

## With The Gods 561

Chapter 561

Side Story 37

On the railing where Pandora had vanished.

YuWon, noticing that Asura's aura had also disappeared along with her, quickly understood his intention.

"So he got tired so quickly...?"

His opponent was Asura. A guy as proud as Son OhGong.

Asura was not someone who would tolerate an opponent he fought with not giving his all.

And probably, the reason he took Pandora was to see YuWon's true nature.

Paf-.

YuWon started moving in the direction Asura and Pandora had disappeared.

On the way.

Fortunately, he saw no signs of battle.

"Looks like she didn't resist..."

Pandora was not weak either. Even if her opponent was Asura, he couldn't have subdued her in an instant.

That could only mean one thing.

That she had followed Asura obediently.

"Ha-."

A sigh escaped YuWon's lips.

The fact that she didn't resist was, in a way, a good thing.

If she had fought back and gotten hurt, he wasn't sure he could contain his anger.

'I understand that guy's personality, but...'

Kuuk-.

Running quickly down the path Asura had taken, YuWon cursed quietly.

'This time he's gone too far.'

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The world of Floor 38 was completely covered in trees.

Asura had distanced himself from the Sun Chariot.

It was to find a suitable place to fight without interruptions.

And so, as he ran.

Asura was able to find a wide open space where the trees had been completely cleared.

"Not bad."

Asura stopped and pointed his finger at Pandora. Sealing Pandora's movements by touching her blood point, he sat her on the ground.

"Stay still."

Pandora, who was about to say something, was surprised to find that no voice could come out of her mouth.

Pandora stared at Asura.

As if warning her that he wouldn't stand idly by if she resisted, Asura had already drawn his sword.

At that moment...

"Well, well, this is quite an interesting sight."

Kaboom-.

On the edge of the open space.

With the sound of a tree falling, Asura perceived another presence.

In the forest where no one should be.

Asura turned his head, feeling a presence that made his skin crawl.

"...Hercules?"

Although they were at a considerable distance, it was not difficult to discern who it was.

A colossal size that could only be explained by being a giant.

A huge axe slung over his shoulder and a lion mask on his head.

A muscular, dense, and admirable body that emanated natural strength.

If you had seen him once, it would be impossible to forget.

The same was true for Asura, who had been on the battlefield with Hercules before.

"What are you doing here?"

"That's the question I should be asking you. This is my home."

"Your home?"

"If you walk a little over there, you'll see it. I've been living here for over a thousand years."

Floor 38 was an abandoned world.

A wasteland with 90% covered in forests and the remaining 10% turned into a desert.

It was extremely rare for someone to live in this world.

If there was an advantage in this world, it was that there were many trees. That's why many lumberjacks had settled on Floor 38.

"An axe instead of a club..."

Hercules' Club was made of Yggdrasil. Hercules' power holding it made him much stronger, and it was said that he had no rival other than his father Zeus, Son OhGong, and Vishnu.

But it turns out it's not a club, but an axe. At first glance, it was obvious what he was doing.

"Is the supreme Hercules chopping wood?"

"In this job, there is no distinction of status."

"Stay out of the way."

"Didn't I tell you before? This is my home."

There wasn't much more to say. According to Hercules' words, the uninvited guest was Asura. If one had to leave, it only made sense if Asura did it himself.

There was no argument to refute with words.

Normally, in this kind of situation, Asura would act as he always does.

But...

'Kim YuHun will come soon. Plus, there's Hercules...'

Asura, who was too tired to deal with YuWon at the moment, couldn't afford to make Hercules an enemy.

Although he looked like a robust lumberjack cutting wood, Hercules' rank was second.

He was the second strongest man in this vast Tower.

"Are you just going to watch?"

"For now."

"For now?"

Hercules' gentle eyes narrowed.

"I told you before? This is my friend."

"....."

An intense gaze.

It was the first time Asura felt overwhelming pressure just from the opponent's facial expression alone.

Asura hadn't even felt it in the fight with Indra, his target.

'Strong.'

Normally, Asura wouldn't acknowledge his opponent without even fighting.

'Even more than me.'

This time, he couldn't help but think so.

Shoo-.

At that moment, a fierce energy surged from the forest full of trees.

Kweeek-!

Wild beasts ran out and birds flew into the sky.

From afar, the presence of YuWon slowly approaching made Asura grab his sword.

"He's coming."

Clang-.

So far, he had easily lost to YuWon, who clearly read his sword.

But in the last fight, Asura had glimpsed a way to defeat him.

When he cut YuWon's cheek. After more than ten defeats, Asura had finally found a way to dodge YuWon's sword.

'This time will be different.'

With that determination...

Clouds gathered in the sky as the bright daylight turned into night.

Craack, craack-le-.

From the distant approaching body of YuWon, a Golden Lightning flowed.

"See you again, friend."

Behind Asura, Hercules greeted YuWon.

Asura's bewildered reaction to Hercules' response.

'Friend?'

He already thought it was strange when Hercules called Pandora his friend for the first time.

It was strange that Hercules, whose activities were not known, would have friendship with Pandora, whose whereabouts were not even properly revealed.

But the strangest thing was right in front of him.

That guy called Kim YuHun.

'He also has friendship with The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal. Also with Pandora. And now with Hercules...'

Craaack, crack-le-.

As the distance shortened, the pressure emanating from YuWon became intense.

This sensation was not unfamiliar.

It was as if all the Arcane Power permeating the forest was following him. The Arcane Power around YuWon amplified and branched by itself, as if wanting to gain his favor and demonstrate loyalty.

'Taishang Laojun.'

The guy had been carried away by that power and had lost the weapon he had.

But YuWon was different.

Asura, with his previous ten defeats, knew he was an unmatched swordsman.

"Who are you?"

It was the same question he had asked a few days earlier, on the Sun Chariot.

But even with the same question, Asura wanted to ask again.

Who are you?

"You seem quite angry..."

Hercules looked at Asura with a perplexed expression.

Looking at Pandora with a grim expression on his face, it was clear why YuWon was so angry.

"You'd better surrender right now. That way, at least, you could keep the head you have left."

"Thanks for the advice."

That was his response, though...

"...Looks like there's no reasoning with you."

Hercules sighed and shook his head.

The mad smile on Asura's lips.

With that crazy smile, it was evident that Asura wasn't listening to his words.

And it's understandable.

Asura would probably enjoy this reaction from YuWon even more.

For him, blood and death would not be a cause for fear.

"Well..."

Hercules, with his arms crossed, observed Asura's figure approaching YuWon with a sword in hand, anticipating the interesting spectacle that was about to unfold.

'Thanks to this, I'll be able to see with my own eyes what happened with that guy, Son OhGong.'

-----

『You only have one chance.』

A voice echoed in his head, loud and insistent.

Asura mentally responded to the voice that, doubting him, warned him again and again.

『I know.』

It was a way of telling it to stop bothering him, but the voice did not quiet down.

『That guy's sword technique resembles 'ours.'』

『Pierce his heart on the first strike. So that he can't rise again.』

『Remember, we are weaker than him. And now that he's angry, even more so. But there's a chance to win.』

Crack, crack.

The veins on his forehead swelled with irritation.

He knew.

He was weaker than the guy in front of him. But that didn't mean Asura resigned himself to being a loser.

Even if he was weaker than his opponent, he would find a way to win.

"I am Asura."

Asura's arms split into six.

Two spears, a vajra, and a sword.

He crossed the six weapons.

Along with the two expressionless heads with closed eyes. He opened a light attack and flew towards YuWon.

"Did you think of taking advantage while I was asleep?"

A calm gaze and voice.

The sword YuWon wielded began to move.

"That's something I can't forgive."

Swoosh.

As expected, the tip of the sword moved in a familiar trajectory.

To properly see this moment, Asura had gone through twelve defeats and hundreds of repetitions.

『Now is the time.』

The three Asuras moved together.

A mirage occurred as six weapons merged into one, creating a long spear.

[Great Six-Armed Heavenly Destruction]

Long ago.

A Martial Art he learned and mastered through a manual obtained in the Murim World. After mastering the spear of the Orthodox Sects, he turned to Demon Cult and completed his own spear.

It's unknown whether it was an ancient Ranker, or whether it was before the Murim World laid its foundations, or whether it was a Ranker who came from outside the Tower... however...

However, Asura did not hesitate to make it his main technique after learning and mastering it.

Kiiing.

The Arcane Power enveloping the spear's tip, tinged red, spun rapidly, creating a complex air current.

A merged spear, a suddenly elongated distance.

Asura's Great Six-Armed Heavenly Destruction approached YuWon's chest before his swinging sword.

'Success.'

The Great Six-Armed Heavenly Destruction was Asura's technique with the greatest penetrating power and destructive force.

It was an instant...

The moment the heart, hidden under clothing and skin, would be pierced.

At the moment the deployed technique was about to pierce YuWon's chest.

"So, in the end, what you came up with was The Great Six-Armed Heavenly Destruction."

Spurt.

"...!"

When YuWon evaded his body, Asura's launched Great Six-Armed Heavenly Destruction passed through the senseless void.

Kwaaaaaaah!

Ujjik, kwaddud.

The Arcane Power shot from the spear's tip knocked down the trees in a straight line.

If seen from the sky, it would look like a red line drawn on a green background.

'Did he dodge it?'

Zaaaah!

The sword cutting through Asura's chest.

At that moment, Asura met YuWon's eyes, who had approached and swung his sword.

'Golden Cinder Eyes?'

Heterochromatic eyes formed by a red eye and a golden eye.

The skill symbolizing those eyes was only Golden Cinder Eyes, known to be possessed only by The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal.

However, how?

Does that guy have those eyes?

Not only that.

Kuguk.

YuWon's biceps swelled.

Gigantification, symbol of the Giant Slayer and the representative ability of Hercules, was unfolding in YuWon's hands.

Kwaang!

"Ugh..."

Asura's body staggered backward from the heavy punch that struck his face.

However...

"This is the thirteenth time."

Unlike other times, YuWon's aura did not calm down even though the battle was over.

"Eighty-seven more to go."

In his gradually fading consciousness.

"Let's end this here."

In the face of those words, sounding like a death sentence, Asura's body trembled.

Chapter 562

Side Story 38

Kaboom!

A fist struck the side of Asura's head.

Once again, Asura could do nothing.

If that punch had aimed for his head...

Perhaps his only remaining head would be crushed like minced meat right now.

"That's fifty."

Swoosh!

YuWon spun his body.

Kwaaaang!

A Lightning Bolt resonated over his slightly withdrawn head.

It was that same Lightning Bolt.

Asura, struck by the Lightning Bolt, was paralyzed and couldn't do anything.

