nothing more.

But that changed.

Seeing something in a dream that couldn't happen in reality is common after all; it's the power of imagination.

"However, the root of that tree was planted inside me."

"Lucky you. Now, it will probably grow and come out through your nose."

Mimir laughed while sipping his coffee.

However, Odin spoke seriously, unlike his usual jokes.

"I'm not joking."

"What's wrong? Why that reaction?"

"You probably won't understand. It's a feeling I can't explain more than as a simple dream. That dream was more vivid than the reality in which we're drinking coffee right now."

He thought it was of no importance.

The conversation back then left a lasting impression on Mimir. The gigantic tree spanning the Tower and the dream that Odin had, more real than reality itself.

But perhaps because he wasn't too interested, Mimir soon forgot that conversation. Probably when he was about to conquer the Tower and become a Ranker.

"It was Yggdrasil."

The tree that was planted inside Odin.

-Beeeeh-.

The Black Goat of the Woods raised its head.

With every step Odin took towards Shub-Niggurath, life in the dead forest came to life.

As he got closer, he felt it more intensely.

How great that calamity was.

"They say it's called dj vu."

In Odin's mind, he remembered the moment he first encountered the true form of Shub-Niggurath.

Although it hadn't been long, the memory was so vivid that he remembered it clearly.

"Even though the circumstances are different from that time. You and I."

['The roots of 'Yggdrasil' reside in your body']

A feeling of energy filled his entire body.

It had been a long time since he felt this sensation.

This also meant that it had been a long time since he used Yggdrasil.

Odin struck both his legs firmly on the ground and stood before Shub-Niggurath.

The size of Shub-Niggurath, towering like a mountain, and its eight horns sharper than Diablo's, made it more menacing than any monster Odin had seen before.

However...

Crash!

In front of Yggdrasil, all creatures were just tiny and miserable cosmic dust.

Huuup!

A direct punch forward.

...!

It was the moment when the fist reached Shub-Niggurath's forehead...

Bam!

-Beeehh-.

Shub-Niggurath writhed in agony as it shook its head. Without stopping, Odin lifted Gungnir in his other hand and swung it with all his might.

Buuuum...

Schaaaaa!

The top of Shub-Niggurath's thigh split like paper. Magic filled Odin's fist, which sank deeply into the flesh through the spurting blood.

Wuuung, wuuung...

Dozens.

No, hundreds of magic circles.

"Monsters as big as you..."

All the magic circles shared a common property.

An open palm.

And when that struck Shub-Niggurath's head.

"The weight of his body is his greatest weakness."

Gruuung...

Thud!

The body that couldn't overcome its own weight collapsed on the ground, crushing the forest.

Gravity.

Even with the same force applied, the heavier the body, the greater the resulting force. The countless magics accumulated in Odin's hand crushed Shub-Niggurath's body the moment it touched his head.

Toc.

So, standing on Shub-Niggurath's head...

"Don't make futile moves."

Odin asked as he pressed with both feet.

"This isn't all you have, is it?"

Wuuuuuung...

Magic dispersed from Odin's hand. Something had interfered with the countless magic circles, forcing them to disperse.

-Beeeeeeh-.

-Beeeeeh-.

Shub-Niggurath's bleats resounded repeatedly.

A tree began to grow from Shub-Niggurath's body beneath Odin's feet. Clicking his tongue, Odin struck again forcefully.

Crash!

The trees shattered into pieces.

Green energy flowed into Odin's body. The power of Yggdrasil was resisting the power of the Black Woods.

"...As I thought."

He grumbled.

The forest was draining life. Yggdrasil was doing its best to protect Odin, but it couldn't say the same for others.

"I'm... suffocating..."

"I feel... strength leaving my body..."

The Rankers trapped in the forest began to lose consciousness.

Shub-Niggurath's bleats materialized and appeared.

Ssssh, ssssh...

The Black Woods' trees extended their branches toward Odin. Odin pushed them aside with his hand and then turned his head in the direction of Shub-Niggurath's bleat.

Thud!

A heavy step echoed.

Another goat appeared in the Black Woods. Shub-Niggurath wasn't just one.

No.

'To be exact, those are just a part of him.'

The Black Woods was not just the place where Shub-Niggurath lived.

The sheep/goat within it, and even the form of the gigantic billy goat, were all Shub-Niggurath itself.

Parts of Shub-Niggurath.

There was no original form.

That made it even more terrifying.

Odin realized that when Shub-Niggurath first appeared in this world.

Thud!

"I will destroy everything."

He already knew the truth. It wouldn't change anything.

The Shub-Nigguraths were approaching from the other side of the Black Woods.

Yggdrasil began to shine against them.

Thud!

Odin's punch struck Shub-Niggurath's head.

Almost simultaneously, the tail of another Shub-Niggurath fell onto Odin's head.

Jjeoung!

Odin was sent flying by the blow and fell to the ground. The green energy surrounding him slowly dissipated.

"Ugh!"

Gungnir in Odin's hand gleamed brightly.

The process was quick. The tip of the spear that slipped from his hand pierced Shub-Niggurath's chest.

Kwuuung!

It was the fifth time today already.

Mimir, who had been observing the fight from a distance, began to worry.

"Are you okay?" This was the question Hercules had been holding back.

Odin, who was alone in the middle of the Black Woods, fighting Shub-Niggurath, was undeniably astonishing. It was a breathtaking spectacle.

He could understand why Odin had never fallen in the Ranking.

But today, his opponent was no pushover.

Tss, tss, tss...

The immediate problem was the forest.

Hercules, who was trying to recover and become more familiar with the power of the Lightning Bolt, found it more challenging to recover since the forest appeared.

The Black Woods was sapping vitality. Those with weak wills not only lost their strength but also experienced strange hallucinations and delusions.

In this situation, who would have the advantage over whom?

According to what he had thought, they were definitely not on the winning side.

Mimir probably knew that.

However...

"We need a decisive attack."

Mimir's thoughts were a bit different from Hercules'.

"What do you think you can change if you go out now? The guy who still can't control his power properly?"

"At least we should try, right?"

"You're right. Try it, but try what specifically?"

"So, what...?"

"Just wait."

Wait for what?

At some point, Mimir had started to frown and hold his head with his hand as if he had an unbearable headache.

As if he couldn't bear it any longer.

"Odin, if it's him, he will hold out. Just wait a little longer."

Mimir's words ended there.

Hercules nodded as he gripped his thigh with his hands. If he hadn't, he might have rushed to help without even realizing it.

Pweeok!

One of Shub-Niggurath's horns impaled Odin's body.

Crack, crack...

The horn broke through the golden armor that surrounded Odin's body. It was the highest-quality item made of half adamantium and half mithril, created in Asgard.

"Klok!"

Blood spurted from Odin's mouth.

Fortunately, the injuries were not severe. Only the horn had pierced through his body without causing too much damage.

However, many magics woven into his armor broke, and the Arcane Power flowing through his body reversed. It was almost as if his blood were flowing backward.

['The Roots of Yggdrasil' stabilize the flow of Arcane Power]

['The Black Woods' are infecting 'the Roots of Yggdrasil']

Messages with unclear meaning.

Odin felt like he was reaching the end. It seemed that it wouldn't be long before the roots he had planted rotted away and lost their power.

Kwok...

He held Shub-Niggurath's broken horns with both hands. With all his strength, he lifted Shub-Niggurath and threw it upward, away from him.

Buwooong...

So, Shub-Niggurath soared high into the air.

Pazzz...

Gungnir radiated light once again.

Kwuung...

Gungnir's spear strike pierced through Shub-Niggurath's body.

This was the sixth attempt in a single day.

'Thanks to Yggdrasil, I was able to significantly reduce the cooldown time of the ability, but...'

Tremble, tremble~

The arm that threw the spear trembled. It was reaching its limit.

'Six times in a single day.'

When had he thrown Gungnir so many times? If he remembered correctly, during his battle with Surt, it had been three times at most. This number was truly unprecedented.

But it still wasn't enough.

Gungnir returned to Odin's hand. Odin grasped his trembling arm with his other hand to steady himself, then looked at the Black Woods.

"There's still a long way to go."

He could still fight.

So could Yggdrasil.

It wouldn't be defeated by a forest like that.

Thinking so, when Odin was about to take his next step...

Clack, clack...

The trees of the Black Woods grabbed Odin's arms and legs.

They appeared to be withered trees that should have died, but...

"Aigoo..."

The trees emerging from the ground bound him. Even though they were withered trees, Odin couldn't escape from them.

"My strength..."

Odin's eyes trembled.

['The Roots of Yggdrasil' have been infected]

The force that was holding Odin vanished.

Shuaaak!

The trees of the Black Woods pierced Odin's eyes.

And in that moment...

Kwaang!

A Golden Lightning Bolt came flying from somewhere.

It blocked the trees that were closing in on Odin.

"I should have let your followers see this scene."

Mocking laughter was mixed with his words.

Under different circumstances, that tone of voice would have been unbearable to him.

But at this moment, there was nothing he could trust more than that.

Thud...

Two people emerged from the depths of the Black Woods.

"...You're late."

Watching YuWon and Zeus, Odin muttered.

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Approximately an hour ago.

Kwang!

Golden Lightning Bolts fell incessantly in the Black Woods. YuWon was busy dodging and blocking the Lightning Bolts, so his expression wasn't the best.

"...Is it not reacting at all?"

Sweat ran down Zeus's forehead. Despite his vast amount of Arcane Power, releasing Lightning Bolts of this power for an hour was draining him.

Zeus took a moment to catch his breath.

YuWon approached Zeus and asked.

"My clothes are singed."

YuWon extended the sleeves of his clothes.

These items were already damaged by the aftermath of the Lightning Bolts. Fortunately for Zeus, his target wasn't YuWon; otherwise, the situation could have been much worse.

"What do you want me to do about it?"

"What do you think I want you to do?"

"I'll buy you a new set."

"Okay. That's what I wanted to hear."

Concluding their business, YuWon rolled up his singed sleeves.

The woods was completely devastated by Zeus. It was almost impossible to find its original shape.

'Zeus is many times better than me at destroying a wide area.'

Lightning was considered the most destructive property among various magical properties, especially when it came to high-level Lightning magic like Zeus's. No one would deny that he was the best in the Lightning magic category.

'After all, wantonly destroying everything isn't the solution...'

YuWon grew more concerned, and his expression became more serious.

Then, Zeus, who was catching his breath while restoring his Arcane Power, looked at YuWon in surprise, as if not understanding.

"Don't you like your clothes being singed?"

Zeus smirked mockingly, as if it were some kind of joke.

"Don't worry. In Olympus's warehouses, there are countless treasures and riches that you can't even imagine..."

"You shouldn't just limit yourself to destroying the place."

Zeus's expression seemed to say, "What the hell are you talking about?"

But there was no further response.

Zeus didn't get a response from YuWon, even though he seemed to expect something.

YuWon's eyes turned red. In that moment, he was seeing something else.

['Golden Cinder Eyes' are discovering the true nature of the 'Black Woods']

YuWon had the Golden Cinder Eyes, which could discern between falsehoods and truths and understand the essence of life and the inanimate. Thanks to this, Son OhGong had never made a wrong decision, even though he seemed like a fool who only knew how to fight.

When YuWon asked how he could do it, Son OhGong pointed to his eyes, claiming they could see the truth. That's why Son OhGong never took a wrong path, even though finding the right path in this Black Woods seemed impossible.

However...

['Otherworld Opponent' is discovering the true nature of the 'Black Woods']

For YuWon, there was another option besides the Golden Cinder Eyes.

['Otherworld Opponent' is unraveling the limits of the 'Black Woods']

Zzzz...

He saw it.

The border between the woods.

Schluck...

His hands clenched the sword tightly.

He focused on a single point with the sword.

He needed nothing more.

['Otherworld Opponent' confronts the 'Black Woods']

Uoaaaaah!

