

With The Gods 551

Chapter 551

Side Story 27

Asura sat in the stadium, contemplating.

YuWon smiled upon seeing Asura's sudden action.

"That's his strong point."

Asura was different from Son OhGong, who was blinded by the fight.

Certainly, he was a demon who had lived his whole life with a desire for revenge against Indra.

However, despite his desire for revenge, Asura did not attack Indra hastily.

He planned a battle where he could defeat Indra and set the stage for it.

And the same happened in the future.

Even without YuWon's intervention, Indra was destined to be defeated by Asura.

"He's observant and intelligent. The problem is that sometimes he crosses the line."

He thought Asura might notice it, unlike others.

He didn't expect him to help in such a spectacular way.

['Eyes of Foreknowledge' have been deactivated]

Srrr-.

The golden light emanating from YuWon's eyes faded, and the ability deactivated.

Buzz~

Perhaps from using the Eyes of Foreknowledge too much?

A familiar headache returned after a long time.

Unlike other abilities, Foreknowledge required more Mental Power than Arcane Power.

"I never thought not knowing the future would be so uncomfortable."

YuWon had long enjoyed the advantages of relying on future information.

That time had been so long that, in reality, he hadn't had many occasions to use the Eyes of Foreknowledge.

However.

The current situation was something that hadn't happened in the original future.

"But well..."

YuWon massaged his throbbing head and looked at Taishang Laojun, who had appeared in the stadium.

"With this, I've found all the variables."

Taishang Laojun.

The one who suddenly burst into the stadium was the key to the battle that would unfold in this Great Celestial War.

"Taishang Laojun...?"

"Why is Taishang Laojun here?"

Chaos erupted among the participants.

It was a surprise that Taishang Laojun, who hadn't shown up for thousands of years, had returned and now suddenly interrupted this Great Celestial War.

While other participants were bewildered by the unexpected situation...

YuWon tapped Tsukuyomi on the shoulder with his finger.

"...?"

"Are you ready?"

Tsukuyomi nodded at YuWon's signal.

With that signal, Tsukuyomi thought.

That now it was beginning.

Sssh-.

The sword that had been in Asura's sheath came back into the light.

Asura narrowed his eyes at the appearance of Taishang Laojun.

"Well, what a surprise."

Boooooom-.

Asura's Arcane Power surged toward Taishang Laojun.

"At first, I was going to cut down anyone who appeared. And it turns out it's you."

Asura exuded a fierce killing aura.

In the face of Asura's behavior, Lee Ye had a perplexed expression on his face.

Even if he had burst into the stadium, his opponent was Taishang Laojun.

The Master of the Jade Emperor and another supreme figure of the Celestial Realm.

Showing such a killing aura towards Taishang Laojun was an act that crossed the line even for Asura.

However...

"Where did you notice it?"

Taishang Laojun did not criticize Asura's behavior as a lack of respect.

Instead, he looked at him with eyes full of curiosity.

"It smells bad."

Asura looked at his own face reflected in the two swords and crossed it with Taishang Laojun's.

"It smells like a battlefield."

"A battlefield?"

"When the bloodlust and hostility intensify, it feels like the smell of blood. No matter how much you try to hide it, unlike the aura, it's something you can't hide."

Taishang Laojun was impressed. His initial attitude of disdain towards the participants melted like snow under the sun at that moment.

"Your ability to detect the battlefield is truly divine."

Shhh!

Clang!

Taishang Laojun's hand and Asura's sword clashed.

The shockwave of Arcane Power spread around.

Lee Ye protected his head with both arms and was pushed backward.

"Why suddenly...?"

This was way beyond expectations.

Taishang Laojun, a divine existence in the Celestial Realm.

Wielding a sword against him was a matter serious enough to immediately suspend this Great Celestial War.

And moreover, the opponent was Asura.

This warrior with a single digit ranking had enough strength to stand alone against Celestial Realm.

Crack, crack.

Asura's sword couldn't reach Taishang Laojun.

The Arcane Power emanating from his hand pushed the sword back, and a struggle began with Asura.

"Do the Administrators behind you still not intend to come out?"

"Have you noticed that too?"

"First of all, I was the one waiting for them."

Swoosh!

Asura's sword cut through the air and aimed at Taishang Laojun's neck.

"...!"

"It seems like you're also part of that gang."

Swoosh!

Zzzzzz!

The battlefield was cut in the shape of a cross.

A fine line of blood appeared on Taishang Laojun's neck.

Taishang Laojun pushed Asura with the palm of his hand and distanced himself.

However, Asura only slightly lost balance instead of being sent flying.

"...Your sword is sharp."

Taishang Laojun wiped the blood running from his neck and looked at Asura.

"How do you know?"

"The Administrators have a different smell."

The flow of Arcane Power emanating from Taishang Laojun.

Asura, sensing the subtle difference with the tip of his nose, pulled another weapon from his inventory.

"Although the Arcane Power is the same, what I feel in them is different."

A long red spear.

It was a spear a few fingers longer than a normal spear and as thin as a finger.

"It's exactly the same as what you feel now."

Boom, bang, boom.

The spear moved rapidly in Asura's hand.

The spear spun in a circle with a strong wind.

As expected from Asura, who handled all kinds of weapons, he had concluded that the spear was more effective than the sword against Taishang Laojun.

However...

"Really?"

Taishang Laojun smiled with satisfaction.

He raised his hand.

The place where his hand pointed, where Arcane Power concentrated, was not Asura, but another direction.

"They call him the 'Mana Master' for this."

Kiiing!

It wasn't normal mana.

It was much more powerful.

"A lightning bolt?"

Paff!

Asura hurriedly ran towards Taishang Laojun.

The distance was closing rapidly.

However, the direction of the participants was opposite to the direction Asura was in.

"Watch closely."

Even for Asura, it was too late to prevent the participants on the opposite side of Taishang Laojun from being attacked.

And at that moment...

"The type of power they have."

Zzzzzaang!

Taishang Laojun's lightning bolt was unleashed.

Kwaaahhhh!

Distorted Arcane Power materialized into a physical force that crushed dozens of participants.

It was a blow that turned them into minced meat instantly.

"I arrived late."

Tsst!

And at the same time...

Zas, chas, chas!

An ice mirror formed by hundreds, thousands of faces spread before the participants.

Zas!

A field of vision blocked by the mirror.

A chilling cold emanated from the cracked mirror.

And at the top of that mirror was a Ranker.

"Tsukuyomi, damn..."

"How long, Taishang Laojun."

Tsukuyomi greeted Taishang Laojun.

She wasn't the only one.

"This competition is already ruined."

"I don't know what happened, but..."

"In any case, we can't just stand by after being attacked for no reason."

Participants appeared one by one on the battlefield.

Due to Taishang Laojun's intervention, the rules of the Great Celestial War had already turned into a disaster.

Tsukuyomi, Hargan, Lee Seong Yun, and many other Rankers surrounded Taishang Laojun.

Furthermore...

"I demand an explanation."

Khihihihi!

With a resounding roar, Lee Rangjin and other Generals of Celestial Realm appeared in the sky.

"Both for your sudden intervention in the Tournament and for your attack on the participants. I want an explanation for everything."

"He attacked me first."

"But you intervened in the competition first. And there is no justification for attacking other participants, right?"

"Haha, you're right."

Taishang Laojun chuckled.

However, his gaze was not directed at Lee Rangjin but at Tsukuyomi, who had blocked his attack.

In his eyes, hidden behind his smile, doubt was reflected.

He seemed not to understand how she had managed to block his attack.

"Arrest Asura and Taishang Laojun."

"Yes!"

Following Lee Rangjin's order, soldiers cautiously approached Asura and Taishang Laojun.

Although they had unbreakable chains to contain even High-Rankers, there was no guarantee that the two would accept them without a fight.

Glup.

The soldiers slowly approached Asura and Taishang Laojun.

"Hi, hiiik!"

A soldier who met Asura's gaze recoiled in terror.

Despite offering no resistance and remaining still, a mere soldier lacked the courage to apprehend Asura.

And on the other hand...

"Good job."

The soldier who approached Taishang Laojun felt a warmth completely different from Asura's.

With a relieved expression, the soldier extended the chains towards Taishang Laojun's hand.

"T-Thank you..."

Plop.

And then...

Puf!

A hole opened in the soldier's head as Taishang Laojun touched his finger, and blood gushed from behind.

"Major!"

Lee Rangjin roared.

Wielding the Unbreakable Sword, Lee Rangjin rushed towards Taishang Laojun.

Looking alternately at the fallen soldier and Taishang Laojun, he opened his mouth with furious voice.

"What the hell are you...?"

"My son."

A voice that dissipated the tension.

Lee Rangjin had to control every fiber of his being not to be carried away by that voice.

"You and Celestial Realm, would you like to join us?"

"Join us? What do you mean?"

Words difficult for Lee Rangjin, who was unaware of the context.

The explanation unexpectedly came from Asura.

"They are the Administrators."

"Administrators?"

"The flow of Arcane Power I feel in that guy is similar to the Administrators. And..."

Asura's eyes scanned the Generals who had appeared with Lee Rangjin.

"Administrators, there are some of them mixed in here too."

And at the moment those words came out of his mouth.

['Mana Master' controls the mana around him.]

Shwaa!

The mana in the atmosphere became heavy and oppressive.

The mana that once moved as freely as their own limbs dispersed, and suddenly, it felt as challenging to handle as taking their first steps.

"I can't... breathe..."

"I can't..."

As the mana supply was cut off, even breathing became difficult.

The Rankers, gasping for breath, were soon forced to move the mana that once flowed naturally like their own limbs to regulate their breathing.

The mana in the atmosphere had found its owner.

One by one, among the soldiers, the Mana Master began to appear.

"Is this Celestial Realm?"

"The air is quite refreshing. It's been a long time since I visited another world."

"It's been too long. The dogs are playing masters in an ownerless house."

Beings emanating formidable power, appearing as they received the chant and worship of mana.

YuWon counted the number of Administrators appearing one by one.

'One, two, three... It seems they are three after all.'

He thought it wouldn't be just one, considering they would have to face both the soldiers of Celestial Realm and the participants of the Great Celestial War.

However, as expected, the number of Administrators he had confirmed with the Eyes of Foreknowledge was three.

The number he now had before his eyes was no different.

'For now, three.'

Crunch~

Looking at the familiar faces appearing on the stage, YuWon began to take a step forward.

['Magnum Innominandum' reveals its hostility.]

'Not a bad start.'

Chapter 552

C28

The stage turned into chaos in an instant with the appearance of the three Administrators.

Commotion among the participants

"What? The Administrators?"

"Why are the Administrators here?"

The Administrators bared their teeth in response to the participants' shock.

The Arcane Power in the air transformed into sharp fangs.

Some Rankers, with the pressure crushing their throats, collapsed to the ground.

The same was happening with the Rankers from the Celestial Realm.

Then, Lee Rangjin looked perplexedly at Taishang Laojun, the origin of this situation.

"Joining 'us' means joining the Administrators?"

"That's right. You've understood correctly."

"...Have you betrayed the Celestial Realm?"

"It's not betrayal, young one."

Taishang Laojun called Lee Rangjin and persuaded him.

"The Tower will soon return to its original owner. For Celestial Realm to survive that turbulent storm, they must join us."

In response to Lee Rangjin's words, his gaze shifted to the three Administrators.

The absolute rulers of the Tower.

They were the ones who possessed overwhelming power but had not used it until now.

Players and Guilds from each floor had, at some point, taken for granted the silence of the Administrators.

However, no one ignored that the Tower's order would crumble the moment they made a move.

"This is the only way for Celestial Realm to survive."

He couldn't help but have doubts.

Lee Rangjin was currently the Leader of Celestial Realm.

The mission entrusted to him was the protection and prosperity of Celestial Realm.

He had lived for it until now.

A moment of choice.

With this single decision, Celestial Realm could either thrive or fall.

'What should I do here...?'

"Thanks to you, I've realized something good."

Step~

At that moment, when everyone fell silent at the appearance of the Administrators, someone spoke.

"It seems like they're stumbling back and forth between the Guilds?"

In the face of the voice that didn't seem tense, Lee Rangjin's gaze shifted from Taishang Laojun to a man walking towards him among the participants.

Who is he?