'Fifty times...'

Though not severely injured, Asura was rendered helpless.

Impotence took hold of him.

He knew his opponent was strong. Even before coming here, he had already lost to YuWon more than 10 times.



But he never thought the difference would be this significant.

"How the hell... even Zeus's Lightning-?"

Flash!

Midway through his prayer. A long thread of electricity flew towards Asura's throat and stopped.

What would have happened if it hadn't stopped?

Undoubtedly, he would have died instantly.

"Forty-nine left."

YuWon no longer spoke to Asura.

The only times he opened his mouth were to kindly count the remaining blows.

Boom!

Clang!

The sword that had clashed so many times finally broke.

The hand holding the sword became numb.

In an instant, YuWon's sword pierced through Asura's head and stuck into a tree.

Puff!

"Forty-eight."

A number gradually diminishing.

"Forty-seven."

Bang!

"Forty-six."

"Forty..."

Asura wasn't injured anywhere.

The only wounds he had were the chest YuWon had cut at the beginning and the cheek swollen from the punch.

Since then...

YuWon hadn't cut or struck Asura; he had only been suppressing him.

『What should I do now?』

『How can I win?』

With the "Great Six-Armed Heavenly Destruction" broken and after enduring over fifty defeats, Asura thought over and over, gathering his heads.

A way to defeat the monster in front of him.

If there was even a sliver of hope, Asura would never consider giving up.

But...

Whoosh!

"Ack!"

Asura's nape was grabbed by YuWon's hand, and his body was lifted.

The fiercely burning eyes looked into Asura's and recited with a monotonous and emotionless voice.

"Thirty-one."

The moment their eyes met.

『I can't win.』

Along with the helplessness of defeat, all the strength in his body faded away.

Thud!

Asura collapsed to the ground when YuWon released his hand. His body was still energetic, but something much greater than losing his arms and legs had been taken from him.

His heart.

Fear seized Asura's heart.

-----

Asura gave up on continuing to fight. Exactly when there were thirty-one battles left, he knelt down and sat on the ground.

His eyes dulled.

Asura, without the will to fight, was no longer Asura.

Yuwon stood there for a while and looked at Asura, who had his head bowed.

Had he scared him? He no longer rushed at him and didn't even lift his head.

'Did Vishnu also do this?'

No.

The Vishnu YuWon knew wasn't that meek.

That's why a hundred times.

But now that he thought about it, there was no need to obsess over that number.

Sigh~

Pandora, who had freed herself from Pressure Points and was sitting on the side with a spread-out picnic blanket, was eating snacks with Hercules.

Yuwon, who checked his safety once again, for once regretted his choice.

'I should have done it like this from the beginning.'

Facing the master of weapons, Asura, YuWon confronted him with a sword.

But that didn't matter. Because he was confident.

YuWon knew Asura better than anyone.

He had taught him weapons and finally defeated him in battle.

But Asura didn't know YuWon.

YuWon knows his opponent, but his opponent doesn't know YuWon.

That was a great advantage for a expert above Rankers.

And moreover, YuWon had much greater skill than Asura.

He suppressed him without hurting him, and suppressed him again.

So YuWon planned to keep fighting until Asura surrendered.

The problem was that he was trying to be like Vishnu.

If he had been pressuring Asura from the beginning, he wouldn't have been injured.

Crunch.

"Do you want to eat?"

Hercules, who knows where he got it from, handed him a fruit-filled cake and a fork.

"Did you come for a picnic?"

"Who is the one who suddenly barged in?"

"Who's lazing around and chopping wood in these times?"

"Lazing around? Me?"

Hercules' expression slightly frowned.

"I tell you again, I can endure being ignored, but I can't endure you ignoring the work of lumberjacks..."

"Alright, give it to me."

Interrupting halfway, YuWon took the fork and started eating the cake hurriedly.

Maybe because he had been moving his body all the time, the sweetness was even sweeter.

In the sight of Pandora, who watched him eat a whole cake alone, YuWon left the fork in silence.

"Haha."

"Why are you laughing?"

"If you're hungry, I'll take care of the food. It's the first time you've come as a guest in a long time."

"...Yes."

The time it took to break Asura's spirit was only a day. The sun was already setting, and night was approaching.

"Thank you, Hercules."

"Thanks?"

"If you hadn't been here, I might have gotten a little carried away."

Hercules stood beside Pandora. If it weren't for that figure, he couldn't be sure if he could be any calmer right now watching Asura.

"You seem quite worked up. Was that real?"

"Was I that worked up?"

"You looked angry."

For Rankers with a lifespan close to infinite, a decade wasn't a very long period. But that didn't mean all concentrations were the same just because time was short.

Hercules thought the time he spent with YuWon was more intense than any other moment.

So much so that they knew each other well and had seen many different sides of each other.

However...

He thought that this was probably the first time he saw YuWon express so much emotion.

"It seems like you really cherish her now, huh? No."

Hercules alternately looked at YuWon and Pandora and lowered his voice to ask.

"Do you love her?"

"Are you and Son OhGong really..."

He wasn't just asking; he seemed to be teasing.

"Now be honest. Don't be shy."

"When did I-?"

"Did you say you would marry her?"

Hercules' words made YuWon's mouth stiffen.

Marry...

It had been over ten years since Pandora courted YuWon. Finally, YuWon decided to marry Pandora and was making plans to do so.

It wasn't something that could be done just for unilateral affection.

Anyway, being with her was also YuWon's desire.

"Aren't you doing it because you want to? Then express it. Lucky bastard."

In the face of Hercules' words, YuWon looked at Pandora, who eagerly devoured the cake he had left, with whipped cream on her mouth.

"...To think there would come a day when I'd hear you say these nonsense to me."

He couldn't help but laugh.

He didn't expect Son OhGong to do it, but it was even more surprising that Hercules, who used to treat women like stones, talked about this topic.

He seemed so frustrated, and at the same time, YuWon felt that the world they had protected had become a more inhabitable place.

In the past...

Under the sky tinted purple by the Outers, this conversation would have been unimaginable.

Yuwon nodded.

He was aware that he was terse and stiff.

Although he had improved a bit lately, that shyness was probably due to the long years of fighting in the future.

Of course...

"And you?"

That didn't only apply to YuWon.

"Aren't you dating anyone?"

"Well, Hargan told me the same. That I should date someone."

"Is Hargan planning to introduce someone to you?"

"He said he would."

"But?"

"I'm not mentally prepared yet..."

"Look at how much you resemble your father."

"So it seems."

"..."

A sudden silence enveloped them.

The atmosphere became awkward, and Hercules got up from his seat stiffly.

"Sh-Shall we?"

-----

Crackle, crackle.

The pork skin cooked deliciously over a slow wood fire.

As he roasted the whole meat, Hercules saw Asura sitting silently in the distance.

"How long is he going to stay like this...?"

"It will be a shock for him."

Yuwon, drying his wet hair, approached and followed Hercules' gaze to observe Asura's reaction.

"Still, this level of shock therapy is necessary."

"You washed up quickly."

"The water was cold. Customer service is terrible."

Hercules smiled at YuWon's joke and stirred the dying fire with a poker.

Showing his back, Hercules asked without looking at YuWon:

"Now, are you going to talk? Why did you look for me?"

"Do I need a reason to come?"

"It seems to be a difficult matter. The way you're beating around the bush."

There was no way YuWon would come to this remote place without any purpose.

Moreover, he had just defeated three Administrators in Celestial Realm.

Did YuWon, who visited him right after that, have no motive?

Not even a stray dog would believe that.

"Is it about the war, right?"

At Hercules' question, YuWon nodded.

"Probably."

"Is the enemy this time more dangerous than those guys?"

"Do you mean guys like Shub-Niggurath or Nyarlathotep?"

"Nyarlathotep?"

"I guess the Foolish Chaos Name would sound more familiar to you. Yes, I mean those guys."

YuWon's response was delayed a bit.

At that moment...

Thinking about Hercules' mood, who turned his back, made it difficult for him to respond smoothly.

"What kind of answer do you want?"

Crack.

The firewood he had put in the fire broke in Hercules' hand.

Watching the shattered pieces of wood fall to the ground, Hercules nodded.

"That answer is enough."

YuWon didn't deny his question.

Perhaps this would be a battle as difficult as the fight against the Outers.

After all, the Administrators were like symbols of this world.

"Did you ask me why I came?"

Hercules turned his head.

With a towel on his wet hair, YuWon had an apologetic expression on his face.

"I don't want to fight, but now is not the time to be calmly chopping wood."

Calmly. Chopping wood.

He had heard those words recently, but this time they didn't bother him.

It was true.

At this very moment, there would be people fighting somewhere.

"You need to help me, Hercules."

Saying those words, YuWon closed his eyes.

It was Hercules, not just anyone.

He was different from Son OhGong or Asura obsessed with battle.

The strongest of them all, but the one who hated fighting the most.

The one who became a lumberjack after all the battles were over, without needing to fight anyone.

To him.

He was really saying something cruel.

Whoosh.

Hercules raised his head and looked at the sky.

The stars entered his field of vision.

That was the sky they had protected.

They couldn't afford to lose it again.

"From today... the lumberjack is temporarily retiring."

For now, it was time to wield the Club instead of the axe.

Chapter 563

Side Story 39

Asura had sat in silence until dawn when he suddenly disappeared without a trace.

Yuwon didn't think he had changed his mind. After all, he had lost his bet with him.

"Promise me you won't kill without my permission if you lose against me. I'll give you about a hundred chances to challenge me."

Yuwon knew Asura as someone who would be willing to give even his life in exchange for keeping a promise.

'It's strange that he disappeared. I thought he would accompany me for a while, as he can't kill without my permission.'

He had no idea where Asura had gone. However, he could guess what he was doing right now.

'Learning new things.'

He had become demoralized after their fight and had given up on the challenge. Although that meant a definite defeat, he was someone who walked the Path of Asura.

Being someone who never stopped learning and growing, maybe he had even learned something from that battle.

In any case...

Tsssss.

The sky tore.

He had gone out for some fresh air at dawn, but now he encountered an unexpected guest.

"The news travels fast, huh."

A beam of white light spilled from the dark dawn sky.

The Olympian Rankers descended in their Sun Chariots.

And at the head of them was the warrior who sat on the Throne of War and Wisdom.

Athena.

YuWon didn't avoid her gaze as she observed him from above.

'Did she come to see Hercules? Or me?'

He had no way of knowing her purpose. However, judging by the number of Rankers accompanying her, it didn't seem like she intended to fight.

'She also doesn't seem to have any hostility.'

However.

YuWon felt considerable curiosity in the way she looked at him.

'She doesn't seem to have come without knowing anything.'