Aaaaaah!

Strange cries echoed in the woods.

Zeus showed no reaction, as if he hadn't heard the sound.

It was understandable.

Even though Zeus was a High-Ranker with divine powers almost equivalent to a God, hearing the voice of the inanimate was a completely different problem.

'It's not about cutting down the trees in the woods.'

Destroying indiscriminately wouldn't be enough to escape from this place.

There was a different essence.

'Cutting the woods itself.'

It was an abstract idea. YuWon couldn't describe this feeling with words or phrases.

Cutting the woods itself.

But YuWon was certain.

The power to cut the "woods" itself.

And that difference in perception was the first step to reaching the essence.

And that difference in perception was the first step to reaching the essence.

Swaaaah!

Pwoosh!

The tip of YuWon's sword pierced the void.

It literally "went through" the void.

The tip of his sword passed to the other side, to another woods.

'Here.'

Having made an entry point, there was only one thing left to do now.

['Otherworld Opponent' confronts the 'Black Woods']

Repetitive messages echoed.

Agonizing screams were heard almost simultaneously.

Uaaah!

Ooooh!

These were distressing screams, more like howls than mere whimpers.

"What's going on?" Zeus murmured this time, apparently having heard the sound.

Well.

Even though he didn't compare to YuWon, who had attained the Divine Status of 'Otherworld Opponent,' Zeus was also someone who had achieved the Divine Status (Divinity). If he couldn't even hear these agonizing screams due to weakened limits, YuWon would have been even more disappointed.

"Just wait a little longer."

Schluck...

YuWon gripped his sword with both hands.

"Now, I'll let you out."

A pressure filled his hands holding the sword.

Slowly.

['Otherworld Opponent' has cut the Black Woods]

Zzzz...

Uaaah!

The screams grew more intense, and in the empty space where there was nothing, a long line was drawn following the tip of YuWon's sword.

The space twisted and opened. YuWon was trembling due to the intensity of his power, but he finally spoke.

"What are you doing?"

Pssh, pssh, pssh...

Hearing YuWon's words, Zeus infused energy into the lightning bolt he held in his hand.

And in the next moment...

"Destroy it."

Schluck...

A Golden Lightning Bolt pierced the heart of the Black Woods, which had been the prison for both.

Pop...

YuWon and Zeus arrived on the battlefield.

The lightning bolts falling from the sky set the trees of the Black Woods on fire, and YuWon cut down the trees that had been binding Odin.

Tock, tock, tock...

His body, which had been bound, was free again. Odin, who had been constantly boosting the power of Yggdrasil, felt the tension that had been straining his body relax.

Zeus and YuWon.

Both were the people Odin had been waiting for.

"You've come early."

"I'm always one step ahead."

"What an opportunity to joke in a situation like this."

Odin smiled at Zeus's banter.

He could feel how the Black Woods were shrinking due to the electricity flowing from Zeus's body.

Regardless of what they said, he was Odin, one of the few beings who could match him.

Furthermore...

"You are the same."

The person he had been waiting for had finally arrived on the battlefield.

"Why did it take you so long?"

He knew YuWon would arrive late. Because YuWon never faced any fight head-on.

In that case, he surely must have prepared a decisive victory. Odin thought his role might be to hold on to prevent the battlefield from collapsing until the plan was completed.

"Because I had two things to do," YuWon replied.

"Two things?"

"The safer, the better."

"But why is this guy coming too?"

Upon hearing Odin's question, Danpung peeked his head out from behind YuWon.

His reaction seemed that of a frightened child encountering a grumpy grandparent.

"Because I lost him."

"Would you allow a child to come to a dangerous place like this?"

"It's certainly dangerous."

"Even knowing that..."

"For him, it's here. This will become a dangerous place."

When Odin wondered what that meant, a point in the conversation he and YuWon had had moments before came to his mind.

"Is this child your insurance?"

"Yes."

"Hmm..."

Odin looked at Zeus, who had the same expression. Neither of them felt any energy in the small Danpung, not even a trace of Arcane Power.

"All we can do is trust," Zeus shrugged.

Odin let out a sigh. If he could feel something, it might be different, but even he didn't sense any kind of energy in little Danpung.

Moreover...

'It seems he has other insurance as well.'

Thinking about that, Odin involuntarily chuckled.

'Is it time for me to retire for real?'

It was strange that he thought of depending on a young man, instead of resolving it himself.

Even though YuWon claimed to have traveled from the future, he probably wasn't older than him. It was only natural for him to feel subconsciously disappointed in himself for thinking this way.

"Anyway, it's strange," Zeus said as the three of them conversed.

He whispered.

"It's very quiet. Strangely quiet."

Surely, this place was a battlefield in the midst of war, as indicated by the presence of Odin.

Although he had managed to escape the Black Woods after being trapped for some time, given the circumstances, it didn't seem like Odin had defeated Shub-Niggurath.

Despite that, Shub-Niggurath had become completely invisible.

"I guess she's on guard."

"Who would she be on guard against?"

Instead of answering, YuWon nodded.

Then...

"Abba. Ah!"

Danpung playfully raised his hand under YuWon's foot and expressed his viewpoint.

It was a scene in which Zeus, who had asked the question, changed his expression once again.

"Is she on guard because of this kid?"

The reaction was as if he was hearing something utterly absurd.

And that was exactly what Odin thought. He understood that YuWon had expectations of Danpung, but it was too incredible that Shub-Niggurath would remain silent because of this little one.

Even though it seemed like an exaggeration...

"Should we believe in this?"

Originally, what felt like a joke might start to seem true when repeated with conviction.

Furthermore, YuWon's faith in Danpung didn't seem like a joke but a genuine belief, which led Zeus and Odin to feel a strange anticipation towards Danpung.

Moreover...

"She's on guard because of me as well."

YuWon once again displayed his peculiar confidence.

It didn't matter if Zeus and Odin didn't know Danpung well, as he was a mystery. But YuWon's confidence seemed genuine.

"You're overly confident."

Zeus found it difficult to admit.

It wasn't that YuWon lacked skills, but he wasn't a good opponent in this situation. Right now, his ability didn't seem to rival either Zeus or Odin.

Of course, YuWon knew it too.

"It's true."

YuWon knew that his pure ability wasn't a match for Shub-Niggurath's power.

But...

"This kind of confidence is dangerous."

He couldn't help but feel confident.

['Otherworld Opponent' faces 'The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young'.]

The story YuWon wrote.

And through that story, YuWon obtained his Divine Title.

"It seems that..."

The Otherworld Opponent

What his power was, YuWon could discover by confronting Shub-Niggurath.

"It seems I've become her worst enemy."

Chapter 443

C443

Beeh-.

Beeh-.

The sheep around Shub-Niggurath began to bleat.

The sound of their bleating was much softer than at first, and it couldn't extend beyond a wall.

Within the Black Woods.

The mother surrounded by the sheep opened her mouth.

-Calm down. Nothing will happen.

Despite the words of the gigantic demon-horned goat, the unease of the sheep didn't easily disappear.

It was a natural reaction.

The mother surrounding them showed anxiety they hadn't seen before, and the offspring that identified with that emotion, how could they not feel triple the anxiety that Shub-Niggurath faintly felt?

-Saying that is useless.

Shub-Niggurath blinked slowly and looked at YuWon and Zeus, who were somewhere in the Black Woods.

Shub-Niggurath had clearly confined Zeus within the boundaries of the Black Woods. The woods ruled by Shub-Niggurath was so vast that, no matter how powerful Zeus was, he couldn't simply disrupt it all, and she thought that was enough to get Zeus out of the battlefield.

Zeus was as dangerous a figure as Odin, who wielded Yggdrasil, so it was a natural choice.

However...

-Where did that guy suddenly come from...?

Shub-Niggurath's gaze focused on YuWon.

He had probably entered her woods along with Zeus. But she had no memory of inviting YuWon into her woods.

That meant that YuWon had entered the woods of his own accord.

That was something that even Shub-Niggurath, who had encountered all sorts of incomprehensible things, couldn't easily understand.

Moreover...

Beeh-.

Beeh-.

The sheep were restless at his arrival.

It was an unease that wasn't related to Shub-Niggurath, the mother.

But that didn't mean she didn't understand the anxiety of the offspring.

The reason the little sheep trembled and bleated.

That was due to some sort of threat emanating from the human body called Kim YuWon.

She suddenly remembered the story of Foolish Chaos.

YuWon's description was exactly like...

-Is this our natural enemy?

She felt a strange sensation.

It wasn't just a simple feeling. The woods was trembling due to the sensation coming from YuWon.

He was her enemy. The energy flowing from him proved it.

Although for now, the energy was just beginning to bloom.

-It could become a dangerous sprout if it grows a little more.

Perhaps Foolish Chaos intended for her to handle him by sending him.

He was a guy with foolish ideas. She also understood why more and more people followed him outside the Tower.

However...

Sshh-.

The gaze of the gigantic goat turned to the little boy who was hovering under YuWon.

She had always been thinking about it.

And she was still thinking about it now.

Her throat trembled. Although she was now fully regenerated, she still felt pain. The one who bit her throat as he made his way through the wall...

It was that little one.

-I just hope... it's not him.

Beeh-.

Beeh-.

Beeh-.

Was it because of Shub-Niggurath's anxiety?

The sheep's bleating became more intense. Realizing her mistake, she stopped paying attention to YuWon and the child by his side.

She had lost too many sheep.

She had to fill those gaps as soon as possible.

-Wait a little longer.

Shub-Niggurath comforted the little sheep.

-We'll replenish your siblings soon.

The battlefield fell into a temporary calm due to Shub-Niggurath's silence.

The sheep that had fought on the battlefield had dispersed into the woods at some point. The exhausted Rankers had abandoned the pursuit of the sheep they had knocked down during the battle, and Miguel and Lee Rangjin, who led them, couldn't ignore their own fatigue either.

Ching...

Lee Rangjin stomped the ground with his sword. Immediately, he began to inspect the corpses of the sheep that the Rankers had brought down during the battle.

"About five hundred, I guess."

That was the number of sheep whose corpses had been found. If the sheep whose bodies left no trace were added, the figure would be much higher.

A prominent example would be the sheep that had been torn into pieces by the four-handed Asura wielding swords and clubs, leaving no trace of their bodies.

"Oddly, you don't seem to be resting."

Sshh...

Miguel approached Lee Rangjin.

He sat down beside the corpse of a sheep that had been next to him and looked around, surveying the Black Woods.

"Although our bodies are resting, it seems our minds are still fatigued."

"Why did they suddenly withdraw?"

"Well, perhaps they're catching their breath?"

"They outnumbered us."

Lee Rangjin nodded heavily at Miguel's words.

Unfortunately, they couldn't stop all the sheep. Neither Lee Rangjin nor High-Rankers like Miguel could consider themselves in difficulty, but for regular Rankers and higher-level players, each sheep was a calamity.

It took dozens of positioned Rankers to fight for a long time to become an opponent. And they could only resist thanks to Asura's amazing abilities that swept the battlefield.

"So, there must be another reason."

"The other side is doing a good job."

"I hope they continue to do so."

Lee Rangjin looked around.

He saw his exhausted comrades. Both the veteran leaders of the Celestial Realm and others were exhausted.

And among them...

Lee Rangjin approached Brunhilde, who was tending to the injured Valkyries.

"Are the Valkyries all right?"

"They're okay."

Brunhilde, who had nodded, bit her lower lip as if she couldn't take it anymore.

"...Although I would like to say that, the damage is great."

"The Valkyries were the first to fight them. Everyone will remember their sacrifice."

"...I just hope their deaths will be glorious."

When Brunhilde was disconsolate, Lee Rangjin patted her on the shoulder.

In this battle, regardless of what anyone said, Asgard suffered the most. Odin knew what was going to happen today and planned the Day of Reunion to draw everyone in.

