

## With The Gods 461

Chapter 461

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The place they arrived by boat wasn't very far.

In less than two hours, they reached a mansion on the 98th floor.

"Have we arrived already?"

YuWon, who had stepped to the front of the boat, asked as he looked at the expansive mansion with a garden.

He thought they would go down further, but they had already arrived. It seemed they weren't heading to Asgard's territory.

'If it's the 98th floor... a place where the influence of Olympus extends.'

YuWon's gaze turned to Zeus, who stood with his back turned.

'For now, are we going to the nearest place?'

After the fight with Shub-Niggurath, Olympus and Asgard had established a fairly close relationship, a fact known to the public.

However, even so, had the leaders of two such large guilds come together to a place like this small mansion?

Sss...

Zeus, who was looking down from the bow, turned around.

He didn't know what he was thinking all the time, but seeing YuWon again, he made a puzzled expression.

"It's strange."

"What is?"

"Something... seems the same."

"So, what's the problem?"

"You always changed every time we met again. And quite a lot."

In Zeus's mind, he recalled when he first met YuWon.

At first, he was someone who could barely avoid one of his Lightning Bolts. But then, and then again. So, several times until their last encounter.

YuWon kept changing.

But...

"A year isn't much time, but it should have been different for you. But now, what's this? Have you been having fun and playing around for a year?"

"Are you disappointed?"

"Disappointed?"

Zeus seemed angry for some reason. Although his face seemed expressionless, his calm gaze was more filled with fire than when he fell from the throne.

"No. I just regret wasting my time coming here to see a guy like you."

Toc, toc...

With those words, Zeus entered the inner part of the boat. It was a reaction that indicated there was nothing more to say.

That was the first time he saw Zeus so talkative. He didn't know much about him, but seeing him so talkative, he seemed genuinely upset.

"Don't worry too much."

Sss...

Just as the boat touched the ground, Odin approached.

"The one who has been looking for you more than anyone in the last six months is that guy. You might not know, but he was probably worried."

Although it could have been an attempt at consolation, YuWon laughed looking at the departing Zeus.

'Worried?'

Looking at it that way, Odin still didn't know Zeus well.

Or maybe it was him who knew him too well.

'He's not the type of person to do that.'

Zeus was a logical and rational type.

He was the kind of person who used his own children as pawns to achieve his goals. It was impossible for such a person to worry about someone who wasn't even his son.

Yuwon looked to where Zeus had gone.

'It's strange.'

It had only been a year.

But then, why was he so angry?

Like a person who doesn't have much time.

In the meantime...

"We've arrived."

Thud...

The boat carrying the three people reached its destination.

-----

Kiiing...

Zeus entered a small room that had been set up on the boat and lay down on the bed.

Although not as tall as Hercules, Zeus was also a man of great stature. He lay haphazardly on the relatively small bed and looked at the ceiling.

"Are you disappointed?"

YuWon's words resonated in his mind.

He wasn't. Although he said he regretted it, it wasn't because he was disappointed.

'...I just had high expectations.'

And the reason was obvious: because he had expectations.

But YuWon hadn't changed at all since a year ago.

'Has he been loafing around all this time?'

Zeus thought about it for a moment, but then shook his head.

'I don't think so.'

So, why?

Sure, Rankers faced a wall at some point. Zeus did too, and he had broken down that wall several times.

But so far, it seemed there was no such wall in front of YuWon.

'...This is a problem.'

Zeus raised his hand.

His hand blocked the light from the ceiling. But, for some reason, the hand couldn't block all the light.

'...It's fading.'

The hand gradually blurred.

To regain it, Zeus clenched his fists.

Craack...

The hand regained its original shape. If he lost concentration, this was what happened.

How much longer could he endure?

Srrr...

His eyelids became heavier and heavier.

He thought that maybe, if he lay down on the uncomfortable and narrow bed, he would feel a bit better, but it wasn't the case.

Instead, drowsiness overwhelmed him. Suddenly, something occurred to him.

'How long has it been...'

He continued to think as he stood up to avoid falling asleep.

'How long has it been since I slept?'

-----

YuWon followed Odin into the mansion.

It was a spacious and grand mansion. It wasn't flashy, but it was quite tidy, with barely any traces of human life.

"Whose house is this?" YuWon asked, intrigued by the choice of a home instead of a palace.

"It's true it's not a grand residence. But it's the home of the most beautiful woman in Olympus," Odin replied with a slight smile.

"Aphrodite?"

"Ah, yes, she's beautiful too."

Aphrodite was a Ranker with such a beautiful appearance that it was jokingly said half of her ranking came from her face. Naturally, people didn't hesitate to mention Aphrodite when choosing the most beautiful person not only in Olympus but also in the tower.

But it turned out it wasn't Aphrodite who awaited them.

"Someone is waiting for you," Odin said.

"For me?"

"YuWon!"

A familiar voice echoed, and YuWon's gaze turned to the end of the hallway.

And there...

Swish.

Someone flew towards YuWon.

Thud.

It was a quite impactful collision. Although YuWon didn't put up much resistance, his body was knocked down.

It was surprisingly strong, might even be Hercules in a woman's form.

That person was...

"...Pandora?"

"I've come, YuWon."

Pandora smiled brightly. Unlike before, when she wasn't as put together, her red hair was carefully combed, and her expression was much livelier.

Pandora was like a flower blooming in the desert. Everything in the world seemed dim in comparison to her.

Now YuWon understood why Odin called her the "most beautiful woman in Olympus."

"You're heavy," remarked YuWon.

"Are you going to run away again?" Pandora asked.

"I've never run away."

"Yes, you have."

"No, I haven't. To run away, you first have to be tied down somewhere."

"Next time you go somewhere, let me know."

".....?"

YuWon, who was under Pandora, looked at her with confused eyes.

"What's wrong?"

Pandora asked, interrupting the conversation for a moment, and YuWon replied.

"It seemed like you were talking a bit more."

Pandora's expression, as remembered by YuWon, changed, and her speech became somewhat hesitant.

But now it was a bit different.

There were changes in expression, and her words were quite extensive.

It was as if a doll that used to move without emotions had turned into a person.

"Don't you like it?"

"No."

There was no reason not to like it.

"It's much better this way. So let me get up now."

Swoosh.

When YuWon got up, Pandora stepped back. Although she barely did.

Crunch.

A grip strong enough to wrinkle or tear clothes.

It was a determination not to let go.

"I won't leave. At least not today."

YuWon made Pandora release her hands with those words. He appreciated the place she provided, but carrying her with him constantly wasn't practical.

YuWon looked around the inside of the mansion again. Given the scale, he suspected this mansion wasn't cheap.

"Was this place provided by Olympus to Pandora?"

"Now that she's a High-Ranker representative of Olympus, why wouldn't they give her a castle instead of a mansion?"

Pandora's ranking had risen rapidly. Unlike the past when she was sealed by Zeus, she was now freed, and her imperfect mind was also slowly returning.

Pandora's elevated ranking had reached two digits, rapidly approaching Hades' level.

"Did I come here just to meet Pandora?"

"She seems to be looking for you a lot. I'm not sure why."

"I guess she thinks she owes me."

"That's what she said. That you saved her. But it doesn't seem like she's just looking for you because of a debt."

At those words, YuWon looked at Pandora, who was watching him from a half-step away.

What was the meaning of that look?

'...She's really beautiful.'

Although his heart trembled being observed by such a beautiful woman at such a close distance, that was all. The emotion had already been eroded and worn away from the moment he began glimpsing the future of destruction.

'I'll have to talk to her later.'

To be able to free himself from her, YuWon would have to uncover where Pandora's obsession originated.

With that thought, YuWon followed Odin, who had started moving again.

"As you can see, the world is changing."

"Are you serious?"

"Yes. The sky you saw is appearing in different places."

The purple sky was considered a precursor to the arrival of the Outers. And, as YuWon had seen, the Outers appeared in the sky he was looking at. Although they were only tentacles without a Name, they were clearly beings coming from outside the Tower.

But for the sky to be showing Outers everywhere...

"Why didn't I know about it?"

"It happened a few days ago. I was having headaches because of it."

Odin's gaze turned towards the window.

Asgard's ship floating above the mansion. To be precise, Odin was looking at Zeus inside it.

"And in the midst of that, Zeus came to see me. He said you had appeared."

"He seems quite disappointed. He still hasn't come down."

"I'm sure it's not just because of that."

Odin's gaze turned to Pandora, who was following behind YuWon.

"...Ah."

It was only then that YuWon understood the situation. Of course.

The relationship between Pandora and Zeus wasn't good. Zeus was the one who locked Pandora in a prison, and every time she saw Zeus, she swore to kill him.

Perhaps Zeus wasn't coming out of the ship because of Pandora.

"But if you're going to talk about that, why did we come here?"

"I have things to ask you and things to give you."

If he had questions, he could have asked them anywhere. The reason Odin, who sought him, came directly here was probably because he had something to tell him.

"The questions that are bothersome are better asked later, and what are you going to give me? Is it something good?"

"I don't know if it's good or not, but..."

The tail end of the conversation became blurry, as if certainty was hard to come by.

But soon, Odin spoke confidently.

"You'll probably be surprised."

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Yuwon followed Odin. Pandora lived alone in a mansion that was surprisingly spacious, even for her, who used to live alone.

There was something astonishing that Odin mentioned. But why was there something like this here?

"It was Zeus who brought it. It was after you disappeared."

Was fate approaching? Odin began to speak.

"You know it too. Who is Zeus? Do you really think he gave this mansion to Pandora because he felt guilty for what he did to her?"

Now that I think about it, it's true.

Who is Zeus? If he really felt guilty, he wouldn't have done what he did to Pandora in the first place.

So, why?

The answer didn't take long to come.

"To protect her."

"Your intellect is still impressive."

An affirmative answer.

Pandora was a prominent High-Ranker in Olympus. If her position and power were set aside, her military strength was comparable, or even superior, to Hades.

By giving something to Pandora, it could disguise as a common mansion, or, on the other hand, it could make Pandora protect it.

"How important is that?"

"If you look at the item alone, it's surprising but not that astonishing. It's not as good as my Gungnir or the ring you have."

"But..."

"The important thing is 'where' it comes from."

Where?

Even YuWon couldn't easily guess this time. Although many items passed through his mind, none seemed to fit with what Odin was saying.

In the end, there was only one way to find out: see it with his own eyes.

Kiiing-.

The door leading to the basement of the mansion opened. When the door opened for the first time, the first thing he perceived was a pungent aroma that pricked his nose.

'A hallucinogen?'

A hallucinogenic drug that alters vision and affects the senses. And, as if that wasn't enough, all around the door were magical circles that seemed to be created by Odin.

"You did it loudly."

Zzzip-.

A black light burst from the Uranus Heart that YuWon held in his hand. It cut through the illusory scent and the magical circles.

Huuung-.

The view inside was revealed.

"...It was built robustly."

Gray walls. They were entirely made of mithril, and this alone seemed to be one of the strongest fortresses in the entire Tower.

It was as if he had crossed a portal and arrived in another world.

"They say it was originally the prison that imprisoned Pandora."

"So, this is why..."

In YuWon's view, scratched marks appeared everywhere on the walls.

They were nail marks that had scraped something. From the look of the marks, it seemed she had been tied to something.

Of course, for a High-Ranker like Pandora, breaking a mithril wall would be nothing difficult.

That meant...



'They probably took additional measures so that she couldn't use her strength.'

YuWon glanced at Pandora, who was glued to his back.

Tremble, tremble~

That woman who had said she would kill Zeus even if he were in front of her was now trembling.

She probably had been trapped here for quite some time.

'Trapping Pandora in a place like this...'

He didn't know if Zeus knew it or not, but...

'He's still trash.'