Bum, bum.

Heavy footsteps resonated from behind.

Hercules appeared beside Pandora, while Pandora rubbed her sleepy eyes.

"This is the first time I have so many guests."

"I'm sleepy..."

Pandora, who had been dozing off standing up, leaned against YuWon's chest.

Finding a comfortable spot to lean on, she closed her eyes again and fell asleep. Even in the midst of all this noise.

Hercules stretched and raised his head to look at Athena.

"Come down, sister."

Hercules' words made YuWon turn his head in surprise.

Hercules, seeing YuWon's surprised expression, asked:



"What's wrong?"

"It's true. She's your sister."

"Did you just realize?"

"No. I knew from the beginning. I just forgot for a moment because of her appearance."

His face wrinkled. Hercules also knew. That his face looked older than his other siblings, like Aphrodite and Athena.

Two people who seemed close. Athena looked at both of them for a moment before taking the reins of her horse and descending.

"We had some trouble finding you."

Athena looked around at the trees.

The 38th Floor World, full of densely populated trees.

Finding Hercules there was like looking for a needle in a haystack.

The fatigue on her face was probably due to that.

"Why have you come all the way here?"

Hercules' gaze turned to the Rankers who were behind Athena.

"Dragging these armed women along with you."

Athena's warriors.

They played a similar role to Asgard's Valkyries within Olympus.

A group of warriors.

Although their number was small, the fact that they had mobilized meant something important.

"It seems to be because of them. The reason you're so on guard."

"If you had come alone, I would have welcomed you gladly. As you know, I am a quite despised son in Olympus."

"Don't worry. If I had wanted to fight you, my father would have come in person instead of these girls."

"If you're here..."

Hercules' eyes filled with golden energy.

"Will he also come?"

Zeus.

Hercules was especially sensitive to that name.

And in the face of Hercules' anger, Athena said with a bitter expression.

"...It seems they haven't reconciled yet."

"It's not reconciliation, it's forgiveness. I am in the process of doing it, so don't pressure me."

Hercules' mother, Alcmena. She had lost her life long ago due to a plan by Zeus.

Although the reason was to create a perfect being like Hercules, he couldn't easily accept Zeus, as he had been involved in his mother's death.

Not reconciliation, but forgiveness.

Even that was something father and son had to strive for.

That was the relationship between Zeus and Hercules.

"I understand. For my father, apologizing must be difficult."

"He has already done it."

"My father?"

Athena's pupils shook.

It had been a long time since she had last doubted her ears.

Hercules' words were so hard to believe.

Nothing less than Zeus.

Had he apologized to his son?

"If he hadn't, do you think I would have stayed in Olympus?"

"True. You're right."

"Let's leave aside unpleasant conversations. Why have you come to this corner, sister?"

"It's hard to talk while smiling."

Athena muttered with a bitter smile.

Though she didn't expect a grand reception, she didn't anticipate the first impression to be ruined from the start.

It seemed coming with others and mentioning Zeus's name without reason had been a mistake.

Furthermore.

"...Father is calling for you."

The words she would say from now on could only further excite Hercules.

"And him too."

When Athena pointed to YuWon beside her, Hercules' excitement grew even more.

Craack, craackl-e

"Why also this friend of mine?"

"Friend?"

It didn't sound like a mere title. It could be sensed even in the conversation YuWon and he had had before.

Hercules, who had been living as a lumberjack in the mountains, had treated him as if he were someone very familiar.

Moreover...

"Calm down."

How could he get so excited just by hearing that they were looking for him?

"That's impossible. From today, I am no longer a lumberjack; I am a warrior."

"From today?"

Hercules' gaze turned to YuWon. In response to that look, YuWon brought his hand to his forehead and sighed.

'Is this to hide something or to reveal it...?'

It was comforting to see Athena and Zeus's sensitive reactions to looking for themselves.

That showed how grateful they were for caring about him.

However, what Hercules had just said, acknowledging that he had been influenced by YuWon, was no different from expressing gratitude for that.

Furthermore...

"It's not necessary."

YuWon reached out and touched Hercules' shoulder, who stood between him and Athena.

"Anyway, I was going to go."

"Go where?"

"To Olympus."

His visit to Hercules was not just to leverage his strength.

"I want to take a look at that Zeus guy in Olympus."

Hercules had as high a status in Olympus as Zeus, after all. It seemed he thought that entering Olympus with Hercules instead of Hargan would increase his influence and word power.

"Zeus? That guy?"

Athena's forehead furrowed.

The words mentioned by YuWon grated on her ears.

He was the father of all in this world, equivalent to a king.

If she let them speak so disrespectfully about Zeus, she would no longer be Athena.

"You're speaking a bit disrespectfully."

Athena pointed at YuWon with her gaze.

"Who do you think I am?"

"Well, I haven't heard much about your name."

"That will change soon."

Athena, staring at YuWon with her narrowed eyes.

YuWon looked back at her and asked.

"Both father and daughter are suspicious, huh?"

"What are you saying?"

"Alright. Why not talk more to make your mouth hurt? But..."

Toc-toc.

He cracked his knuckles and reached into his inventory.

"Anyway, even though I'm going, the attitude must change a bit."

In response to YuWon's reaction, Athena also pulled out her Aegis.

"I think that's not something you should say here."

Along with that, Athena looked at Hercules.

In this fight, she needed Hercules' approval before anyone else.

Although Athena occupied the next position after the Three Gods in Olympus, she couldn't draw her weapon so blatantly in front of Hercules.

Because Hercules was an absolute being, not even Zeus, the King of Olympus, could do anything hastily.

"Do as you wish."

Hercules nodded.

As soon as Athena prepared for her battle against YuWon, Hercules smiled slightly and added.

"If you can, that is."

-----

Athena faced YuWon.

She raised her symbolic weapon, the Aegis Shield, upward.

'Is it really him? Kim YuHun.'

At first glance, he didn't seem that formidable.

As expected, she couldn't recall any face even when seeing him in person.

Even examining YuWon's previous actions, she couldn't find convincing traces.

Therefore, Athena couldn't easily believe the news about the man in front of her.

'A Ranker outside the Ranking. No, he might not even be a Ranker.'

In the Tower, where the Ranking existed, facing an opponent shrouded in so much mystery was unprecedented.

Perhaps because of that.

Zeus became even more interested in him.

"It seems rumors are circulating."

At first, when Hargan told me about it, I thought he was just an extraordinary guy.

That the Administrators would appear in the Great Celestial War. And that's why he needed Zeus's help.

Moreover, asking him to launch a Lightning Bolt.

Zeus didn't dislike such audacity.

No...

Rather, he liked it.

Although a Ranker couldn't be an ordinary person, Zeus had seen many of them being trampled.

However, no Ranker had dared to ask him for something like that.

That's why Zeus wanted to know more about him.

However...

"They say he even defeated some Administrators despite being from a lower floor. Isn't it ridiculous? A guy who doesn't even appear in the Ranking."

Contrary to his first impression, the guy who once seemed like a mere pebble now was like a complete star.

He had defeated an Administrator.

Not just one, but three.

Despite Hargan's testimony, Zeus wouldn't believe it unless he saw it with his own eyes.

"Is he an Administrator, an Outer, a High-Ranker unknown even to the Administration Bureau... or is it all just a rumor?"

They needed to know the guy's identity.

That's why Zeus gave an order to Athena.

"Find a guy named Kim YuHun. If what Hargan says is true, his next destination will be the 38th Floor."

"And what should I do when I find him?"

"Bring him here."

He wanted to see Kim YuHun in person.

Athena couldn't fully understand Zeus.

"As a guest? Or...?"

"No matter the method or deal. Leave it to your judgment."

And one more thing.

Zeus always revealed his true intention at the end.

"And if you can confirm the rumor is true, even better."

Chapter 564

Side Story 40

YuWon gripped his sword. He just held it, not moving.

"Is he not going to move?"

Athena frowned slightly at her motionless opponent. It was as if he was challenging her to make a cut.

Does he trust his skills so much?

"It's fine if he's that confident."

After all, the goal of this battle was not to win.

It was confirmation.

That was what really mattered in this battle.

"So, where..."

Paff!

Despite his confidence, there was no need to give him the chance to attack.

"Let's see how good he is."

Kwaaaat!

Athena's sword cut YuWon's body in half, or at least that's what it looked like. But there was no sensation in her fingertips.

Tss.

A figure that faded like an illusion.

YuWon's form, cut by the sword, reflected in the Aegis.

Athena was surprised at how quickly YuWon had reached her back.

"Fast."

Although she was taken by surprise, she didn't flinch. She hadn't underestimated her opponent's skills, so there was no reason to be surprised.

"However..."

Athena's true power didn't lie in the sword.

"Speed is not an issue."

The reason she was really strong was...

Kiiiiiiing.

[Activating "Aegis Shield."]

"Target "Deceleration" begins."

"Target "Petrification" begins."

Deceleration and petrification.

Those were the built-in abilities of the Aegis.

Aegis.

One of the masterpieces of the Tower's chief blacksmith, Hephaestus.

After it broke once, Athena asked Hephaestus to reinforce it even further.

The Aegis was an item-type object created by Hephaestus using the head of the monster "Medusa."

The power of the Aegis was so formidable that it could turn even the body of a High-Ranker into stone.

"He won't be able to avoid this."

The range of the Aegis's power was everything reflected in the shield.

Ziiiiiiing!

The influence of the Aegis spread across the entire battlefield.

Crack, crunch!

Grass and trees turned into stone.

Even Athena's subordinates who were far away were affected by its power, and their bodies froze.

"Is Athena-nim using the Aegis?"

"With this power, it must be in full activation."

"Does that mean she considers the opponent so dangerous?"

They were her subordinates who had been helping her since Athena became a Ranker for the first time.

The Aegis was a shield that didn't distinguish between friends and foes.

Athena didn't resort to the power of an object for trivial matters.

That was her philosophy, as she didn't consider it her own strength.

However, now, Athena had activated the Aegis for the first time since the last war.

That meant...

Crackkk.

In this battle, Athena was putting the name of Olympus at stake.

"We won."

"At that distance, if he was hit by the petrification of the Aegis..."

"He could be petrified for several years."

YuWon's figure, petrified in ash color.

The Olympus warriors, confident of victory, quickly relaxed.

Until now, there had never been a case of someone who had been turned to stone by the Aegis and had returned to normal on their own.

However...

Crack.

YuWon's figure, clearly turned to stone, began to crack.

"Is it possible?"

In an instant of doubt, Athena's body moved first.

She quickly stabbed into YuWon's chest, who had turned to stone.

Athena's instinct told her that if the petrification was broken, she had to deliver a final blow before that happened.