Furthermore, he chose the heart of Asgard as the battlefield, which was as important as Valhalla.

'If it were elsewhere, there would have been a backlash against Asgard.'

Odin had abandoned Asgard.

Moreover, he planned to fight Shub-Niggurath himself by throwing his own body into the battle.

Lee Rangjin was also an ancient High-Ranker.

'I can't help but respect him.'

After Lee Rangjin had patted Brunhilde's shoulder for a moment.

Mmm...

Among the exhausted comrades who had fallen, a light step approached.

"Are you the one they call Lee Rangjin-gun?"

A boy's voice came from behind Lee Rangjin.

Lee Rangjin was preparing to turn around in response to the voice, but suddenly realized that the voice was closer than he thought.

"When?"

Lee Rangjin involuntarily stepped back, feeling a shiver. Quickly raising his weapon in the direction of the voice.

Then, a somewhat familiar face caught his attention.

It was a young man with light green hair and a youthful appearance. Lee Rangjin initially mistook him for Vishnu due to his unusual light green hair, but his black eyes proved he was not Vishnu.

"Why are you so alert?"

"How could I not be?"

"Really? I guess you could have been quite surprised."

The man awkwardly scratched his head. He raised his hands as if to show he had no intention of attacking.

"I thought I might have taken the wrong path."

"Path?"

"Yes, I'm looking for someone."

The man looked around the Black Woods as he shook his head.

Amidst the absolute silence of the woods...

"Where is Shub-Niggurath?"

He spoke the name of the monster that appeared in Valhalla.

The crunch of dry leaves broke with every step.

The surroundings were quiet.

It felt like they were entering a cage of silently lurking beasts.

"It seems like everyone has scattered at some point."

Zeus commented as he followed YuWon deeper into the woods.

Odin responded to the implicit question about what was happening.

"Since this woods appeared."

"What does the appearance of the woods have to do with it?"

"The spatial location has changed. As if they were separate blocks."

"It's astonishing."

"There's nothing impossible in this Tower. Much less for a guy like that who comes from the outside."

"True."

Zeus nodded in agreement.

So, while the two of them were briefly conversing...

Crackle-

YuWon felt a presence in front of him.

A hand that brushed aside the dry leaves without a hint of moisture. Odin pointed the Gungnir spear towards that hand, or rather, towards that presence.

But then...

"There's no need to do that."

Zeus stopped Odin.

YuWon, who was leading the way, was not alert either.

Odin wondered what was going on.

"How did you get here?"

In response to YuWon's question, a palm the size of Odin's head appeared among the bushes.

Crackle-

"I guess I came to the right place."

Hercules, covered in black ash on his face, appeared before them. He should have definitely scattered due to the appearance of the Black Woods, but how the hell did he get here?

"You came to the right place. It shouldn't have been easy to find the way."

"I just knew. Although I'm not sure why."

"Probably thanks to the Lightning."

Hercules' gaze sharpened at Zeus's words.

"...Yeah, thanks to the 'Lightning'."

A face and tone that seemed somewhat angry. When the two people's eyes clashed in the middle, YuWon wondered what was going on for a moment and then shook his head.

"It looks like they're about to fight again."

He already knew that their relationship was not good. It was surprising to YuWon that Hercules had acquired the power of Lightning.

It seems that the insurance Zeus was talking about was Hercules.

"I wonder how much stronger he has become."

Hercules, who had only had brute strength, now possessed a quite mature Lightning power. This was probably what Zeus had prepared to face Shub-Niggurath.

"I'm looking forward to seeing it."

YuWon had never seen Hercules use that new power in a fight. So, he was quite interested in how he would deploy that power while carrying the Lightning and unleash his strength with his powerful fist.

Beeh-.

Beeh-.

The sound came right after Hercules joined.

Beyond the woods, sheep arms passed by. Hercules, who had just come out of there, turned his head.

"Another noisy group has arrived."

"They are just kids."

Craaack-le-.

Zeus created Lightning in his hand. Hercules also started gathering Lightning power in his hand little by little.

And at that moment...

"Rest for a moment."

YuWon suddenly began to walk towards where the bleating of the sheep could be heard.

"Rest?"

Hercules shook his head as if it were absurd.

Zeus also seemed annoyed by YuWon's actions.

"There are quite a few of them."

"It will only take me a moment."

In YuWon's pupils, a group of sheep could be seen gathered on the other side of the bushes.

Shub-Niggurath's offspring.

['The Otherworld Opponent' bares its fangs at the 'Black Goat of the Woods'].

It was a message that he recalled when he first wielded the Predator.

Curious, YuWon looked at the sheep with eyes full of curiosity.

"...I need to check something for a moment."

Chapter 444

C444

[The Otherworld Opponent]#Those who fight against other worlds. They possess great strength in battling against other worlds.

The description itself didn't seem convincing.

No specific numbers were shown, and no special abilities were described.

But he understood it.

Most characteristics related to Divinity tended to be like that, even if exact numbers weren't provided.

The reason for this was debated, but the general consensus was one.

Divinity belonged to forces that the System couldn't control.

Therefore, it had no other choice but to check it for itself.

Step~

YuWon approached the sheep.

The sheep bared their teeth at the wolf that entered the flock. YuWon counted the number of sheep.

'Around a hundred, maybe a bit more.'

He didn't need an exact number.

The sheep that had gathered in a group. These little ones wouldn't be wandering by chance.

This Black Woods was the territory of Shub-Niggurath.

'She must be preparing.' For a while now, YuWon had felt her gaze. It was clear she was trying to use the sheep to test him.

Unlike Zeus and Odin, with whom he had already fought once, YuWon was a newcomer.

'All the better for me.'

Oong.

The tip of the sword trembled in his hand.

The sword's edge began to be imbued with Arcane Power. The 'Otherworld Opponent's' power manifested over him.

And at that moment...

Pashh.

Finally, the wolf jumped into the flock of sheep.

"Kwaaah!"

A sheep's head was severed by YuWon's sword. Skin, fur, and tough bone were cut through together.

'Quick. And clean.'

'Is this the Asura's sword skill? It seems to go well with that guy too.'

'Nevertheless, they're not enemies that can be killed so easily.'

Three thoughts about YuWon's sword.

They weren't exceptional impressions, given YuWon's rank, that was to be expected.

But something surprising happened next.

Pashh.

The body of the severed sheep crumbled to dust. Where the hell did that tough vitality go? The sheep disappeared into YuWon's hands.

"Beeeh..."

"Beeeeh..."

The terrified bleating of the sheep.

YuWon cut down a sheep and stood still for a moment before murmuring.

"... So, it was like this?"

The corners of his mouth curved up.

It felt good. His leg, which had been still for a moment, moved again.

Shub-Niggurath might have sent these to test him.

'Thanks to that, I can fill my stomach.'

Kwaaah!

YuWon's sword cut off another sheep's head. The cleanly cut-off sheep's head fell from the sky to the ground with a dull sound.

Thud.

YuWon's arm, surrounded by a hundred sheep, was bitten by the teeth. The moment Hercules tried to step forward to help YuWon, the sheep that had bitten YuWon's arm was lifted upwards.

Vroomm-!

Crunch!

YuWon forcefully lifted the sheep that bit his arm and slammed it down with all his might.

The sheep couldn't even scream. YuWon held his leg up high and broke the sheep's neck.

Crack.

The sound of crushed bones.

Not a drop of blood flowed from YuWon's arm. It left a few bite marks, but it didn't seem to have caused any bruising.

"Flying high."

"Indeed... It seems light."

"Is he saving Arcane Power?"

"I wish I had a popcorn bag. Eat and watch the show."

"What's popcorn?"

"It's a food that people down below eat a lot these days. They fry corn..."

Zeus and Odin exchanged words. YuWon was running solo, so the three of them didn't have anything to do at this moment.

YuWon wasn't using any special abilities.

Although he could have used the Lightning Bolt like Zeus and burned the woods, he only had a sword in his hand as he leaped among the sheep.

The way YuWon cut down the sheep with his sword looked like a predator tasting blood going wild.

'But this is strange.'

Hercules, now watching YuWon fight with confidence, thought.

'Of course, the more you fight, the more stamina wears down...'

YuWon didn't seem to lose strength even a bit after cutting down the sheep with his sword.

'Instead, it seems like he's getting stronger.'

Kwaaah!

The head of another sheep was severed by YuWon's sword.

The sheep were no longer approaching YuWon. YuWon cut down a sheep and, while shaking the blood off his sword, heard a cheerful message.

['You have defeated the 'Black Goat of the Woods']

[The 'Otherworld Opponent' absorbs the power of the 'Black Goat of the Woods']

[The 'Otherworld Opponent' absorbs the power of the 'Black Goat of the Woods']

[The 'Otherworld Opponent'...]

[Your 'Strength' increases by 1]

His stats went up. The stats that had completely stopped began growing again.

Each sheep was like a level-up experience for YuWon. For the first time in a long while, he enjoyed the thrill of the hunt.

'This is the third one.'

He gained three stats by defeating around a hundred sheep. With the second stat, his health increased, and his previously heavy breathing returned to normal.

Stat increases through hunting. In this regard, the power the Otherworld Opponent had was similar to the Predator.

And furthermore...

Crunch.

The teeth of the sheep that bit his leg.

Each sheep was an individual with enough strength and endurance to chew even steel. Even though YuWon's endurance stat was high, he couldn't ignore this kind of fangs.

At least, under normal circumstances.

[The 'Otherworld Opponent' protects your body from the 'Black Goat of the Woods']

Crack!

The sheep's teeth didn't sink into YuWon's body but, instead, they broke. It turned out to be the same result after trying multiple times.

An indeterminate force protected his body. This force that had started boiling inside him since the sheep fight began allowed him to avoid any harm.

'There's no need to keep testing at this point.'

Thud!

YuWon's sword lay flat.

There was nothing more to check here. Now he was starting to feel it was a waste of time fighting these types of sheep.

Of course, he had no intention of yielding these valuable experience sources to the three who were behind him.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

A Golden Lightning Bolt erupted from the ring YuWon was holding his sword in.

[The 'Uranus Heart' creates a 'Lightning Bolt']

[The 'Otherworld Opponent' resides in the 'Lightning Bolt']

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The color of the Lightning Bolt changed. When the Golden Lightning Bolt mixed with the purple, YuWon's hand, about to brandish the sword, stopped for a moment.

And in that brief moment...

Vruuum-!

Crunch-!

With its mouth wide open, a nearby sheep came closer and swallowed YuWon.

And at that moment...

Zing-!

It moved faster than he thought.

Crash-!

The Lightning Bolt cut the woods in a wide arc.

With that strike, the Black Goats of the Woods were swept up into the air.

[You have defeated the 'Black Goats of the Woods']

[You have defeated the 'Black Goats of the Woods']

[You have defeated the 'Black Goats of the Woods']

["..."]

[Your 'Arcane Power' has increased by 1]

The messages repeated. In the end, the message was that his Arcane Power had increased.

Arcane Power was one of YuWon's highest stats. Even if it increased by just one, it was a satisfying achievement.

However, the joy was momentary.

YuWon looked at the remains of the Lightning Bolt that had exploded in front of him.

Crack! Crack-le!

The Lightning Bolt's effect still lingered in scattered places. While YuWon's range wasn't as broad as Zeus's, his Lightning Bolt was much sharper.

Of course, YuWon and the other three weren't interested in that.

'The color of the Lightning Bolt...'

'It's closer to purple.'

In this Tower, there were various colors.

Depending on the properties of Arcane Power or abilities, the variety of types was diverse, but he had never seen a purple Lightning Bolt before.

'Power coming from the Outside of the Tower has purple properties.'

'Lightning Bolts are basically golden in color. The fact that the color changed means it mixed with another power.'

YuWon's thoughts were equally complex.

Through the Uranus Heart, YuWon re-attracted the Lightning Bolt into his hands.