Although it seemed he had changed a bit, Zeus always showed his trash side when he needed to.

He didn't care about the means or the method, as long as he achieved his goal.

Of course, that was what YuWon knew to be "typical of Zeus."

"If you feel uncomfortable, go out for a bit."

--Clack! --

Upon hearing that, Pandora grabbed YuWon's clothes even tighter.

Did she not want to let him go?

"I'm not going anywhere. I'll be back after finishing the matter, so..."

"If you go in, you won't be able to come out."

It was a statement that was probably based on experience. Indeed, Pandora must have been trapped here for thousands of years.

So, the current concern was not unfounded.

But...

"Don't worry."

YuWon raised his head and released her hand.

"I'm stronger than you, and there's someone even stronger by my side."

With the phrase "someone even stronger," YuWon pointed to Odin.

So, after a brief moment of hesitation, Pandora nodded. In the moment he thought Pandora would fall, she took one step further into the room.

Clack-.

"Oh-."

Odin slightly admired Pandora's actions.

"Certainly, these days people are bold."

"Do you already feel old?"

"Yes, I've aged, but only I can say it, not you."

Thus, the brief commotion passed.

Finally, YuWon entered the room along with Pandora.

A quite spacious room, about 40 square meters.

And in the middle of the room floated a sword.

It wasn't difficult to figure out what that "item" Odin mentioned was, as the only thing in the room was that sword.

"Is that it?"

It was a somehow familiar sword.

A long sword with a black blade and a crescent moon-shaped rounded hilt. Beside it floated the sword's sheath, which had nothing extraordinary in its appearance.

It was the design that Hephaestus used to use frequently.

"It looks like it was made by Uncle Hephaestus."

Could it be something that Hephaestus sent?

If that were the case, it would undoubtedly be a valuable item. Hephaestus put his heart and soul into every item he created, and his items were considered treasures.

However...

"Sorry, but I don't think this is an item worth causing all this commotion for."

"Take a closer look. Only you can recognize it."

"Only me...?"

When he demanded a visual explanation, Odin shrugged.

It was more of a reaction suggesting to see directly rather than listening.

"Definitely, it would be better to see it directly."

Somehow, he didn't know why Odin was so surprised by that weapon.

Since it was a sword, it would be much easier to understand the identity of the item by holding it, at least to some extent.

Step by step, YuWon approached the sword.

Although Pandora tried to follow him closely, Odin blocked her path with his arm.

"Wait a moment."

A gesture indicating that she couldn't pass.

Just one hand blocking the way wasn't enough to prevent passage. But that was just the beginning.

Pandora knew how much she differed from Odin, who stood in front of her.

If she tried to cross the line he had created, Odin would dominate her immediately.

Finally, biting her lips, she had to settle for watching YuWon's back as he walked away.

Unnoticed, YuWon had already reached the center of the room where the sword floated.

Whether from afar or up close, there wasn't much difference in appearance. At this distance, he couldn't see anything he couldn't see before.

However, he was confident.

'It definitely looks familiar.'

This item was one he knew. However, there are many other items with similar designs from the same manufacturer.

But even if he already knew the item, there wasn't enough reason for Odin to bring it so hastily.

'Still, I should check the status of the item....'

Without hesitation, YuWon reached out and grabbed the sword.

[Name: ?]#This is a sword that Hephaestus carved with his own bones as a hammer. It contains the essence of another world.#?#? ? ?#?--

A description that seemed quite damaged somewhere.

But that was enough to understand the object.

'Why...?'

"Is this here?"

The question he had thought of escaped his lips without warning. Now he could see why Odin was so sure he would be so surprised.

This was undoubtedly an item that shouldn't be here.

"Do you know this item?"

Odin approached YuWon after giving him a brief moment.

Apparently, he only knew half the story about this item.

"I know it."

With a responsive tone, YuWon spoke while feeling the familiar sensation in his hands.

"Because I used to use it."

"You?"

Hephaestus used to give simple names to the items he created himself. His masterpieces, such as the Lightning or the Sun Chariot, usually had intuitive names based on their appearance or abilities.

The name of the sword was "Otherworld Sword" (), created a long time ago from Hephaestus's hammer.

"It was at the end of the battle. Eating and drinking were luxuries, and by fighting every day, even our weapons wore away to nothing."

The fight was tough. Forges capable of repairing equipment had disappeared, and obtaining materials to make items was nearly impossible.

Even the best blacksmith like Hephaestus couldn't create nonexistent materials.

"Son OhGong's Ru Yi Bang broke in half, and Hercules' club did too. Even your Gungnir was heavily worn at the tip."

"It was quite... difficult, wasn't it?"

"Very difficult..."

Similar expressions but with different nuances. The struggle they had faced couldn't be simply described as difficult.

"Probably no one was sure of surviving tomorrow in those fights."

They didn't consider the disappearance of a comrade who was smiling yesterday and today vanished while sleeping with death as a pillow to be special.

Anyway, everyone was prepared for it.

"...It's the first time I've heard that story."

For Odin, it was the first time he had heard that story from YuWon.

Son OhGong's Ru Yi Bang broke, there was no food, and a future without weapons.

Seeing the surprise on Odin's face, YuWon asked:

"Why are you surprised? What did you think about the future?"

"I didn't think it would be so beautiful. Since I saw that goat on the first floor."

Odin looked up at the ceiling with nothing, with a surprised face and not daring to face YuWon.

"I thought you had come here carrying a lot. That's why, in the end, I felt sorry for the others who had left you to carry everything..."

"Compared to those who stayed there, I'm in a flower garden now."

Yuwon's response contained not a single empty word.

He really felt that the few years he had returned to the past were like a flower field. Even if he fought for his life, in the end, he could enjoy hot water and tasty food. Compared to the future, this place was almost a paradise.

And so it was.

"Now I understand why you were moving so busily."

The reason YuWon had whipped himself even more.

"Do you feel sorry for those left there?"

Klunk.

Yuwon remained silent as he looked at the sword in his hand.

He didn't deny it. Sometimes, silence can be a stronger response than a nod or a word.

For the first time since he met YuWon, Odin felt sorry for him.

Somehow, YuWon had never said he was tired, even when his body was about to tear apart running.

No matter how breathless he felt as if his lungs were about to burst, the reason he couldn't say it was hard was that his comrades were fighting in hell, supporting the path he was running on.

"...This was a sword forged by Uncle with his own hammer."

Changing the subject, YuWon lifted the sword.

"There were no other hammers, so he used his own hand as a hammer and struck it."

Although the System's explanation was a mess, it was evident the moment he held it in his hands.

An item that shouldn't exist in this world.

Therefore, it was clear "where" it came from.

"How is it possible that it came from the future?"

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Odin shook his head in response to YuWon's question.

"I don't know very well either."

"You don't know?"

"This wasn't brought by me but by Zeus. I found out it was something from the future thanks to Mimir."

"Zeus?"

How the hell did he have it in the first place? Although curiosity consumed him, at this moment, he was angry with himself. He knew that, given Zeus's nature, he wouldn't easily reveal the information even if he asked.

Finding out the origin of an item wouldn't be so difficult for Mimir. He would have been wise enough to play a key role in the creation of the Clock Mechanism along with Odin.

"Mimir is probably already asleep at this moment."

"...Yes."

"We'll have to wait a hundred years to see him again."

"I wish it were so."

The response was a bit strange.

I wish it were so?

"Is there a problem with Mimir?"

"He lost an eye."

"...An eye?"

It wasn't the first time he had heard that story.

Through Son OhGong, who had come from the future a little later than him, he had heard the story that Mimir had lost an eye.

That meant...

"Are you talking about the current Mimir?"

"From what you say, it seems that the Mimir from the future also had the same thing happen to him."

"At least it's not now. And I'm not sure it's for the same reason either."

YuWon mumbled as if he were thinking aloud.

"So, what? What's the reason Mimir lost an eye?"

"He made a deal."

"A deal? With whom?"

"With a mysterious hooded man."

"A hooded man...?"

YuWon's face twisted.

Foolish Chaos.

It was he who made a deal with Mimir.

Previously, Foolish Chaos and YuWon made a deal.

They formed an alliance to confront Shub-Niggurath, the public target of everyone. In the end, they joined forces.

The most desperate were the High-Rankers of the Tower, including YuWon. Even if Foolish Chaos hadn't appeared at that moment, it wouldn't have been surprising at all.

From Foolish Chaos's point of view, it would be beneficial if Shub-Niggurath weakened the Tower's power even a little.

But...

'If he made a deal with Mimir's eye... Is the calculation correct?'

He wondered what would have happened if Foolish Chaos hadn't appeared at that moment.

There might have been more dead and wounded. Perhaps not only Valhalla, but also some more worlds could have been destroyed.

It was complicated.

That Mimir sacrificed an eye for Foolish Chaos to move in time.

"If he had lost an eye... It might take him hundreds of years longer to wake up."

Now that he understood Odin's concern, YuWon looked at him with compassionate eyes.

Then...

"It's not one."

Odin smiled sadly and said.

"Both."

"Both?"

"Where the hell would he have left it? He came with both eyes closed."

Mimir, who had lost both eyes.

He had heard that Mimir lost an eye to send Son OhGong to the past, but he couldn't even imagine it.

"Both eyes...."

Did he really use both eyes in the deal with Foolish Chaos?

Or did he use the other eye for something else?

'I can't wake him up to find out.'

Due to the Curse of Knowledge, Mimir who slept once wouldn't rise for anything. Even if you stab a dagger in his neck or throw him into a pit of fire, it won't make any difference.

In the current state, Mimir was practically dead.

In the end, there was no way to know what Mimir used his eyes for.

"I'm going crazy."

Apparently, Odin didn't provide a detailed explanation, judging by the situation, not even a prior hint.

Perhaps he trusted that he, being smarter, wouldn't do foolish things.

"In the end, there's no way to know how this happened."

YuWon muttered as if he were expressing his difficulty.

But as YuWon made that face...

"Why are you laughing so much?"

Somehow, a strange laughter seized him.

It was brighter than ever. It was so genuine that it was chilling, considering that he usually only made ironic, sarcastic, and mocking laughs.

"It's just that..."

Zzz-

YuWon looked at the sword he held in his hands and responded as if he were appreciating something.

"It's a bit comforting."

"Comforting?"

"I'm not sure how they sent it, but I think I know why they sent it."

Among so many items, the reason they chose to send his sword.

It wasn't necessary to think so deeply.

After returning to the past using the Clock Mechanism, YuWon had always thought he was fighting alone. Abandoning those who were left behind, he fought hard to change the past.

Fortunately, when Son OhGong returned with him, the burden seemed to have decreased, but even if two people shared a burden as heavy as the sky, it wouldn't change anything.

However...

Clang-.

Looking at the sword, it seemed to know.

"They're fighting there too, aren't they?"

They were still fighting.

In that distant future. Like those who experienced the battle first.

They did not abandon YuWon and continued the fight.

'I will gladly accept this gift.'

It truly was.

The meaning of this gift. And also the item itself.

He was thinking of looking for a new sword since the Edge of Nightfall was becoming heavy, so he was pleased.

Of course.

"It's been a while since I saw you."

He didn't plan to use the sword in that state.

"Ahjussi."

-----

YuWon didn't stay long.

The moment he grabbed the sword, YuWon started moving immediately.

Odin's words asking why he was in such a hurry were in vain. YuWon, with the sword in hand, seemed excited about something.

Crack-.

Leaving the mansion like that, Odin looked up.

"He's gone."

A ship floating above the mansion and a clear sky.



Odin spoke up. It was unclear whether he was talking to the ship or the sky.

"Didn't you hear everything? You too."

"...."

No response.

Whether it was uncomfortable or because he had no thoughts at all. Probably, he found it quite embarrassing to have gotten angry without reason.

"That guy moved right away. Although he could have taken a day off."