One of the 64 participants who made it to the Main Round. His face seemed familiar, but he couldn't remember his name. He appeared to be one of the less well-known Rankers.

However, he dared to introduce himself without any fear.

Fwoosh!

At the same moment he thought that, something happened.

The Arcane Power crushing his breath was released a bit.

[The 'Mana Master' controls the mana around him]

The same message appeared in everyone's minds.

Lee Rangjin's eyes widened.

The same energy that the Administrators possessed was felt in this participant.

"Who are you?"

Taishang Laojun stared at YuWon approaching him.

The three Administrators also focused on him, feeling the familiar flow of mana emanating from YuWon.

Who was he to possess the same ability as the Administrators?

"Kim YuHun."

"Kim YuHun? I've never heard of a Ranker like you before."

"Because I'll become famous from now on."

YuWon shrugged and looked at the Administrators floating in the sky.

"I'm going to catch them all."

The eyebrows of the Administrators furrowed.

No one, not even in this situation, would dare to show such audacity.

Until now, no Player had dared to challenge the Administrators in this way.

"A bit arrogant, don't you think?"

"Seems like that idiot doesn't know who we are."

"Or maybe... he thinks he can handle us?"

The Administrators mocked YuWon and pointed upward with their fingers.

The participants' gazes turned to the sky.

In the clear sky the Administrators were pointing at, there was a thick white cloud.

And then...

Fwoosh!

The clouds gathering in the sky dispersed in an instant.

Within the scattered clouds, countless Envoys hid in silence.

"Hehehe."

"Fight, fight."

"Players. Mosquitoes."

"Some are strong."

There were so many that it was difficult to count them.

Judging by the number, the Envoys hidden in the clouds easily surpassed ten thousand.

"Uwaaah, uwaaah...!"

"What, what are those?"

"So many Envoys?"

There is a saying that the crowd beats strength.

In the Tower, this saying was not very applicable.

Because in this world, there were great Rankers who could overwhelm the majority, like Vishnu, Son OhGong, and Zeus.

However, the pressure exerted by an overwhelming number was different from individual absolute strength.

The three Administrators with absolute power.

And with the appearance of ten thousand Envoys, the tension that consumed Lee Rangjin's entire body dissipated instantly.

This cannot be won.

Even if he fought against the Administrators alongside Asura, Tsukiyomi, and Lee Ye, there was no way to handle so many Envoys.

However...

"Don't you find it strange?"

Even in the face of such a number, YuWon smiled.

As if the situation unfolding before his eyes amused him.

"Hasn't it suddenly become too quiet?"

"What?"

"Until a moment ago, it was a noisy festival, right?"

Yuwon's words brought a strange feeling to the Administrators.

It was true.

Although the Administrators had appeared, the stadium had strangely fallen silent.

It wasn't just a feeling that the sound had reduced.

The countless auras.

They had all disappeared.

"Could it be..."

The gazes of the Administrators and the participants turned to the surroundings.

The stands.

The sounds of the tens of thousands of Players and residents filling the edges of the stadium had suddenly disappeared.

Like a mirage that never existed.

They were still silently cheering for the match, without any sound or movement.

And then.

Whoosh!

Whoosh!

Like a light mist or dust scattered by the wind, the figures of the audience vanished from their places.

["The Nameless Mist" appears.]

["Magnum Innominandum" appears.]

A purple mist enveloped the stadium.

An enormity that covered the entire Tournament battlefield.

Mist with a physical form, capable of freely changing shapes.

The faces of the Administrators turned pale at its appearance.

"It can't be..."

"N'yog-..."

Krrr-.

A Lightning Bolt resonated in the sky.

The Administrators looked up.

In the brief moment their eyes landed on the mist, the clear sky had turned dark.

The disappeared clouds had reappeared.

Black clouds carrying thunder and lightning.

Looking at the dark clouds, YuWon clicked his tongue and muttered.

"That guy's personality is quite unfortunate, but..."

Now, there was no resident or Player who wasn't a Ranker inside this stadium.

"His ability is the best."

The one who can throw the spear farthest in this Tower.

The being with the most powerful Lightning Bolt, specializing in crowd control like no one else.

Zeus.

Craaaaaack-!

The Olympus Lightning, writing a new history, echoed above the heads of the Envoys.

Craack, craackl-e

Even after throwing the spear, the Arcane Power remained in his hand.

It had been a long time.

Since the last time he threw a Lightning Bolt with such force.

"I'm a bit tired."

Setting aside the power, the distance was too great.

Throwing a spear through multiple floors to a designated location was not an easy task, even for Zeus.

He had to prepare in advance, take time to aim, and spend a large amount of Arcane Power to cover the long distance.

It was impossible to do it without knowing the exact time and place, and without there being Players or residents around who could be affected.

That's why Zeus didn't throw the spear in this way against a moving opponent.

However...

"Anyway, I did it."

All those conditions had been met.

What was certain is that Hargan hadn't intervened in this matter.

The only thing the guy had done was convey a message.

The words of a man named Kim YuHun.

"What do you think?"

Swoosh-.

Zeus, massaging his sore arm from throwing the spear with all his might, turned his head.

At that moment, a guest had arrived at his temple.

"Administrator."

An Administrator with thick beard and hair.

A ragged giant of the size and build of a giant.

He was the Tutorial Administrator, commonly known as Floor 0 in the Tower.

"It's strange."

"Strange?"

"It's unusual, and also..."

He immersed himself in thought, stroking his curly beard.

The crystal orb showing the landscape of the Tournament where the Lightning Bolt had fallen glowed with a golden light.

Undoubtedly, right now it would have turned into a battlefield, even if he didn't know it.

"It doesn't seem to be just intelligent."

"And then?"

"He either knows our identities very well, or he possesses an ability like Foreknowledge that allows him to see the future. One of the two, I can't believe it any other way."

He didn't dare to think that both things were possible.

Even one of the two was hard to believe.

It wasn't normal for someone to know the secret of the Administrators or for a nameless Ranker to have an ability like seeing the future.

"More than anything..."

The Administrator fell silent before finishing the sentence.

His eyes were still fixed on the crystal orb, which shone brightly with the residual glow of the Lightning Bolt.

'Can't be, right?'

At the last moment...

In the vaguely visible landscape, he seemed to see a purple mist.

'They disappeared.'

The Outer Gods.

Beings that opposed them from time immemorial, entities that stood on the opposite side of the world. Their power and Names had already disappeared after the battle ten years ago.

Wasn't it to confirm this that the Administrators broke their long silence and started acting?

On the other hand, Zeus narrowed his eyes at the sudden silence of the Administrator and asked:

"More than anything?"

"No, it's nothing."

"...Really?"

In terms of insight, no one in the Tower surpassed Zeus.

Zeus found the Administrator's reaction a moment ago much more interesting than simply calling it strange or unusual.

"Meaning..."

"You have a rather ominous expression."

"I don't like that way of speaking."

"You'll have to accept it. The fact that you recruited our guys in the past doesn't change."

Long ago, Zeus had recruited the Tutorial Envoys to attract talented Players in advance.

Since then, the Tutorial Administrator had harbored resentment towards Olympus, but now the relationship was a bit different.

"Didn't we agree to forget about that? How grudgeful you are."

"Well. As for 'both,' I feel too aggrieved to say that."

"You're more petty than you seem."

Zeus shifted his attention after a brief dispute.

Inside the crystal orb, which began to gradually illuminate once the aftermath of the Lightning Bolt dissipated.

Through this reaction, Zeus could be even more certain.

"Kim YuHun..."

Kim YuWon.

"I wonder how I'll feel seeing him in person."

If he survives, I should definitely meet him.

Chapter 553

Side Story 29

"The 25th-floor Administrator raised his shield.

It was to protect his own body from the flying Ru Yi Bang.

However...

"Grow!"

Due to the long battle, he had also realized.

"... Ruyi."

That he couldn't block Son OhGong's Ru Yi Bang with his own shield.

Kwadeuk-!

"....."

The Administrator flew along with the shield.

His horse was already a corpse, buried somewhere beneath the piles of rocks beneath him.

Kwadadad-.

He flew backward with the extended shield.

The Ru Yi Bang seemed to be chasing the Administrator to the end of the world.

"Uraaahha-!"

Brute force applied to the Ru Yi Bang with a roar.

Flying towards Son OhGong, whose eyes were squinted, the Administrator showed a look of confusion from his partially destroyed helmet.

Kwaaaang-!

A body finally hit by the Ru Yi Bang and stuck to the ground.

The impact on his back was extraordinary.

The armor deformed, and the impact transmitted directly to his torso.

He could feel his body crunching a bit.

The impact received from the Ru Yi Bang was gradually accumulating, and at some point, he was finding it difficult to control his body.

'He is strong.'

That was the impression he had of the battle with Son OhGong.

There was nothing more to say.

Son OhGong was strong.

Much stronger than expected.

'His strength exceeds our expectations.'

Jeok, jeok-.

He felt Son OhGong's presence approaching.

'That's also much more than I feared.'

Duddudu-.

The Administrator slowly stood up, pushing aside the rocks and debris covering him with his hands.

A collapsed roof.

The house where the Administrator fell was so destroyed that it was unrecognizable.

The cloudy sky could be seen through the hole in the roof.

Somewhere in the sky.

Son OhGong, who had chased the Administrator to the village, asked with the Ru Yi Bang hanging from his shoulder.

"Why make such a fuss about imitating Odin? You surprised me."

The spear thrown by the Administrator.

It clearly resembled the Gungnir Odin threw.

Of course, even with the same item, its power varied greatly depending on the user.

The Administrator's spear was an example.

It was an imitation weapon of Gungnir, but its power was inferior to the Gungnir Son OhGong knew.

Of course.

"No, to be precise, Gungnir was created from your spear."

It is not always true that the strongest is the original.

Odin's Gungnir became the most powerful spear not only because of the item's power but mainly because the one wielding it was Odin.

Administrators existed from the time when Players, long before Odin, were active.

So, naturally, it was very likely that the spear used by the Administrator had a longer history than Gungnir.

"You're quite clever in this regard."

"In this regard? I'm just..."

"Euaang-!"

The sound reached Son OhGong's ears, who was about to swing the Ru Yi Bang again.

The Administrator and Son OhGong's eyes turned at the same time to the source of the sound.

"...Eh?"

A small child who looked about 7 years old.

Son OhGong hesitated for a moment as he looked at the crying child under the collapsed house.

And in that brief moment...

"It's unexpected."

Peureuk-!

The Administrator's spear pierced Son OhGong's shoulder.

"The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal doubts in a place like this..."

He had gained a small advantage.

That's what the Administrator thought, but soon he realized he was wrong.

Crunch!

Son OhGong's hands grabbed the spear that had pierced him.

Moreover, the spear that was supposed to have pierced his shoulder had not managed to go through completely.

It didn't pierce.

In that fleeting moment...

Son OhGong, who had been watching the child, caught the approaching Administrator's spear with a quick movement.

A truly amazing reflex.

Even with the help of Golden Cinder Eyes, it was something worthy of admiration.

In this situation, he needed to create distance again.

The Administrator immediately exerted force to retrieve the spear.

However...

"...It hurts."

Son OhGong's hands holding the spear began to bleed.

Son OhGong bared his teeth at the blood flowing from his shoulder.

A fierce aura began to emanate from him.

It seemed like at any moment he would start tearing with his claws and wield the Ru Yi Bang mercilessly.

However, his gaze still turned towards the crying child.

"Hey, kid."

"Sob, uh..."

"Stop crying and tell me, where are your mom and dad?"

Whoosh!

Son OhGong's eyes scanned the remains of the collapsed building.

"It seems they're not here..."

"Mom... Dad..."

"Yeah, yeah. Where did mom and dad go? You can talk, right?"

"Mom... outside... dad is dead..."

"Mom went out, and dad was never here?"

Son OhGong sighed as he watched the child nod.

"It seems I've also caught the Hercules bastard's habit. Everything catches my attention."

Puff!

The spear that had stuck in Son OhGong's shoulder came off.

Reluctantly wiping away the blood, Son OhGong approached the crying child on the ground.

Annoyance blossomed on his face, which seemed happy since he was in the middle of a fight.

"Do you think you can fight while protecting that meatball?"

I acknowledge that Son OhGong is strong.

But he was an Administrator.

But he was an Administrator.