Crack, crack.

A twisted Lightning Bolt of beautiful golden color.

It definitely had a different nature than before.

"What have you just done?"

"That's the question I want to ask you."

Hercules' voice resonated from behind.

Turning his head, YuWon realized that Hercules had approached him unnoticed. The distance was so short that YuWon had to look up to meet Hercules' gaze.

"That was definitely a Lightning Bolt. Maybe until yesterday, I wouldn't have known, but now I'm sure it is. But what exactly was it?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know?"

"It doesn't seem like the nature has changed. I guess it inadvertently mixed with another type of power."

"Mixed with another power?"

"That's right."

"Come to think of it, you used purple fire. So, Fire and Lightning... no, it didn't seem like Fire mixed with Lightning..."

Hercules scratched his head, seemingly perplexed.

Despite having gained the power of the Lightning Bolt, Hercules didn't have a deep knowledge of Arcane Power properties compared to other High-Rankers.

"Anyway, what do you think?"

While Hercules was puzzled, Zeus, who also wielded the Lightning Bolt, had a rather straightforward reaction.

"Aren't you sure of his ability? Honestly, it's beyond my expectations."

It was certainly a response that suited Zeus.

After all, he valued results more than anyone YuWon knew.

No matter how YuWon had acquired this power, it was fine by him.

And this time, even Hercules didn't deny Zeus's statement.

"...Well. It's time to part ways, after all."

"That's true. If you have any questions, you can ask them later."

Hercules nodded.

He had confirmed the power YuWon had obtained by reaching Divinity. More than anything, the fact that he had made it to this battlefield was what mattered most.

"The fact that you've made it here means we have the advantage."

So far, YuWon had crossed many battlefields.

Probably, in this short period of time, he would be the only one in this Tower to have experienced such large battlefields. Moreover, among them, there were battlefields that not even YuWon could handle with his abilities.

And what they had in common was one thing.

In every battlefield YuWon appeared in, they won without fail.

Hercules looked at him with a satisfied expression.

But...

"Advantage?"

YuWon's response to Hercules' confidence, as if it were impossible, was an empty laugh.

"Just with me?"

"Huh?"

"No way."

A firm, unwavering response without hesitation.

Hercules, who thought he had gained a bit of an advantage with YuWon's arrival, had a perplexed expression for a moment.

And then...

As he gazed deeper into the Black Woods, YuWon spoke.

"Of course, if it's just me, that wouldn't be enough."

Chapter 445

C445

Shub-Niggurath's eyes saw everything in the Black Woods.

The Rankers, who had finished their rest and began to move, like Lee Rangjin, Michael, Brunhilde, among others. And four people, including YuWon, were setting the place on fire as they passed. Even the trembling goats throughout the woods.

In the midst of all this, under the eyes of Shub-Niggurath within the Black Woods, the figure of a little boy was reflected.

"What a pity."

The little boy laughed at YuWon's feet, as if it were a lot of fun.

First of all, what she wanted was for that boy to move.

"Was it not enough?"

Maybe.

It probably wouldn't have been so difficult for a single one of the four people there to stop that many goats.

It seems that a stronger stimulus is needed to get that boy to move.

"Still, it wasn't an insignificant harvest."

Next, Shub-Niggurath looked at YuWon.

It was when YuWon and her eyes met. At first, it might have been an accident, but there was no way it was an accident twice.

"Are you looking at me?"

Thump, thump, thump.

Shub-Niggurath's tail hit the ground, shaking the woods.

It was as if she was playing something really fun for the first time in a long time. The force of YuWon, who ruthlessly killed the poor goats, and the identity of that little boy. Everything was incredibly interesting.

It was natural.

In the end, all of this would finally be hers.

Thud.

It was then...

Another noise was heard near Shub-Niggurath, which was not the sound of a goat.

"That's right."

Shub-Niggurath's eyes moved.

"I was so preoccupied with something else that I couldn't pay attention to you."

Green hair and black hair. A handsome young man with skin as white as snow that didn't fit in the Black Woods.

He approached Shub-Niggurath.

And then...

"How long do you plan to lie around?"

Clap, clap.

Loosening his hand that had hardened from not using it for a long time, Vishnu looked determinedly.

"Get up. Let's finish this quickly."

In front of Shub-Niggurath in YuWon's eyes. A green-haired man entered YuWon's gaze.

'You've arrived.'

He finally began to move.

The largest being in this world.

'He's fortunate. He left last, but found her first.'

The view of the landscape in front of them was gradually becoming blurry. When Shub-Niggurath stopped looking at YuWon, she also disappeared from YuWon's sight.

Still, he was fortunate.

In that vast woods, he didn't know how he would have found that creature.

"Thank you for paying attention."

"Attention?"

YuWon responded to Hercules' question simply.

"It means I found the way."

"The way?"

"Yes."

Shub-Niggurath's Black Woods were currently expanding, devouring the 65th floor of the world.

It probably would have already devoured half of Valhalla by now. And finding Shub-Niggurath in this vast woods wouldn't be an easy task.

It was thanks to Shub-Niggurath making a move that YuWon was able to find her. With only the Golden Cinder Eyes, he wouldn't have been able to find her in this vast woods. But if they looked from her direction, the story would be different.

"Odin."

"I'm here."

"Please mark the location."

Odin nodded at YuWon's words.

"That's an easy request."

"And Zeus."

"What should I do?"

"Call the clouds. We need to hurry. I'll tell you the direction."

"Until a moment ago, you said it was impossible, right? It seems you've changed your mind."

"It's not a change of mind; it's a change in the situation. Time is precious, so don't talk nonsense and hurry."

"Understood. But don't get too many illusions."

Zeus raised his hand upward. A Lightning Bolt shot up quickly to the clouds in the sky.

Kurung!

A Lightning Bolt struck among the four, and a portion of clouds descended.

Although not as large as Son OhGong's Flying Nimbus, the clouds controlled by Zeus had fairly quick mobility. Moreover, the size of the clouds was large enough for the four of them to travel on.

Before moving, Hercules asked with a serious expression.

"And me? What am I supposed to do?"

"Your role is..."

YuWon pondered for a moment before responding.

"Fight well. And don't die."

"Is that all?"

"Because that's what you do best."

It wasn't an empty statement.

Indeed, in the fight against Shub-Niggurath, Hercules's role was crucial. He was the one who could confront her directly and resist for longer than anyone else.

Furthermore, he now had the power of Lightning Bolt.

Originally, Hercules had more power than YuWon expected.

"Although it would have been great to have Son OhGong..."

A very busy guy. Besides, it would be difficult to rely on someone who didn't even respond to calls.

But with this, the overall picture was taking shape.

The only thing left was one.

"Now, that guy just needs to move."

YuWon and the other three boarded the cloud summoned by Zeus.

Now it was time to head to the final battlefield.

Shub-Niggurath's body fell to one side.

Her immense body was permeated with dark energy. The unquenchable Arcane Power, like an eternal flame, constantly weakened Shub-Niggurath.

Thud.

In the midst of the fallen trees, Vishnu stood up.

Supporting himself with a hanging arm and swaying, Vishnu grabbed his shoulder with one hand.

Crack~

The dislocated shoulder returned to its place. Without changing his expression, Vishnu looked at Shub-Niggurath.

"It seems the world has changed a lot."

Sizzle.

The Arcane Power surrounding Shub-Niggurath gradually extinguished like rain over her. The immense goat that dominated the Black Woods slowly rose, and her jewel-like purple eyes shone.

"Impressive."

"Thanks for the compliment."

Woo~

Green energy burst in Vishnu's hand.

Thus, Arcane Power extended toward Shub-Niggurath.

When that energy reached the leg of the gigantic goat, Crash, Crash.

A huge tree grew on Shub-Niggurath's body, solidifying her body according to Vishnu's will.

But that wasn't all.

Thump.

Vishnu's foot shook the ground. At the same time, the green-leaved trees that sprouted from the ground began to wrap around Shub-Niggurath's body.

An outstretched hand.

Snap.

Vishnu's hand clenched tightly. As if holding a solid rock in the palm of his hand, he exerted great force.

Squeeze, Squeeze.

The powerful force crushed Shub-Niggurath's body. As it absorbed Arcane Power from Vishnu, her strength steadily increased.

However...

Crunch.

The horns worn by the Ruler of the Black Woods were not consumed by the small woods created by Vishnu.

Bang.

The goat's leg struck the compressed trees and jumped outside. Shub-Niggurath shook her head, where six horns rose, and stepped out.

Naturally, the strength contained in Vishnu's hand was released. Arcane Power dissipated, and his face hardened automatically.

And the next moment...

Whoosh.

A gigantic tail flew toward Vishnu.

"Ah..."

Before he could say a word...

Wham.

Vishnu felt like all his bones were breaking. Once again, Vishnu was thrown far away.

Bang...

Thud, Thud, Thud.

The woods toppled, and hundreds of trees collapsed. Shub-Niggurath, freed from Vishnu's ability, advanced toward him.

Thump.

The gigantic goat drew near.

Vishnu, crushed by the trees, raised his head.

Thud, Crack.

With his shining black eyes, Vishnu's broken bones began to mend. Shub-Niggurath gazed at Vishnu in amazement, as if she had found something strange.

"It's a strange feeling. I'm sure he only has one body, but it feels like I'm facing three people."

Before her, Vishnu was undeniably powerful. One of Shub-Niggurath's horns was broken, and her skin was torn in several places.

In the heart of the Black Woods, Vishnu also put up a strong fight against the "Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young."

"One and three... no, three and one. It's hard to understand."

It was truly astonishing.

From one, three were seen, and then those three fused back into one. There were many strange creatures outside the Tower, but there was no one like Vishnu in front of her.

Shub-Niggurath stared at Vishnu for a long time.

"It's a shame, but there's nothing I can do."

The doubt persisted for a long time.

In her heart, she wanted to make Vishnu her own child. However, Vishnu was not an opponent who could be easily persuaded like Asmodeus.

It is said to be a foolish choice to make impulsive decisions due to dissatisfaction and greed.

Furthermore, for her, who had hundreds of goats, giving up one goat was not a difficult choice.

"I'm sorry, but you..."

Shub-Niggurath raised one of her front hooves.

"You're too old to be my child."

As if indicating that it was no longer fun.

Crack!

The goat's front hoof struck Vishnu. Vishnu's fiery eyes widened as if they were about to tear apart from the impact, and the bones that had barely been recovering were broken again with a resounding sound.

But...

"Come closer..."

Despite the impact that seemed like his entire body would turn to dust, Vishnu's gaze showed no signs of giving up.

"Fine... thank you..."

Splash!

With his shattered arm, Vishnu grabbed Shub-Niggurath's front hoof. Shub-Niggurath, who seemed surprised by the last resistance, looked at Vishnu with inquisitive eyes, as if wondering if Vishnu planned to make a final effort.

"One... disappeared..."

At that moment...

Swiish...

Dark energy flowed from Shub-Niggurath's front hoof and then through her body.

"What is this...?"

"It's probably quite painful."

Zaaaaap!

Darkness engulfed Shub-Niggurath's body in the blink of an eye. The corrosive power in the darkness burned through the great goat's dense fur and dissolved her tough skin.

Thud, thud.

One horn broke, and the remaining five horns shattered as they fell to the ground due to the impact. What had once been as resilient as adamantium crumbled into pieces like paper under the force that caused them to fall.

Shub-Niggurath did not scream.

Instead, those on the other side screamed.

Ahhhh!

Ahhhh!

When the Ruler of the Black Woods trembled in pain, the entire Black Woods erupted into wails.

Vishnu, lying on the ground, felt the earth shake and wiped the blood running down his cheek with the palm of his hand.

"It's so noisy that it gives me a headache."

"If you have time to complain, you'd better recover quickly."

Murmuring to himself as if he were talking to someone, Vishnu raised the corner of his mouth and smiled.