Baang-!

A Lightning Bolt fell from the clear sky.

With it, Zeus appeared behind Odin and asked with annoyance:

"What are you saying?"

"You should know too, right? I don't think that guy wasted time for a year playing and enjoying himself."

"...."

YuWon spoke about the future he experienced.

He knew Zeus was paying attention to his voice. After all, the mansion and the room they were in were not soundproof at all.

Still, YuWon didn't hide the existence of the Clock Mechanism or the fact that he came from the future.

He wouldn't stop.

Never.

"He really seems not to have changed at all."

"By the looks of it on the outside, but for sure, when the time comes, he'll surprise us as always."

Odin's opinion was completely opposite to Zeus's.

He looked at YuWon, who didn't seem to have changed at all, and had even higher expectations.

"I wonder what that impatient guy was trying to achieve by stopping in one place. And whether he succeeded or not."

-----

"Selling beautiful hair ribbons! Made from high-quality silk, beautiful hair ribbons!"

"Come and see the novelties made from luxury silk! It's not something you see every day!"

"Something special from the upper floors arrived from afar-!"

A bustling market.

The market of the Tenth Floor in the Murim World was always like this. So congested that there was no room to take a step, people bought and sold goods every day.

At first glance, it seemed like just the bustling market floor.

Unlike other upper part worlds, it didn't seem so developed at first glance.

However, unlike what it seemed on the outside, the Murim World market was known for producing quite valuable items.

Tap~

That's why...

"Hmm-."

That was the reason why Hephaestus set foot in this world after the first floor.

"Why the hell do all the merchants sell things made of silk?"

"It's the most popular item in the Murim World. It refers to silk that comes through the Celestial Mountain."

"Following fashion eventually makes you like everyone else. Useless things."

"Aren't you setting standards too high? Although they may seem that way to Hefesto-nim, they are also living intensely."

A small forge located in a corner of the market.

Hephaestus, who entered there, examined a box full of various equipment. This forge was a place Hefesto used to go to get materials since he settled in the Murim World.

"These items are in a total mess too."

"Don't look at me with so much pity. Wasn't it Hefesto-nim who asked to bring defective items? We also have many high-quality products in our store."

As the blacksmith said, his forge had quite good quality equipment.

Certainly, they were items too advanced for Tenth Floor Players. Some of them were items that even higher-level Players might desire.

However, the problem was that what Hephaestus chose this time were defective products that failed to make those items.

"Even though they are defective, this is an affront to iron."

"...Should we cancel the transaction?"

"It seems like the points are rotting. Do as you please."

"No, no, I'm so sorry...!"

A brief dispute.

Hephaestus finally paid and picked up the box full of broken items.

"But, what the hell are you going to do with these broken items?"

"I don't know."

"If you have the chance, come visit us later."

There was no reason to stay in such an unattractive forge after the business was completed.

With the box full of swords, spears, and iron armors in his hands, Hephaestus headed to his own forge.

When the man with the large box moved, the murmuring people separated to make way for him.

And so he reached a not-so-distant place.

Thud-!

Clunk-!

Hephaestus lowered the box from his shoulders and sat on the chair he had left nearby.

While massaging his sore shoulder with one hand, suddenly...

"What the hell?"

Suddenly, Hephaestus looked down the stairs of the forge with narrowed eyes.

He had spent quite some time setting up expensive formations and magic circles around the forge in case there were thieves.

But apparently, an unauthorized outsider had entered while he was out for a moment.

Creak-.

Hephaestus grabbed the hammer he had left aside.

If the intruder didn't come out immediately; he had the impulse to smash the entire forge in one blow.

With that ruthless spirit, an unauthorized outsider appeared below the stairs.

"Greetings, Ahjussi."

Waving his hand, YuWon climbed the stairs from below. It wasn't clear when they had last seen each other, but seeing his face after so long was very pleasant.

Come to think of it, Hephaestus was the first companion YuWon met after setting foot in the Tower.

And at the moment when YuWon revealed his hidden figure under the stairs...

"Yes."

With a gaze full of anger, the muscles in Hephaestus's arm swelled.

Boom-.

Thus, with all his power, Hephaestus threw the hammer at YuWon's face.

Clang-!

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Chapter 464

C464

YuWon, who received the flying hammer, rubbed the hit spot with his hand.

There were no fractures on his head or bleeding. Not even a small bump appeared.

Even if he used his abilities to wield the hammer, it was obvious that Hephaestus's hammer wouldn't break YuWon's head.

Of course...

That didn't mean there was no pain.

"Are you ignorant or stupid?"

Hephaestus looked at YuWon, who was rubbing his forehead with his hand, with disdain.

"You're just letting yourself get hit."

"Haven't you done this before?"

"You got away with it once, why can't you get away with it twice?"

A similar situation had already occurred before.

At that time, YuWon didn't seek him out even when Hephaestus contacted him, and the moment they met, he was hit by the thrown hammer.

Initially, Hephaestus knew that YuWon wouldn't get hurt, but from YuWon's perspective, it wasn't a pleasant situation.

"The way you release your resentment is unique."

Calming an angry person by letting yourself be hit. It was truly an ignorant and stupid method.

"Bring it."

Clapping his hands, Hephaestus pointed to the sword.

Finally, the moment arrived. YuWon thought to himself as he drew the sword he carried at his waist.

Swoosh~

When he drew the Edge of Nightfall...

"Well, it's fine."

In Hephaestus's eyes, which seemed to have softened for a moment, the flame reignited.

That was why Hephaestus was so angry.

The Edge of Nightfall was the sword YuWon obtained when he reached the first floor. Made by mixing Dark Divine Crystal powder and various valuable materials, it was an item that Hephaestus valued highly.

Certainly, it was an almost unparalleled treasure for a First Floor Player.

However...

"Have you been fighting so much and never thought to repair it?"

YuWon really mistreated that Edge of Nightfall.

It was strange that a First-Level Player, who fought against beings from other worlds and higher-ranked Players every day, continued to use a sword that was no longer sharp.

"I'm not asking you to take care of it too much. But if the weapon reaches this point, at least contact me and..."

Hephaestus continued scolding for a while.

Apparently, Hephaestus was upset with YuWon, who treated his own creation like that. In that regard, YuWon also felt quite guilty.

However, he couldn't help it.

"You live too far away... and I don't know how long the repair will take."

Time was pressing for YuWon.

He couldn't afford to waste time unnecessarily, so he couldn't afford to meet Hephaestus, who was on the tenth floor, to repair the sword.

By not properly repairing it and wielding it carelessly, Edge of Nightfall lost its edge without YuWon realizing.

He had definitely used it to the limit.

It was strange that Hephaestus, who cared so much about his creations, didn't get angry with YuWon for that.

"I'm sorry."

"Don't apologize to me. Next time, take care of it a bit more."

After a sermon that lasted more than ten minutes, Hephaestus seemed a bit more relaxed than at the beginning. He sheathed and unsheathed the Edge of Nightfall several times and then opened his mouth.

"It'll be repaired in ten days."

Ten days.

It wasn't a short period, as expected.

"It's fine to keep it to a minimum. Restoring such a damaged sword to its original state is harder than making a new sword."

"Really?"

"Until then, take anything from there and use it. Anyway, you won't be in danger without a sword..."

As he spoke, Hephaestus frowned and looked at YuWon.

Whether he was listening or not, YuWon was already opening the box that Hephaestus had brought with him.

"Have you been fixing broken things?"

Among the items inside the box, YuWon picked up the first sword that caught his eye.

The sword was not in proper condition, with the blade wobbling and the center of gravity off.

Hephaestus had a single reason for buying something like that.

"Breathing new life into dead iron... Like you said, wouldn't it be easier to just create something new?"

"Why are you so intrigued?"

"It seems like you were very bored."

Hephaestus, who was caught, turned his head to avoid YuWon's eyes.

The reason he settled here and picked up defective scraps was because his body truly loved the Blacksmith's work.

There's a saying that if Hephaestus wished it, Olympus's wealth would double, because the items he created were worth that price.

Even if he lowered his points a bit, picking up some unnecessary things and selling them could easily get him tens of thousands of points.

"In reality, I didn't come to find you to repair the Edge of Nightfall."

"What are you saying?"

"Fuse that and use it as material."

Skak-.

Another sword was drawn from YuWon's belt. Hephaestus, as expected, showed more interest in the new item YuWon pulled out than in any words.

The sword's blade was broken and shattered, emitting screams of agony. Although others didn't know it, Hephaestus's ears heard those screams clearly.

"What is this...?"

Hephaestus's voice trembled as he looked at the Otherworld Sword.

The shape of the Otherworld Sword was clearly similar to Hephaestus's works. However, as expected, his eyes saw something that YuWon's eyes couldn't.

Indeed, as he looked at the Otherworld Sword, Hephaestus seemed to be thinking about many things.

And suddenly...

"Who made it? Huh?"

Without knowing if his future self did it, Hephaestus hurriedly asked.

If there was a Blacksmith who made this sword, he definitely wanted to meet him.

"Can you fix it for me?"

"I can fix it, but..."

"Then, can you make it again?"

"Again?"

Hephaestus's eyes gleamed.

Only then did he look at the Edge of Nightfall that YuWon handed over to him.

They told him to use it as material, and these were his words.

"...I'm not sure. To be honest, this sword was made with a skill better than mine."

"Why are you suddenly so uncertain?"

"I say this because this weapon is real. There are times when one must also be humble."

This was the first time Hephaestus was like this.

He always boasted of being the best at making something if it came to creating something. But now, in front of him, there was an even greater wall.

A weapon made by his future self. Hephaestus's eyes looking at that weapon shone brighter than at any other moment.

"Anyway, there's no reason to get angrier about this, right?"

"You always bring something fun every time you come."

"So next time, instead of throwing a hammer when I come, why not give me a warm welcome? What surprise will you bring next time?"

"It's a matter of helping each other."

"Does that mean you can actually do it?"

The Otherworld Sword and the Edge of Nightfall. Two swords created by future Hephaestus and the present one.

It was a challenging task to combine two swords broken by long battles into one. Probably, this would be Hephaestus's most difficult task in life.

But...

"I can't refuse something like this."

Faced with this challenging task, Hephaestus smiled even more.

The defective equipment he had bought with difficulty was no longer in his consideration.

"I need fire."

The frame of the Otherworld Sword was made of adamantium.

It wasn't a material Hephaestus could handle easily, and it would take quite some time to ignite a fire that could melt adamantium.

And now, in front of Hephaestus's eyes...

"Will you help me?"

Probably, among the current Rankers, the person who could use the most intense fire was right in front of him.

And YuWon's response to that was natural.

"Gladly."

-----  
YuWon and Hephaestus went up another floor and arrived on the 11th floor.

Although he wondered why he would leave a perfectly good forge, Hephaestus led YuWon to a huge forge the size of a small castle.

"Why did we come here in the first place?" YuWon asked, surprised.

"It's where I used to work," Hephaestus replied, throwing the answer.

"Do you mean it belongs to you, Ahjussi?" YuWon asked, incredulous.

"Why? Do you think I couldn't have something like this?"

If they were on the 11th floor, they would definitely be under the influence of Olympus. Moreover, even though they had now cut almost all ties, Hephaestus used to be a proud Ranker of Olympus.

Of course, it wouldn't make sense for the best Blacksmith of Olympus, Hephaestus, not to have a forge in Olympus.

Finally, Hephaestus returned to the house he had abandoned himself.

"This used to be the place where I made items used in the ancient Gigantomachy. I don't have pleasant memories, but at least the facilities are the best here."

He was a skilled craftsman who didn't rely on equipment or facilities.

However, even for someone like him, the current work turned out to be a challenge.

Naturally, he found the forge he had long abandoned.

"Why hesitate? Come in already."