Protecting someone while fighting, and moreover, such a fragile child who seemed like he would disappear with a single blow, was madness.

"Hey, that's what I'm going to do."

OhGong lifted the child lying on the ground and placed him on his shoulder.

In the face of that absurd reaction, the Administrator aimed his spear at Son OhGong again.

"It seems you've become arrogant after winning a few battles."

"Ah... really?"

Son OhGong turned around and looked at the Administrator.

"That guy said it. That Administrators are weaker the lower they are."

The pupils of the Administrator, visible through the helmet's slits, stirred at those words.

Administrators on lower floors are weaker.

That was something not even the Envoys knew.

However, the fact that The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal knew it was bewildering.

"How...?"

The Administrator stopped mid-sentence. Continuing to speak would only mean admitting that Son OhGong's words were true.

"You're only from the 25th floor, right? That's why..."

A mocking smile appeared on Son OhGong's face.

And at the same time...

Bang, boom boom boom!

Boom boom boom boom!

Countless clones of Son OhGong appeared, filling the sky and the earth.

"Do you expect me to suddenly have difficulties fighting you just to protect this brat?"

The eyes of the main body of Son OhGong, controlling the clones, now shone with Yokai Energy.

"Even the wanderers these days don't use such clichéd stories."

The stadium was struck by a Lightning Bolt.

The place was completely different from the stadium they were in a few minutes ago.

"...A complete mess."

"And a big one."

The stands were collapsed, and the stadium floor was blackened and burnt.

The flames burning in various places didn't seem to easily extinguish.

In that brief moment, the participants experienced a mix of emotions.

The sudden Lightning Bolt...

Those who had sunk into the ground, oppressed by its immense Arcane Power, thought they were really going to die.

However.

"A-Are we alive?"

"How...?"

The participants who had temporarily lost their sight due to the blinding light raised their heads.

And what stretched before their eyes was a quite familiar sight.

"A mirror?"

"Again?"

The mirror shield created by Tsukuyomi. That shield had blocked the Lightning Bolt falling from the sky.

"What happened?"

"Suddenly, the Administrator appears, Zeus's Lightning Bolt falls... and then Tsukuyomi blocks it..."

"Damn. This is a complete mess."

Crack, crunch~

The mirror quickly broke.

In an instant, a freezing cold filled the stadium.

Hargan looked at Tsukuyomi with eyes of doubt.

'What happened?'

She was undoubtedly a High-Ranker.

In terms of her current strength, she was probably much stronger than him.

However, even so, the strength she had just shown was not convincing.

She had blocked Taishang Laojun's attack and protected the participants from Zeus's Lightning Bolt.

The things she had done a moment ago were difficult even if the Three Precious Children gathered.

That means...

'Is it thanks to the Three Sacred Relics?'

The Three Sacred Relics.

The objects that the Three Precious Children, including Tsukuyomi, had been searching for a long time, scattered throughout the Tower.

According to the story from a few days ago, all of them should be in Tsukuyomi's hands.

'It's lucky for us, but...'

Hargan's gaze, which had confirmed that the participants were safe, turned upwards.

More than ten thousand Envoys. With the appearance of these guys, Zeus's Lightning Bolt had fallen.

'I guess they're about to die.'

Sizzle, craack.

First of all, the target of the Lightning Bolt was not the participants below.

The Lightning Bolt had struck the Envoys hiding in the clouds.

And Zeus's Lightning Bolt was specialized in dealing with large crowds.

And as a result...

'...Many have died.'

The number of Envoys that had filled the stadium until recently had been considerably reduced.

Most Envoys had fallen to the ground, charred.

The surviving Envoys barely numbered a few hundred.

The visible number had been significantly reduced.

"We might as well try... right?"

"It seems like Zeus is on our side..."

"And also Celestial Realm."

"We have no choice but to fight."

Voices filled with hope.

However, they were ignorant voices.

'These Rankers are really shortsighted.'

Hargan shook his head.

'More than the number of Envoys, those three remaining are what matters.'

The three Administrators full of anger.

They were the core of this fight.

"Has it already begun?"

Heavy steps~

Immediately after the Lightning Bolt fell, Pandora, she, appeared in the stadium.

The eyes of the participants widened in surprise at her appearance.

Under normal circumstances, they would have bothered her for an autograph or something, but the current situation was not conducive to that.

Toc, toc.

"Can we fight now? Yu..."

Pandora, about to say his name while looking at YuWon's back, tilted her head.

"YuHun?"

It was noticeable that she had changed YuWon's name hastily, but there was no one who noticed.

Nod~

YuWon nodded without turning his head. His gaze was fixed on the three Administrators floating in the sky.

And among them...

"You, take care of that one over there."

YuWon pointed at one on the right.

An Administrator with a skeletal body dressed in a robe.

The opponent was an Administrator.

However, if Tsukuyomi, Pandora, Lee Ye, and Hargan, who had obtained the Three Sacred Relics, formed a team, they should be able to deal with a lower-level Administrator.

Asura was currently fighting Taishang Laojun.

'One should be possible for them.'

The other High-Rankers, including Tsukuyomi, needed to adapt to fighting Administrators one-on-one.

"One?"

As expected, Hargan reacted with disbelief.

Even Tsukuyomi, who had obtained the Three Sacred Relics, felt intrigued.

"What do you plan to do with the other two?"

"What else?"

At that question, YuWon looked at the two remaining Administrators.

Due to the Lightning Bolt that had fallen from the sky and the mist disguising the spectators, the Administrators' attention on YuWon was at its peak.

"It seems you have a lot of questions, but we'll have to greet each other in person."

Chapter 554

Side Story 30

'You have to focus.'

Lee Ye gripped the bow tightly.

He had been a Ranker for thousands of years, but he had never faced a crisis like this.

Above were the Administrators and thousands of their Envoys.

And right in front of him, Asura and Taishang Laojun.

It was like walking on thin ice.

Suddenly...

"Hey, you."

At Asura's call, Lee Ye startled and looked at him.

"Stand on that side."

"That side?"

Lee Ye looked in the direction Asura was pointing.

There were Kim YuHun approaching the Administrators, and Tsukoyomi, Pandora, and Hargan forming a team one by one.

And the Rankers of the Celestial Realm joining Lee Rangjin.

They were already prepared to fight against the Administrators.

'So...'

Lee Ye looked at Taishang Laojun, who was in a close duel with Asura.

Due to the rocky start caused by Zeus's Lightning Bolt, he exuded a hostile aura different from the beginning.

"I'll take care of this guy."

A smile formed on Asura's face.

Facing the impending large-scale battle against Taishang Laojun, he was concentrating his Arcane Power to the fullest.

Lee Ye nodded at the energy emanating from the two and took a step back.

*Pat-.

Lee Ye walked past Taishang Laojun.

But Taishang Laojun didn't pay him any attention.

No...

He couldn't pay attention.

"The little one has grown quite a bit."

"Your era is over, old man."

A red aura emanated from the tip of the spear.

Two heads and four arms materialized behind Asura, imbued with Arcane Power, revealing Asura's true form.

"I'll show you."

Initially, the Administrators' target was the Great Celestial Realm Guild, one of the most significant in the Tower.

The absorption of the Great Guild and the Great Celestial War provided a favorable scenario for them.

However...

"It's definitely The Nameless Mist."

"Didn't they all disappear?"

"N'yog-Sothep has been eliminated. Shub-Niggurath too."

"Then, how...?"

The fact that lightning fell from the sky was astonishing, but what concerned them more was the mist that concealed the onlookers.

The three Administrators couldn't have been mistaken. That meant the mist that had just appeared was indeed N'yog-Sothep.

And the owner of that name was none other than...

"What has you so intrigued?"

At this very moment...

It was the nameless player who appeared among the three Administrators.

*Slash-.

A rather fast swordplay. But more lethal than the sword's power was its strange nature.

Swish, swish, swish-.

The Administrators dodged the sword quickly, creating distance. They felt an inexplicable oppression as they watched the sword wielded by YuWon.

Chills, chills~

The Administrators focused on YuWon's sword with an unsettling feeling, as if their entire bodies were being sliced.

And at that moment...

"It has split very well."

Kwaaaat-.

A Black Woods spread around the two Administrators.

"What...?"

"This can't be..."

Seeing the woods that unfolded before their eyes in the courtyard where The Nameless Mist appeared, only one thing came to mind.

A dark landscape devouring the two Administrators.

And as expected.

[The Black Goat of the Woods' invites you.]

Entering the woods that had swallowed the two Administrators, YuWon greeted them.

"Welcome."

Swoosh.

The two Administrators and YuWon disappeared in an instant.

The Black Woods that had appeared for a moment swallowed the three of them in the same moment, then disappeared without a trace.

Only one remained...

Only the robed Administrator, whose body had been cut by YuWon.

"Something... is wrong."

The appearance of The Nameless Mist and Black Woods.

The Names that should have disappeared had returned.

'I should return immediately, but...'

Clang.

Before the Administrator's eyes, the General Chief on horseback appeared.

Riding a flying Celestial Horse, General Chief Lee Rangjin and the soldiers of the Celestial Realm surrounded the Administrator.

"Is your answer a no?"

In response to the Administrator's question, Lee Rangjin nodded.

"To reflect on myself, who wavered for a brief moment..."

Boom.

Lee Rangjin's body, mounted on the Celestial Horse, soared into the sky, and the Unbreakable Sword in his hand drew a blue line.

And so...

Kwaaaat!

Lee Rangjin's Unbreakable Sword split the Administrator's body in two.

"I will fight you with my life at stake."

It was the moment when the flame that had flickered in Lee Rangjin's heart reignited.

At that moment...

At a considerable distance from the stadium and the streets of the Grand Tournament, a large number of spectators had gathered.

"What's happening?"

"Until recently, Asura and Tsukuyomi were fighting..."

"Where are we?"

As if they were watching a match, they sat in a large vacant lot.

They were sure they had followed the right path.

There was no way they couldn't find the enormous stadium resembling the Colosseum, and they had checked the seating map and sat in their seats correctly.

But, what is this?

Suddenly, the landscape of the stadium that stretched before their eyes disappeared completely.

The fierce battle between Asura and Tsukuyomi vanished without a trace, and a wide vacant lot was revealed.

Even some of them were Rankers who had spent a lot of money to see the Grand Tournament in person.

"What is this?! Have we all been deceived?"

"Where did Tsukuyomi go?! Our beautiful Tsukuyomi!"

"Were the preliminaries also a scam?"

The spectators gathered in the vacant lot were indignant.

With the disappearance of The Nameless Mist, they began to doubt whether the Grand Tournament itself was a farce from the beginning.

It was natural for them to be angry, as they had traveled long distances and spent a lot of money to see the duels.

Among them, a spectator jumped into the center of the stage where the match was originally supposed to take place.

"Let's all go to Celestial Realm! We have to get to the bottom of this!"

The man raising both hands high gradually looked up.

"We have to get to the bottom of this..."

His words faded.

In the sky.

Something small was seen as a dot approaching rapidly.

And at that moment...

Baaaaaang!

It fell swiftly into the center of the stadium.

Kwaaaang!

“Uwaaaaah!”

However, being a Ranker, the man quickly dodged the attack. In the spot where he was, a dense dust cloud rose into the sky.

The identity of the object that had fallen to the ground wavered in the swirling smoke.

Gulp.

The man closest opened his eyes in surprise.

“It, it, it... It...”

The smoke dissipated slowly.

Whoosh.

With a burning red eye shining, Son OhGong, riding on a cloud, appeared holding by the neck the Administrator whose head was half broken and had lost consciousness.

“The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal?”

The Administrator with the half-broken helmet was unconscious.

And the little trembling child on Son OhGong's shoulders.

Son OhGong shook the Administrator's neck with one hand while scratching his head with the other, puzzled.

"Isn't this the place?"

In the Black Woods.

The two Administrators looked at the black trees surrounding them.

"It really is the Black Woods."

"Is his Name still there?"

The being that rules the Black Woods.

Shub-Niggurath.

Even among the Outer Gods, she is one of the three most powerful, and she received a Name from Azathoth that gives her the power to rule the Black Woods.

That is...

Beeeeeeh-.

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

"Did you hear that?"

"Yes. I'm not even surprised anymore."

They had long abandoned complacency.