"Recovery, huh? If we can't kill him with this, then it really will be the end this time."

"That's right."

As if in agreement, Vishnu relaxed the strength of his body while conversing with Brahma, who resided within him.

"Now, it's just the two of us."

Chapter 446

C446

Thud, thud-thud...

The bones in Vishnu's body returned to their original form. It was quite painful to watch the broken bones mend and the damaged skin regenerate.

Shub-Niggurath before his eyes was already dead. The body turned into black charcoal seemed impossible to resurrect.

It was an unmatched darkness.

The main feature of dark magic was corrosion.

Even with exceptional regenerative ability, resurrection here was impossible.

But...

Tziing...

As he slowly recovered, Vishnu, with an anxious look, noticed that Shub-Niggurath's stomach was opening.

"...This is a disaster."

A despondent voice.

Brahma's voice came from Vishnu's mouth as he began to stagger to his feet.

"Yes, it is."

"What do we do now?"

"We're in trouble."

"That's right."

Only the mouth never stopped moving. Even though he was recovering quite well, the situation was completely different from before.

Recovery was only partial. Moreover, now there were only two Vishnus, not three.

He had to finish this on the next attempt if possible.

Tziing...

Tzap...

A woman with a beautiful purple head with horns emerged from the giant billy goat's stomach.

Hair wet as if she had just come out of the womb. Furthermore, it had grown much taller than when she opened the belly of the sheep/goat before.

But it had not only grown in height.

'Those horns are eerie.'

On her head, which was not particularly large, were horns sprouting alongside her hair. The horns split into six stalks like trees and extended towards the ground.

There was no change in her expression, and she did not open her eyes, but Vishnu could feel the anger she carried.

Gugugugu...

The Black Woods trembled. Then, Shub-Niggurath opened her eyes that were closed and looked at Vishnu.

And at that moment...

"Kugh...!"

Vishnu began to groan in pain as he clutched his neck with one hand.

Tzz, tzz...

Black marks spread from Vishnu's neck. He instantly felt nauseous and sensed his body was being paralyzed from the neck down.

"The losses are severe."

With a whisper, the woman who emerged from the giant billy goat's stomach looked at the blackened billy goat's body.

"I lost a name."

'A name...?'

Losing a name. It was a puzzling expression. There was no time to decipher this mystery right now.

Giiing...

A green glow emanated from Vishnu's hand, holding the lifeless, blackened neck. Shub-Niggurath gazed at Vishnu, who was starting to resist, with her vacant purple eyes.

"It doesn't matter."

With slow steps, she approached Vishnu.

"Soon, you will have a bigger name."

So, what does it really matter?

Doubts didn't last long.

Ziing-.

A burning sensation spread through his throat, and he gradually lost the feeling in his body. While he felt his body slowly disintegrating, Vishnu's anxiety grew.

'Try to do something.'

'I'm already doing it.'

'If you do this, you'll die.'

'There's no other way...'

Just as Vishnu was receiving a warning about how dangerous his situation was, Kwarrung-!
Kwaung, Kung-!

Lightning bolts struck from three different directions. This divided the distance between Vishnu and Shub-Niggurath.

At the same time, the corrosion affecting Vishnu's body disappeared. Vishnu, who could barely breathe, coughed and regained his breath.

"Ugh, that was close."

"Are you okay?"

Shh-.

He felt movement behind him. When Vishnu turned his head, he saw Odin applying healing magic to his back.

"Why do you ask if I'm okay?"

"You don't seem to be okay."

"I almost died."

Feeling relieved, Vishnu looked around.

Odin wasn't the only one who had come to help. Zeus, Hercules, and YuWon were there too, simultaneously launching Lightning Bolts from three different directions.

That was strange.

Not just Zeus, but three people wielding Lightning Bolts.

And furthermore...

'One of them has a different color.'

Vishnu looked at YuWon with inquisitive eyes. He was the owner of the purple Lightning Bolts.

'Are you watching that corpse?'

YuWon had a debt. He knew of Shiva's plan in advance and was taking action. Thanks to that, Vishnu thought he had special preparation compared to the others.

However, from the moment YuWon arrived on the scene, he had been constantly looking at the blackened great goat's corpse.

"He says he's lost his 'name'."

He knew something.

He couldn't help but ask YuWon with the persistent feeling.

"Do you know that thing's name?"

YuWon nodded.

Yes, he knew.

He knew too much.

The true name of that thing is Shub-Niggurath.

"The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young."

And two other names as well.

"The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness. And The Perverse Fertility Deity."

In total, there were three names.

"Shub-Niggurath has three names."

This was the information that Odin brought back after fighting Shub-Niggurath and returning alive.

"Three names? Not just one?"

Seeming incredulous, Vishnu asked.

Shub-Niggurath only had one name known to her companions. The most well-known and representative name for her was: "The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young."

But now it turned out she had two other names.

"In the heart of the Black Woods lived the biggest and strongest goat. Named: 'The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness.'"

The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness.

Odin had said that it was the most dangerous creature inhabiting the Black Woods. According to him, if you encountered it in Shub-Niggurath's territory, you had to run without hesitation.

'Is that the one?'

A charred corpse.

If what he said about losing her name is true, it means that the name "The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness" can no longer be found in Shub-Niggurath.

YuWon briefly glanced at Vishnu.

'You've done well so far.'

Up to that point, everyone, including YuWon, had been fighting one of Shub-Niggurath's three names.

The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young, symbolizing Shub-Niggurath and her primary name.

"I don't know what that 'name' means, but it seems very different from what we know."

As if he grasped something from the names listed on YuWon's lips, Zeus spoke up.

"So, what do you think that guy's name is?"

"Probably..."

YuWon looked in the direction that Zeus was pointing.

And there, emerging from the storm of Lightning Bolts created by the three, was a woman.

"It must be The Perverse Fertility Deity."

"The Perverse Fertility Deity?"

Fertility/Abundance ().

A word that meant bountiful crops and fields full of grain.

But strangely, another name of Shub-Niggurath included the word "Fertility."

But there was another word in front of that name.

"Perverse..."

A word that could never be associated with purity and fertility.

YuWon gazed at Shub-Niggurath while pondering that word.

"Was it a mistake to make eye contact?"

YuWon's appearance made Shub-Niggurath's approach to Vishnu slow down a bit.

No, more precisely, it might be due to Danpung, who was right under YuWon's feet.

Shub-Niggurath's attention, which had come very close to Vishnu, was entirely directed towards Danpung, who was clinging right under YuWon's feet.

"Or maybe it's destiny to find a better path."

Tsu, tsu, tsu, tsu...

The energy that was beginning to spread around Shub-Niggurath changed the wind's density.

Lips dried up. It felt as if lip dryness would make them crack and the skin would age and decompose.

The wind, the air, and the earth.

Everything that was alive was withering.

"We'll know soon."

The Perverse Fertility spread across the world.

Fireeee~

The fire that clung to Diablo's body was slowly dying out. In the midst of the faint flames, Diablo gathered his Demonic Energy once again and rekindled the flames.

The flames flickered dangerously.

Even the Demon Lord himself, Diablo, was experiencing this. How would the others be feeling?

Diablo raised his head and looked to the sky.

"Is it trying to destroy the world?"

Diablo, who spoke like this, had grown several times larger than before.

He had grown so much that he could now look above the tall trees and observe from above.

But even for Diablo, this 'Fertility' was overwhelming.

"Destruction? What are you talking about?"

A voice came from below.

Diablo lowered his head and looked toward the source of the voice. Susanoo and Mimir had joined him some time ago.

"In fact, it's the opposite."

"What are you saying?"

Susanoo looked as if he didn't understand at all what Diablo was saying.

"Maybe that means even the goat woman is in a tight spot."

Mimir added.

But his interest was elsewhere.

"However..."

Mimir, hunched over, slowly turned around.

Susanoo also increased his grip on the sword he held and followed his gaze.

"If one more enemy joins, it will be a problem."

"Enemy?"

Diablo turned his gaze.

How long have they been following us?

In the place they turned to, there was a mysterious-looking hooded figure.

"Are you an enemy now? Or an ally?"

"Probably, an enemy."

Susanoo pointed his sword at the hooded figure.

His voice was full of threat.

"This chaos in the Tower is mainly because of him."

"Him?"

Mimir's eyes narrowed as she looked at Foolish Chaos.

"Now I understand. It was you. You created this whole scenario."

A sensation similar to what came from Shub-Niggurath was felt in Foolish Chaos before them.

The energy it emanated was not inherently threatening, like Shub-Niggurath's, but for some reason, Mimir felt that Foolish Chaos was an even more dangerous seed.

It seemed that Mimir's intuition was correct.

Foolish Chaos slowly opened his mouth.

"Mimir. The poor and wise prisoner of knowledge."

"Do you know me?"

"It seems you haven't heard anything about him."

"Him..."

A face flashed through Mimir's mind.

Kim YuWon.

Coming from the future through the Clock Movement, shaping the future of this Tower.

The vague mention of "him" instinctively evoked her thoughts, but Mimir was sure of who the person Foolish Chaos was referring to. However, she refrained from mentioning YuWon's name. She instinctively knew that it wouldn't be prudent to say too much to the individual in front of her at this moment.

"You asked me a moment ago whether I'm an enemy or an ally."

As if he had no other choice, Foolish Chaos spoke first.

"Let me answer that question first. Originally, I was an enemy. However, now I am only half so."

The vague words furrowed Mimir's brow.

"Half so..."

"I am both an enemy and an ally at the same time. Or perhaps I am neither."

Complicated and enigmatic words.

But Mimir understood the meaning behind them.

"It seems you have something you want from me."

"That's right."

A laugh mingled with the voice.

With a dismissive gesture toward Susanoo and Diablo, who displayed their murderous energy, Foolish Chaos extended his hand toward Mimir.

"I have come to make a deal with you."

Chapter 447

C447

Floor 65.

A world under the dominion of Asgard called Valhalla.

Unusual weather loomed over the world inhabited by tens of billions of people, snatching away the lives of its inhabitants.

"Breathing... is difficult..."

"Cough... cough..."

People collapsed, suffering.

This was happening beyond the battlefield covered by the Black Woods. The influence of Shub-Niggurath was draining the life from living beings, with no distinction between races and plants.

Crack...

The once green and healthy plants withered and blackened. The woods was transforming into Shub-Niggurath's territory, and those who lost their lives lay on the streets like corpses.

This didn't only affect the common citizens of Valhalla.

Thud...

Players collapsed one after another.

Even the Rankers, some injured or exhausted, lost consciousness under the influence of 'Fertility.'

"This is a nightmare..."

"This... really seems like... the end..."

"Awake! If you lose consciousness here, it's truly over for you."

Agni and Kubera maintained their blurred vision and helped the Rankers under their command, whose skin was drying up and turning into mummies.

However, it seemed that the number of people that could be saved was limited. Agni looked at the dying Deva Rankers and murmured.

"Is it trying... to destroy the world...?"

Fwoosh...

The crimson flame surrounding Agni's body trembled dangerously.

Agni, a High-Ranker who controlled flames, could see and feel wherever the fire was within his power.

Shub-Niggurath's 'Fertility' was not limited to the battlefield. The same situation was occurring in all the places confirmed through the flames.

The world was dying.

It was not just the people, animals, and all forms of life that dwelled within it. If the world were considered in its broadest sense as a single organism, it was dying right now.

Vishnu looked up at the sky.

The sky had changed from purple to pitch-black.

'Has it finally come...?'

Vishnu had foreseen the fate.

He had wanted to stop this moment. The moment when the sky turned black, and everything beneath it was dying.

That's why he chose to become one again and sacrificed one of the three.

He believed that otherwise, it would be impossible to change the fate that was already decided.

But...

'It seems that what should happen will happen.'

Fate did not change.