Hephaestus led the way, and YuWon followed, entering the forge. The inside was spacious, warm, and dry.

"It seems to have been empty for quite some time."

A forge without a trace of people.

"The flame hasn't even gone out."

Fwoosh, fwoosh-. The bellows activated automatically. The flames in the furnace threw heat with each activation of the bellows, supplying fire to the workshop.

While YuWon explored the forge, Hephaestus took out a hammer and said, "What's the point of using a forge that's cold? It was a gift from Apollo, an ever-burning fire."

Now, as if it was no longer needed, Hephaestus stomped on the bellows. Then, surprisingly, the bellows that activated on its own stopped.

Now, all that was left was the yellow flame burning in the furnace.

"Although the heat isn't that great, it won't go out for a thousand or ten thousand years. But I don't need it anymore."

Fwoosh-. Hephaestus ripped his clothes with his hands. Among the torn clothes, burned scars on his chest and abdomen were revealed.



"Let's start right away."

The bellows were not needed.

Since there was no need to initially light a fire, it was natural.

However, YuWon was worried.

"Is it really okay?"

Normally, using the bellows to light the fire in the forge and heat the metal was the standard practice for Blacksmiths.

But Hephaestus was inside the huge furnace he had built himself.

"No need to worry so much. I have confidence in my fire resistance. No one in this Tower has higher fire resistance than me."

His gaze burned.

Hephaestus was not a fool. Surely, he would know YuWon's ranking.

And if he knew the imposing mountain named Zeus, he certainly wouldn't be unfamiliar with the skills of a Ranker of that level.

'For now, I can only trust him.'

If what was needed in this tower was the hottest fire...

['Heart of Fire' responds to 'Holy Fire']

['Holy Fire' supplies fire to 'Hephaestus's Forge']

Fhoosh~.

Yuwon lit the flames.

The enormous fire, formed by gathering the flames of Muspelheim, was supplied to Hephaestus's forge.

An intense heat rose.

"If you can't stand it, let me know."

"No problem."

Hephaestus raised his hammer. He was more serious and happier than ever.

Thus, he entered the flaming furnace.

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Chapter 465

C465

Olympus has undergone many changes.

These were not negative changes. In fact, Olympus enjoyed an unprecedented resurgence in history.

Although Poseidon, one of the Three Great Gods, disappeared, Olympus still had Hercules and Zeus.

Both single digits. Two of the most prominent Rankers.

There were even people claiming that Olympus' current power rivaled Asgard.

"If that's the case, why the hell did I reclaim the throne?"

Although he lagged behind in terms of the names of these two, he was still one of the Three Great Gods.

Or rather, Hades, who had now become one of the Two Great Gods, sat on the throne of Olympus Castle instead of Zeus, with his head resting on his hands.

He was overwhelmed by the overwhelming amount of accumulated work.

"Cheer up. There's more here."

Chin.

Another stack of documents slid toward him.

Hades pressed his tired eyes with his hands and spat resentment at Apollo, who had brought the documents.

"Again?"

"This is the last one. You've managed to complete what piled up over half a year in just a month. It's truly impressive."

"Can't you lend me a hand?"

"I don't have the authority to sign those documents, uncle."

Though said in jest, Apollo's help was quite significant.

After all, Apollo, following Zeus, was the one who best understood Olympus administration, organizing the documents neatly by hour, place, and priority.

If not for that, it would have taken more than double the time.

"What about Zeus?"

"He hasn't returned yet."

"It makes no sense for him to wander around like that."

"True. He's not someone who moves much in the field."

Poseidon was known for being the most active among the Three Greats, while Hades and Zeus rarely ventured directly into the field, except in exceptional situations.

However, recently, since purple skies began to appear here and there...

Zeus plunged into the field, casting Lightning Bolts whenever he had the chance.

"It's strange. Very strange..."

Perhaps it was because he was finally catching up with the accumulated documents?

Although he had found it strange for a long time, when he finally had free time, his suspicions deepened.

It didn't make sense for someone as powerful as a High-Ranker like Zeus to become so careless suddenly.

Why was he suddenly doing things he had never done before?

"Could he have started enjoying fights?"

Several thoughts crossed his mind, but none seemed right.

Beyond the familiarity they had shared for a long time, Hades and Zeus were blood brothers.

There was definitely something wrong with him.

The time it took from when he started organizing the documents to realizing something was amiss was not short.

That question had been on his mind all the time he had held the accumulated documents.

"I can't go on like this."

"Yeah?"

"The rest, you do it."

"Eeeh?"

Swoosh.

A shadow spread over Hades' body.

Apollo, surprised, reached out to him. But even if Apollo was a High-Ranker who could fly, he couldn't catch Hades who disappeared.

Thus, Apollo, left alone, muttered.

"... Me, this?"

After containing the collision that threatened to burn the accumulated documents, he finally had no choice but to sit in that spot.

-----

Firee, firee.

Inside Hephaestus's forge. The blazing flames stirred, enveloping Hephaestus's body.

Within those flames, Hephaestus showed not the slightest tremor.

At this moment, he was busy creating.

Standing at the hottest point, Hephaestus closed his eyes as he melded the Otherworld Sword and the Edge of Nightfall.

After sweating profusely for a while, Hephaestus shouted.

"You're not increasing the fire enough!"

Swoosh.

With Hephaestus's shout, the flames in the forge intensified.

It was YuWon, supplying more intensity to the fire.

The hands holding the hammer and tongs were so swollen they looked about to burst. The sweat dripping from his forehead evaporated before touching the ground due to the scorching heat.

Watching closely the process, YuWon couldn't help but marvel.

'There's a reason he's the best, after all.'

The flames burning in the forge were by no means weak.

No, they were not at a weak level.

Even the highest Rankers coming into contact with them would instantly turn to ashes.

Even High-Rankers with two digits in their ranking would struggle to withstand that fire.

'How much fire resistance does he have?'

Suddenly, YuWon felt that Hephaestus's confidence was not unfounded.

He had lived his whole life alongside fire.

Even in the battle with Crises, maybe he wouldn't have been penalized if not for his flames.

However...

"Still, how far can he endure?"

Woosh~

The drops of sweat flowing from Hephaestus's body turned into vapor.

It was as if he were burning his body like firewood. His hand holding the tongs trembled, and the hammering didn't stop.

On the other hand, he was melting the Edge of Nightfall.

'No matter how much I try to control the heat, there are limits. You have to be very close to the flame.'

In his heart, YuWon wanted to stop him.

Despite having high resistance, his skin was gradually turning red.

It was still weak, but it meant he was beginning to suffer burns.

A whole day had already passed. Hephaestus had been burning in these flames.

The forging of the Edge of Nightfall and the Otherworld Sword merged. Hephaestus, who had been absorbing the flames throughout his body for a while, combined the two forges.

And at that moment...

Hephaestus, who had been waiting for this moment all the time, took the stone he had left aside.

The cooling stone entered the molten metal.

The cooling stone, emitting intense cold on its own, rapidly solidified the molten metal flowing like water.

At the same time...

To avoid burns, Hephaestus raised the sleeves that had lengthened and swung the hammer.

Kang, Kang, Kang-!

Repetition of hammering and cooling.

In that simple process, one could feel Hephaestus's soul.

Bang, Bang, Baang-.

Different materials blended. The tales of different swords clashed.

The two forges repelled each other, trying to separate again.

And to stop that...

Baang-!

Hephaestus lowered the hammer.

At this moment...

He became the flame.

-----

Hephaestus's work continued day and night for over three days.

Heating in the blazing fire, hammering, and reheating over and over again.

The two forges that were about to separate calmed down. Now they had an approximate shape and were transforming into another sword.

Tremble~

Hephaestus's body trembled.

The hand holding the hammer trembled. Burns all over his body were now in an irreversible state.

YuWon, who reflexively tried to approach him, soon stopped.

Sympathy was not allowed. What Hephaestus was doing was not simply forging a weapon.

He was a Blacksmith.

As a Blacksmith, he fought with his skill. Now, in front of Hephaestus burning before his eyes, he was fighting the most difficult and exhausting battle he could wage.

Had Hephaestus ever gotten involved in his fights?

Each fought in their own territory. YuWon had no place to intervene in this fight.

'Not a fight I would participate in.'

Firee~

Within those flames, YuWon's eyes glowed red.

The roof blocking YuWon's view was reflected in his field of vision. Hephaestus's workshop was covered with thick and sturdy iron plates blocking the heat, so even with Golden Cinder Eyes, the outside was vaguely visible.

'... Were they watching us?'

If not, I don't think the sky would appear precisely at this moment.

Firee!

A gigantic flame appeared behind YuWon.

With the arrival of the Heavenly Demon Spirit, a huge flame rose above the giant's body.

["Holy Fire" merges with the "Heavenly Demon Spirit."]

YuWon looked at the giant burning in flames.

"It's only a temporary solution, but..."

Even so, it wouldn't be so bad.

Clap-.

Just in case, YuWon took cautious steps to avoid inconvenience.

Fortunately, Hephaestus seemed not to notice YuWon's movements; he didn't even turn his head. His only concern was the heat YuWon provided.

So, both headed to different battlefields.

-----

The sky above the forge was purple.

It's been quite some time since the sky started appearing.

'It advanced more than I thought.'

Is it the decision of Foolish Chaos? Or the decision of all of them?

It couldn't be known. But one thing was sure: now he wouldn't have to feel guilty with his companions anymore.

"This side will also become a battlefield."

Swish-.

Out of habit, YuWon reached for his waist. Not finding anything, his hand hesitated for a moment.

"... Right."

Fortunately, if it was a sword, he still had other options.

Swoosh-.

A shadow rose under YuWon's feet.

["King of the Dead" summons "Susanoo."]

The shadow changed shape, and Susanoo appeared. He looked slowly, opening his eyes with a fierce laugh.

-It's a fight.

"Yes, a fight."

YuWon gestured toward Susanoo.

Susanoo looked at YuWon's hand as if wondering what this was.

Then...

-I can't.

Susanoo shook his head, holding the sword's scabbard at his belt with his hand.

They didn't need to say anything. What YuWon wanted was one of the Three Sacred Treasures he had given to Susanoo: Kusanagi.

"I'll give it back later."

-Are you telling me to fight with bare hands?

"In any case, just take something from the corner there and use it. After all, a craftsman doesn't blame the tools."

In the first place, this fight already had a predetermined winner. If YuWon wished it, Susanoo had no way to resist the order.

Finally, Kusanagi was in YuWon's hands.

Swoosh-.

Too light and sharp, that was the advantage and disadvantage of Kusanagi.

But in moments like these, when it was unknown how long the fight would last, it wasn't a bad choice.

Swoosh-.

YuWon swung Kusanagi in the air.

Among the purple clouds waving in the sky.

-Ohhhhh-!

-Ahhhh-!

Through the purple clouds in the sky, an annoyed cry was heard.

"These purple swirls will never cease to be annoying."

The presences outside the Tower, revealed in the purple sky.

Countless tentacles and twisted masses gathered toward Hephaestus's forge.

Although he didn't know why they appeared, it seemed they had a purpose.

"Are they trying to prevent the completion of the sword?"

The Otherworld Sword and the Edge of Nightfall.

They seemed to want to prevent the two swords from merging into one.

Those senseless beings wouldn't move by themselves.

It wasn't necessary to think much to know who was above.

Woosh-.

The Arcane Power imbued in Kusanagi glowed red.

Keeping only the minimum amount of Arcane Power on the blade, YuWon muttered while standing on the roof of Hephaestus's forge.

"No way."

He didn't know if he would tire first or if the sword would be finished first.

With the determination to never release the legs supporting him on the roof, YuWon brandished Kusanagi toward the purple sky.

---

Chapter 466

C466

Sitting on the soft clouds, Foolish Chaos looked down under the purple-tinted clouds.