From the moment The Nameless Mist appeared, they were prepared to fight against the Outer Gods.

Footsteps sound~

Crack-.

The two Administrators turned towards the sound.

In the center of Black Woods, countless eyes and legs approached their location.

And among them...

"...They've arrived."

"The Nameless Player."

Surrounded by Black Woods Goats, YuWon, the shepherd, stood there.

"Nameless, you say. Clearly, I am active under the name Kim YuHun."

Petting the heads of the goats one by one, YuWon shrugged.

"Oh, right. This is just the beginning."

Beeeeeeh-.

The goats bleated in response to YuWon's words.

The goats were easily more than dozens.

Probably, in this vast woods, there were many more goats hidden than were visible.

"So, you know this name? Kim YuWon."

"Kim YuWon?"

The Administrators locked eyes.

Although the memory grazed them, they failed to recall YuWon's name.

At that reaction, YuWon nodded.

It seemed that even after hearing his name directly, neither of the Administrators remembered it.

'That's all I needed to confirm.'

There was no need to continue talking to them.

YuWon directed the goats with a gesture.

Beeeeeeh-.

The goats surrounded the two Administrators.

The Administrators began to swell in the overwhelming presence of the goats absorbing YuWon's Divine Power and growing in size.

Woo~

The two Administrators revealed their true forms.

An Administrator with green scales and jaws, and another that was a giant sphere with dozens of eyes and thin legs.

Enormously increasing their sizes, they looked down at YuWon and the goats and released their Arcane Power.

[How do you have those Names?]

[Are you also part of the Outer Gods?]

The reason they became interested in YuWon was simple.

It was because of the Names he possessed.

However, they didn't know.

That those weren't the only Names YuWon possessed.

"Dagon. Ihot."

The two administrators staggered at the names YuWon mentioned.

Dagon and Ihot.

Those were the real names of the two, the Administrators of the 17th and 21st floors respectively.

[How...?]

[Our names?]

The Administrators were baffled.

And rightfully so.

They couldn't even imagine that within the Tower there existed a being who knew their Names.

They had assumed that YuWon was a remnant of the Outer remaining in the Tower.

But if he were just an Outer God, he wouldn't have a way to know their Names.

"Why are you the ones deciding the distinction between an Inner and Outer?"

Inner and Outer.

Words that had been used for a long time, when the fight against the Outers lingered.

Back then, Tower players called themselves Inner.

At that time, the term Inner was used as a concept opposed to Outer, and the Tower, with its brief and tumultuous history, was heading towards destruction at the hands of the Outers.

However, long before that...

There were those who used the word Inner.

"What makes you think you can call yourselves owners of the Tower when you cowered in terror?"

Beeeeeej-.

YuWon stroked the fur of an approaching goat and mocked the two Administrators.

"Has it gotten to your heads?"

A Name born from the arrogance of believing themselves the owners of the Tower.

Inner.

The only ones entitled to use that name were the Players, not the Administrators.

Chapter 555

Side Story 31

[What are you?]

[Someone is telling our story!]

The Black Woods trembled with the Arcane Power emanating from the two Administrators.

Though they were only Administrators of the lower levels, they were still Administrators. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that all the Arcane Power in this world was on their side.

And in response to their power...

Beeeeeh.

The goats urged with their bleats.

They were asking for the order to attack.

The Name of Shub-Niggurath was synonymous with absolute power over the goats of this woods.

The goats couldn't move without YuWon's permission.

That's why they were bleating.

They were asking for permission to devour the two Administrators.

"Well, it's time for a long-awaited feast."

Yuwon responded to the cries of the goats.

"Devour them."

Beeeeeh!

The goats pounced on the two Administrators in unison.

Not just from around YuWon, but they emerged from all parts of the woods.

Crunch!

The goats opened their mouths as wide as their bodies and bit into the Administrators' flesh.

Squeeee!

Pwah!

Waves stirred with Dagon's claws. The mighty water pressure enveloped the goats and turned the Black Woods into a turbulent sea.

Crack!

The hundreds of hands and feet sprouting from Ihot's torso crushed the goats' bodies, bending and breaking their backs in half.

The goats were torn by claws and crushed by hands and feet.

But they were children of Shub-Niggurath.

Beeeeeh!

Crunch!

A massive mouth bit into Dagon's forearm wielding claws.

Crunch!

Ugh!

The sound of bones crunching along with flesh.

The Black Woods Goats mercilessly harassed the two Administrators.

'We can't kill them no matter how much we kill them.'

'We have to catch the entity with the Name.'

Their gazes met. They couldn't keep fighting the goats alone.

They were ghostly beings inhabiting the Black Woods. As long as the entity with the Name didn't disappear, they would resurrect ceaselessly thanks to its power.

[Dagon.]

[Understood.]

Dagon nodded at Ihot's words and bowed.

Whoosh!

A pillar of water rose into the sky. His figure, rising high enough to see the entire forest, distorted as his body swelled enormously.

And right after...

Crack!

The hands sprouting from his body caught the forest goats.

Beeeeh.

Beeeeh.

The goats fought fiercely.

Crunch, crack!

Gasp!

The goats bit into Ihot's hands holding them and rammed their inflated bodies with sharp horns.

Puff, pop!

Ihot's countless eyes holding the goats turned towards Dagon.

[I can't hold them for long.]

[It's enough.]

To catch the entity controlling the goats.

Boom!

Riding on the rising water wave, Dagon's body, surpassing Ihot and the herd of goats, had become as large as a small mountain.

Black pupils without sclera.

Transparent skin clearly showing the movement of blood flowing through his body.

YuWon had to lift his head to observe Dagon's form.

"You've been living well, haven't you?"

A monster formed by a colossal mass of Arcane Power.

YuWon mocked Dagon's form, reminiscent of a sea creature.

"You look like someone who's had a tantrum."

[Talk however you want.]

Crunch, crunch~

The prominent veins on his hand's back swelled, and colossal Arcane Power enveloped Dagon's fist.

[Now it's your end.]

Kwang-!

Dagon's fist struck the ground where YuWon stood.

The ground flipped, and the woods shook.

The trees of the Black Woods broke and fell with a creak, and Dagon lowered his other hand.

Bang-!

The eyes, resembling those of a mammal, emitted a murderous aura.

The Arcane Power, as if in tune with Dagon's murderous aura, gradually became more destructive.

Bang, bang, bang-!

And so, several times.

Dagon's movements, punching towards YuWon, gradually slowed down.

[...?]

Perplexity reflected in his eyes, which were once fiercely beast-like.

Clearly, by this point, he should feel like his body was being crushed, but he felt none of that.

And at that moment, when Dagon felt something strange.

Crack-.

The fist swinging as if to break the ground stopped.

His arm, as if stuck in the ground, didn't move from the sunken ground.

"If you really wanted to fight, you should have stayed in the sea."

Dagon was the Administrator of Floor 20.

It was in the sea where he wielded his greatest power.

On solid ground, Dagon's power was halved.

That's why he had no choice but to go after YuWon directly. Because he didn't have the confidence to fight against Shub-Niggurath's offspring.

However...

He was wrong.

[The strength of the Giant resides in your arms.]

That the owner, YuWon, was a much more dangerous opponent than the thousand goats before him.

[That is... a Giant...]

The moment Dagon recognized the nature of the ability residing in YuWon's arm.

Whoosh-!

With a momentary feeling of lightness, Dagon's body soared into the air.

'He... threw me?'

Was he Hercules, to throw him alone with his strength?

Above all, what he knew was that only Hercules in this Tower used Gigantification.

He had verified through numerous Envoys that there were no other users of the "Gigantification" ability handled by Hercules, a single-digit High-Ranker.

So, where did this guy come from?

Confused, he hurriedly regained balance in the air and looked down at YuWon.

'Where did he go?'

Yuwon had already disappeared from that place.

Dagon hastily searched for YuWon, who had thrown him, moving his eyes.

"One. If you lose sight of your enemy once-"

Unbeknownst, due to his enormous size like a mountain.

"It's over."

Yuwon was already above Dagon's head.

['The Heavenly Demon Spirit' rules 'The Flame of Death and Decay.']

['The Dancer Who Dances With Fire' rules 'The Heavenly Demon Spirit.']

Fwoosh-!

The giant figure engulfed in flames rose above YuWon. The giant, wielding a sword of fire, mimicked YuWon's movements and swung his sword.

Kwaaah-!

Dagon was beheaded.

Ihot screamed seeing Dagon's head fall lifelessly, separated from his body.

[Dagon-!]

How?

How could he cut Dagon's resilient neck so easily, as if slicing through butter?

A chill ran down Ihot's spine, reminding him of the ominous feeling he had felt for the first time in YuWon.

'That unsettling feeling I felt on that guy's sword wasn't an illusion.'

His sword emitted a strange aura. Being close to him made his body feel heavy, and even from a distance, it felt like the sword grazed his neck.

At first, he thought it was a hallucination.

As Administrators, they knew in-depth about all the items that existed in this Tower.

And no item in the world, no matter how powerful, could have an advantage over them, who had made a 'Mana Contract.'

So, why?

Why that black sword...?

Tsss-tss.

That wasn't all.

Atop Dagon's falling corpse, Ihot's eyes reflected the figure of YuWon assuming a spear stance.

[That is...!]

Dozens of eyes gleamed in the darkness.

Zizizi-!

Arcane Power amplified over Dagon's body.

There was only one known item with that appearance.

[Is that Gungnir?]

No, it wasn't.

That was the item wielded by the God Odin of Asgard, an item made of Light Arcane Power.

But this was the opposite.

Judging by the Dark Arcane Power emanating from it, it could only be one thing.

'Nír.'

The item opposite to Gungnir.

A symmetrical item that, in terms of power, was comparable to Gungnir.

And now it had appeared in the Tower.

[That is definitely, those Goblins-!]

The moment Ihot realized the identity of the item, a roar echoed.

Zheeng-!

The spear YuWon held in his hand was forcefully thrown towards Ihot.

There was no time to wonder about YuWon's identity anymore.

Ihot withdrew all the hands holding the goats and focused on blocking the incoming spear.

Kwaji, zizizi-!

[Kyaaaah-!]

The spear, containing colossal Arcane Power and flying with swift and powerful force, pierced and rotted several of Ihot's hands before reaching his body.

Beeeeeh.

Beeeh.

Kwadak, kwadad-.

Chisss-.

Meanwhile, the goats surrounding Ihot avidly devoured his body.

[Do you really think we'll fall for something like this?]

Ihot's hands finally managed to block Nír by grabbing the spear.

Although his body was being bitten by the goats, and he had lost almost half of his hands...

At that moment, Ihot allowed himself a small smile for having successfully blocked an item symmetrical to Gungnir.

Of course.

"I didn't think a hastily activated spear could cut an Administrator's throat so easily."

Kuk-.

A small sound of footsteps.

Ihot's eyes followed YuWon, who was now standing on his voluminous body.

[What...? When...!]

"Do you know what?"

The sword was held in reverse.

Shwaaah!

Feeling a sense of danger, Ihot's hands lunged to grab YuWon.

Just like Dagon, once they catch you once, the fight is as good as over.

Puhk!

The sword embedded deeply into Ihot's torso.

The hands reaching towards YuWon's body ceased their movement simultaneously.

Having plunged the sword deep into Ihot's torso, YuWon looked into one of his eyes and continued speaking.

"The power of Gungnir that Odin launched was ten times stronger than what you just blocked."

Odin.

He was YuWon's comrade and the King who sacrificed the most.

"That guy trained his body and threw his spear every day. Saying that if he wanted the world he ruled to be safe, he himself had to be strong."

Looking at the ruins of Asgard, Odin said, "I should have trained more."

During that long time, Odin hadn't relaxed a single day.

He had fought and struggled against invisible enemies every day to protect Asgard.

"That guy gave his life in the battle ten years ago to protect the Realm he had created."

He learned of the situation through Son OhGong and Hercules.

In the battle that took place without YuWon, Odin finally lost his life.

Odin sacrificed his life.

He fought by burning his life and protected the battlefield.

Until Mimir, sacrificing his life and soul, brought several of his comrades from the future, joining the battle.

"And you idiots want to take over that world."

It was unthinkable.

The right to live in this world belongs to those who protected it.

Those guys who had always been watching from afar when Foolish Chaos plunged the Tower into chaos, now pretend to be the masters.