The black sky appeared, and the world was dying. And he was certain this would not be the end of this world.

After this.

And after that, over and over.

Creak...

Vishnu took a step forward.

He couldn't afford to leave Shub-Niggurath unchecked. He couldn't estimate how many people would die per minute, per second.

So, when Vishnu prepared to rush toward Shub-Niggurath once more...

"Take positions," YuWon said.

YuWon's words drew the group's attention to him.

"Hercules and Odin at the front, I'll stay behind to support. Zeus will throw his spear, and Vishnu will bind that guy's movements."

It was a classic formation.

Each taking on the role they were best at for battle.

Vishnu, who had advanced toward Shub-Niggurath, was surprised when he looked at YuWon.

For a moment, his heart raced, and he was about to rush forward on his own. But he was not alone now, and it was not necessary for him to advance when there was a High-Ranker like Hercules by his side.

Probably, YuWon had decided his position after observing Vishnu's actions.

"No need to hurry. In fact, we must not hurry."

YuWon felt the same way as well.

"The more we rush, the worse the outcome will be."

Rather, they had to buy time. Time was their enemy and their ally simultaneously.

'I wish I could hurry...'

YuWon glanced behind the Black Woods.

'The 'Fertility' is too strong.'

There was nothing he could do for now.

He could only dig two hideouts.

"I'm not sure if it will work..."

"Abba-."

YuWon glanced at Odin, Hercules, Zeus, and Vishnu after looking at Danpung under his feet.

'It's not impossible.'

Crack, crack.

Odin and Hercules moved forward. The Perverse Fertility Deity smiled as she watched the two.

-My children

Bang!

Odin and Hercules.

When the two took off from the ground...

-Come

The battle began again.

Baaaam-!

Hercules' punch fired a Lightning Bolt.

The power of the Lightning Bolt not only increased the strength in Hercules' punch but also made it faster and more powerful due to its attribute.

Bam, bum, crack!

Hercules' punch hit Shub-Niggurath's body. However, the punch, which had the power to shatter even mountains, never reached Shub-Niggurath.

Bam, bum!

Crack-!

Black horns sprouted around Shub-Niggurath's body.

They often blocked Hercules' punch. Hercules didn't seem to care and waved his lightning-clad fist.

He extended the punch, then did it again.

Crack-!

Amid the destruction of the horns, the force grabbing Hercules began to pull him.

Shub-Niggurath reached out her hand forward.

He was sure no one could overpower her in strength, but her arm didn't move an inch. When he came face to face with her purple eyes, Hercules' strength slowly dissipated.

-For now, one at a time.

Zzzz...

"...!"

Hercules' eyes widened. He felt every cell in his body dying along with his skin.

But that only lasted a moment.

Bwoong-!

Another punch came in through the path Hercules had opened.

Jeo-eong-!

Hercules's club, made from the branches of Yggdrasil, pierced Shub-Niggurath's stomach.

Crack, kugugugu!

Shub-Niggurath, struck by the club, broke the Black Woods' trees as she flew. Hercules, who finally managed to free himself from her grip, gasped and exhaled heavily.

Behind Hercules, Odin handed him back his club and asked, "Are you okay?"

"... I'm alive."

Hercules finished his response with a slight nod.

He got up immediately after receiving his club and brandished it.

Jeo-eok-!

The head of the massive goat rose toward Hercules and Odin. As the giant horned goat staggered, Hercules and Odin repositioned themselves.

"It seems there's no time to rest."

-Beeeeeeeh

The massive goat bellowed in what seemed like pain or anger.

Around it, suddenly, purple-furred goat began to bleat.

Beeeeeh...

Beeeh...

Beeh...

A herd of goat had interposed themselves in front of Shub-Niggurath.

And leading these goat, even giant goats.

"Don't worry."

Sssh...

"It's not our role to surpass them."

Frrrr...

It was then that a purple flame blazed before their eyes.

["The Giant's Heart" influences "Holy Fire"]

["Golden Cinder Eyes" influences "Holy Fire"]

In an instant, the Black Woods lit up brilliantly.

Purple flames erupted under the darkened sky, and the figure of a colossal giant took form above them.

["Heavenly Demon Spirit" influences "Holy Fire."]

Clank...

The giant, wielding a massive sword of flames, raised it high.

Beneath the giant, YuWon got into position, preparing to swing his sword.

'The Heavenly Demon Spirit is a vessel that wields the Holy Fire.'

Frrrrr... BOOM!

The Heavenly Demon Spirit giant was completely engulfed in flames. A scorching heat filled the woods, and the flames' purple color grew even deeper.

["The Otherworld Opponent" merges with "Holy Fire"]

So, as the Heavenly Demon Spirit moved following YuWon's sword.

Whoosh!

A Golden Bolt of Lightning descended from the sky.

Kaboom!

The flames and the Lightning swept through the woods. The herd of goat obstructing the view was cleared, opening a wide path.

And at the end of that path, green energy flowed from beneath Shub-Niggurath's feet.

Whizzz!

It soared upward, holding Shub-Niggurath.

It was Vishnu's ability.

Kraaack...

A wooden pillar wrapped around Shub-Niggurath's body.

Thunk, thunk...

And at that moment, Odin and Hercules advanced toward Shub-Niggurath.

Clang!

A Golden Bolt of Lightning burst from Hercules' club. Odin's Gungnir was in his hand, and white light burst from the tip of his spear.

"We got her!"

But just before Hercules' club and Odin's Gungnir could pierce Shub-Niggurath's head.

Blur...

The sight of Hercules and Odin rushing at her trembled, and their balance crumbled.

'What's happening...?'

'What has happened...?'

At the same time, shared thoughts emerged.

They didn't blink, but their visions became blurry, and suddenly, the positions of the three had changed. The tree that was wrapping around Shub-Niggurath had trapped Odin and Hercules in their place, holding them tightly.

And the color of that tree...

-Did you not know?

Suddenly, it had transformed into a black tree identical to the Black Woods.

-All lives belong to me.

Creak, creak...

"..."

"Khh..."

Hercules shouted without making a sound, feeling the pressure from the tree that threatened to crush him. Odin tried to cast a spell using his hand, but the tree absorbed all of his Arcane Power.

"Curse it!"

Geeeeeng...

Through Vishnu, green energy emerged. He wanted to regain control over the ability transferred to Shub-Niggurath.

However...

"Crack!"

In the attempt, Arcane Power recoiled from Vishnu. With black blood dripping from his lips, he quickly turned his head.

"Kim... YuWon."

He already knew YuWon would be next in line, given the two who were fighting in front of him had been subdued.

Surprisingly, YuWon wasn't moving at all.

Instead...

"You've come quickly."

He muttered incomprehensible words while staring at Shub-Niggurath.

"Faster than I thought."

"Fast?"

Vishnu's gaze turned to Zeus. It was already too late to approach, so he was thinking of quickly launching his spear.

But the response was the same with Zeus. His gleaming golden eyes had also frozen.

'What the hell are you two doing...?'

When Vishnu tried to move, thinking he couldn't allow this to continue...

Sssh...

One side of the Black Woods warped slightly. Shub-Niggurath turned her head toward that distortion.

Fwoosh...

An arm passing through the distorted space.

-You are...

In the distorted space, the arm's owner appeared, and Shub-Niggurath's expression distorted considerably, more than it already was.

On the other hand...

"I never thought I'd be glad to see you."

YuWon smiled as he saw the puzzle piece he had been waiting for.

"We meet here again."

Flutter~

The familiar black robe.

Foolish Chaos appeared on the battlefield with a laugh mixed in his voice.

"Black Woods Bitch."

Chapter 448

C448

As in a movie scene, the battlefield suddenly came to a halt.

And at the center of it was the sole enemy on this battlefield: Shub-Niggurath, with Foolish Chaos standing behind her, the one who had stabbed her.

"Black Woods Bitch..."

His voice resonated eerily through the woods.

In the faintest whisper, the greatest strength was concentrated.

Black Woods Bitch.

It was like the only thorn that could irritate Shub-Niggurath.

"Seeing you say that, it seems you've finally made a decision."

"Didn't you know from the beginning? And then you accepted the proposal."

It was true.

Shub-Niggurath accepted Foolish Chaos's proposal. She hurriedly brought her own body here and swept the world as Foolish Chaos suggested.

All to obtain Foolish Chaos's 'name.'

"Surely, you knew it was a trap from the beginning. Yet, you jumped in here."

Crack.

A crack formed in Shub-Niggurath's body pierced by Foolish Chaos's arm.

"Because you ignored them."

Staring at Shub-Niggurath, Foolish Chaos opened his mouth.

"You did better than I thought. You wounded Shub-Niggurath's own body, reduced more than half of the Black Woods' goats, weakened her power."

Foolish Chaos's gaze turned towards Vishnu, who stood there with a stunned face.

"Beyond that, you even erased one of Shub-Niggurath's names... it couldn't be better."

Zzz, zzz~

It was at that moment...

Shub-Niggurath's pupils began to tremble.

"You..."

Cracks spread all over Shub-Niggurath's body.

"You said you would give me your name when this is over, right?"

Woosh-.

Foolish Chaos's figure slowly faded like a mirage.

"I will make sure to fulfill the promise when this ends. However, only if you can survive here."

Before Foolish Chaos disappeared, his eyes met YuWon's.

At that moment...

Both remembered the conversation they had in the same room.

"I will catch Shub-Niggurath."

"Her?"

YuWon's proposal unusually surprised Foolish Chaos.

He cultivates chaos in this Tower. That's why all his plans were designed to bring the tower to collapse.

But only one.

Among the things he truly wanted, there was a goal opposite to the tower's collapse.

"It bothers you too, doesn't it? Shub-Niggurath. She's the only one outside this Tower who opposes you, Foolish Chaos."

YuWon's words about capturing Shub-Niggurath sounded very appealing even to Foolish Chaos's ears.

"But how?"

"It will be difficult between us two."

"Do you want me to help you?"

"Yes."

"How do I know I can trust you?"

"To believe or not to believe is your choice."

In the face of YuWon's words, Foolish Chaos fell silent for a moment.

YuWon had known for a long time that Foolish Chaos and Shub-Niggurath hated each other. But unless interests align and there is no special stimulus, Foolish Chaos would never show his fangs towards Shub-Niggurath.

That's why YuWon had to provoke him.

He was movable enough. He had to say that he could catch the Queen of the Black Woods.

"Are you trying to use me to catch her? It seems obvious."

"Honestly..."

YuWon shrugged.

"You have two things to do. First, lure her. It must be on the Reconciliation Day organized by Odin. It won't be possible to catch her unless it's that day."

"The first one isn't difficult. I have a card she can't refuse. What's the second?"

"The second is to take away one of her names."

The conversation stopped for a moment. If YuWon could see inside the cloak, he would be sure that Foolish Chaos would be twisting his expression right now.

"That's really difficult."

Shub-Niggurath's name was actually three. And none of those names were easy to handle.

A name that leads a great army of goats: The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young.

The most powerful entity: The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness.

And even the Perverse Fertility Deity residing in the belly of The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness.

-Shub-Niggurath is not one. She is the Black Woods that rules, the sheep offspring she leads, the giant billy goats, and even the woman emerging from the belly of that goat. They are all Shub-Niggurath.

-But...

-To snatch those names, there are several conditions. You must go through the sheep offspring and dominate The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness...

-Our task is to weaken it. It will be difficult, but eventually it will happen.

-And what if I don't move until the end? Or if I wait until you both die as much as possible?

-Do as you please. I can only trust you.

-You're spouting nonsense without feeling it, aren't you?

-Caught me, didn't you?

They didn't trust each other. YuWon only considered Foolish Chaos as insurance, not an essential component.

Despite that, the reason he involved him in this was one.

At least, he saw the opportunity to catch Shub-Niggurath with minimal sacrifice.

'Friends are close, enemies even closer.'