But...

Clang!

Dang!

...!

YuWon's sword, which broke the petrification in an instant, diverted Athena's sword.

A chill ran through her body. She was overpowered in the sword power struggle.

It was a reckless act.

It was an error on her part not to put all the strength into the hand that held the sword, thinking that YuWon's body was still petrified.

No.

Even leaving that aside.

"His stats are higher than mine."

Crash!

Gripping tightly the sword that had been deflected, Athena attacked YuWon again.

Defense through the Aegis, attack through the sword. The balance between attack and defense was Athena's greatest advantage.

Fwoosh, swoosh!

Boom!



With all her strength, the sword cut through the empty air. Athena, who had cut down Aemon's trees, lifted Aegis, which she had been using to defend, feeling that this was not enough.

"Ugh!"

The veins on her arms swelled, and Arcane Power flowed into Aegis.

A considerable amount of Arcane Power.

Hercules, who was observing the battle, opened his eyes in disbelief.

"Sister? Seriously...?"

In the brief moment Hercules hesitated,

She descended with all her might the shield, which was now too heavy for her.

Guuuuuum!

Zzzzzz!

The ground sank.

The impact of Aegis overturned the ground and engulfed Hercules' house, which wasn't too far away.

While Hercules, who had suddenly found himself on the ground, jumped high and shouted,

Athena looked at YuWon's figure reflected in Aegis and recited the final incantation.

"Answer my call..."

Sssaaaa...

The sound of snakes echoed on the battlefield.

Athena, sweating profusely, released the seal of the monster residing in the Aegis.

"Medusa."

[Aegis Shield activated.]

[Medusa responds to your call.]

Ssssss!

A pattern of snake heads appeared on the Aegis.

Hundreds of snakes emerged from the pattern.

"It's Medusa!"

"Everyone, close your eyes!"

As soon as the monster's head appeared, Athena's warriors closed their eyes and turned away. If one encountered the eyes of one of those snakes or was bitten by their fangs, they might never wake up from petrification.

But...

"With this, I won't have any regrets."

YuWon stored his sword in his inventory and faced Medusa's snakes directly.

Medusa's head was the same as the main body of Aegis. Its petrification ability couldn't be compared to a simple enchantment. If one met its eyes, and even got bitten by its fangs, even a High-Ranker would have a hard time coming out unscathed.

"You're too confident."

Athena, who had thought of stopping Medusa due to the danger it posed, soon reaffirmed her decision. If this person were to lose his life due to his arrogance, it meant he was originally not worthy of Zeus's attention.

Stopping Medusa wasn't a suitable trial for him.

However...

The power of Lightning Bolt.

Crack, crack-le-.

At that precise moment, a Golden Lightning Bolt began to flow from the ring that YuWon had on his hand.

A familiar flow of Arcane Power.

Athena knew that only three people in the vast Tower possessed that power.

"How is this possible...?"

The Lightning.

The power that only Zeus and his descendant Hercules, Hargan, should possess.

Bang!

The moment that power sprouted from YuWon's hand.

Bang!

Shuuuuuuuuiik —.

The bodies and heads of hundreds of snakes were torn or burst.

Waves of Golden Lightning filled the space around Athena.

The Lightning-type Arcane Power, boasting a wide range, swept the battlefield through the ring that YuWon wielded.

"How did you get that?!"

"No, it's a bit different from his."

Crack-le-.

Brushing aside the waves of Golden Lightning, YuWon moved towards Athena.

"This is the original."

What remained for Zeus was not Lightning but only the remnants of the Lightning he had carried for so long.

Therefore, the true power of Lightning that Olympus now knows...

Was closer to the power manifested in YuWon's hands.

Kukuduk, kukukduk-.

"Of course, this is not fake either."

YuWon's fist extended forward.

A slow-moving fist.

It was as if he was deliberately giving her time to dodge it.

However...

"Gigantification?"

At that moment, Athena was petrified in surprise and couldn't evade.

The power coursing through YuWon's arm...

Was the ability symbolizing Hercules, the High-Ranker who represented Olympus alongside Zeus.

Bang!

Athena's body, who hastily raised her Aegis shield, soared into the air.

A resounding impact echoed on the shield.

Papak, papak-.

The hands gripping the shield seemed on the verge of breaking.

She was being overpowered in strength.

It wasn't just that.

"Bill Zeus for the repair costs."

YuWon's voice echoed from the other side of the shield.

Ujjikkun-!

The Aegis, into which YuWon's fist had plunged, cracked.

Kwaang-!

Together with the shield, Athena's body crashed to the ground.

After that, she remembered nothing.

-----

It didn't take long for Athena to regain consciousness.

Thirty minutes.

That was the time it took for Athena, who had fallen alongside the cracked Aegis, to come to her senses.

"Have you awakened?"

Under the shade of a tree. Athena, who slowly opened her eyes, met the worried faces of her subordinates looking at her.

Athena stood up with a slightly dazed expression.

The subordinate holding the cracked Aegis, upon seeing Athena's expression trying to understand the situation, opened her mouth.

"We were worried. You fainted suddenly."

"Have I lost?"

"Yes. Unfortunately..."

Athena nodded at her subordinate's additional words.

"What's there to regret? The difference in skill is so vast."

In the last moment, the power of Gigantification and Lightning that YuWon unleashed was overwhelming for Athena.

Just by looking at the cracked Aegis in front of her, it was evident.

An item considered one of the most defensive in the Tower had been completely crushed.

If YuWon hadn't restrained his strength in the end, it wouldn't have ended with just a faint.

'The fact that he broke free from petrification proves it.'

Athena had fought against many formidable opponents in her life. Among them was Poseidon. Athena had challenged him to test the resilience of the Aegis, and other High-Rankers.

They all had something in common:

Petrification didn't affect them at all.

However, YuWon didn't resist petrification.

He did it because he trusted his ability to break free from it.

YuWon slowly approached Athena. He sat on the ground in front of her, who was leaning on one knee, and asked while looking at the cracked Aegis:

"Will you be able to move soon?"

"Thanks to you."

Athena lowered her head.

"I appreciate your consideration."

"Ah, Atenea-nim?"

The warriors surrounding her were surprised by the change in Athena's attitude. It was unheard of to see her use honorifics and bow with such reverence.

There were only two people in Olympus to whom she showed such deference:

Hades.

And Zeus.

Athena was now adopting the same attitude towards YuWon.

Ignoring the commotion of her subordinates, Athena stood up and greeted YuWon with respect.

Now that she had confirmed it, she couldn't continue treating him as she had before.

"Since we're going anyway, my attitude should change."

YuWon had said from the beginning that he had matters to attend to in Olympus.

However, he mentioned Athena's behavior as an issue.

He didn't seem like someone who cared about formalities or appearances. Yet, YuWon mentioned "attitude" and demonstrated his true strength to Athena.

Initially, she wasn't an opponent he should treat so rudely.

"His Majesty has invited you to Olympus."

With a different attitude than before, Athena offered YuWon a formal invitation.

"Do you accept the invitation?"

She handed YuWon an official invitation to the Grand Olympus.

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## Chapter 565

### Side Story 41

After Vishnu's funeral, the Great Deva Guild was more furious than ever.

If in Olympus there are Three main Gods, Zeus, Hades, and Poseidon, Deva also has its own Three Gods: Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva.

They were the Gods who had led Deva since ancient times, and among them, Vishnu, though with the shortest active period, was the spiritual pillar relied upon by Deva's high command.

Moreover, over a decade ago, it was revealed that they were actually three born from one called "Vishnu."

The death of Vishnu this time felt as if all the Gods of Deva had vanished.

Revenge must be taken.

Some of Deva's high command argued that they should fight against the Administrators even at the risk of death.

The war against the Administrators.

While Deva was in deep agony over the possibility of disappearing from history,

"Varuna."

The only aide who witnessed Vishnu's death.

"You know, right?"

Varuna shuddered at Yama's question.

"What, what?"

"Who is Kim YuWon?"

"I... that..."

"I can see from your expression and recent reactions. You're not very good at lying."

Some time ago, Yama, along with Vayu, asked Varuna about the name "Kim YuWon."

And then...

Yama closely watched both of their expressions.

And unlike Vayu, who heard the name Kim YuWon and let it pass through one ear, Varuna showed a distinctive reaction only he did.

"Have you been worried about something since then? What is it?"

"I..."

"Those were Vishnu-nim's last words, Varuna."

Wow!

Yama's hand grabbed Varuna's shoulder.

"We have to find that guy. This is not just a problem for the Administrators. Gandharva, Britra, Akshaya, Ananta! They're all targeting us."

"...Even Ananta?"

Ananta.

A monster that has been going up and down between the upper and lower floors of the Tower for a long time, and also a sort of ancient enemy of Deva.

Varuna's expression turned serious when Yama mentioned his name.

"When did that guy wake up?"

"A long time ago."

"Then why has he been silent until now?"

"He would have needed time to recover after being sealed for so long. Plus, Vishnu-nim was safe and sound."

Time and Vishnu's existence.

Both issues no longer mattered.

Enough time had passed, and Vishnu was no longer in this world.

Furthermore...

"There is a traitor within Deva."

There was an even bigger problem.

"Are you kidding?"

"It's serious. And it's a pretty high-ranking guy. He knew that Vishnu-nim was going to meet the Administrator."

"Really?"

There is a traitor in Deva.

That statement was an even bigger shock than any other story.

Among Deva's high command, there was no one who was not indebted to Vishnu.

And yet, betray

ing him...

'Come to think of it, it was also said that Taishang Laojun, an entity rooted in the Celestial Realm, switched sides. So...'

It's a quite plausible story.

Yama continued his final persuasion with Varuna, who was falling into chaos once again.

"It's not just about avenging Vishnu-nim. It's a matter of survival. Deva could disappear forever, Varuna."

Varuna closed his eyes tightly.

Although he had a promise to fulfill, the promise to YuWon was not more important than Vishnu's legacy or the survival of the Devas.

"Actually... I know."

At Varuna's response, Yama breathed a sigh of relief.

It was fortunate.

Because on his own, he would never have found it.

Fortunately, Varuna already knew the person Vishnu was looking for.

"I don't know him, but... I hope he guides the fate of the Devas."

"He probably will. The one I know is someone with enough capability to do so."

"So much?"

"Indeed, you also know him."

You just forgot.

And now, people remembered him by a completely different name.

"It's Kim YuHun..."

The one who saved the Celestial Realm.

-----  
The Sun Chariot that Athena had prepared was on a different scale than the one YuWon used to use. Only in passenger capacity, it could easily transport over five hundred people.

However, only a dozen people, including YuWon, Hercules, Pandora, and others, boarded the Sun Chariot.