Yuwon couldn't tolerate such a thing, he couldn't even imagine it.

Zizizi-

Ihot's body, pierced by the Otherworld Sword, gradually turned into black ashes and dispersed.

His eyes were filled with injustice, resentment, and endless questions.

He, who had observed countless worlds with dozens of eyes and hands, spoke with his many eyes.

Who are you?

Chapter 556

Side Story 32

Hwaaah!

The wind blew.

A wind so sharp and fast that it was difficult to open the eyes.

The Celestial Realm soldiers caught in its whirlwind flew through the sky.

"Aaaah!"

"I'm flying!"

"Hold on tight!"

The wind that blew at the Administrator's gesture threw the soldiers into the sky.

Whiiii!

A wind like a typhoon swept through the sand.

Due to it, even mid-level skilled soldiers found it challenging to stay steady.

He wasn't using any special ability.

Magic itself was aiding him.

"Huuuk, huu," Lee Rangjin panted.

Additionally, from the other side of the collapsed stadium, Lee Ye, with trembling hands, nocked an arrow.

Hargan, staggering as he gathered electricity in his fingers, collapsed to the ground as if his legs had given way.

[I pay my respects to you.]

The Administrator's clothes didn't budge an inch in the strong wind.

[High-Rankers are truly different.]

"Thanks for the compliment."

[You can consider it an honor. It's a miracle that simple creations from another world like you have even brushed against the Master of Mana's clothes.]

The Administrator's clothes were torn in various places. All were marks from the battle with the Rankers, including Lee Rangjin.

"Wow..."

Whoosh.

Lee Rangjin put strength back into the hand wielding the Unbreakable Sword.

"Those words sound both like a compliment and a mockery at the same time."

Bam.

Boooooom!

The Unbreakable Sword once again drew a huge trajectory, flying from multiple directions simultaneously.

The Administrator reached out his hand towards the Unbreakable Sword.

Cwaaah!

The wind gushing from the Administrator's fingertips pushed the Unbreakable Sword back.

The Unbreakable Sword couldn't even get close, let alone cut.

Lee Rangjin took a step back and looked at the Unbreakable Sword in his hand.

'Again.'

The moment he wielded the Unbreakable Sword, the magic imbued in the weapon dissipated.

It was as if the magic refused to attack the Administrator.

That strange sensation made him hesitate in his attack.

'But...'

Crack.

Lee Rangjin tightly clenched the hand wielding the Unbreakable Sword.

'I'm getting used to it little by little.'

To prevent the magic from dispersing, it required great concentration and even more magic than usual.

It took a lot of attention and effort to control the rebellious magic and become familiar with it.

At first, he had despaired in this battle.

With magic that didn't obey his will, he wondered how he could defeat the Administrator, the Master of Mana.

But as the battle continued, he was gradually getting used to that feeling.

Moreover...

"Ugh."

A punch accompanied by a small, weak cry.

Boooooom!

Pandora's fist pushed the wind and brushed past the Administrator's head.

Although it failed to hit due to the wind's deflection, Pandora's strength clearly approached the Administrator's range.

'Her brute strength is really incredible.'

Pandora wasn't using any special abilities, nor was she consuming a large amount of magic like him.

She was simply using her overwhelming physical strength to keep going.

'I don't know why she's here, but...'

Kwaaaaut!

Swinging the Unbreakable Sword alongside Pandora, Lee Rangjin filled with confidence little by little.

'We can win.'

In the space created by Pandora.

Viiiiaaaaaa!

Puuuuuum!

Lee Ye's arrow pierced the Administrator's shoulder.

Losing balance for a moment, the Administrator was no match for Lee Rangjin, a seasoned warrior with experience in all kinds of battlefields.

Cwaaah!

The Unbreakable Sword cut through the wind.

Fuuuk!

The Unbreakable Sword pierced the Administrator's body along with his robe.

"Finally!"

"The General Chief did it!"

The soldiers watching the battle cheered. Although they initially thought it was impossible to win, their General Chief, Lee Rangjin, had not disappointed them.

However.

"..."

Lee Rangjin's reaction, who had thrust the Unbreakable Sword into the Administrator's body, was different from theirs.

Lee Rangjin had a surprised expression.

'This guy's body...'

Clack!

The Administrator's hand struck Lee Rangjin's body.

Immediately after...

Cwaaaau!

The wind gushing from the Administrator's hand pierced through Lee Rangjin's body as if it were piercing it and threw him into the sky.

"Kyaaa!"

Lee Rangjin sharply turned his body in the air to cushion the impact.

The impact, as if his body were pierced, prevented him from straightening up properly.

Staggering, he looked at the Unbreakable Sword he was wielding.

He remembered the feeling he had when the Unbreakable Sword pierced the Administrator's body a moment ago.

'There was nothing.'

When a body was pierced, you felt flesh and bones. However, he felt none of that in the body of the Administrator, Hastur.

His body was empty.

Except for the robe that enveloped him, there was nothing inside.

'How the hell am I supposed to fight against this...?'

He thought he had finally succeeded, but he didn't have a real body.

It was a desperate situation.

A silence fell over the stadium.

The Administrator took a deep breath.

[Those who have not yet lost hope...]

His eyes fixed on three Rankers who had stepped forward.

[There are three]

Tsukuyomi, Pandora, and Hargan.

Even in this situation, after Lee Rangjin was knocked down, they were still willing to fight.

"There was an incident about 10 years ago, where the Administrator of the 1st Floor was killed."

Tsukuyomi's eyes gleamed with intense white.

"Administrators are not Gods, nor are they invincible."

Tsukuyomi's eyes filled with Arcane Power.

The black pupils disappeared, and the irises turned white.

Seeing the magic emanating from her eyes, the Administrator knew where Tsukuyomi's power came from.

[Is it Izanagi?]

Izanagi.

An ancient High-Ranker who created the Three Sacred Relics and the name of the item created when the Three Sacred Relics are combined.

The strange thing was that the Three Sacred Relics had disappeared during the last 10 years.

[How did you obtain them?]

Tsukuyomi, who had appeared after gathering the missing Three Sacred Relics, did not answer the Administrator's question and instead activated Izanagi's ability.

[Izanagi governs the Arcane Power of the surrounding area.]

[The rate of Arcane Power amplification for targets recognized as allies increases significantly.]

[Drains the Arcane Power from targets recognized as enemies.]

Tsutsuutsu-.

The wind that had swirled around the Administrator slowly dispersed.

Arcane Power gradually moved towards Tsukuyomi.

The Administrator began to resist that power.

['Mana Master' resists 'Izanagi'.]

[Izanagi's power is reduced by 48%.]

The power of the item weakened.

Although he resisted almost half, that didn't mean it had no effect.

Izanagi's power interfered with the Administrator's magic.

The Administrators, the owners of all mana.

The mere fact that it could interfere with their power was truly astonishing.

Zzzz~

Layers of ice formed around the Administrator.

Tsukuyomi appeared with a frosty aura.

"What do you think?"

She responded by pointing the crimson sword at the Administrator's neck.

"I'm also curious about that."

Shwaaak-!

The Administrator's robe tore with the crimson sword in her hand.

At the same time, the wind began to blow around the Administrator again.

The sharp gust of wind cut Tsukuyomi's face, splattering blood.

Resisting the force pushing her, Tsukuyomi cut the Administrator's robe.

[It's futile resistance.]

The Administrator's voice filled with power.

The eyes engraved on her had the power to oppose the Administrators' power.

"It's not futile."

Shwip-!

And then.

Pandora appeared behind the Administrator, grabbing his shoulder.

"We will win. This time too."

Clang-!

Kaboom-!

An explosion erupted with the fist that struck.

The Administrator's body staggered momentarily from the impact.

And the next moment...

Crackle~

"Thanks to this, I can take a break."

Perhaps because he was recognized as an "ally" within Izanagi's domain?

Hargan, free from the Administrator's influence, began to control his Arcane Power and created a giant spear in one step.

Kaboom-!

The golden spear pierced the Administrator's body.

The unflattering nickname of "low-budget Zeus" he received in the world, his Lightning Bolt, hit its mark.

Crackle, crackle.

The light emitted by the Lightning Bolt traveled through the center of the stadium.

Hargan, who had exhausted all his remaining Arcane Power, collapsed backward as if exhausted, and Tsukuyomi distanced herself to avoid being caught by the Lightning Bolt.

The light gradually faded.

And in the midst of it, the Administrator appeared with a hole in the center of his robe.

"Ah, seriously. I'm exhausted..."

Hargan, with no strength in his body, sat on the ground with a defeated smile.

The Administrator was unharmed.

Apart from his tattered robe, there were no changes in his movements.

Crunch~

The Administrator approached slowly.

Hargan felt like he was fighting a formless enemy.

'No matter how much I attack, it has no real form.'

There was nothing more frustrating than fighting an invisible enemy.

He hadn't even felt this when he fought monsters of the ghost race.

They couldn't win.

That certainty gradually transformed into fear.

But then...

Bam-!

The Administrator's body staggered once again from a powerful punch.

"Don't touch the weak."

Pandora.

Hargan's expression distorted at that brutality.

'We... weak?'

Hargan's pride was wounded. It was as if she treated him like a child, him, who obsessed over strength more than anyone.

But now wasn't the time to argue about that.

"Haaaah-!"

Pandora took a deep breath and lunged towards the Administrator's chest.

She knew that physical attacks would be useless. She acted as if she knew no fear.

"Pandora! We first have to figure out the true nature of that guy... ugh!"

Tsukuyomi, who was activating Izanagi, covered one eye with her hand.

Her vision was blurring.

'Really...? Already?'

It was the first time she used Izanagi. She knew that the Arcane Power and mental strength required to activate it were no small feat, but she didn't expect it to deplete so quickly.

Bang-!

Pandora's fist struck the Administrator's body.

Chiii-!

The wind cut through Pandora's body.

Even though her fist tore, she didn't hesitate to keep moving.

[Seems like something's wrong with you.]

Chiiiiik-!

Pandora's extended fist tore, and a bloody wound appeared on her forearm.

Pandora didn't back down.

Pandora broke through the wind claws.

Tsukuyomi shouted, surprised by her behavior as if sacrificing her own body.

"Pandora!"

For a moment, she felt as if time slowed down.

Like a moth hurling itself to its death.

Pandora against the Administrator wielding the wind.

In the instant they collided, Tsukuyomi tightly closed her eyes.

She couldn't bear to see how Pandora was cut by the Administrator's wind.

But...

"...?"

Tsukuyomi, in the unusual silence, quickly opened her eyes again.

And there...

"I was just going to watch...."

YuWon, who had disappeared along with the two Administrators, was behind the Administrator, holding Pandora in his arms.

"It's harder than I thought."

Chapter 557

Side Story 33

Until recently, YuWon had been silently observing the fight from a corner of the stands.

His team, created by himself, was battling an Administrator.

To his surprise, the power of the Three Sacred Treasures created by Tsukuyomi could rival the Arcane Power of the Administrator.

"I thought it would be easier than I thought."

Izanagi.

Even YuWon coveted the performance of Izanagi when the Three Sacred Treasures were combined.

An item that could compete against the "Mana Master," a monopoly of the Administrators.

YuWon thought the fight might end more easily than he thought.

That was until Tsukuyomi collapsed on the ground with closed eyes.

"...This is problematic."

At this point, Pandora was the only force left. Of course, she still had the ability to fight, but the issue was her broken spirit.

They still didn't know.

That the true nature of that damn Administrator was nothing out of the ordinary.

And then...

"Eh?"

YuWon saw Pandora recklessly charging towards the administrator.

He knew.

That was the correct answer.

Even if it meant losing a hand or an arm...

It was the right answer to win this fight.

However.

Even knowing that, YuWon couldn't help but move.

"I was just going to watch, but it's harder than I thought."

"YuWon?"

Pandora blinked in surprise and looked at YuWon.

Everyone's attention focused on YuWon due to the unexpected situation.

Those who still didn't know the relationship between YuWon and Pandora opened their eyes in surprise at seeing YuWon holding Pandora in his arms.

"You did much better than I expected. I told you to gain experience, but I didn't think you could come this far."

Yuwon was genuinely impressed.

He didn't bring all three to the Black Woods but only two, not because he couldn't handle all three by himself.

There would be many more battles against the Administrators in the future.