Remembering a line from a movie he watched a long time ago, YuWon looked at Foolish Chaos.

'That's right.'

With this, all the pieces of the puzzle he had prepared fit perfectly.

Swish~.

Foolish Chaos disappeared.

-You... you...!

Zzzzz...

Like a glass mirror about to shatter, Shub-Niggurath, covered in cracks, burst into a scream full of bitterness.

-Ni####...

The Black Woods screamed in response to the name Shub-Niggurath uttered.

Swish...

Foolish Chaos, who had disappeared before everyone realized, seemed to have no intention of getting involved further in this fight. YuWon looked at Zeus, who was covering one ear and frowning at Shub-Niggurath's scream.

"Ask those two for help."

"Those two?"

Odin and Hercules, who had not yet been freed.

Confirming those two, Zeus asked, perplexed.

"Are you passing the ball to me?"

"One of them is your son. And it probably won't be as difficult as before."

YuWon nodded slightly as he observed Shub-Niggurath, who continued screaming without stopping. Although she seemed quite upset about being a victim of Foolish Chaos, she didn't show much interest in Odin and Hercules, whom she had captured.

Of course.

She had already lost two of her three names. The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness was defeated in the battle against Vishnu, and the other lost name was unknown.

But it seemed enough.

Zeus soon nodded in response to YuWon's request.

Now was the time to save Odin and Heracles.

"So be it."

Zeus also knew that Foolish Chaos would move in the end. In that, YuWon and Zeus agreed.

But it seemed that YuWon had another move up his sleeve.

Crack!

With a thunder, Zeus's figure disappeared from the place. Vishnu also moved, not showing when he moved.

The fight was reaching its climax.

And at the end of all this...

Silently...

YuWon's eyes turned to Danpung, who had been silent in both words and actions.

"Are you angry?"

Bending his knees, he sits down, meeting the gaze.

In response to YuWon's question, Danpung nodded slightly.

"Abba."

"Why are you so angry?"

"Abba, I don't know..."

A hesitant pronunciation. Despite the question of whether he was angry, the answer seemed calm.

But YuWon could feel it.

Since the encounter with Shub-Niggurath and the appearance of Foolish Chaos, Danpung had been getting increasingly irritated.

"You can stop holding it back."

"Abba, no."

"Why?"

"Abba in danger."

Although it couldn't be sure if the previous word was "dad," it could still understand the word 'danger.' It seemed that the concern was for himself.

"It's okay."

YuWon stroked Danpung's head as if telling him not to worry.

What's dangerous, what else can those guys we left behind be?

"No, Abba."

"I won't ask you why you're angry with that guy."

Swoosh-.

While cautiously stroking his head, YuWon calmed Danpung's anxiety.

"I won't ask who you are either. Even if someday your fangs turn against me, I won't blame you."

From the moment he first saw the Predator. And from the moment he decided to use that power, YuWon had always been prepared.

He didn't know if those fangs would someday turn towards him. His end might not be much different from the other Outers devoured by it.

But despite that, YuWon chose.

"So lend me your strength."

In this fight he considered he would never win, he decided to use the power of this young God.

While Shub-Niggurath screamed, looking for Foolish Chaos.

Thud-!

Craack-!

Vishnu and Zeus helped Odin and Hercules escape. It wasn't as difficult as they thought, maybe because Shub-Niggurath's mind was occupied elsewhere.

"What the hell happened here... wasn't that guy our enemy?"

Heracles, freed from the bindings, looked at Shub-Niggurath, who was furious, spinning and shouting.

Throughout the forest, numerous goats howled to the rhythm of her screams.

Certainly, Foolish Chaos was the one who created this situation.

He used Zeus to provoke the Gigantomachy and planned the Ragnarok through Surt. Not only Heracles but also Odin knew that behind all the big and small things that happened in the Tower, Foolish Chaos always had something to do with it.

But even so, that guy, who did all that, extended a hand to help in this fight.

"Zeus."

Odin looked at Zeus.

From a distance, his expression was no different from YuWon's. Rather than being surprised by Foolish Chaos's impulsive action, he seemed relieved.

"You knew, right?"

"I told you in advance."

"How?"

"Since the day that guy came to see me, I've been planning for this moment."

Zeus's gaze turned to the side.

"It seems that guy also planned it the same way..."

Zeus's voice, which agreed with YuWon's thoughts, stopped halfway.

'Where did he go?'

Until recently, he was in that place. He asked himself and Vishnu to rescue Odin and Heracles, and asked for a little time.

But that doesn't mean he's the type of person who would come here and run away.

While Zeus's attention turned to YuWon seeking answers, another surprised voice resonated in his ears.

"She disappeared."

It was Odin's voice, who was also looking for Yuwon. But the target he said disappeared wasn't YuWon.

"What else does he plan to do?"

"Her energy also disappeared."

Vishnu, anxious, and Heracles, raising his strength once again and keeping watch around. They couldn't see the existence that should clearly be there.

Shub-Niggurath, who was mad with anger, had vanished from the face of the earth.

Chapter 449

C449

-Ni#####

In response to the cry of Shub-Niggurath, the surrounding trees shattered and fell to the side. Her rage was immense.

It wasn't because she felt betrayed. In the first place, she never considered Foolish Chaos an ally, so the word "betrayal" wasn't appropriate.

However...

What infuriated her so much was the fact that two names had already been snatched away.

Beeh-!

Beeh-.

The sheep around her began to bleat.

Reactions of submission and fear spread everywhere.

Upon hearing the bleating of the sheep, Shub-Niggurath gradually regained her composure.

She stroked the soft wool of the sheep that had gathered around her and tried to reassure them.

-Well. This mother apologizes.

Beeeh-.

The sheep were beings born from the names of Shub-Niggurath. They were deeply connected to her emotions and reacted sensitively.

That's why Shub-Niggurath hurried to calm her heart. The fight was not over yet, and getting more excited here wouldn't help.

-The losses are great.

She had lost two names.

Although she had considered the possibility of losing one, she had not thought of losing two.

-Things are not going well.

If she couldn't win this confrontation and snatch Foolish Chaos's name after all this, even if things somehow resolved, she wouldn't leave empty-handed.

Beeeh-.

It was then...

The heads of the sheep that roamed around Shub-Niggurath turned.

-Why are they acting like this?

Shub-Niggurath asked, observing the frantic reaction of the sheep.

That's when she realized that the place where she was standing was different.

It should have been the Black Woods.

Although the black color remained the same, the trees surrounding her had disappeared without a trace.

-You've been quite distracted.

She hadn't noticed the change of place.

Since the Black Woods wouldn't suddenly disappear, it meant she had moved at some point.

Not noticing that change was indicative of how much her senses had twisted.

-Yes, who are you?

Shub-Niggurath asked as she scanned the surrounding darkness without a single trace of light.

-You invited me.

Step-.

Footsteps were heard.

It was a faint sound, but it suddenly echoed from nearby.

It was a familiar face.

And it was the opponent she mistrusted the most from the beginning.

-You move less cautiously.

Swoo-.

YuWon, who revealed his face from the darkness, stood in front of Shub-Niggurath. Compared to how tall Shub-Niggurath is, YuWon is about a head shorter.

[The 'Otherworld Opponent' challenges 'Shub-Niggurath.']

The message not only resonated in YuWon's head but also reached Shub-Niggurath.

Although there was no system in her, it was as if that information was engraved in her instinct.

-The Otherworld Opponent, huh? That's quite an arrogant name.

She looked into YuWon's unfocused eyes and felt a strange sensation.

Clearly, YuWon's outward appearance was no different from before. The energy he emanated was also the same.

But the name "Otherworld Opponent."

And the atmosphere emanating from him.

-Where did that boy go?

Although YuWon, with the name Otherworld Opponent, was also threatening, he was still an unripe fruit.

But Danpung by his side was different.

If the 'thing' she was thinking was correct, even though its outward appearance had shrunk, the inside of that thing would be larger than any entity she knew.

While Shub-Niggurath looked for Danpung for a moment, her eyes met YuWon's, who was gradually regaining focus.

And at that moment...

-... It's you.

Shub-Niggurath instinctively perceived it.

Within YuWon's sight, she found the little one she had been looking for, nestled inside him.

-You were that little one.

-Still...

YuWon's mouth opened.

-Do I still look like a child?

A voice that resonated in the same space as Shub-Niggurath.

That voice made Shub-Niggurath's pupils widen as if they were about to break. YuWon's figure was reflected in those large eyes, shining like jewels, and along with it, lights like the stars of the universe emerged in the dark surroundings.

-It's been a long time, Sothoth's Whore.

Sothoth.

She knew that name.

Just as Foolish Chaos called her "Bitch," she didn't feel offended at being called 'Whore.' Now was not the time to be in the mood for that, or for the name 'Sothoth.'

YuWon seemed to know and say everything.

It was a moment when doubt turned almost into certainty.

-Really...

Shub-Niggurath almost knelt and bowed, about to bow.

She knew she didn't have to do it. Or, she knew she shouldn't do it.

-Is it you?

-Why ask something you already know?

-Hadn't you disappeared?

-I disappeared. I had died.

-But, how...?

-Even the phoenix, a mere immortal creature, rises from extinguished ashes. Does that explain it?

An existence symbolizing immortality, even resurrecting from ashes after death. Although YuWon belittled the phoenix as a simple animal, there was no discomfort in YuWon's words.

The determination of life or death depended on who uttered those words. And the presence before Shub-Niggurath's eyes was someone who lacked nothing in the ability to speak those words.

-It won't change anything.

Beeeeeh

Beeeh

Beeh.

Following Shub-Niggurath's wish, sheep appeared around.

A flock that filled its surroundings.

YuWon's figure, surrounded by that flock, looked like it could be buried in the sheep's wool at any moment.

-The phoenix rises from the ashes, but the spark doesn't light up the sky from the beginning. The same goes for you.

-Yes, it's the same for me.

-I still see you as a child in my eyes. Your imposing presence and your greatness fell to the ground, and the power your name carried vanished, leaving only an empty shell.

It wasn't a statement directed at YuWon.

It was Shub-Niggurath talking to herself.

It was a challenge to the one she had once revered on her knees. It was a renewed reflection on the fall of the King who, powerless, was naked.

But.

Beeeh

Beeh.

The sheep surrounding YuWon, showing their fangs as if about to devour him, suddenly became docile.

YuWon stroked the fur of those sheep. The sheep, bleating happily, looked at Shub-Niggurath one after another.

With eyes they had never shown before.

-All your words are correct, but one is wrong.

Beeh~

Suddenly, the king of the sheep, who became the leader, spoke through YuWon's mouth.

-The true essence is not the shell but the core. All those multiple identities you cling to are just empty shells.

-Shells...?

As if she couldn't believe it, Shub-Niggurath's pupils trembled.

The sheep backed away. It was a denial of Shub-Niggurath's assertion that she was the "Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young."

With the feeling that something like this had never happened before, Shub-Niggurath reached out forward.

The moment she tried to stroke the sheep's wool that was so close...

Crack.

Until now, the sheep's fangs that had long been chasing enemies alongside Shub-Niggurath started biting her hand.

It was shocking...

That her own offspring would bite her...

-That's what the power of a name means. In the first place, these sheep don't follow you. They follow the name you possess.

-I still have the name.

-That's an obvious statement. You still have it.

-But why...?

-These sheep follow your name, but at the same time, they follow 'me.'

Me...

It didn't mean having a name like The Goat Who Gives Birth to Madness or Perverse Fertility Deity. It meant having the true name hidden inside, like Shub-Niggurath.

-A name that can't be snatched away. A name that won't disappear even if you're killed and trampled a hundred times.

-A name like that... has power?

-You might not know. You've adorned yourself too much with a false name. You've been losing what's truly important. But anyway.

In YuWon's eyes, Shub-Niggurath's figure reflected like in a mirror.

-This story may not concern you.