Slash!

A red line was drawn, and a massive tentacle was cut off.

It wasn't the use of a special ability or the deployment of extraordinary power.

It was simply a cut, utilizing the sharpness of Kusanagi.

"Hmm..."

Foolish Chaos watched the scene with one hand holding his chin.

It was as if he were enjoying an entertaining show.

The fight continued.

Purple waves relentlessly covering the sky.

YuWon's sword moved like a net, drawing patterns in the air.

Then...

Swish~

Slash!

The oncoming waves shattered into a thousand pieces. Since the beginning of the fight, YuWon focused on controlling his energy while wielding his sword.

Foolish Chaos: "I wondered where you went."

Why didn't he appear until now?



And why did he decide to do so right now?

The questions tangled. Although the being he sought finally appeared, he wasn't very pleased.

"Is this also your doing?"

An ominous feeling emanated from the workshop. It felt uneasy, as if a beast were showing its fangs from behind.

That shouldn't be completed. He moved with the certainty that it shouldn't be allowed to happen, but then Kim YuWon appeared.

"Are you so concerned about that?"

The mist enveloping Foolish Chaos spoke. It was only a small part, but it had come with Foolish Chaos.

"I'm not the only one, right?"

-Then, should we hurry? Before that thing lets out its first scream.

The being that always appeared whenever the purple sky manifested.

It probably wouldn't be different this time.

I know.

-Then...

"There's no other way to hurry it. It's already out of my control to allow those beings to cross the border."

Out of his control?

The mist, which didn't immediately understand the meaning of those words, floated around Foolish Chaos for a moment.

So for a while.

-Maybe...

With a thought that he didn't want to believe, the mist began to tremble unstably.

Maybe? There were no words to continue. It was because of the name that he didn't dare to speak aloud.

But, as if mocking that mist.

Yog-Sothoh has moved.

Foolish Chaos looked down, lifting his gaze.

"Anyway, soon the wall will collapse."

-----

Kwaout!

Arcane Power surged into Kusanagi. The cut tentacles fell to the ground, releasing a viscous substance.

"Huff..."

The moment he released the breath he had been holding, a drop of sweat fell from his forehead.

Just one drop.

But that single drop was the problem.

'There are too many.'

They kept accumulating. At some point, there were more than he cut.

He couldn't help it.

He couldn't afford to exhaust his stamina to conserve Arcane Power.

['Uranus Heart' creates 'Lightning Bolt.']

Craaack!

A golden spear formed in YuWon's hand.

Holding it tightly, he threw it into the sky.

Then...

Flash!

Bum!

The golden wave engulfed the purple sky and clouds.

The tentacles turned into black ashes, dispersing.

[You have defeated ?.]

[You have defeated ?.]

[You have defeated... ]

[... ]

[Arcane Power has slightly increased.]

According to the System, Arcane Power that hadn't increased much during all this time had barely gone up.

Although Lightning Bolts consumed a lot of Arcane Power, this wide-ranging attack showed maximum efficiency.

YuWon raised his head to look at the sky again.

The sky, which briefly turned golden when the Lightning Bolt exploded, returned to a darker purple than before.

It was a quicker response than he had expected.

"... Has Sothoth already moved?"

It was a murmur from YuWon, almost simultaneous with Foolish Chaos.

Ba-dump!

The core of his heart was heating up.

Along with that burning sensation, a message arrived.

['Holy Fire' trembles.]

['Holy Fire' has decreased in proficiency.]

['Holy Fire' has decreased in proficiency.]

['Holy Fire'...]

A message that repeated incessantly.

The proficiency of the Holy Fire skill was decreasing. It was something he had never experienced or heard of in his entire life.

'What's happening?'

In that moment of confusion in not understanding the situation, the air temperature surrounding YuWon and the workshop suddenly changed.

Firee-!

The air enveloping YuWon and the others in the workshop changed drastically, feeling sultry and even hot. And purple-flamed fires filled the area around the workshop.

It wasn't YuWon's flames. The world's landscape turned into a hellfire, as if the 11th floor had changed to Muspelheim.

A world instantly turned into a sea of flames.

Although the Olympus players on the 11th floor rushed to evacuate the residents, considerable damage was still expected.

'Flames...?'

The owner of flames similar to Holy Fire.

There was a presence that came to his mind.

'I think I know who it is.'

Firee, firee-!

The purple flames enveloping the world shot up, creating countless columns of flames that seemed threatening.

As if they were intimidating.

No...

['The Dancer Who Dances With Fire' proclaims its name.]

As if it were shouting.

"It was you."

YuWon's eyes glowed.

When he encountered those flames, he had an idea of who might be calling that 'name.'

Firee-!

["The Dancer Who Dances With Fire" has discovered its own name.]

[Holy F--- rejects you.]

[The mastery of ----- resets.]

The name Holy Fire appeared blank. While listening to the confusing message, YuWon walked towards the columns of flames that appeared in front of him.

And at that moment...

["Flames of Death and Corruption" chooses a new owner.]

The true name of Holy Fire was revealed through the message.

-----

Kaang-!

Unaware of the commotion outside, Hephaestus struck his hammer.

The Edge of Nightfall and the Otherworld Sword almost perfectly blended. The tempering process also came to an end, and now only the final work remained.

Firee-!

The vibration of the flames was felt.

For a while now, Hephaestus had been uncomfortable, wondering why he suddenly felt so at ease.

"I need stronger fire."

For the first time, a different thought emerged than hammering. Hephaestus turned his head.

"You don't ignite the fire properly..."

Firee-!

The flames gradually faded.

The shape of the huge flames gradually disappeared, leaving only ashes. He didn't know since when, but YuWon was no longer there.

"Where did he go?"

Surely, he should have been here without moving, ordering him to ignite the fire properly.

Without the flames that YuWon kindled, the work could no longer proceed properly. Although he could have used the flames Apollo gave him and worked diligently on the hammering, it wouldn't be enough to finish properly.

"This guy couldn't handle his new position..."

Tremble-!

There was a shake in the workshop as if something had exploded.

The senses, numbed by hammering, returned to him. The commotion outside was loud, and although he didn't bother to go out, he could have a general idea of the situation.

"...A fight?"

Every time a purple sky appeared, something strange happened, and here too, it seemed chaotic.

Swik-!

Hephaestus looked at the sword he held with the tongs.

Although it was an unfinished work, maybe he should throw it.

-----

Firee-!

Within the purple flames.

The burning heat enveloped his face. The columns of flames threatened YuWon from various places.

'Maybe this is how Ahjussi felt?'

Hot and fiery.

How could Hephaestus have lived his whole life in a place like this? It was truly amazing.

Boom!

When he entered the flames, a huge pillar rose.

Unlike the other pillars, this one blocked YuWon's way.

-That name is not yours.

The voice of the flames resonated.

Seeking the flame that YuWon had, it fiercely stirred.

And then, right after...

Aaaaah!

The flames burning around YuWon instantly engulfed him.

Frrr, frr-

YuWon, shrouded in purple flames, covered his face with one hand. Although the flames were quite intense, YuWon had other flames even without Holy Fire.

["Heart of Fire" consumes the "Flames of the Giant and Demon."]

["The Flames of the Giant and Demon" resist against "The Dancer Who Dances With Fire."]

Frrk, frrr-

Red flames burned on YuWon's body.

Those flames pushed the purple flames outward. Amidst the fiercely clashing flames, a face that looked human appeared.

-That name is mine. Give me my name.

The name seemed to refer to Holy Fire.

Holy Fire. Gained in the trial on the 10th floor, a flame from outside the Tower.

YuWon remembered how astonished he was the first time he saw it. He had always thought that the day would come when he would meet the owner of those flames.

And now...

Holy Fire. An entity that had lost the name "Flames of Death and Corruption" was furious in front of him.

Of course...

"It seems to be the same. The lame spirit that lost a leg."

Whatever it was, YuWon didn't care much about that story.

In fact.

"Do you really like that name so much?"

YuWon laughed at the face that appeared in the flames.

"If you can take it, try it, Tulzscha."

Frrrr~

Perhaps because he had heard the provocation.

The flames surrounding YuWon trembled for a moment. It was a reaction as if he were asking how he knew his name.

Tulzscha.

It was the true name of the Outer with the names "The Dancer Who Dances With Fire" and "Flames of Death and Corruption."

It wasn't the first time YuWon had seen Tulzscha. He had seen him at least twice.

Once was in a very distant future. It was when the war with the Outers had just begun.

'Many people died to stop that flame.'

Widespread flames. At that time, he remembered that many died because there weren't enough Rankers to stop it.

After appearing once, Tulzscha disappeared somewhere and barely remained in memory. Furthermore, Tulzscha's flames and Holy Fire had similar colors but had completely different properties.

-You can't use that name correctly. It's too much for you.

"Of course. Because only now have I realized that was the name."

From a skill called "Holy Fire" to a "flame" called "The Flames of Death and Corruption."

The moment he recognized the name, the name also began to recognize YuWon differently.

"But well. It seems you're gravely mistaken about one thing."

Frrk~

The color of the flames emanating from YuWon's body changed.

["The Flames of Death and Corruption" recognizes a new owner.]

A brilliantly bright purple flame. The color burned much darker and more beautiful than YuWon was used to, and slowly began to engulf Tulzscha's flame.

"That name is not yours."

As if the owner was sure of himself.

The owner of the name smiled at The Dancer Who Dances With Fire before his eyes.

"Isn't it?"

YuWon had seen him at least twice.

Once in a very distant future...

"The other time was a very long time ago.

Chapter 467

C467

Upon exiting the workshop, what Hephaestus saw was a world entirely transformed into a sea of flames.

Even Hephaestus, who until a moment ago was inside the forge, felt a heat intense enough to make even him, with his tolerance, furrow his brow.

Holding a sword in hand, Hephaestus stepped outside and frowned.

"The heat outside the forge is not exactly pleasant."

How many of the High-Rankers could describe the heat of the flames, which was even difficult for most to endure?

Despite being in a state of burns all over his body, Hephaestus showed no concern.

Kwak-!

[Abnormal condition: Burns increase to level 4]

With level 3 burns, the skin was turning into cooked meat. Although the pain from the burns was more intense than the pain of tearing and cutting flesh, Hephaestus showed no concern.

Level 4.

Only level 4.

He was confident he could withstand the flames.

Of course.

"...This is a bit troublesome."

If only the flames were what stopped him.

Tilting his head, Hephaestus saw that around the forge, a gigantic serpent of purple color was writhing.

Perhaps Yamatano Orochi, whom Susanoo had cut, would be of that size? No, maybe even larger.

The snake covered in purple scales wrapped around Hephaestus's forge with its tail.

Crack~

The forge, which he was sure could withstand Surt's flames, collapsed and broke.

"Wow."

With astonishment mixed with admiration, Hephaestus jumped forcefully upwards, away from the forge...

Wooosh-, Baang-!

Hephaestus's small forge collapsed.

Hephaestus, who had jumped so far, looked at the scene. If his heart didn't ache after the forge that accompanied him throughout his history collapsed, he would be lying.

But...

Looking at the sword in his hand, Hephaestus could console himself a little.

'Anyway, I wasn't planning to use it anymore.'

He had decided not to look at the gift from Olympus a long time ago.

Now, the important thing was to deliver this weapon.

'Where is he...?'

That's how Hephaestus turned his head.

Woah-!

A giant snake tail flew towards him.

'It had two tails-.'

Baang-!

The snake's tail struck Hephaestus. In that life-or-death moment, instead of dodging or blocking the tail, Hephaestus tightened the sword in his hand even more.

Somehow, he had to make sure not to let it go.

Then...

[?(Incomplete)' resists the 'Greedy Snake Crawling On The Ground.']