'Even compared to the original, it shouldn't be very different.'

It was the first time YuWon had seen such a massive Sun Chariot.

"The performance is also the same. It can reach up to 70% of the speed of Apollo's Sun Chariot."

"Really?"

"It's a model that only has three in Olympus, but today is especially..."

Athena glanced at Hercules while leaving the sentence unfinished.

If it were only YuWon, it wouldn't matter, but she had to be especially careful with Hercules, someone she had to respect.

"What do you mean?"

Athena's eyes moved slightly at YuWon's question.

"Isn't it because there's something difficult to say that you're unnecessarily adding these useless words?"

"You're quick to notice."

"It's because your expression is so obvious."

"I have informed my father about Mr. Kim YuHun."

Hercules turned his head at Athena's words.

It was a typical reaction from him, sensitive to the words "father" or "Zeus" more than anyone.

"You can feel upset. If so, I'll bow my head and apologize."

"It's nothing."

"Are you okay?"

"Zeus knows everything his children know. I know that."

"Then I'm glad... about that."

Athena's words gradually faded away.

While she moved her gaze to follow YuWon approaching Hercules, a question mark appeared above Athena's head.

It was a doubt that arose at the same time as relief.

Who was this guy who knew the customs of Olympus so well?

Observing the friendly relationship between YuWon, Pandora, and Hercules, Athena took out her Player Kit again and contacted Zeus.

-----

An entire day.



That was the time it took for the Sun Chariot to reach Olympus.

Athena, followed by YuWon and Hercules, moved behind it.

Athena turned around.

She apologized to YuWon and Hercules.

"I'm sorry, but I think this is where I stop. My father wishes to see the three of you separately."

Athena bowed, bid them a final greeting, and left.

Hercules stayed for a while, looking at the enormous temple of Olympus, lost in his thoughts.

Hercules couldn't move easily.

Yuwon tapped him on the side to snap him out and asked:

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah, more or less."

"How long has it been since you came here?"

"It's the first time since the war."

"It's been quite a while."

"I thought I'd remember my mother if I came, so I didn't."

"Do you want to go back?"

"No, no. Just that I should've come earlier."

Hercules shook his head. He noticed the expression he had until a moment ago and smiled slightly.

"It hasn't been as bad as I thought."

With those words, Hercules began to walk towards the temple.

One of the temples owned by the High-Rankers of Olympus.

A temple similar to a realm, called "Olympus" and "Temple of Heaven."

Climbing the tall stairs leading to the clouds, the view of "Olympus" became visible at a glance.

And at the entrance of the temple...

"You arrived, our youngest."

"How long has it been?"

"Who's that behind you?"

"Isn't that Pandora?"

"..."

Yuwon could see six Rankers sitting in front of a long table.

'Aphrodite, Dionysus, Artemis, Hermes, Hades, and...'

Tap~

"Welcome, friend!"

A man with a passionate attitude no matter when you see him.

Hargan was sitting on one of the thrones of Olympus, greeting YuWon with a wave as he visited the temple.

"He arrived quickly."

Hargan was with the other High-Rankers of Olympus.

It was strange for YuWon to see Hargan like this.

He thought Hargan probably spent the least time sitting in that place.

Yuwon and Hargan were Tutorial companions.

Although he had the opportunity to obtain Zeus' Lightning Bolt in the meantime, his talent was truly dazzling.

"Do you know Hargan?"

"So, that guy is Kim YuHun?"

"It's the first time I've seen him."

The Rankers of Olympus observed YuWon. What caught Hermes' attention among them were the shoes YuWon was wearing.

"Aren't those my shoes?"

Ordinary leather shoes.

However, Hermes, the former owner of those shoes, couldn't help but recognize their identity.

Tap, tap

Hermes approached YuWon with his light wooden sandals.

He closely examined the shoes YuWon was wearing and became convinced.

They were the shoes he had worn.

"Friend? Where did you get those shoes?"

"I got them in the Trial of Floor 11."

"On the 11th Floor? Oh, right. Now that I remember, I sold them to the Administration Bureau in exchange for Points..."

As he spoke, Hermes recalled an event that had happened a long time ago, and his eyes widened.

"What score did you get in that Trial?"

Hermes had sold his shoes in exchange for Points as a reward for the 11th Floor Trial a long time ago.

Of course, there was no noble reason like helping the new generations.

He just needed money because he had spent all his money on bets.

Floor 11.

That was a world where Hypnos, a Ranker of Olympus, was the exam supervisor.

Out of curiosity, Hermes asked Hypnos who would end up with his shoes.

"It's unlikely that those shoes will make it outside."

Hypnos' response was firm.

"Even if my father tries again?"

Then, Hypnos explained the rules of the exam he supervised.

A merit-based battle for capturing a flag.

In that battle, participants accumulate merits by collecting flags, which then turn into points to choose a reward.

Upon hearing the rules and the price of the shoes he had sold to the Administration Bureau, Hermes thought he would never see them again.

However...

"Don't you plan to sell them to me again?"

Hermes couldn't help but let his eyes shine upon rediscovering the item that Zeus had given him a long time ago.

Although he had sold them out of necessity, it was difficult to find such a good item.

"No."

"Why not? I'll pay you a good price. If you're short on money, here's Dionysus..."

"I have a lot of points too. Besides, I like them quite a bit."

Hermes' Steps.

That was the type of item that best suited YuWon among all the shoe-shaped items.

An item with an ability that allowed jumping in the air without the aid of magic.

Moreover, it lightened the user's feet, making it quite comfortable for daily life.

For that reason, Hermes had also regretted selling them to the Administration Bureau.

"Profit-"

Faced with YuWon's refusal, Hermes gritted his teeth for a moment and looked at YuWon's feet.

Then, his feet filled with wings.

Hermes flew towards the back of YuWon's head.

"Oops."

As soon as Hermes' hand touched YuWon's shoulder, a skill activation message appeared.

[Hermes' is stealing 'Hermes' Steps'.]

[The ownership of 'Hermes' Steps' has been transferred to Hermes-]

ZAP!

And at that moment.

"It seems like Olympus isn't very good at receiving guests."

Hermes' wrist that touched YuWon's shoulder was grabbed, and the skill activation was forcefully canceled.

"Just as I heard."

Chapter 566

Side Story 42

[The activation of "Hand of the Thief" is canceled.]

Hermes, trapped in YuWon's hand.

With this action, YuWon had once again trampled on Hermes' Divinity, known throughout the world.

"Wanderer of freedom and thief, was it?"

Was he a thief or a swindler?

He was confused for a moment, but in the end, it didn't matter.

What mattered was that this guy had tried to steal his item.

Crack!

"Ugh...!"

A groan escaped from Hermes' lips due to the pressure on his wrist.

"Should I break this?"

"Hermes!"

"Hey, you bastard!"

Aphrodite and Dionysus suddenly stood up from their seats at the unexpected situation.

Breaking his wrist was the least of it; what Hermes had done before was not something you should do to a guest, according to YuWon's words.

"Even if those were the shoes you were looking for, do you do this to Father's guest?"

"That's right, man! Just break his wrist and apologize!"

Breaking the wrist without further ado.

They were a truly affectionate family.

Hermes screamed, crushed by Dionysus and Aphrodite.

The two kept a close eye on the reactions of YuWon and Hercules.

YuWon, who had come as Zeus' guest.

And Hercules, who held the second rank not only in Olympus but in the entire Tower.

Hermes' previous actions had been enough to annoy these two.

"Zeus is inside."

At that moment, Hades, who was sipping tea on the side, pointed inside the temple with a gesture.

"Go see him and come back."

Hercules briefly bowed his head in acknowledgment and passed by him.

YuWon and Pandora, who were not particularly interested in Hermes' wrist, did the same.

As they walked, YuWon looked around the place that had become noisy because of Hermes.

'The High-Rankers of Olympus have gathered in one place.'

Most Rankers were like that, but the High-Rankers of Olympus had a particularly individualistic character.

Even if they were bound by blood, they only gathered on one occasion.

And that was only when Zeus summoned them.

'The times Olympus has gathered can be counted on one hand, including the Gigantomachy. And it has to be now.'

It was no coincidence, undoubtedly.

YuWon walked inside along with Heracles.

Step by step~

Only the sound of their steps echoed in the high-ceilinged hallway.

Pandora, who walked slowly by his side, tugged at the edge of YuWon's clothes.

YuWon, feeling the trembling in her fingers, looked at her and took her hand.

"Do you want to stay here?"

"...No."

"Are you okay?"

Pandora nodded. Her response came a bit late. It seemed like it was hard for her to make a decision.

He thought about persuading her, but he let it be. She had already made a decision.

Not just right now.

Since they arrived here.

She knew she would meet Zeus, but she stayed silent.

It was a decision she had made after a long time of thinking.

It was not his place to interfere with that.

Crr, crr~

The sound of birds as they headed to the center of the temple.

And besides that, the sound of water and the fresh breeze brushing against their faces.

"We've arrived."

It was the first time YuWon had come there, although he had only heard about it in stories.

Zeus' abode.

A place where the sky opened up and stretched before their eyes, with a pond surrounded by meadows.

"Have you arrived?" Zeus asked from the edge of the pond, where he was sitting, with his golden hair and handsome middle-aged face greeting YuWon.

"Kim YuWon."

-----

It was early morning on the 90th floor.

Varuna, under the moonlit window, sat with his head bowed and his forehead resting on his hand for a long time.

His mind was filled with the conversation he had with Yama.

"Do you mean Kim YuWon?" Yama asked in disbelief.

Kim YuHun is Kim YuWon.

"Did something like that really happen?" Yama insisted.

"Have you never found it strange even once?"

"Strange?"

"Yes, the same happened to me. I hadn't even considered it strange."

In retrospect, YuWon's traces were everywhere in the Tower.

Unlike with Deva, with whom he had a less profound relationship, Olympus and Asgard had many events related to him.

However.

No one remembered him or bothered to think about YuWon.

"Probably no one would believe it even if I told them now. Not until they experience it themselves."

"Still, it's hard to believe."

"I guess it'll be hard to believe until you see it with your own eyes."

"Is it possible to find him?"

It was a difficult question.

To be precise, Varuna only knew who YuWon was but didn't have a close relationship with him.

Fortunately, he received a response to his message asking if he could visit.

He was told to do as he pleased.

'I have to see him at least once.'

Today.

Varuna decided to go see YuWon, even if he had to do it alone.

The destination was decided: the 66th Floor, where Olympus was located.

'You're going to see Zeus directly.'

It was a good plan.

Even if the world didn't remember him, someone of YuWon's caliber should be recognized by Zeus.