However, he couldn't be there every time.

High-Rankers needed the power to confront the Administrators even if they formed a team with several people.

Forming a team to fight against the Administrators and leaving an Administrator behind in this battle was the first step toward achieving that.

However...

They did much better than YuWon had expected in their first battle.

"Why did you come back alone?"

The Administrator looked around at YuWon's appearance.

They were not in sight.

The two Administrators who had disappeared with him.

Only YuWon had returned, and the others were nowhere to be seen.

"Are you really... the owner of Black Woods?"

The last thing the two Administrators saw before disappearing was the Black Woods.

They thought it was impossible, just a resemblance, but...

"Hey, what are you doing here?"

Bam!

At that moment, another presence appeared over the arena.

A white-haired man riding on a white cloud, cutting through the Administrator's wind.

"...The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal?"

The Administrator's voice trembled as he confirmed Son OhGong's identity.

He even held the unconscious 25th Floor Administrator in his hands.

Following YuWon, who had defeated two Administrators, Son OhGong had also subdued another Administrator.

In an instant, the situation had drastically deteriorated.

"And were you just watching?"

"That was what I was going to do at first."

"If you had stayed still, that bastard would have finished."

Son OhGong clicked his tongue regretfully. He alternately looked at YuWon and Pandora, who was huddled in his chest, with a mocking expression.

"Did you also become blind like a bird that can't see?"

YuWon nodded silently.

Pandora chuckled foolishly at Son OhGong's words.

In a combat situation like this, one would never expect to make such an irrational decision.

Making Pandora, injured from the battle with the Administrators, sit on the ground, YuWon examined her body.

'She's injured.'

It was natural for her to get injured while fighting.

He hadn't dragged her onto the battlefield without considering that.

However, just in case...

With a fleeting thought, YuWon hurriedly subdued the two Administrators and silently observed their battle.

'And quite a bit, too.'

In reality, she wasn't that injured.

Scratched and cut wounds from the wind.

As expected when fighting against an opponent who wielded wind magic, there were numerous superficial wounds, but not very deep.

Fortunately, there didn't seem to be any fatal injuries. Thanks to Pandora's robust constitution.

However, strangely, she seemed very injured.

YuWon didn't feel good.

"Rest."

"...I can win."

"I know you would have won if I hadn't intervened. So consider it a draw."

YuWon pressed Pandora's forehead, who was trying to get up, and sat her back down.

Son OhGong laughed cheerfully as he flew over to YuWon's side on his Flying Nimbus.

YuWon looked at the Administrator that Son OhGong held in his hand and asked:

"Is he dead?"

"I didn't cut off his breath."

"He looks dead."

"He woke up a couple of times on the way. He really has a tough life."

"Then it's lucky."

Suddenly, Son OhGong narrowed his eyes.

The two locked eyes.

"Rock, paper..."

Whoosh!

Looking into YuWon's eyes with his Golden Cinder Eyes, Son OhGong extended his palm.

"Scissors!"

Rock and paper.

Son OhGong, who had drawn paper, grabbed his head and screamed.

"Ahhhh! Hey, that's not fair! Who thinks of using Eyes of Foreknowledge in Rock, Paper, Scissors?"

"We both used abilities, so don't play dumb and accept it."

Son OhGong rolled on the ground for a while after that.

Despite having fought quite a bit, it seemed like the guy was still hungry.

It's understandable.

Having not had a decent fight in ten years, no matter how much he fought, he would still hunger for battle.

[Did you choose your opponent with Rock, Paper, Scissors?]

The Administrator looked incredulously at approaching YuWon.

The fact that they didn't attack together, but only one, and not The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal, but another guy stepping forward, was puzzling.

YuWon nodded to the question and displayed his hand, which had drawn a rock.

"Yes. I won."

Son OhGong was definitely an idiot. Rock, Paper, Scissors, of all things. He had relied on his Golden Cinder Eyes, but YuWon had Eyes of Foreknowledge.

It's not like he was looking into a distant future; he just had to guess what OhGong would draw next, which wasn't that difficult.

[...And what happened to the other two?]

"You mean Dagon and Ihot?"

[How do you know those names?]

The Administrator is bewildered.

No one but the Administrators should know their names.

Only a few know.

The ancient Administrators who took root in the Tower and have existed for a long time...

[Don't tell me...?]

A being that is not an Administrator.

Thinking about that, Hastur's Arcane Power became unstable and began to fluctuate.

"You have a good eye, Hastur."

By guessing his name right, Hastur's speculation inched one step closer to certainty.

And that was the situation that the Administrators most wanted to avoid.

[That's impossible. He clearly-]

"Don't you see?"

Shuaa!

Fwoosh, whoosh!

Enormous flames engulfed YuWon and Hastur.

Hastur, wrapped in flames, hesitated and took a step back.

The flames turned purple.

Inside them, a huge eye stared at Hastur.

[Magnum Innominandum]

[The Flame of Death and Decay]

He felt like he was going to be suffocated by the enormity of the flames.

Hastur's gaze turned to the sword that YuWon held in his hand.

An item that had caught his attention since YuWon first appeared.

As if its mere existence denied and threatened the Administrators, like the fangs of a fierce beast.

"Ah, this?"

YuWon felt Hastur's gaze, hidden in his empty cloak.

"I didn't think of it myself. At that time, I was just in a hurry to fight the ones outside."

The Otherworld Sword.

This item was Hephaestus's masterpiece.

A weapon that future Hephaestus, sacrificing his hammer, had bequeathed to the current Hephaestus and which he had modified.

This sword was the nemesis of the Outer Gods.

But ironically, the role of the Otherworld Sword did not end with the fight against the Outer Gods.

"Thinking about it, you guys are the same. You come from outside."

[Don't tell me you, seriously....]

"Not now. Now, I only have memories left. But it's funny that you only remember Azathoth and forgot about me."

Step by step, YuWon approached Hastur.

"Well, for me, that's a good thing."

Crack.

Hastur began to retreat.

He had already lost the will to fight.

What he wanted most was to ride the wind and flee as far as possible.

But he couldn't.

Fwoosh, whoosh!

The flames burned fiercely around him.

It was as if touching them would turn his whole body into black ashes.

Unable to ignore the flames, Hastur stopped retreating and turned his head to look at YuWon.

"It's ridiculous. Posing as Gods, but being defeated by the Players you yourselves summoned and being dragged to the ground."

The flames burned in YuWon's eyes.

Hastur's interior, reflected in the Golden Cinder Eyes, remained empty.

An empty space.

That's why Izanagi, Tsukuyomi, Lee Ye, and Hargan, too.

They gradually lost the will to fight against a formless Hastur.

However, they were not wrong.

Hastur's cloak, now tattered from the battle against the Celestial Realm and various High-Rankers.

She had tried to deliver a final blow to Hastur's true form.

The result probably would have been the loss of a hand or an arm for Pandora, and death for Hastur.

But YuWon couldn't just watch that scene.

If the opponent had been a stubborn lunatic like Asura, the battle would have been much easier.

[What... are you?]

Hastur asked about the essence of YuWon. Although he had initially doubted, now he was sure that YuWon was not Azathoth.

Azathoth.

He was an absolute being that spanned the Tower and all worlds, regardless of form or space.

A being that could destroy the Tower in an instant if it wished.

The only being that even Outer Gods like Shub-Niggurath, Yog-Sothoth, and Nyarlathotep, whom the Administrators feared, feared was Azathoth.

However, he didn't feel that Azathoth's power in the current YuWon.

"You see, I told you, 'now' I'm not."

Fwoosh, whoosh!

The flames were getting closer.

"In the past, I was for a while. I had its memories, its power, and its Name. But now I've lost the power and the Name."

The wind surrounding Hastur pushed YuWon's body backward.

"But I still have a Name."

[Name...?]

Now that he thought about it, he hadn't heard his Name.

A Name overshadowed by Azathoth's enormous name.

"Kim YuWon."

The three words stirred a whirlwind of emotions in the Administrator's mind.

Chapter 558

The first player who mentioned his Name was the Tutorial Administrator.

"A guy named has entered."

He didn't remember the Name well. Instead, he only recalled the news that a formidable guy had arrived.

The Tutorial Administrator was the Administrator of the lowest layer, but his power was the greatest among the Administrators.

He was in charge of selecting Players from the inhabitants of various worlds and dimensions.

It was the first time since Son OhGong that he mentioned a Player from the lower layer.

"Why? Is he an important guy?"

"It's said that the son of Zeus has participated this time. What is that guy doing?"

At that moment, the Administrators' attention focused on Hargan.

The lineage of Zeus inherited the Lightning. Although he became a Player belatedly, his ability was already at a considerable level before starting the Tutorial.

Perhaps he would become a formidable spear that would replace them and fight against the Outers in the shortest time possible.

However.

"That guy is the second one."

The result was completely unexpected for the Administrators.

"A guy from an insignificant world called 'Earth' surpassed Hargan and passed through."

"Is that possible? A guy who isn't even of Pure Blood?"

"Certainly... it's the first time since The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal."

The surprise didn't end there.

"The Chimera Creator died at the hands of that guy."

The Tutorial Administrator who said that muttered that it was a nuisance but also smiled.

"Thanks to that, we have to rewrite the end of the Tutorial from scratch."

Player has broken all records in the Tutorial to date.

He even defeated the Chimera Creator and completely changed the ecosystem of the Tutorial.

It was an anomaly and a radical change.

The change began to make waves from .

The First Floor Administrator was even more shocked.

"That guy fought against an Olympus Ranker and drew."

It was absurd.

Even if the battle took place on the First Floor, drawing with a Ranker was unheard of.

The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal had fought against the Chimera Creator on the 50th floor and won, but that was after he had adapted quite a bit to the Tower.

However, a newcomer who had just passed the Tutorial drew with an Olympus Ranker.

"If it's him, it might be possible."

Hastur thought after hearing the news. The battle against the Outer Gods, which was considered impossible to win.

He wondered if that guy could defeat Yog-Sothoth and Shub-Niggurath.

However....

'... What was it?'

He had forgotten it for a while.

A Name composed of only three characters.

Fwoosh-.

Hastur thought slowly as he burned in flames.

'Kim YuWon.'

The forgotten Name came to his mind, and memories related to it passed like a movie.

'Why did I forget it?'

He fought against Foolish Chaos. As if he came from the future, he avoided Ragnarok and Gigantomachy.

Foolish Chaos's plans were thwarted one after another.

Then he avoided the first invasion of Shub-Niggurath and eliminated her along with Odin.

He gained the Name of Shub-Niggurath.

He took the power and the name of N'yog-Sothep, Nyarlathotep, and Yog-Sothoth.

And finally, he took the power and the Name of Azathoth.

Hwa-rar!

Hastur's cloak turned into ashes and swirled.

In his gradually clouding sight, he saw YuWon's face looking down at the cloak in flames.

[...I thought you had disappeared.]

In the last moment.

The Name, which had disappeared along with Azathoth's, came to his mind, and Hastur murmured as if lamenting.

[We had forgotten you.]

The throne shattered.

The Impious King who blasphemed and loved the world from above no longer existed in this world.

To not forget Azathoth's Name, they had spent a long time engraving it in their heads.

However...

Precisely another person.

They had forgotten the name of someone they shouldn't forget.

[Kim... Yu...]

Hastur thought as the last remaining heads turned into ashes and flew away.

If they couldn't think of the variable Kim YuWon.

They might lose this war.

Craack~

YuWon stepped on the ashes scattered on the ground and extinguished the flames.

"The ones below are four with this... no, five, including the one on the first floor?"

Somehow, the Great Celestial War turned into bait that attracted many Administrators.

Five out of a hundred.

It wasn't a large number, but not all Administrators would act the same way.

That was evident in how he immediately warned Zeus.

Undoubtedly, some of the Administrators opposed the idea of expelling Guilds and Players.

'This should be enough for those guys to hide for a while.'

They had lost four comrades in an instant.

Now that even the 95th Floor Administrator was injured, cautious types wouldn't move recklessly.

So...

'Judging by how they targeted this tournament, we must assume that the groundwork has already begun.'

He couldn't waste time.

Thinking about what he had to do next, YuWon remembered a game he used to play on 'Earth' a long time ago.

"This is what they called a mafia game."

Chi-ik.