[The use of '?' (Incomplete)' is not allowed.]

[["?(Incomplete)" Fails resistance].

With various messages, an agony that felt like all the bones in his body were breaking took hold of him.

In the direction he was hit by the tail, Hephaestus flew away and fell to the ground. Amidst several collapsing buildings and the earth turning over.



"Cough!"

Hephaestus coughed violently, quickly squeezing his chest with his hand. He didn't know how many bones were broken.

Fortunately, he didn't lose consciousness. Hephaestus looked up thinking about how far he had flown and saw the snake that attacked him.

Every time the snake moved, the city's topography changed. Somehow, in that short period, it seemed like its size had become even larger.

'It's a miracle to be alive.'

Despite being hit by the tail of such a sizeable snake, Hephaestus was still alive.

Regardless of his skill as a blacksmith, Hephaestus's strength was not that great. How could it be otherwise when Olympus sent a normal Ranker to capture Hephaestus?

In comparison, the snake seemed difficult to catch even for several High-Rankers.

'Is it thanks to this?'

The item he created.

Although it was still incomplete, it had an effect. Even without him wanting it, the item protected him.

But that too was just a one-time favor.

It couldn't happen a second time.

Slide~

Although he hoped it wasn't true, it was the truth.

The snake approached Hephaestus more and enlarged its body gradually.

'A greedy snake, just as its name suggests.'

"Ugh-."

He rose from the ground while stomping the ground with the fist that held the sword.

Instead of thinking about fleeing, the first concern that arose was how to traverse that path and deliver the sword.

However, it seemed impossible no matter how much he looked at it.

Chik-.

Thud-.

Aaaaaah!

Giant waves of purple color and tentacles jumped up from the ground. Under the purple sky, other Outers kept coming, and the sea of fire on the ground expanded more and more.

It was like standing in the middle of the end of the world.

Could he really reach YuWon through that?

It wasn't something that could be accomplished through effort.

'Will I die here?'

Although he said that, there was no fear.

He had lived long enough not to fear death.

There was no regret either.

He had achieved the masterpiece of his life.

There was only one regret.

'An instrument is complete only when it finds its owner.'

The regret of not being able to see his creation find its owner and the regret of not having completed it entirely.

Kuuuu-.

The snake's head covered the sky.

Ssshh-.

The long tongue made a cunning sound as it writhed.

Hephaestus's own image was reflected like a mirror in the purple eyes that shone softly like jewels.

No...

'It seems it's not looking at me.'

Only now did he understand.

What the purpose of these beings was.

Gguk-.

Hephaestus firmly held his incomplete child in one hand. And in the other hand, he held his weapon, his other heart.

'I don't want to destroy the child I created, but...'

A hammer left for the end.

It seemed he would have to use it to break it instead.

'Sorry.'

He dropped the masterpiece he had created with so much effort on the ground. Although he didn't have an anvil, it didn't matter.

["...(Incomplete)"]

[Do you want to destroy '?(Incomplete)'?]

He had the ability to destroy any incomplete weapon at any time.

Swish-.

Hephaestus's hammer rose.

Shiiiiing-

The snake's tail covered Hephaestus's sky. It moved to snatch Hephaestus's sword.

And just as Hephaestus was about to strike down to not surrender it, a Golden Lightning Bolt fell from the snake's sky.

Ssshh-!

Bang, bum-!

The snake, making cunning sounds, screamed in pain. It writhed and suffered in agony as if its entire body was engulfed in flames.

Hephaestus, who had barely stopped the hammer, looked up.

A wave of Golden Arcane Power devoured the purple sky.

He knew that only one person in this Tower possessed such devastating power.

"Father...?"

"Did you call me?"

He turned his head towards where the voice was heard.

Zeus, with golden armor that closely resembled his hair, stood there. Hephaestus's body stiffened at the thought of how long it had been since they saw each other.

'You have changed a lot.'

On his face, which had never had a beard before, dark hair was growing. Additionally, his majesty had become even greater, and his eyes still saw him as a blacksmith, not as a son.

He remembered something that happened a long time ago.

When he refused to forge more weapons, Zeus kicked him and left him lame in one leg.

Tremble, tremble!

It was a body that didn't tremble even in the face of death.

However, for some reason, his body began to tremble from the moment he faced Zeus.

Zeus scared him more than death.

Even at this moment, Lightning Bolts were falling from the sky.

Still formidable.

No, he was an even more monstrous figure than before.

"Are you going to keep trembling like that?"

"Ah, no, it's not that."

"The idea of fighting still hasn't left you, and you want to move forward, right?"

Zeus, who had been looking at Hephaestus for a while, walked past him.

"I saved you, so go and deliver that. It seems important."

His tone remained indifferent.

Perhaps because of that.

Although nothing had changed in his tone, the tremor stopped at his words. When they met again, Hephaestus thought that at least one leg or arm of his would break.

Step...

Zeus walked. The answer seemed to be, "I will fight, so you deliver the sword or whatever."

Hephaestus looked at him like that.

Perhaps because of the beard on his face. Or maybe there was another reason.

Despite having become much stronger than in his memories, his back seemed smaller for some reason.

-----

In the midst of the burning flames.

The fiery column trembled and showed a confused reaction.

As if it couldn't understand.

Tulzscha's flame reacted.

-"What do you mean by that?"

Fwoosh!

A rough resistance.

-"I am no one's dancer. How dare you?"

"Did you forget that you danced for me?"

-"Nonsense..."

And at that moment...

The name and face of someone came to Tulzscha's mind.

Shub-Niggurath.

The ruler of the Black Woods, noble and grand.

-"It can't be."

Many beings cried and raged at the death of Shub-Niggurath.

Tulzscha wasn't much different. But if Shub-Niggurath's death was caused by the one he considered, the story would be completely different.

"Do you remember?"

It was a wrong question.

Tulzscha had never forgotten.

It wasn't such a bright flame from the beginning.

"You were my toy. You danced for me and gave me pleasure. You were my dancer."

YuWon reached out towards the fiery column.

Clack...

Something was grabbed by his hand. Something small and hot without aesthetic limits.

"It was the name I gave you to soothe my boredom. Your fire was definitely fun to watch."

Tulzscha was convinced.

What was in front of him was not a simple human.

This was a story known only to two people, inside and outside the Tower.

"You were my dancer and my toy."

Whaaaa!

The purple flames covering the world gathered in YuWon's hand.

"However, you boldly sought my name."

["You have obtained the name 'The Dancer Who Dances With Fire'"]

The power of the name changed hands.

YuWon looked at Tulzscha, pulled out of the fiery column like this, and smiled.

"Your true name is Tulzscha. One day, you appeared before me as a mere small flame."

Frr...

A small flame burned in the palm of his hand like a firefly.

This was the appearance of Tulzscha, whose name was taken away.

With that, when YuWon squeezed his hand tightly.

Crunch...

The small flame disappeared without being able to resist.

"It annoys me that the name I come across is the name of something as vulgar as you..."

Flash...

Pfff...

The flames covering the sky and earth disappeared, revealing the outer landscape.

A world whipped by Lightning Bolts. Thousands of Outers stretched beneath the purple sky.

Tulzscha was just the beginning.

And looking at that battlefield, YuWon smiled happily.

"Fortunately, Names are everywhere."

Chapter 468

C468

It felt as if he had closed his eyes for a brief moment and then opened them again.

When he regained consciousness, he realized that his world had changed.

Frrr...

The flames around him extinguished.

Tulzscha's flame had faded. It meant that the owner of the name had changed.

'Has it transferred to me?'

Frrrr...

Just before, the Holy Fire that fiercely rejected him now followed him as before.

No...

Rather, it was much more obedient than before. What used to exist as a skill now felt like arms and legs, like part of his own body.

He didn't remember anything, but he understood what was happening.

'Again.'

This was not something new.

It was the same with Shub-Niggurath.

Later, he had investigated this over the past year.

Thanks to that, he had gained some clues about that moment.

Free...

But, as expected, this time too, the headache returned without fail.

It was a reaction that occurred every time he tried to remember, but now it didn't hurt as much.

"Fortunately, Names are everywhere."

He said it with his own mouth, with the same voice.

But it wasn't him who said it.

'...Is this a gain or a loss?'

Considering the gains and losses revealed to him, there were more gains than losses. But, as with stocks outside the Tower, there was always danger in inexplicable events.

The same happened now with him and Danpung.

Fr...

"You were my toy and my dancer."

"However, somehow, you boldly coveted my name."

His forehead furrowed with the headache. Fortunately, every time this happened, memories returned little by little.

That's how he began to understand Son OhGong's heart.

In some way, he could get an idea of how the one wearing the Golden Headband felt in their daily life.

'If this continues, someday I might never be able to go back.'

It was a concern he had many times while delving into Danpung's memories after the fight against Shub-Niggurath.

Although now it seemed like it only blinked for a moment, who knows?

The concern didn't last long.

YuWon extended his hand and lifted the Holy Fire on his hand.

Frrr...

'Since when have I been thinking about this?'

From the beginning, he was already prepared for this level of determination.

Since the fight against Shub-Niggurath when he reached out to Danpung born from the Egg.

'It's okay.'

That's how YuWon responded to the little Danpung who said it was dangerous.

It wasn't a lie to say that it was just to borrow a little of his strength and reassure that small being.

But those words were sincere at that moment.

The same happened now.

And the word "okay" didn't mean safety.

Even if it was dangerous, it meant that it was okay.

Frrr...

'I don't remember properly, and I still don't know how to use this power correctly.'

This shouldn't be taken into account in the calculation.

Variables are things that happen in unpredictable circumstances. Including this in the calculation would only lead to misfortune.

However...

Frrr...

['The Dancer Who Dances With Fire' rules over 'The Flames of Death and Corruption'.]

There was no reason not to use the name he already had.

Whoosh...

Flash!

When the flames dissipated, the sound of Lightning Bolt was heard.

The sky glowed golden several times. The guy who still didn't show his face seemed to be extremely noisy.

"...I said Names are everywhere."

Although it wasn't him who said that, he repeated the words with the same mouth.

This couldn't be overlooked.

Flash...

Again, Lightning Bolt descended.

If things continue like this, all those Names would be lost.

Although most were nothing more than remnants of Names divided into pieces.

'If I stay still, I might lose them all.'

So, YuWon advanced to join the battlefield.

...Won-!

From somewhere, a blurry voice calling him resonated.

A thick and rough voice, a familiar voice.

He tilted his ear and could clearly hear the mumble of: "Where the hell have you been, brat?".

"Ahjussi?"

Although he was clearly busy forging a sword inside, he didn't understand why he had come here, putting himself in danger like this.

"Hey! Kim YuWon, hey!"

Hephaestus opened his throat wide and shouted.

Several tentacles approached pointing towards the sword he held, but it was in vain. Thanks to the Lightning Bolts falling from the sky, targeting like snipers the Outers aiming at Hephaestus, he was able to save himself.

Bang, clang!

Thus, in the middle of the battlefield where Lightning Bolts fell...

"What are you doing here now?"

Yuwon appeared in front of Hephaestus.

Hephaestus reflected a relieved expression as if thanking his luck.

Although, anyway, it seemed like he had felt something in his chest, he exhaled a held breath and asked.

"Where did you go?"

"Nowhere."

"You haven't been responding even after calling for several tens of minutes."



"Several minutes?"

Had it been that long?

'It seems like I've been unconscious for quite a while.'

He didn't remember the flow of time, perhaps because he had no memories of when he lost consciousness. Naturally, YuWon didn't think that Hephaestus had been looking for him for so long.

"Then, how did you get here, Ahjussi...?"

Bang!

Another thunderous Lightning Bolt echoed.

When Zeus manifested, YuWon could realize why Hephaestus had managed to come out unharmed.

'It seems it was thanks to that guy.'