Moreover, Olympus was known as the best Guild at present.

Zeus, its leader, had influence that extended throughout the Tower.

"In that case..."

Deva should also participate.

Bathed in the moonlight, Varuna rose

from his seat, lost in his thoughts. He could no longer chase after women's backs. That era of peace had ended, and now he had to fight to regain it. His determination was firm. He was ready for all his future actions to be stained with blood.

Just at that moment...

As Varuna got up and headed towards the door, a familiar voice echoed in his ears.

"Where are you going?"

"Varuna."

Looking up, Varuna saw a man dressed in white sitting on a tree.

"Vayu?"

"You're moving early. Not typical of you."

A comment befitting someone who knows Varuna's sleepy nature. However, it was strange that he was there at that hour.

"What are you doing here?"

"I simply couldn't sleep."

"Don't talk nonsense. If you can't sleep, why are you in front of my house-."

While speaking, something happened.

Words brushed Varuna's mind: "There's a traitor within Deva."

Traitor.

A Deva Ranker who leaked information about Vishnu to the Administrator and contributed to his death.

'Could it be?'

The question that arose in his mind quickly inflated. Cold sweat began to run down Varuna's face, and at the same time...

With the remote possibility in mind, Varuna raised a hand backward and began to gather Arcane Power slowly.

"Vayu."

"Yes?"

"Just in case. Just in case, I ask you-."

Varuna's eyes, glowing blue under the moonlight...

"Do you plan to simply return?"

To that question, Vayu smiled widely.

With an expression Varuna had never seen before.

"No."

Fwoosh-!

A wind blew and hit Varuna.

"I won't do that at all."

The water barrier Varuna had created wavered. If he hadn't prepared in advance, it would have been difficult to react.

"...You blocked it."

"Vayu-!"

As it was revealed that his worst fears were true, Varuna created a water bow and questioned him, aiming it.

"Why are you doing this?!"

"Do you ask knowingly? Didn't Yama mention it already?"

"Is it really true then?"

Puh-kahk!

The tree Vayu was sitting on shattered from the impact of Varuna's arrow and Vayu's fist.

Varuna moved, stepping on the roof, and Vayu closed the distance quickly.

Chrr-.

The bowstring tensed. In the moment he was about to shoot it at Vayu, his fingers hesitated for a brief instant.

And in that instant...



Whoosh-!

"You retreat too much, Varuna."

Vayu's hand, which had shortened the distance through the wind and was now in front of him, touched Varuna's body.

Thwack-!

The wind that pierced Varuna's torso crushed the ground.

At the same time he screamed, Varuna snapped his fingers.

Grrroooooaar!

A water pillar sprouted from the ground.

Varuna pushed back Vayu's Arcane Power and rapidly rose into the sky on the water pillar.

"Phew, phew-."

Cold sweat flowed from Varuna's forehead.

His physical strength had also quickly depleted due to the sudden use of an ability that consumed a lot of Arcane Power.

A brief moment of hesitation had caused great damage.

"Nevertheless, you came out fine."

"Why you, Vayu?"

"Why me? Is there anyone among us who hasn't received Vishnu-nim's grace?"

"That day, you stopped me when I got furious with Yama. You said you were angry with the Administrators!"

"You saw that correctly. That was sincere."

"Then why!"

"Varuna."

Bitterness reflected in Vayu's expression.

"No matter if we are High-Rankers, in the end, we are just tools of the Tower. Even if our lifespan is infinite, we are mortal beings who will eventually die."

"And then?"

"The fact that we are on the winning side is a natural instinct for survival."

"Do you mean you betrayed Vishnu-nim just because you want to live now? Who saved your life when you were already dead?"

A long time ago.

Varuna, Vayu, and other Deva Rankers were saved by Vishnu.

Ananta.

Vishnu saved Varuna and Vayu after they lost their families and comrades at the hands of that monster.

Because of that, Vayu and Varuna pledged loyalty to Vishnu together.

Deva soon became their home and family.

At least, that's what Varuna had thought.

"I'm grateful to him for that. However..."

And yet...

"That doesn't mean we should all die together, does it?"

It seemed that, after all, that was just Varuna's thought.

Step by step~

Vayu approached Varuna.

With a bitter expression and voice, he continued speaking.

"In the battle ten years ago, the Tower lost King Odin. The Demon Kings and The Heaven lost half their power, and Deva lost several High-Rankers, including Kubera."

It was impossible to forget.

That day, ten years ago.

It was the first time in the Tower's long history that several Great Guilds joined forces to fight.

How many High-Rankers, including Odin, died back then.

Needless to say, it was terrible, as the number of Rankers registered in the Ranking had decreased by 30% since that day.

"We've been steadily weakening due to the fight against the Outers and Foolish Chaos' plans."

"What do you mean?"

"It was about five years ago. The Administrator found me. He said they are now reclaiming what belongs to them."

Remembering the events of that day, Vayu looked up and stared at the sky somewhere while continuing to speak.

"We can't win. Not just with those who remain..."

However...

"Wh-what? Five years ago?"

Varuna was more concerned about something different from the words Vayu had just spoken.

'Five years. If it's five years... '

When was it that they forgot him?

As soon as he thought that, inappropriate laughter burst out from Varuna.

"Hey."

Varuna said to Vayu, who was murmuring about past events, with a mix of laughter and mockery in his voice.

"You've miscalculated."

Probably not. He was sure.

Vayu wouldn't remember.

Chapter 567

Side Story 43

"...?"

Vayu, with a furrowed brow, looked at Varuna with eyes of doubt.

Varuna smiled widely.

He was mocking him, saying he had miscalculated.

"What do you mean?"

"You'll know later. But make sure you're ready to regret."

Veins on Vayu's forehead bulged.

Varuna's ability to irritate him was as good as ever.

Despite being friends for a long time, Vayu had always thought that it wouldn't be strange for them to fight at some point.

And that moment was now.

"You're still too confident."

"So what? Do you think the Devas will stand idly by while this chaos unfolds?"

Varuna's house was not far from the Devas' headquarters.

"I just need to buy time. Do you really think I can't hold you off for five or ten minutes?"

Though he had suffered losses due to his hesitation, the rank difference between Varuna and Vayu wasn't that significant.

Under equal conditions, their skills were on par.

It would take an all-night battle to determine a winner.

However...

"You're a bit short-sighted."

"Eh?"

Vayu's response was unexpectedly calm.

It was as if he had another card up his sleeve.

"Do you think I'm the only one here?"

"What?"

Varuna raised his head in surprise.

In the distance, in his field of vision, he saw a light rising above the dawn glow.

'It can't be, in addition to Vayu...'

Flames were engulfing the land.

The village ruled by the Devas was being devoured by fire.

Boom!

At that moment, a fist shot out.

Bam!

Varuna quickly raised his bow and blocked Vayu's fist.

Even with one eye missing, he couldn't be fooled twice for the same reason.

Crunch~

Vayu's hand grabbed Varuna's bow.

With a fierce expression he hadn't shown before, Vayu lifted his head towards Varuna.

"I'm not a fool. Do you think I would move alone?"

Hiss~

Vayu's hair stood on end.

Despite the killing aura emanating from Vayu, Varuna's gaze turned towards the burning Devas' village.

'Who else is it? Seriously?'

-----

An unmistakable electric aura ran through Hercules' body.

Zeus.

He had mentioned a name a moment ago.

Kim YuWon.

"How do you know that name?"

Certainly, Zeus didn't know YuWon's name before.

That's why he had tested YuWon with Hargan's news and had confirmed his existence through Athena.

If Zeus had remembered YuWon from the beginning, he wouldn't have gone through so much trouble.

"I've only known it recently. Is it a name I shouldn't know? Too bad for you then."

Zeus's eyes looked at him meaningfully.

"Both the one who struck me down for the first time, the one who returned me to the Throne, and the one who took away my Lightning Bolt..."

Smile or gaze?

"They are all the same person, you know?"

Zeus's expression was impossible to read.

'As expected, I can't let my guard down.'

He had a small hope. With anyone else, no, but with Zeus.

He thought maybe Zeus would remember.

Of course, it was just a hunch, with no real basis.

That's why he had only considered it as a remote possibility.

Craaack-le

Hercules moved towards Zeus.

Judging by the heaviness of his steps, he seemed quite excited.

It seemed like he, too, was surprised by the fact that Zeus remembered YuWon.

"Don't you know that's not what I'm saying?"

"Then?"

"Stop going around as if you don't know me. I'm just asking how you know."

"It seems calling me father still makes you uncomfortable. I understand."

Flash-!

Light filled the temple.

In the instant Hercules unleashed the Lightning Bolt and his fist extended towards Zeus,

Touch-.

Zeus's fingers clashed against Hercules' fist.

Kwaang-!

A Lightning Bolt rose into the open sky of the temple.

The Lightning Bolt rising from bottom to top was an impressive sight.

YuWon stood in front of Pandora just in case she might be affected.

Zeus had blocked Hercules' fist with a finger.

No wonder.

After all, Hercules' fist was nothing more than a mere threat with no real seriousness behind it.

"Didn't I tell you clearly? I'm not helping Olympus for you."

Zeus and Hercules were said to have a fairly good father-son relationship.

However, that was just a façade.

As he had told Athena, Hercules could never reconcile with Zeus.

That's why he was only trying to forgive him, not reconcile.

And that forgiveness would probably take hundreds or thousands of years to come.

Despite that, Hercules was willing to use his strength and name for Olympus.

Hero.

That was the adjective always associated with Hercules' name.

The mere presence of Hercules was a deterrent against war.

Zeus needed Hercules' strength and name to stabilize the Tower, which had plunged into chaos after the war against the Outers.

Hercules was also aware of that fact.

That's why he had no choice but to act as Zeus' son despite his reluctance.

"While I strive to forgive you, you must also live righteously. Consider it a way to apologize to my late mother, even if it's just a little."

"Fine. I promise."

"Don't make promises so lightly-!"

"Hercules."

Touch, touch-.

YuWon approached Hercules and cautiously touched his shoulder.

"Aren't you exaggerating a bit with just him remembering my name? He hasn't done anything yet..."

"Ah..."

Hercules, who was very excited, withdrew his fist and scratched his head.

Upon further reflection, it was true.

The only thing Zeus had done was remember YuWon's name when no one else did.

Hercules was the one who had reacted so sensitively to the "Father" name.

"...You're right."

Hercules suppressed his excitement with a dry cough and an embarrassed smile.

As Hercules quickly stepped back, YuWon addressed Zeus.

YuWon's gaze towards Zeus wasn't friendly either.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Do you still see me that way?"

"What are you saying...?"