Yuwon stomped once again on the ashes that had been Hastur and extinguished the flames.

Frrr, frr~

The flames gradually went out.

Next to him were Son OhGong with a disgusted expression and Pandora bandaging her wounds.

And beyond that...

"..."

There were people in silence looking at YuWon with eyes of surprise. The eyes of those people were fixed on the black ashes that YuWon was stepping on.

One wouldn't have to be foolish to know that the ashes were Hastur, who had recently disappeared with YuWon in the flames.

He had disappeared along with two Administrators and returned alive, and in an instant turned another Administrator into ashes with a giant flame.

'What is that guy... what the hell?'

Hargan, wordless, muttered lowly, unable to even laugh.

At first, he only thought of him as a nameless Ranker, or maybe a high-ranking Player who hadn't received a Ranking yet.

The true identity hidden within him was a monster of unimaginable proportions.

¡Zhuang-!

Clang~

Taishang Laojun, with the palm of his hand cut by the spear wielded by Asura, broke into a cold sweat.

He couldn't comprehend the current situation at all.

'Why am I being pushed back? Why?'

At first, he thought he could easily defeat this brat, even if it was only one round.

A guy who was in the three-digit Ranking even before he entered seclusion.

Moreover, he thought, what could a guy who has lost two of his three heads do?

And that thought didn't change even after they exchanged the first blow.

'I definitely had the advantage at the beginning.'

Out of every ten exchanges, three blows landed on Asura's body.

Each time, Asura staggered to regain balance and wielded his spear again.

He had great endurance. However, without the power of immortality like The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal, he was nothing more than a tree that would eventually fall.

Thinking that, Taishang Laojun threw himself into the battle.

But...

'Why?'

Zhuang-!

Once again, Taishang Laojun's palm sank into Asura's abdomen.

Gasp~

Despite staggering as if he would fall at any moment, Asura swung his spear.

Taishang Laojun's clothes tore.

The spear's tip deeply cut into his shoulder blade, and blood spurted upward.

'Why, why, why, why?!'

Taishang Laojun finally shouted as he saw Asura lunging at him like an undead that wouldn't die.

"Why won't you fall?!"

His hand struck Asura's chest.

Zhuang-!

The energy that shot through his palm shook Asura's body from the inside.

Asura's body shook violently.

Seeing Asura's eyes turning white in an instant, Taishang Laojun felt relieved, thinking that it was finally over.

And in that very moment...

Slash~

Asura, who staggered as if he would fall, exerted force again on the hand that held the spear.

"Why don't you beg me to lose?"

Impact sound~

"....."

The spear's shaft wielded by Asura hit Taishang Laojun's waist forcefully.

Taishang Laojun clenched his teeth to endure the impact.

If he could withstand this single blow, then it would be his turn to counterattack.

Or so it should have been.

Buzz, buzz~

The sword and the vajra aimed at Taishang Laojun's head and chest.

He had forgotten.

That Asura didn't have a single hand.

Flesh and bone tearing sound

The sword and the vajra penetrated, tearing flesh and bone.

Taishang Laojun's eyes widened with terror.

Strength left his body as the sword pierced his throat and the vajra tore through his ribs.

"Have you been... creating... openings... all this time...?"

Asura, who had been handling six arms and three heads, had been freely using one of them as a weapon to fight against Taishang Laojun with just a spear from some point.

Had he run out of Arcane Power, or was there a limit to the skill's duration?

At some point, Taishang Laojun stopped worrying about the four nonexistent arms and focused solely on the spear.

But...

"It seems like your real combat experience is quite poor after being in seclusion for so long."

That was exactly what Asura had been waiting for.

Complacency, that was Taishang Laojun's downfall, and what the cunning Asura had been seeking.

Whistle~

The sword that pierced his throat smoothly retracted.

Taishang Laojun's eyes dimmed.

Asura reached out for Taishang Laojun's head, whose life force was quickly fading.

Pukaak-!

His head exploded like a squashed fruit in no time.

In a short while, Taishang Laojun's body staggered backward and fell.

"I thought this guy was the strongest...."

Asura murmured regretfully while looking at his blood-stained palms.

"I was wrong."

Asura thought he would rather fight Taishang Laojun than the three mediocre Administrators.

He even judged that Taishang Laojun would only be more dangerous than the three Administrators if both possessed the same type of mana.

But, what happened?

Perhaps due to the time spent absorbing and getting accustomed to the Administrator's mana, Taishang Laojun had become a brute with only brute force.

"The real..."

Cutting sound~

Asura, now wielding two swords instead of the long spear, kicked the ground and stepped on air.

Whoosh~

"It's here."

The direction of his charge was the edge of the arena where the battle had ended.

It was exactly where the Administrator turned into ashes, and YuWon stood over him.

Shuaaaak-!

The first strike was simply a threat.

Asura, whose body was still warm from the disappointing battle, had no intention of ending the fight with a surprise attack like this.

So, just a little.

He intended to inflict a small wound to instill a sense of crisis.

"Are you still wandering?"

"...!"

Yuwon's and Asura's eyes met as he turned his head.

In the instant Asura was surprised and hesitated...

Yuwon's outstretched hand grabbed Asura's head and slammed it against the arena floor.

Kwaang-!

Chapter 559

Side Story 35

Boom!

At the end of the battle that was thought to be over, a sound echoed through the arena, making the entire place vibrate.

The stadium floor cracked and crumbled.

The tension that had dissipated instantly tightened again.

And upon confirming the source of that roar, Lee Rangjin couldn't help but laugh in disbelief.

"The winner of the Great Celestial War this time is that guy."

Asura lay on the ground, head bowed. And YuWon was still gripping Asura's head, slamming it into the ground.

If the two had really fought, the result would undoubtedly have been the same.

'Where the hell did this guy come from...?'

He had checked the list of participants before the final phase began.

Kim YuHun.

A name that was nowhere to be found in the Ranking.

That's why Celestial Realm had simply considered him as a talented high-ranker Player.

But, what a surprise.

Since the final phase began, in the arena intervened by the Administrators, he had demonstrated unparalleled skill.

He had achieved something much greater than winning this Great Celestial War.

'Regardless of his identity, we can't simply consider him an enemy just for being suspicious.'

Above all, he was a benefactor of Celestial Realm.

He was a Hero who had saved Celestial Realm when Taishang Laojun, who had allied with the Administrators, was about to hand everything over to them.

It wasn't right to be hostile to him just because he wasn't in the Ranking and his identity was unknown.

No...

Rather, they owed him an immeasurable debt.

'First...'

After all battles were over.

Lee Rangjin looked around at the battlefield filled with blood and corpses and closed his eyes tightly.

'We have to settle this chaos first.'

The era of peace had come to an end.

Celestial Realm quickly went into action.

It was natural since the Tournament they had organized had been a disaster.

They had to retrieve the bodies of the fallen warriors and discuss what compensation to offer to the deceased participants.

The spectators who had come to watch the Tournament were also a problem.

They couldn't let those who had spent valuable points and time simply leave like that.

Of course, despite all that.

YuWon had not gained little from this event.

'The result isn't bad.'

YuWon recalled the original purpose for which he had participated in this Tournament.

To publicize another name instead of his own name, which had been forgotten among the people.

And he had been quite successful.

The two Administrators he had dealt with in Black Woods.

And up to three Administrators, including the one burned in flames, had fallen at the hands of YuWon.

Although some participants and generals of Celestial Realm who witnessed that scene doubted the power of the Administrators, ironically, Asura had done them a great favor in the end.

'Because there aren't many Rankers who distrust the Ranking.'

A Player who had defeated Asura in the blink of an eye.

That moment instantly influenced the perception of the Player called "Kim YuHun."

The name Kim YuHun was engraved in people's minds instead of Kim YuWon.

Although there were still some who doubted, the fact that he had publicized his name to this extent was a great success.

Crunch~

Opening the sliding door of the room at the end of the hallway, Pandora, who was lying with bandages on her body, sprang up.

She seemed to have been waiting for quite some time after sending him a message through her Player Kit.

"What have you brought?"

Pandora's eyes gleamed.

YuWon extended the basket he held in his hands and replied:

"Just a little something."

"A cake?"

"No, something different."

They were on Floor 50.

In this Murim-like world, there were many things different from what Pandora used to eat.

"Candied fruit. It's something consumed a lot here."

"Is it sweet?"

"Quite."

Candied fruits in sugar.

Pandora, with sparkling eyes at this new snack, popped a candied fruit into her mouth and began to chew. Her expression seemed quite satisfied.

YuWon sat next to Pandora for a moment and watched her eat the fruit.

Then, she said:

"Although I can fight too, you know."

YuWon looked puzzled at Pandora's words, whose cheeks were filled with sweets.

"Hmm?"

"Can you finish talking before swallowing?"

Gulp!

As soon as YuWon finished speaking, Pandora swallowed the candied fruit that filled her mouth.

"Cough..."

Pandora spoke again to YuWon, who had been concerned for a moment.

"You don't have to do that from now on."

"I don't have to?"

"I can fight too. Now."

YuWon, who initially opened his eyes in surprise, laughed and patted Pandora's head.

YuWon nodded as if he understood, but in reality, he wasn't sure.

The same thing had happened in the battle that took place two days ago.

At first, he had intended to observe.

He wanted to see Pandora fight and win on her own.

However, even in a battle she could have won, YuWon ended up intervening. His body moved faster than his mind, but the reason was clear.

He didn't want to see her hurt.

'I can't make that promise.'

This incident had made him realize one thing:

YuWon couldn't leave Pandora alone.

"Oh, love, love~!"

And then, an unwanted guest arrived.

"YuWon and Pandora are in love~! In love~!"

Son Oh Gong mocked YuWon and Pandora while pointing at them annoyingly.

YuWon looked at him and waved his hand.

"Stop ruining the mood and go away."

"Oh, love... Ouch!"

Bang!

Son Oh Gong received a candied fruit in the nose and was sent flying backward.

YuWon had taken the fruit from Pandora's hand and thrown it with all his might at Son Oh Gong's face.

Precisely aiming at that hateful face, even using his Eyes of Foreknowledge.

Behind Son Oh Gong, lying on the floor, another unwanted guest appeared.

"What a mess."

A silver-haired woman looked disdainfully at the floor and at the sprawled Son Oh Gong in the doorway.

Tsukuyomi.

Appearing along with the cold, her hands were full of fruits hard to come by even in Celestial Realm.

"Are you hurt? Are you okay?"

He asked Pandora as he brought her the fruit basket.

Pandora briefly glanced at the contents of the basket before hiding under the blankets, leaving only her face exposed.

It wasn't a very welcoming reaction.

"You're shyer than you seem."

Without paying much attention, Tsukuyomi placed the basket aside and looked at YuWon.

She seemed to have missed the fire that lit up in Pandora's eyes at that moment.

"So, why don't you answer in her place?"

"She's not hurt. It's nothing serious, and she's just being treated here because she's not in a hurry to leave."

"Really? That's good."

Tsukuyomi approached YuWon.

Unknowingly, or pretending not to know, she didn't notice Pandora's glare and greeted YuWon.

"Thanks again. Thanks to you, I found the Three Sacred Treasures we had been searching for so long, and I was also able to create the Izanagi we desired so much."

"You still need to practice a bit more."

"You're right, I also felt my limitations."

"I already suspected that."

"Your personality is nicer than I thought."

Tsukuyomi laughed cheerfully at YuWon's response, unaware that he was sincere.

Somehow, YuWon's attitude was much softer than when they first met.

It is true that the Three Sacred Treasures were the dream of the Three Precious Children.

For Tsukuyomi, who had achieved it, there was no longer any burden on her heart.

"In any case, I will repay you for this debt. So, I'm leaving."

Tsukuyomi quickly bid farewell and left.

Apparently, she wanted to thank YuWon before leaving Celestial Realm.

The place where Tsukuyomi passed through for a moment...

"It's a little cold."

As expected of Tsukuyomi, who wielded the Arcane Power of Ice, the place where she passed through was filled with quite a chilly air.

That's what he thought...

...?

Pandora looked at him with killer eyes.

The origin of the cold air wasn't Tsukuyomi.

In the cold air...

Son OhGong, who had been observing the situation, cautiously opened his mouth.

"Well, well..."

"Both of you, get out of here."

Paf!