Still, bloodlines are bloodlines.

He couldn't let him die right in front of him.

"I know what you're thinking, but it's nonsense. What my father is trying to save is not me but you."

"What are you saying?"

"I have already played my role in Olympus. To my father, I am now just an abandoned son of the past. In his eyes, someone like me is nothing more than one among many Rankers."

"Then why...?"

"What my father is protecting is this."

Hephaestus extended the sword he held.

Still unfinished, a rough sword without adornments.

It turned out that this was the reason Zeus was protecting him.

"Why this?"

"It seems that my father considers it useful. Probably because those are targeting it."

With the word "those," YuWon's gaze turned to the enormous pupils descending from the sky.

From the beginning with Tulzscha, now even that guy was appearing.

The situation was much more serious than he thought.

"A blacksmith is useful until the war begins, and a warrior is useful when the war has already begun. Now is the time when you are more needed than me."

Clack!

Yuwon accepted the sword Hephaestus handed him.

The feeling in his hand was familiar. The size, shape, weight, and balance hadn't changed at all since the last time.

He had surely mixed two items to make this.

'How is this possible?'

When he gripped the new sword, the feeling was different. Although Kusanagi was also a good enough item, Hephaestus's sword was more familiar to him.

"It's okay."

"You'll probably like it more when you use it."

A reaction full of confidence.

His expression seemed even more self-sufficient than when he created the Edge of Nightfall.

Hephaestus with that expression never disappointed him.

"I'll use it gratefully. And..."

Swoosh-.

Susanoo rose from YuWon's shadow.

Chunk-.

Suddenly handing Kusanagi to Susanoo, YuWon spoke.

"Accompany him until it's safe."

-And now, instead of ordering me to kill people, you're telling me to protect them?

Susanoo naturally expressed his complaint. He had never protected anyone; he had only killed people.

"For a moment, think of Ahjussi as Tsukuyomi."

-Tsukuyomi...?

Just for a little while.

In Susanoo's mind, looking at Hephaestus's rugged face, Tsukuyomi's face appeared.

And then, both overlapped right after.

In front of Hephaestus's face, with his long silver hair fluttering, Susanoo made an expression as if he was about to vomit.

-Are you talking about this ugly guy?

"Speaking like that in front of him doesn't seem like a good idea."

Hephaestus wasn't handsome, no matter how well portrayed. No, he looked more like an ugly man, which was rare among Zeus's lineages.

It makes you wonder if he really shares the same blood as Apollo, who is famous for being extremely beautiful.

And for Hephaestus, Susanoo's words were no different from touching a sore spot.

-Shut up. Or I'll cut you into pieces right now.

Where did so much anger come from?

Susanoo, with his blood about to boil, stared at Hephaestus. Apparently, YuWon's words about "Tsukuyomi" were the catalyst.

It had to be done somehow.

Ignoring Susanoo's reaction, YuWon reassured Hephaestus.

"Even if he speaks like that, he will fulfill my order."

"If you say so."

Not a very pleasant response.

Well...

Even if he had skills, there probably wouldn't be many people who would want someone radiating murderous intentions towards themselves as a bodyguard.

Hephaestus was no exception to that.

However, this was inevitable because YuWon had to move urgently.

"I'm sorry, but please understand. Then I'll go."

"I know it's urgent, but let me ask you one more thing."

When YuWon was about to move, he turned to Hephaestus again.

Seeing him stop despite knowing it was urgent, it probably wasn't something trivial.

When YuWon turned his head, Hephaestus hesitated for a moment before asking.

"Did I, by any chance, make that sword you brought...?"

A question that seemed absurd no matter how you looked at it.

Perhaps that's why Hephaestus's voice trembled a bit. However, somewhere, in those eyes that asked like that, there was certainty.

And YuWon hesitated for a moment.

How should he answer?

It could be a quite long story. It wasn't a question that could be answered simply with yes or no.

Craaack, bang-.

It was time to make a decision.

The color of the sky, which flashed in golden, began to gradually turn red, and the pupils floating above him began to open slowly.

It seemed like it was going to start.

"I guess I'll have to give you the answer later."

"Later? Hey-"

Hephaestus's next words didn't reach his ears. Because YuWon was flying too far to hear them.

Pat-, pat-.

Jumping over the twisted tentacles writhing in the sky, YuWon looked up at the huge eyes that were emerging.

In the center of an eye the size of a decent castle, there was a red pupil embedded. The eye that was slowly opening looked at the world from above.

Was it an illusion?

Yuwon felt as if that eye was looking at him.

And at that moment...

['The 'King of the Dead' warns the appearance of a new king']

The title inside YuWon trembled, and in front of the "eye" that appeared, an alarm rang out.

But unlike that warning...

"It seems like a pretty useful Name."

Yuwon, as if things were going well, tightly gripped the newly taken sword in his hand.

A Name crossed his mind.

To win this fight, he first had to blind that eye.

Chapter 469

C469

Zeus lifted his head and looked up.

Eyes shining in the sky.

He had seen many Outers, but this one had a slightly different feel.

"Should I give it a try?"

Zeus reached out.

Crack! A giant Lightning Bolt formed in his hand.

The King of Olympus.

The result of his Divinity encapsulated in a spear.

In the next moment...

Flash! When Zeus threw the spear, the world turned golden again.

The spear flew towards the half-open eyes.

Unfortunately, the light emitted from the spear's tip disappeared quickly.

"You don't blink, do you?"

The expected result.

From the moment the eyes appeared, he didn't think it would be so easy to handle.

It felt that way.

It seemed like it would be the biggest obstacle in this fight.

"You should have brought Hades with you."

In response to the voice that echoed from behind, Zeus replied without turning his head.

"Do you know anything about that guy?"

"Half."

"If you know, you know, right?"

As if not liking the answer, Zeus finally looked at YuWon.

There were already many Outer bodies on the ground. Amidst them, YuWon walked, stepping on the bloodstains stuck to the ground.

"That's not important now, is it?"

As soon as those words were spoken...

['The Star That Brings Destruction' sings a song.]

Uuung-.

The star's song echoed, inaudible to human ears.

Crunch-.

Crunch, swish-.

The bodies of the Outers lying dead on the ground began to move. At first, they were small twitching movements, but soon, they regained life as if resurrected from death.

Most of those Outer corpses were the work of Zeus.

Zeus's eyebrows moved as he watched the Outers resurrected by the star's song.

"Are they alive?"

"The song kills the living and resurrects the dead. Heaven and earth turn upside down, the end begins, and misfortune and sadness cover the world."

"That's a pretty detailed explanation. You said you only knew half."

"You see. I think I know enough."

What kind of nonsense is this?

Facing Zeus's expression that didn't seem to understand, YuWon looked up and said:

"It's kind of a firecracker."

"Firecracker?"

"Yes. A firecracker that announces the beginning of the battle."

"Explain a little more."

"It means the game is bigger than we thought. Because of them."

YuWon's gaze turned to the resurrecting Outers.

It wouldn't end with their resurrection. Ultimately, this fight would end when those eyes were eliminated.

But why?

Crack-!

"Is that so?"

Zeus, in turn, nodded at those words.

"That's convenient."

"...?"

It's nice that the fight is bigger.

That was something Son OhGong or Asura would say.

'It's not that his personality has changed.'

Maybe it was thanks to having traversed many battlefields with guys like Sun Wukong and Asura.

He could understand the expressions of those who went crazy for the fight. In their faces, there was often excitement and anticipation for the upcoming battle.

But not in Zeus's eyes.

If anything, it seemed more like longing or relief.

"What do you plan to do?"

Zeus asked, creating Lightning Bolt again in his hand. It was too obvious a question.

Firee~

As if in response to Zeus's Lightning Bolt. The purple flames that rose around Yuwon twisted and spread around.

['The Dancer Who Dances With Fire' rules over 'The Flames of Death and Corruption'.]

Clack~

The world turned into a sea of flames again after a gesture.

Those engulfed by the flames twisted their bodies, screaming in agony as they were consumed by the fire.

The power to instantly turn an area the size of a city into a sea of flames, a power that could easily encompass an entire city, was released all at once.

Looking at those flames, Zeus narrowed his eyes.

'This is the same as before...'

Certainly, these were the flames that had set the city on fire before, even if it was only moments ago.

The power of the Outers coming from the Tower.

However, now that power manifested from YuWon's hands.

"Let me respond with this."

"Still, it seems like it will be a nuisance."

"Nuisance?"

['The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young' calls the sheep]

Amidst the burning flames.

"Do you think I'll be a nuisance even now?"

Beeeh...

Beeeh...

A familiar bleating sound was heard. In an instant, Zeus felt all the hair on his body stand on end upon hearing that cry.

That bleat...

Although a year had passed, he remembered it clearly. In Zeus's mind, countless sheep and the face of Shub-Niggurath appeared.

Bang, boom!

Lightning striking from the sky.

He knew.

The sheep that appeared now were not the descendants of Shub-Niggurath.

But...

Beeeh...

Seeing the sheep appearing around YuWon and bleating, he couldn't help but recall something unpleasant.

'I wondered what you've been doing for this past year.'

Flash...

Beeeh...

Covered in purple flames, YuWon led hundreds of sheep.

Seeing his figure, Zeus couldn't help but let out a wry laugh.

'It seems like you didn't waste time.'

Fortunately.

That's what he thought.

Turning his body so it wouldn't be seen in YuWon's eyes, Zeus smiled faintly, and the Lightning Bolt he held in his hand rose to the sky.

Bang!

With that Lightning Bolt that illuminated the entire sky, the start of the battlefield was announced.

-----

Bang, boom!

In the distance.

In a place so far that it can't even be seen with the eyes, flashes of fire and Lightning Bolts could be seen.

The Rankers gathered in the 11th-floor administration office looked at the battle with confusion.

"Uh, what should we do?"

"...Well, what can you do? Stay still."

"Still, this is within our jurisdiction, isn't it?"

"Whether it's our jurisdiction or not, how can we intervene in that single-digit Ranker battle?"

"Is that so?"

It was a confrontation between High-Rankers, and moreover, single-digit High-Rankers.

There was nothing the Rankers residing on those lower floors could do to meddle in that fight.

The only thing they could do at this moment was to rescue the residents and Players and request support from other High-Rank Players.

"And the support? Where is it?"

"As much as you request support, who's going to arrive so quickly-?"

"It seems they're here."

A deep voice was heard from behind.

Turning around to see what it was, the Olympus Ranker who had spoken was surprised.

"H-Hades-nim?"

"Hades-nim?"

The Olympus Ranker who first noticed Hades's presence attracted the gazes of the other Rankers busy in the administration office.

"Greetings to the Throne of Death!"

Thud, thud-.

The Rankers who came to a halt knelt before him. No matter how busy he is, Hades is a High-Ranker playing a role in Olympus.



It was an inevitable task to show respect towards him.

"The formalities are over. Now is not the time for that."

"Yes."

"Evacuation of the residents?"

"We'll handle it as soon as possible."

"Still haven't handled it?"

Hades's eyebrows twisted.

It was a subtle change in expression, but the Ranker in front of him realized that his life was at stake.

The brief silence from Hades felt eternal. Hades opened his mouth towards the Ranker who nervously bowed his head.

"Expand the evacuation area. We don't know how far the battlefield will extend."

His emotionless voice resonated with authority. The Ranker, aware that making a mistake could cost him his life, responded with tension in his body.

"Yes! Understood!"

"Hurry."

"I'll keep that in mind. But, how... is the Throne of Death here?"

It was a cautious question.

When the purple sky appeared on the 11th Floor and a great battle ensued, the Administration had already contacted the Olympus Rankers.

Of course, the news should have reached Hades, who temporarily took on the role of the leader of the Olympus guild.

However, at this moment, not even a few hours had passed since then, and that he was here was clearly something unusual.