It was a story known to all.

But knowing it in the mind didn't mean she could accept everything.

Shub-Niggurath felt like her name, which had been permitted to her, was slowly being erased, one letter at a time.

-You shouldn't be surprised. Weren't you preparing for it?

In response to the provocation, Shub-Niggurath raised her head.

-I wasn't preparing. It wasn't something necessary.

-I respect your thinking. But if so, you shouldn't be surprised by what's happening now.

The power of the name was disappearing.

'The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young' was disappearing, leaving only 'Shub-Niggurath.'

And what was taking away that name was a presence imprinted on YuWon's body.

-You wanted my name.

Step by step, YuWon approached Shub-Niggurath.

Instinctively, she thought of stepping away from him. However, she didn't intend to resist shamefully just because she had sensed what was coming.

From the beginning, she had been thinking that moments like this might happen.

-But in the end, that name returned to someone else. And, unable to let go even of the name, you lost the name you had.

Swish.

Shub-Niggurath's skin peeled off, turning into a handful of flesh and bone dust.

-Still, you shouldn't complain too much. After all, all names come from me.

When the power of the name scattered like dust...

Sshh.

-That's what you really are.

The giant goat form and the beautiful female figure disappeared completely.

In their place, a small, young sheep appeared before YuWon's eyes.

Beeeh.

It wasn't much different from other sheep. In fact, it was much smaller than the other newborn sheep.

Shub-Niggurath.

The only true name, small and unattractive, hidden within a huge name.

To hide that name, Shub-Niggurath wrapped her body with various names and sought another name.

And so, the throat of the young sheep, which finally revealed its true appearance...

Slash.

YuWon cut it with a single blow.

Thud, he beheaded the sheep, which bounced several times on the ground. Curiously, the head rolled to YuWon's feet and stopped when it hit his legs.

And at the same time...

Sssss.

From the severed neck section, a purple mist emerged.

And the moment that mist enveloped YuWon's body.

[You have defeated 'Shub-Niggurath']

['Danpung' has acquired the name 'Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young']

The name now belonged entirely to Danpung.

Chapter 450

C450

It was a strange sensation.

Turned into a handful of dust, he floated in the universe. It felt as if he had been banished from the world and had become nothing.

There were no stars in the universe where YuWon was.

Therefore, everything was dark. Interestingly, in that universe without a single point of light, his own figure was reflected clearly.

'What the hell is going on?'

He vividly remembered persuading Danpung and asking him to calm down. But the moment he saw Danpung's figure, who finally nodded with difficulty, YuWon lost consciousness.

He had been so confident both physically and mentally to challenge anything. But somehow, he lost consciousness without even having a chance to do anything.

'Is this what it means to be in danger?'

Although he didn't know where he was, now that he was awake, he decided to move his hands.

Fortunately, there was nothing wrong with his body. He wasn't hurt anywhere, and indeed, he even felt that his body was lighter than before.

No...

'It's not just a little lighter.'

In reality, he had more strength than he had initially.

YuWon clenched his fist and brought it close to his eyes. His body had more strength than before, and there was an overflowing desire to use his bubbling strength.

And this kind of change could only mean one thing.

[You have defeated 'Shub-Niggurath.']

[The level of 'Danpung' has increased.]

[The level of 'Danpung' has increased.]

[The Divine Power of 'Danpung' has increased by 31.]

[The growth rate has increased by 61.22%.]

[Arcane Power has increased by 10.]

[You have obtained 100,000,000 points.]

[Danpung has acquired the name 'The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young.']

[The first name has been obtained.]

"Damn, this is insane!"

Curses spilled out of YuWon's mouth at the messages that kept coming one after another.

They were incredible messages. They say that when joy is too great, curses come out instead of a cry of joy. YuWon was no different.

Ten points of Arcane Power.

Moreover, Danpung's level increased significantly, and Divine Power increased by 31.

The 100 million points that the highest Rankers would consider as the highest reward were the least valuable reward among them.

'Is Shub-Niggurath dead?'

YuWon had no idea what had happened.

All he knew was that while floating in this space of unknown identity, Danpung defeated Shub-Niggurath.

And through the reward, YuWon's Arcane Power also increased thanks to Danpung absorbing Shub-Niggurath's power.

Furthermore...

'Danpung obtained the name of Shub-Niggurath.'

The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young.

The name representing Shub-Niggurath.

So far, YuWon had fought against the Outers and had faced many names. Shub-Niggurath had three names, and the most well-known of them was Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young.

Not much was known about the power a name possessed. According to some of the smartest, like Mimir and Odin, research on that power suggested that Outer Gods acquired unique power and characteristics according to the name. But that was all that was known so far.

'Does Danpung now have that power?'

It was unexpected news for YuWon, who originally planned to simply kill Shub-Niggurath through the Predator to increase his stats.

However, it was still a mystery how that power would affect Danpung.

'Don't think too much about it.'

If expectations were high, so would disappointments be. It was better not to include unnecessary variables and simply follow a plan.

For now, he had to be satisfied with the rewards in front of him.

'It's attractive enough even now.'

Ten points of Arcane Power.

That was more than enough to completely change the nature of the Arcane Power YuWon had.

At this point, it could be said that there weren't many who could match him just in terms of the amount of Arcane Power. Maybe someone like Odin or Son OhGong could be on par.

'It might be a little uncomfortable the process, but... anyway, I got more than I expected.'

YuWon's eyes explored his surroundings.

'The problem is how to get out of here.'

Suddenly, he felt anxiety.

What if he was trapped here forever, unable to get out?

"Dad, danger!"

Could that be what it meant?

At that moment, when YuWon was starting to delve into how to get out of here, a familiar voice resonated in his ear.

"Whoo."

Who blew wind in my ear?

The itchiness made him scratch his ear with his hand. And at that moment, YuWon saw how the dark universe around him wrinkled as if someone had kneaded it.

And only then could YuWon feel relief.

'Luckily.'

He wondered how to get out of here.

Perhaps, after all, he didn't have to worry about that.

"Hoo-. Hoooo-."

A loud wind noise resonated in his ears. Instead of opening his eyes after regaining consciousness, it was the itching in his ears that woke him up first.

YuWon slowly opened his eyes and blinked.

Danpung blew in YuWon's ears, as if playing a prank on him.

That was the voice of that guy.

"Hoooo- Hoo-."

"...I've woken up."

"Hoo-."

Didn't he hear or was he pretending not to hear? The breeze in his ears made YuWon's eyebrows twist.

And then, YuWon's reaction caused a commotion.

"He's awake."

"He woke up!"

"He's awake!"

The first thing YuWon saw was the ceiling. It was a white ceiling, and the distance between it and the black sky he had been seeing before was considerable.

The surroundings were also lit; it wasn't the Black Woods from before.

'It's fluffy.'

Regaining his senses, YuWon checked the comfortable bed holding him and the appearance of the room.

And again...

"Seeing you roll your eyes like that, it seems like you're fine."

Hercules, accompanied by a broad shadow, also spoke to him.

It was clear.

The fight seemed to have ended a long time ago.

Swish-.

YuWon immediately got up without saying a word.

It was because he felt that if he didn't, Danpung would keep blowing wind in his ears, and also to show that he wasn't hurt.

"Enough, that's enough."

Swish, swish-.

YuWon pressed Danpung's head, who complained by raising his arms. Danpung groaned as if telling him not to do it.

Not only Danpung and Hercules but also several people were around him. It seemed that there were at least six people outside the door, which was slightly open.

"Why are so many people gathered here?"

"We thought you were dead."

"Dead? Who?"

"You, who else would we be talking about?"

"How long have I been here now?"

"Close to ten days. Or maybe a bit more?"

"Ten days?"

He thought he had been somewhere like outer space for a moment, but it turns out it had been that long.

YuWon felt a slight sweat on his back. Even when he was unconscious, he could tell how long he had been unconscious. Although he couldn't say exactly how many days had passed, he always had a vague sense.

But now?

YuWon's experience lasted only about five minutes.

YuWon looked at the scene in front of him with a momentarily perplexed expression.

What the hell had happened?

"We don't know exactly what happened either."

The one who explained YuWon's expression was Mimir, who was reading a book.

"You suddenly disappeared, and that monster disappeared too. When you reappeared, there was a little lamb's neck rolling on the ground."

Mimir's explanation ended, and he focused his gaze back on the book.

"It's just that you look like you don't know what's going on."

Judging by YuWon's expression, it seemed he took care of Shub-Niggurath.

He probably received help from Danpung, but he didn't remember the process.

'Is it okay to move forward?'

Still, YuWon thought he should refrain from asking Danpung for this kind of favor if possible.

"I thought about asking you what happened when you woke up, but I guess it's unnecessary."

"I thought you came to visit me because of my situation or something."

"Since we just changed the subject now. Are you okay?"

"I feel like I've just been born. I feel fresh."

Hercules chuckled softly at YuWon's response. It seemed like he thought it was a joke.

Of course, it wasn't just talk.

As if he really had just been born, YuWon's body felt fresh and seemed like it was about to fly.

The rising Arcane Power filled his body, infusing a new vitality.

"How are things being organized?"

"It's harder than the Assembly. Just... the situation is out of control."

"...There must have been a lot of deaths."

"Yes. Much more than we expected."

It was a world that had been invaded by Shub-Niggurath. Indeed, it wasn't a strange situation that not only one floor but several worlds had been destroyed.

'Maybe it's something to be thankful for.'

They didn't know that Shub-Niggurath could have caused much more damage.

However, the reason why things ended like this was because the situation was better than expected.

Moreover...

'Foolish Chaos moved sooner than we thought.'

YuWon and Foolish Chaos moved together for the first time, and it would probably be the last time.

A common enemy, Shub-Niggurath. To catch Shub-Niggurath, Foolish Chaos appeared at the last moment and decided to steal one of her names.

Until then, YuWon and the others' role was to reduce Shub-Niggurath's power as much as possible. To do that, YuWon borrowed the power of Vishnu.

The result was successful.

But he didn't have great expectations. The probability of Foolish Chaos appearing at the right moment to help was almost zero.

However, Foolish Chaos moved exactly at the optimal time.

For YuWon and the others, who had to avoid getting damaged by Shub-Niggurath while fighting her, Foolish Chaos was in a position where he could act without worries.

But then, why?

'Is there another reason?'

He couldn't ask him directly or think about it right away.

Foolish Chaos's quick help and the results of defeating Shub-Niggurath.

Somehow, an uncomfortable feeling remained.

"For now, rest a bit more and then come out. Many people are worried about you."

"You can rest a bit more. Anyway, you were the one who made the biggest contribution in this matter."

The two got up from the bed as if they agreed that it was enough.

Mimir left the room first, and Hercules stopped for a moment and looked at YuWon.

"Oh, and..."

"Do you have anything else to say?"

YuWon, who had been checking his Player Kit for the past ten days in case there was any other communication, urged Hercules to speak quickly if he had something to say.

"I wanted to talk to you about that. If you're not going to get up right away, take a look at the ranking. It has changed drastically this time."

"Well."

The Ranking.

He didn't care much about that really.

Not only at the current moment, but YuWon knew the Rankings up to a much distant future. Moreover, he had already reached a higher Ranking than the current one.

Hercules left the room with an indifferent gesture to YuWon's indifferent reaction.

The reason YuWon took out the Kit had another purpose. His eyes sparkled as he checked the Kit.

'It's there.'

The communication he had been waiting for.

Several messages and calls were stored in the kit.

[Son OhGong: Hey! Hey! Why aren't you responding?]

[Son OhGong: Come to the Celestial Floor immediately. Help!]

[Son OhGong: Help! Help! Hey!]

[...]

All the messages were from Son OhGong. Dozens of urgent messages.

Somehow, it seems he found the Celestial Floor.

But...

"...So, where is that place?"

Among all these messages, there was no information on where the Celestial Floor was.