As he spoke, Zeus's gaze shifted to Pandora, who was right behind YuWon.

Trembling hands.

Although she had come prepared, she still felt fear in front of Zeus.

"You opened the box."

One day, Zeus visited Pandora, who had opened the box.

A great and ominous power acquired suddenly.

Zeus gestured to Pandora, trembling with anxiety over that power.

Kwa-rung!

Chains of Lightning that bound Pandora's body.

Zeus condemned her to death, as if giving a sentence.

"Lock the sinner Pandora in prison. Do not release her until I give specific orders."

That day, Pandora saw Zeus's laughter.

It was as if she had expected something like this to happen.

A dark and cold prison.

Chains strong enough to seal even a High-Ranker's body.

For a long time, Pandora was immersed in that darkness.

It was a boring, lonely, and frightening time.

And in the end, Pandora transformed like the air floating in the void.

"Yes, that's right. Pandora existed too."

"Also?"

Gii-ing!

['Golden Cinder Eyes' activates.]

['Eyes of Foreknowledge' activates.]

['Sensory Field' activates.]

Craack-le.

['Uranus Heart' activates.]

A ring starting to glow on YuWon's hand.

Uranus Heart.

The true appearance of the Lightning Bolt, gathered by the power of Olympus.

"You shouldn't say that."

Craack-le-.

The Lightning Bolt flowing from the ring at the fingertip coiled around the fist.

Long ago, when Zeus revealed the true appearance of his own Lightning Bolt, his eyes gleamed.

It was the first time he saw the power of Uranus up close.

Zeus showed curiosity.

Perhaps because of that.

He ignored the fact that YuWon was angry.

And so, in the next moment...

Pfft-.

YuWon unleashed a Golden Lightning Bolt towards Zeus.

"Just let me hit you once."

Gguuoooh-!

After taking a hit to the head, Zeus flew and emitted a joyful sound.

Thump, thud-.

Zeus, rolling on the ground, collapsed with a large figure of: 大, on the floor.

The situation unfolded in an instant...

"..."

"Wow."

Hercules, surprised, opened his mouth, remaining motionless, while Pandora clapped with wide-open eyes.

Still looking at Zeus lying on the ground without deactivating his abilities, YuWon.

Hercules cautiously asked him.

"Are you okay?"

"What?"

"If you're wrong, this could be..."

The opponent was Zeus.

The greatest king in this Tower.

YuWon's act could be interpreted as a provocation to Olympus.

'Is this guy going to do something even Son OhGong wouldn't do?'

Hercules calmed his surprised heart.



If it was YuWon, there surely was a reason for his actions.

Right now, that was the first thing to ask.

"Why are you doing that?"

"I promised."

YuWon glanced sideways at Pandora, whose trembling had already disappeared.

"I said if I saw him, I would give him a good punch."

"Ah..."

Only then did Hercules understand YuWon's sudden behavior.

Pandora.

A beautiful and noble woman whose name had been erased from Olympus only ten years ago.

Pandora's tragedy began with Zeus, just like the death of Hercules' mother, Alcmena.

'The problem is that damn father.'

Tak~

Zeus slowly got up.

Hercules looked at him with uneasy eyes.

'Maybe a war with Olympus...'

"Is that enough for you?"

Zeus rubbed his head with a hand, frowning at the blood staining his palm.

"Your punch is stronger than I thought. I didn't know you would also use Gigantification."

"..."

Hercules had a perplexed expression. He thought he might convince Zeus in some way, but he didn't expect such a calm reaction.

Even more surprising was YuWon's reaction.

"I'm not satisfied yet."

"There's more?"

"A lot."

"Then, I'll pay you back little by little. We have plenty of time."

Zeus calmly responded to YuWon's tranquil reply. It seemed incredible that these two were the tenant and the landlord who exchanged punches just a moment ago.

"Then..."

Zeus got up from his place and, as if nothing had happened, gestured towards a table on the side.

"What if we hear what you know?"

## Chapter 568

### Side Story 44

Squirt~

The cup was filled.

The earlier chaos had dissipated, making way for a calm tea session.

Hercules, watching Zeus pour the tea himself, had a continuously surprised expression on his face.

"Drink."

"Do you like tea...? I recall you enjoyed alcohol more."

"I don't enjoy alcohol that much. I drink it out of necessity, not pleasure."

Zeus savored the aroma of the tea.

It was a sight Hercules wouldn't have believed if he hadn't seen it with his own eyes.

Hercules sat on the small chair and reached out to take the tea cup.

The cup he held with his fingers looked like a miniature toy, so Hercules put it back down.

Zeus looked at the three present, aside from him, none of them were drinking tea.

"Aren't you going to drink? It smells good."

"It might be poisoned."

"The cup is too small."

"Hmph~"

Zeus, after seeing Pandora discreetly spit out the tea, also set his cup aside.

"It would have been better to bring alcohol."

"Is the place where you got hit okay?"

Heracles asked, to which Zeus responded by patting the spot where YuWon had hit him.

"I bled a bit, but I'm fine. Though I don't feel great."

"To be honest, I'm surprised. I thought you'd get really mad."

"A punch is not a bad deal. It's a hundred, a thousand times better than having a guy like him as an enemy."

The reason Zeus didn't get angry about the unexpected punch.

It was because he had "calculated" Pandora's hatred and YuWon's anger.

He was a more calculating man than anyone.

He analyzed the pros and cons and controlled his emotions more rationally than anyone.

YuWon, who appeared with Pandora.

Zeus, after confirming their relationship, thought.

That if he endured a punch, calming YuWon's anger, it wouldn't be a bad deal.

In response to Zeus's answer, Hercules looked at YuWon, who was pouring tea from Pandora's cup onto the floor.

He was telling her not to drink that stuff, and instead, he gave her a chocolate from his inventory.

'That means he recognizes it to some extent, doesn't he?'

A man whom even Zeus, with his more than arrogant nature, didn't want as an enemy.

The only being who had brought the King of Olympus, Zeus, to the ground.

'Indeed.'

It wasn't a story he couldn't believe.

'It's natural for him to do so.'

Zeus wasn't foolish enough to turn him into an enemy just because his pride had been slightly hurt.

By his side was Hercules. There was also The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal, and Pandora.

And most importantly, YuWon was stronger than anyone Hercules knew.

He wasn't even sure if the entire Olympus could defeat him.

One punch.

Just one punch.

Zeus was a man willing to take it if it calmed YuWon.

Of course, YuWon knew that too, which is why he dared to hit him.

"Enough with the guest attention. Tell me why you've called me."

"You also sought me out for some reason, didn't you?"

YuWon and Zeus's words clashed.

Both had matters to deal with the other.

After a brief silence, YuWon finally shrugged and said:

"Well, the order doesn't matter. Go ahead, you first."

"How much do you know about the Administrators?"

The question came as soon as the words ended.

YuWon frowned at the seemingly expected reaction.

"What's with this sudden change of topic?"

"You know, undoubtedly. You wouldn't have appeared like this all of a sudden if you didn't know."

His tone indicated that he knew everything.

"I know."

Of course, he had no intention of revealing everything.

"Just that they're not as special as they seem."

"Are you trying to hide it?"

"Neither you nor I are the type to work as a team. I'll give you the information you need, but I won't tell you everything."

Zeus was a dangerous being.

Much more so than some Administrators.

Even Mimir, who was nobody, had evaluated him as someone whose interior was impossible to know. It was better to be careful.

"The most important thing is... the nature of the power they possess, right?"

"Nature?"

"A long time ago, the Administrators made a contract with a Being. That's how they gained the ability to use mana as if it were their own."

A total of a hundred Administrators.

They attracted Players to this Tower and used the System to elevate them to higher levels.

That's why most Players saw them as Gods.

However...

"Besides that, Administrators are nothing special. They're just a bit stronger than normal High-Rankers."

They are not Gods.

No.

Those who have created their own Myth and obtained Divinity and divine power should be considered Gods.

In that case, Tower Rankers should already be on the same level as Administrators.

"That will be the problem. For them."

"I see."

"...?"

"...?"

Hercules and Pandora, with perplexed expressions, didn't understand Zeus nodding and saying, "I see."

"What the hell does that mean?"

For the two who couldn't understand it right away, Zeus put down his tea cup and added an explanation:

"With time, the power of Players has been gradually increasing. At least, I'm not as afraid of Administrators anymore, and they'll feel it too."

"Ah..."

Hercules nodded at that explanation.

"Players are surpassing Administrators..."

Those who had been beneath them were starting to be seen as a threat.

The same applied to Hercules himself.

At what moment was it?

At some point, Hercules began to feel that the Administrators, who had seemed as high as the sky, were not as formidable as they appeared.

"Do you have any attack plan?"

It's not that I don't. After all, the power they possess is also in the form of abilities."

"How do you know?"

"I have it too."

Swoosh~

Upon YuWon's outstretched palm, a mana sphere the color of pale sky rose.

Mana firmly condensed like a smooth glass marble.

[Mana Orb] (Note: Previously called: Mana Sphere)

It was a skill too basic to display now.

Like Lee SeongYun, talented players sometimes learned Mana Orb from the tutorial.

However, what YuWon was about to show was not a simple Mana Orb.

"A pale sky. It's the most basic color of mana. And as you know, Mana Orb can change to any attribute depending on the nature of mana."

Frrr!

A mana sphere burning like flames.

"Fire as well."

Craack-le!

Lightning overlaid the fire.

"And lightning too."

Auuuu!

Plop!

"Darkness or water, it doesn't matter."

"Wow..."

"How beautiful!"

Unlike Pandora, whose eyes were sparkling, Hercules and Zeus opened their mouths for another reason at the spectacle unfolding before them.

A Mana Orb blending four mana attributes.

Even two would be remarkable, but four unmixable mana attributes had been blended.

"Can water and fire mix?"

Unlike other Rankers, Hercules was not well-versed in mana attributes.

However, even Hercules could understand how incredible what he had before his eyes was.

Bang!

The Mana Orb exploded, and the four-attribute mana dispersed and ascended to the sky.

Zeus was also surprised.

"It's something like that. Of course, my experience is much less than theirs, who have been working with this all their lives."

Normal Rankers could handle a maximum of two mana attributes, no matter how many there were.

And even that was not very efficient, so most, like Zeus or Surt, focused on a single mana attribute.

However, YuWon had been using multi-attribute mana at the level of an upper High-Ranker.

'Now I understand how he can handle so many mana attributes...'

The Mana used by the Administrators.

If he could use it, now he could understand the control and understanding that YuWon had shown so far over mana.

"It takes the form of a skill, so obviously it has its limits. The last battle confirmed it."

"The last battle? In the Celestial Realm?"

"Yes."