Of course, the same could be said for Zeus.

"I came following a younger brother who lost his way suddenly."

The reason for Hades's presence.

He said it while observing the glow of the Lightning Bolts unleashed by Zeus.

"The situation is serious."

"Yes. You guys aren't sitting idly either."

Puff-.

Black smoke dispersed in the place. Until a moment ago, Hades, who had been in front of him, disappeared.

...Did he come to warn me?

The 11th Floor was Olympus's territory.

If damage to civilian residents increased due to the battle here, it would be a stain on Olympus's face.

That was Hades's direct order.

Whether he dies here or there.

Now he had no choice but to act.

"Everyone, go out to the battlefield. Don't let a single resident die."

-----

Crunch-!

The sheep's teeth tore through the tentacle. It chewed on the torn tentacle, and the sheep emitted a small bleat.

Beeh-.

The corpses of the Outers went one by one into the mouths of the sheep.

And the Name fragments embedded in those Outers, one by one, joined YuWon through the sheep.

[You have obtained a fragment of the name of '?'.]

[You have obtained a fragment of the name of '?'.]

[You have obtained... '?'.]

[Your Arcane Power slightly increases.]

Continuous messages without rest.

Again, it was the name of Shub-Niggurath. Even if the same name was split into hundreds, thousands of fragments, the size of a single name was different.

The sea could be divided, but it would still be the sea. The dignity of a nameless sheep easily surpassed that of many names.

Beeh-.

Mounted on a large sheep, YuWon looked around the battlefield with crossed arms.

Kyaah-!

A creature resembling a dinosaur, covered in scales, approached behind the sheep ridden by YuWon.

"Oh-."

This time, it was a rather large one.

While YuWon admired the type, a golden flash of Lightning Bolt pushed the dinosaur.

In an instant, the dinosaur turned black as coal.

Although it still writhed for a moment, it soon collapsed to the side.

YuWon: "Why are you interrupting me?"

YuWon turned his head to look at Zeus. It would be difficult to properly recover its Name after being reduced to a piece of coal like that.

The dissatisfaction was mutual.

Unlike Zeus, who moved back and forth, YuWon sat on the back of the sheep and just waved his hand.

Kyaah-!

"What are you doing here?"

Why don't you fight for real? That was Zeus's question.

"I'm waiting."

"Waiting?"

"Yes."

"For whom?"

"For the ace up my sleeve to face that guy above."

Again, an incomprehensible answer.

Two people fighting together, yet each fighting on their own.

And during the short time, not only Zeus was curious.

"But you, after having fought so little, seem quite tired."

Zeus's breathing seemed somewhat ragged.

"What happened to you all this time?"

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"..."

In response to YuWon's question, Zeus closed his mouth for a moment.

The one who had tried to reprimand him for not fighting properly became someone who was left speechless. Zeus was caught in silence. He was witnessing a scene he couldn't even imagine.

"Did I hit the mark?"

"I'm fine."

"But why does it take you so long to answer?"

His eyebrows twisted.

He couldn't hide his expression. Definitely something was wrong.

In an instant, Odin's story flashed briefly through YuWon's mind.

"He says he made a deal. With a mysterious hooded man."

A deal.

The fight with Shub-Niggurath a year ago came to his mind.

He remembered Foolish Chaos moving during that battle.

"Did you also make a deal with him?"

"You're a ghost."

A slight sigh.

It wasn't a denial but an affirmation. Unlike Mimir, who was trapped in an unknown-duration dream due to the Curse of Knowledge, YuWon could question Zeus.

"It wasn't a big deal. Instead of helping to defeat that goat, it was planting a seed inside my body."

"A seed?"

Zeus raised his head and looked at the clouds covering the sky.

As if recalling events from the previous year, he continued his story, omitting many details.

"It was a small vial. I accepted the deal and drank what was inside."

"Why did you do that?"

"I thought I could win, no matter what was inside."

It was the result of pride and arrogance.

He felt no remorse. Even if it had been different, he wouldn't have expected a different outcome.

There's no fight that can be won every time. Moreover, Zeus had already lost once to YuWon.

"I don't have much time left."

Zeus rolled up his sleeves and reached out.

A blurry hand.

Yuwon now understood why he looked so exhausted after such a small fight.

Ssss-

He barely reached out, and Zeus coiled it back up and hid it. As if he had decided that he had already shown enough weakness.

"I don't know what you're waiting for, but do your job. I'll fight in my way. However..."

His eyes hardened.

Behind him, the Outers resurrected by the star song were entering again.

"Do it right. I've had enough disappointments."

Having said that, Zeus turned around.

Immediately, he surrounded his body with Lightning Bolts, sparing no Arcane Power. It seemed that even standing was difficult for him, but he fought again.

Baaang!

When Zeus and the multitude of Outers collided, their bodies burned black and flew into the sky.

The Outers were surely strong, but Zeus seemed stronger now than ever before.

'What kind of deal did Foolish Chaos make with him?'

It was at that moment that his thoughts grew deeper...

Woosh-!

The darkness covering the ground swept away the resurrected Outers.

It wasn't as spectacular as Zeus's Lightning Bolt, but the Outers caught in that darkness lost consciousness and fell.

Dark Arcane Power was rare.

Among them, probably only one person in this Tower could handle Dark Power with this efficiency.

"I was wondering what was going on below."

Tsu-tsu-tsu~

A tall man appeared in the growing darkness, waving his long clothes.

"So, here you are."

Hades.

He was the card YuWon had been waiting for.

As the 11th Floor was ruled by Olympus, he expected him to move, but he never expected him to arrive so quickly.

"Did you come following Zeus?"

"That's right. But in the end, you're here, so he must have followed you."

"No matter who followed whom. The important thing is that you're here now, Hades-nim."

"What?"

Hades was surprised by the unexpectedly warm welcome.

Yuwon's gaze turned to the eyes above.

Eyes that widened as they looked down.

The Star That Brings Destruction.

It was neither YuWon nor Zeus who would handle those eyes.

"You too should join this fight, Hades-nim."

"That was my intention from the beginning."

"Deal with those eyes."

Yuwon pointed to the eyes in the sky.

"If Zeus can't handle it alone, won't I be of little help?"

"It will work."

YuWon extended his hand forward.

Is this a handshake that signifies good wishes? Or is it a gesture to exchange Points?

"What's going on? I don't understand."

Although Hades wondered what he was doing, he couldn't help but firmly and without hesitation shake the hand YuWon was offering.

Hades took YuWon's extended hand. And at that moment...

["King of the Dead" is evaluating the owner.]

["King of the Dead" is evaluating suitability.]

The scene before Hades suddenly changed.

"...!"

In the deep sea.

Bodies floated in it, and all kinds of souls were seen.

The Sea of the Dead.

The gazes of the creatures swimming in it were unanimously directed towards Hades.

[The "Sea of the Dead" adores you.]

[You have obtained the title "King of the Dead."]

-----

Hades lost focus.

In the face of Hades's reaction, YuWon felt a touch of regret.

'It's a shame, but... this is better.'

The King of the Dead was originally Hades' title. Using the Dark Divine Crystal, he obtained the title of King of the Dead that Susanoo had. Even at his peak, Hades surpassed many High-Rankers and ranked among the top 30.

First and foremost, the King of the Dead was a title for Hades. It wasn't something he gained as a reward in Susanoo's dungeon, but something the title chose for itself.

Above all...

'That creature is now Hades' responsibility.'

At this moment, though "The Star That Brings Destruction" was quite a grand name, YuWon had to look a bit further.

Tremble~

The blade's edge trembled in his hand.

As if it couldn't bear it any longer.

"So..."

YuWon's head lifted.

To calm the weeping blade, it was time to hurry.

[The power of a Giant resides in your legs]

The power of the Giant manifested in both legs.

With that power, he leaped as high as he could, toward the clouds.

-----

The Star That Brings Destruction.

The eyes of that Outer looked at YuWon.

A gaze questioning how he dared to ascend.

Perhaps trying to block YuWon's path. From the red pupils, a small human figure appeared.

And in front of that...

Baang!

Zeus appeared and grabbed the neck of the small red-eyed being.

"If you want to live, stay there."

In an instant, Zeus's gaze suddenly turned towards YuWon, who was heading higher.

All it took was a brief moment of space.

What remains now is...

"Of course."

Kwarrung!

"Even if you do nothing, you'll die."

Flash!

The red eyes filled with golden light. Despite the rumbling and flashes of light below, YuWon did not stop.

Thus, above the clouds.

When he reached the place that looked like a purple sky...

"You finally came."

Looking down from the clouds, Foolish Chaos observed the situation.

How many times had they met?

It was hard to count with numbers. But among them, for the first time, YuWon held a sword in front of Foolish Chaos.

"I knew you would come."

Step~

The clouds were solid.

Solid enough to walk on.

Thanks to that, he didn't need to use unnecessary Arcane Power to tread the void.

YuWon approached Foolish Chaos.

"I knew you would come. Sooner or later."

"You should have run away."

"If I ran, you would have followed me anyway. But I think there's something you're misunderstanding."

"What?"

"I didn't do this. I was just watching."

"It doesn't matter. Anyway, these guys will protect you."

Tentacles and mist wrapped around Foolish Chaos.

The show of Names unfolded over him.

The tendency to protect the leader of the group was the same everywhere. This had been a constant for a long time, learned while they fought together.

"Are you challenging me?"

Laughter mixed into Foolish Chaos's voice.

"Do as you please. Anyway, I won't lose anything."

Sitting there, he hid behind the other Outers.

YuWon looked at Foolish Chaos with perplexed eyes.

Although his real form had not arrived yet, he had obtained the Name of Shub-Niggurath.

He thought he would still come to fight, but...

'Doesn't he want to give in so easily? Or...'

Does it mean there's no reason to fight here?

Anyway, it didn't matter.

If there was no reason to fight, then he must create one.

YuWon stared at the tip of the blade he held in his hands.

['? (Incomplete)' confronts the existence of another world]

['?(Incomplete)' awaits your choice]

When he put his heart into it, the sword reacted.

YuWon knew what this sword was made of.



The Otherworld Sword was forged by melting Hephaestus's hammer and using his fist as a hammer.

And this was the sword made by the current Hephaestus by melting the Otherworld Sword.

The only reason this sword was created was to cut down creatures from this other world.

The Flames of Death and Corruption. The power known as Holy Fire manifested.

The flames spread around YuWon. The power of the Name coiled around the sword, dancing and urging him to use it.

It was a strange sensation.

Definitely different from when he wielded Holy Fire before.

The reason for this strange sensation was one.

"Is it because of the Name?"

Holy Fire.

A fire with the name Flames of Death and Corruption.

Originally, they were two and one at the same time. The Dancer Who Dances With Fire means the Flames of Death and Corruption.

And now that those two names had merged into one, the flame finally burned perfectly.

Frrrr!

Yuwon wrapped the flame around the tip of the sword.

'Let's make a hit.'

He drew a circle with the tip of the sword.

Fwoooosh!

Along with the Outers, he cut through the purple clouds covering the 11th Floor sky.

Fwwwww, Fwoooosh!

Hundreds, thousands.

A single sword strike branching into tens of thousands of paths.

The bodies of the Outers were torn into pieces and turned into black ash amidst the flames. The flames created a storm, and the swordplay did not stop.

It was as if he were possessed by something.

Yuwon swung the sword again.

['The Dancer Who Dances With Fire' rules over 'The Flames of Death and Corruption'.]

Fwoooosh!

Another sword.

Frrrrrrrrr!

And another sword.

The flame-wrapped sword did not stop.

In this way, the dancing sword tip of YuWon, which danced like a dancer, headed towards Foolish Chaos, who was sitting as if he had nothing to do with this fight, and then...

Flutter~

It removed the cloak covering his face.