Hit once again by a flying candied fruit, Son OhGong fell backward.

This time it was Pandora.

YuWon and Son OhGong walked limping down the hallway.

Both had a small mark on their faces.

Son OhGong had a swollen nose, and YuWon had a headache.

It hurts a bit, this.

Son OhGong muttered as he touched his swollen nose bridge.

"Why couldn't you avoid it?"

"It's not that I couldn't."

"Then why didn't you dodge it?"

"I felt like I shouldn't dodge it."

Unknowingly still, Son OhGong wondered, recalling the previous situation.

"Why were we hit?"

"I don't know."

"A smart guy like you doesn't know?"

Son OhGong chuckled, amused by the fact that even YuWon didn't know.

Of course, it wasn't that YuWon really didn't know. He just didn't want to tell Son OhGong.

'She's jealous.'

Tsukuyomi was beautiful.

YuWon knew that too.

A beauty comparable to Pandora's.

A moment ago, YuWon and Son OhGong had been with two of the three most outstanding beauties in the Tower.

Of course, Son OhGong, whose only interest is in fighting, probably didn't think of anything else.

Bam, bam, bam!

While YuWon and Son OhGong walked together.

A sound of battle footsteps came from the end of the hallway.

"Here comes that guy again."

Son OhGong clicked his tongue and leaned his head in his hands.

"I'd prefer if he challenged me. I'd love to give him a good fight."

Swoosh!

Asura approached with a fierce expression, unsheathing two swords. His gaze was fixed on YuWon, who was next to Son OhGong.

"Is this the third time?"

"The fourth."

"He came again when I wasn't here?"

After smashing his head against the stadium floor, Asura had challenged YuWon several more times.

On each occasion, YuWon had accepted Asura's challenge.

He had no other choice.

"It's annoying, but I have to accept it."

"Like with Vishnu?"

"That guy was like that too."

Asura's desolation had persisted for quite some time after Indra's death.

And who calmed Asura and established him as Deva was none other than Vishnu.

The method was simple.

Combat.

Asura, who couldn't live without seeing blood, challenged Vishnu dozens of times after losing to him.

And on each occasion, Vishnu accepted the challenge.

However, he set a condition.

"If you lose a hundred times against me, you will join me."

Words that truly stimulated Asura's pride.

Asura accepted the proposal.

He wasn't the type of Asura who wouldn't accept it.

However, the result was as expected.

One hundred fights, one hundred defeats.

An abysmal record.

And so, Asura became a High-Ranker of the Great Deva Guild.

Boom, boom, boom, boom!

Asura was gradually approaching. Feeling the joyful killing energy emanating from him, Son OhGong asked with subtle anticipation.

"Can't I do it?"

"Can't you see? He's fixated on me right now."

"Yes, I see."

Boom, boom, boom, boom!

The steps quickened like a ghost.

Now, YuWon also had to draw his sword.

"I'm just letting you know, don't interfere."

"Just letting you know, I won't intervene."

"Heh."

YuWon, who laughed at Son OhGong's pun, wielded his sword against Asura.

'I've gotten myself into a good mess.'

This was the fourth time.

What remained were ninety-six more.

Chapter 560

Side Story 36

CRASH!

The thick wooden wall broke, and Asura was sent flying.

He staggered and got up, only to fall again.

Through the broken wall, YuWon stumbled out.

"You got me this time," YuWon said, wiping a drop of blood from his forehead and looking at Asura.

"You're persistently disgustingly persistent."

Was this the eleventh or twelfth time?

Asura was gradually adapting to fighting YuWon.

The time it took to subdue him lengthened each time, and this time, Asura had even managed to make a small cut.

The same had happened with Vishnu.

The hundredth time he fought against Vishnu was the toughest.

"What a mess," Lee Rangjin said as he approached YuWon.

"Why do you keep fighting?"

"That's what I'm wondering."

"It seems like Asura is the one who keeps attacking. Isn't this self-defense?"

"Why not kill him? Is that what you're asking?"

"Yes."

Asura doesn't have a Guild. In other words, there's no need to worry about retaliation if you kill him.

However, YuWon kept letting Asura live even though he constantly attacked him.

Even though, if things continued like this, he might end up getting hurt.

"If you keep it up, he might regain his sanity."

"It seems like he's hurt too."

"It seems like he's only using swords."

Asura had attacked YuWon with a variety of weapons.

First a sword, then a spear, then a vajra and a short spear, and even a bow.

YuWon responded to Asura, a Martial Arts Master, with the fencing he had taught him.

The difference was considerable.

In the future, YuWon had a higher rank than Asura, and now he was even stronger than back then.

"Still, don't fight so much here. Repairing the building is not an easy task."

"I was already thinking of leaving soon."

He couldn't stay here forever.

Pandora's wounds had already healed, and the Celestial Realm had finished cleaning up the mess.

His next destination was also decided.

Son OhGong had already grown bored and left the Celestial Realm.

Now it was YuWon's turn to start moving.

But before that...

"By the way."

"Yes?"

"Do you remember someone named Kim YuWon?"

"That's the fourth time you've asked that."

YuWon had asked this question right after finishing his battle with the Administrators.

As expected, Lee Rangjin's answer was that he didn't know.

But still, he had hope.

Maybe if he asked a few more times, if he thought about it carefully, he might remember.

But unfortunately...

"As much as I think about it, no one comes to mind. It's strange, but the name sounds familiar."

"...Really?"

The reason he had spent so much time here was to see this reaction.

To see if he really would remember.

'Like Son OhGong or Hercules, whom I've seen for a long time. Or like Varuna or Hastur, whom I've cornered to the point of death...'

Under normal circumstances, they wouldn't remember him. The fact that he had confirmed it already made these last few days worthwhile.

'So, what should I do...'

YuWon's gaze turned to Asura, lying on the ground.

'I should... tell this guy too.'

"We can't win like this."

The voice echoed in Asura's mind.

It was a voice like his own.

Alongside the owner of that voice, Asura reviewed the battle against YuWon in the depths of his consciousness.

"The opponent is too strong."

"We've already lost eleven times."

"No, twelve."

"Does that matter?"

"Since when have we gotten so used to defeat?"

The two fought within Asura's mind.

Then, gradually, Asura, regaining consciousness, interjected into the conversation.

"The important thing is not that."

"Then what?"

"That guy knows us."

Asura remembered the battle against YuWon.

At first, it ended so quickly that he didn't even remember what happened.

Asura, exhausted from the battle against Taishang Laojun, was defeated by YuWon in an instant.

The next times were similar.

YuWon seemed to know Asura's fighting style.

"Certainly, the sword that guy uses is similar to ours."

"No, it's on a higher level."

"It's more perfected than our sword techniques. We also need to change."

The three conversed like this every day.

How could they become stronger?

What were they lacking? What did they need to do to win?

Through that whole process, they became "The Asura."

"There's something more important."

And another thing...

There was something they had to address without fail.

"That guy hasn't shown everything he has yet."

"-True."

"We have to admit it."

Asura felt a wall in the battle against YuWon.

At first, he thought he could overcome it. He swore to himself that he would overcome it, no matter what. However, as he approached that wall, it became larger and thicker.

"So what? Are we going to give up?"

"No way."

"We also know 'ourselves.' It's a strange question."

As expected, Asura didn't give up. If he gave up so easily, he would have given up revenge from the beginning.

He felt the real wall at that moment.

"So what are we going to do?"

"It's an obvious question."

Asura's answer was evident.

"We have to make him give it his all next time."

Asura opened his eyes.

The clear sky and brisk wind brushed against his nose.

It wasn't the first time he woke up after fainting like this.

Asura got up and looked around.

This time, he wasn't in a Celestial Realm room.

"A carriage?"

The Sun Chariot.

It was a frequently used means of transportation to ascend and descend from the Tower.

The replica version of the Sun Chariot project was known to have significantly contributed to the expansion of Olympus ships.

"Did you wake up already?"

"Yes."

Asura turned his head at the voice coming from his side.

YuWon and Pandora.

The two looked down at him from the railing.

"Are you going to try again?"

Click.

YuWon asked while grabbing the sword handle beside him.

Asura hesitated for a moment and touched the sword at his waist.

Asura's eyes, shining with fierceness, moved quickly. Suppressing his killing aura and battle impulse, he replied:

"I have no intention of fighting on a chariot."

"You're right. Space is a bit limited."

"Seems like you have a lot of money."

"Why do you say that?"

"There's no one else here but you two. You must have rented the entire Sun Chariot."

He withdrew his hand from the sword and, for the first time, felt curious.

Who are you?

Who the hell is this guy?

He had the strength to effortlessly suppress him and the wealth to rent a whole Sun Chariot without a problem.

Why hadn't someone like this been known until now?

Even an ignorant Asura like him couldn't help but feel something was off.

"You're quick to ask that question."

"Is it too late?"

"Everyone has asked it at least once."

YuWon stared at him.

It was the first time Asura, waking up, remained so calm after seeing him.

Twelve times.

That was the number of times Asura had been defeated by YuWon.

"This is the twelfth time."

After Asura woke up, YuWon stood up and headed to the Sun Chariot's room.

"Do you know what will happen the hundredth time?"

"What will happen?"

"I'll tell you if you win at least once before that."

Paff-.

Veins on Asura's forehead swelled. His eyes lit up again with furious red at the provoking words.

"Do you really plan on doing it properly?"

"Who knows."

YuWon shrugged and turned inside the Sun Chariot.

He had been waiting in case Asura woke up and stirred up the Sun Chariot.

If he was going to rest, it was much better to do it in the inner room than on the windy railing.

And so, just after YuWon and Pandora left the place.

『It seems I've found a way.』

A voice echoed in Asura's head.

'It's strange.'

In a small room inside the Sun Chariot.

YuWon, lying with his head on the floor, reflected on his conversation with Asura.

It had been a short conversation, but it had a strange feeling.

It was as if he had been talking to several people instead of one.

'There's only one Asura left. It should definitely be like that...'

Asura had lost a head in the battle against Indra.

And another in the battle against the Outers.

That way, only one of the three Asuras survived.

It should have been like that.

However...

'Is he missing a screw?'

Asura definitely acted like three people.

It made him uneasy.

Of course, Asura had always been far from normal.

After losing everyone he loved, even his family, at the hands of Indra, he became obsessed with fighting and blood.

But now, he had become even more unhinged.

Kunk-.

At that moment, the sound of the Sun Chariot touching ground was heard.

A two-day journey.

YuWon lifted the upper part of his body from where he lay.

'Looks like we've arrived.'

He sat without fully getting up and looked around.

Pandora had definitely gone out to get some fresh air on the railing.

Wondering why she hadn't returned after a while...

'Don't tell me.'

With an idea in mind, YuWon abruptly stood up from his seat.

Swoosh-!

The new form of Asura ran through the trees.

Right after the Sun Chariot landed.

Asura grabbed Pandora, who was standing on the railing taking in the air, and started running with all his might.

Pandora hung from one of Asura's arms, looking up at him as she asked:

"Where are we going?"

"Anywhere."

"Why?"

"To provoke the guy who was next to you."

Pandora blinked several times at Asura's answer and asked:

"With me?"

"Yes, with you."

"To kill me?"

"I don't kill anyone unless they fight me."

Asura was a fanatic for fighting, but that didn't mean he killed anyone. He often enjoyed fighting opponents who piqued his curiosity or were strong.

And right now...

All of Asura's attention was focused on YuWon.

"Of course, if you resist, I might kill you."

"Why me?"

"It seems like the only thing that guy cares about is you."

"The only thing he cares about..."

Pandora, hanging from Asura's hand, smiled weakly. She liked hearing that she was the only thing YuWon cared about.

"Alright, I'll do it."

"You will?"

"Yes, I will."

"Are you saying you'll pretend to be a hostage?"

Although it was strange, from Asura's perspective, it wasn't a bad attitude.

After all, even Asura had taken some time to subdue Pandora.

If she decided to resist, it would be easy for YuWon to catch up with them.

'Not bad to have a hostage. While his only weakness is here, this time he will get angry.'

Anger.

That was the perfect seasoning to bring out YuWon's true self.

This time, he could really see his true self.

And then, with his sword, he would cut YuWon's throat.

At the moment Asura decided.

"It will be fun..."

The "hostage" in question, Pandora, had a cheerful expression, as if she were about to play a game.