"And? What did you confirm?"

"Abilities that strengthen weapons or the body are more effective. Releasing mana directly outward and firing it reduces its effectiveness by half. And that means..."

YuWon's gaze turned to Hercules and Pandora.

"It means close combat is more advantageous in the fight against them."

At those words, Hercules concealed his surprised expression and looked at Zeus.

"If releasing mana directly is a disadvantage, it's a natural enemy for my father."

Zeus's position was that of a javelin thrower. He was a High-Ranker who could throw javelins farther and with more force than anyone else.

On the other hand, Hercules was capable of more powerful close combat than anyone else.

'There's a reason this guy came to see me right after the battle in the Celestial Realm.'

In any case, it wasn't good news for Zeus. However, Zeus's reaction was unexpectedly calm.

"Good information. I'll make sure to share it."

"Don't just share it with Olympus, send it to all the other Guilds too."

"Alright. Besides that, how do you know this?"

"I found out after facing them directly."

"It doesn't seem like everything."

"If you're curious, find out for yourself."

Zeus smiled broadly at YuWon's attitude, responding like a fish out of water.

"As always, this part of you annoys me and pleases me at the same time."

Zeus, reigning as the King of Olympus, had met countless Rankers. And among them, undoubtedly, there were some who could speak and act on equal terms with Zeus.

Magnificent beings like Odin or Vishnu.

However, none of them emitted the same aura as YuWon.

'You are truly different.'

An equal.

That was the impression Zeus got from YuWon.

Talking with him was not boring. It was the first time since Odin that he felt he could have a real conversation.

Everyone in this world seemed like puppets to him.

Ignorant and boring.

The difference between mindless and egoless monsters and Rankers at the top of the Tower was almost nonexistent, except for the ability to speak.

That's why Zeus planted his seed.

In this world, his great realm that he had built himself.

To create a descendant who would inherit the name of Olympus.

The greatest masterpieces he had created.

Hercules and Hargan.

However, an even more magnificent work was in front of his eyes.

'There's only one thing missing.'

Zeus's gaze turned to Pandora, who was standing next to YuWon.

The difference between him and YuWon.

'What would it take to fill it?'

While Zeus was lost in thought, YuWon spoke.

"Now it's your turn."

This time, YuWon mentioned the purpose of his visit.

"Whatever you want."

"More than questions, I have a request."

"A request?"

"I need to use Olympus' information network."

"Is it about the traitors the Administrators planted?"

Zeus smiled ironically, as if he knew everything.

"Don't worry about that. I already have a good understanding of the situation."

"Have you also told Deva?"

Vishnu.

More than anything, YuWon wanted to unravel the secret of his death first.

"That's a delicate matter."

And he seemed to know that question too.

"It may have been delayed a bit because of you."

Zeus had already set his plan in motion.

Chapter 569

Side Story 45

A fierce fire demon engulfed the village.

Screams filled the air.

In the midst of the crowd desperately fleeing the flames, a red-haired woman stood.

"Hurry up, fools. If you die, there will be a penalty."

Swinging her red hair, she inhaled the black smoke as if it were a floral fragrance.

She gazed with satisfaction at the landscape she had created.

"The flowers have bloomed beautifully."

Her words were lost amid the screams; no one heard them.

"I mean, the flames."

These flames were the source of her happiness.

"Suryaaa-!"



Huaaaah-!

At that moment, the flames split, and a crimson fire enveloped Surya.

Fuaaaang-!

Waves of fire clashed and exploded in opposite directions.

Smiling, Surya greeted her former companion who appeared in front of him.

"As expected, you're the first to arrive, Agni."

"What are you doing, Surya?!"

A man with crimson hair tied up.

Agni looked at Surya with eyes full of anger.

As a High-Ranker who mastered flames, Agni had eyes that could see and sense fire wherever it existed.

Moreover.

He could go anywhere where there was fire.

"Why?!"

"Do you need an explanation? Anyway, now we are enemies."

"You, really...."

Huaaaarr-.

The anger intensified the fire.

That was the nature of those who mastered flames.

"Are you saying you've betrayed Deva?"

"Oh."

Pufaaaaah-!

The two clashed.

"That's what you're saying."

Pun, pufupufup-!

Huaaaarr-!

The flames erupted into the sky like fireworks as Surya and Agni collided.

Agni's flames devoured Surya's, and vice versa, in a constant struggle.

Two who control the magic of the same element.

And furthermore, they know each other well.

'I can't defeat her easily.'

Even for Agni, his opponent was Surya.

Rank 185.

In terms of rank, she was only a few places above Agni.

It's not that Agni believes she is less skilled, but the faction following Surya in Deva is larger.

'Fortunately, the damage to people isn't severe.'

Perhaps due to the awareness of the penalty?

Not many died trapped in Surya's flames.

The flames didn't suddenly rise but bloomed gradually, allowing evacuation.

Moreover, Surya had even opened a path for people to escape.

'What is she seeking?'

Realizing this, Agni suddenly felt a strange sense of oppression.

If it wasn't the village she sought from the beginning, then...

"You have no sense of smell, Agni."

Agni's eyes widened in surprise at Surya's words.

"Now do you understand?"

"Don't tell me...."

"I called you from the beginning."

If there was a fire in the village, Agni would be the first to notice.

Surya couldn't ignore that. Her goal was never the village from the beginning.

"And probably..."

Surya raised her head, stopping.

"Others will come soon too."

Guooooo—.

The sky dyed red by the flames opened up.

In the sky, Deva's ships began to appear one by one.

"Fortunately."

Tack-.

Surya snapped her fingers.

At the same time, a cloud blocking the sun suddenly opened, and a huge ship appeared.

'Hidden in the clouds?'

Since when was it hidden there?

Agni's suddenly ignited fiery gaze turned toward the ground.

A village in flames.

People fleeing from the fire.

Agni appeared in the village burned by Surya, and beneath him appeared Deva's ships.

That means...

"Don't come!"

At Agni's shout, the descending Deva ships stopped for a moment.

But only for a moment.

They couldn't ignore Surya, who had betrayed Deva and set the village on fire, no matter how much it was Agni's order.

Agni looked at the disobedient ships and filled with anger.

"I said don't come!"

An empty cry.

Deva should have heard his cry.

"It's too late, Agni."

Wiiiii—.

A tremendous amount of Arcane Power emanated from the enormous ship.

Under the ship, cannons ready to fire, filled with Arcane Power, could be seen.

Surya, who had prepared this situation in advance, moved her hand without hesitation.

"Fire."

-----

Flash!

Light burst from the sky.

The enormous ship Surya had prepared had a power level different from the hastily appearing other ships.

The bombardment began.

Deva's ships were destroyed in an instant.

Agni fought to contain the damage but was ultimately blocked by Surya.

After the ship's bombardment ended, what appeared was a village in ruins and Agni with a battered body.

"Suryaaaaa!"

"Your end is today, Agni."

Surya, she, mocked Agni.

Above her head, the Rankers following Surya emerged from the ship and formed a line.

Chiii—.

Steam rose from Agni's body.

Deva's support forces had been completely eliminated by the previous bombardment.

Now, only Agni, who had suffered damage to block the bombardment, remained.

'I have to survive.'

At this moment, Vishnu was not in Deva.

It is not known to what extent everything has decayed, but his death could lead to the destruction of Veda.

Right now, he just had to survive.

Hwarr-!

Flames erupted from Agni's body. Agni infiltrated the village turned into a sea of fire by Surya.

Surya, as if not wanting to lose Agni, also jumped into the fire.

"Do you think you can escape?"

Hwaaaak-!

Red flames wrapped around Agni's body.

Agni, trying to escape hastily, reappeared with a burn on his shoulder.

"Ugh..."

Kiiing—.

And right after, a barrage of shots.

Kwaaaat-!

He dodged the reach of the bombardment and the attacks of spears and the abilities of Surya's subordinates.

He relied on his mobility, but there were too many. Agni didn't expect that the forces that joined the Administrators would be so significant.

'Since when has Deva decayed so much?'

Kwaaaaauu-!

At that moment, a rain of fire fell on Agni's head.

Judging that he couldn't dodge it, Agni vigorously waved his arms and generated flames.

Pheerr-!

The flames that rose upward blocked the rain of fire.

However, in that single instant, when he diverted his gaze elsewhere...

"I got you, Agni."

"...!"

Huaaaak-!

Pufupufupufung-!

As if they had set a trap beforehand, a series of massive explosions occurred where Agni arrived.

The red flames pushed the flames enveloping Agni's body.

Even without that, Agni, who was anxious to escape, couldn't cope with her, Surya, who had prepared her skills in advance.

Chiiii-.

In the place where the flames had passed.

Agni, with a vivid red body, staggered with a hunched body.

"Don't feel so aggrieved, Agni."

Step by step~

As the distance between Surya and Agni shortened, the bombardment naturally stopped.

"First of all, we are not the owners of this Tower. We just borrowed it for a while, after they handed it over to us."

"...Are you afraid of the Administrators?"

Although it seemed like he had trouble standing, Agni's eyes shone with a crimson red color.

Surya nodded in acknowledgment to Agni.

"I set a condition for them. I told them to kill Vishnu. Then, I would gladly join your side."

"Surya...!"

"I needed to be sure. Sure that we could defeat monsters like Vishnu, Zeus, Hercules, or The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal."

At her request, the Administrator gladly turned Vishnu to dust.

It was then...

When Surya decided to side with the Administrators.

"Those guys are just dogs who follow my orders anyway. The problem is you, guys like you and Yama..."

Surya smiled at Agni with a meaningful smile and extended her hand.

"What do you say, Agni? Would you like to join us?"

"Join?"

Agni smirked and raised his middle finger.

"Eat this."

"What a pity. But if you had said yes, I would have made you suffer more before killing you."

Surya reached her hand toward Agni.

Sharp and curved red nails.

In an instant, she extended her hand to Agni's throat and bid him a final farewell.

"Then, goodbye, Agni."

Shuaaaaak-!

Turup-.

The hand stopped in front of Agni's eyes. Agni, who raised the corners of his mouth without the strength to smile, looked at the warrior who stood between him and Surya.

"If you had come a little earlier, nothing would have happened."

"What a rude way to speak to your savior."

Kwaaak-!

The hand that grabbed Surya's wrist.

Surya's eyes widened as her interrupted struggle unfolded.

This was the territory of the Devas.

If another Deva Ranker had intervened in the fight, she wouldn't have been so surprised.

However.

"Atena, why...?"

"I received an order from my father."

Gooooo-!

At that moment, a massive chariot appeared over Surya's ship.

"From now on, Olympus will protect the Devas."

Athena and the warriors of Olympus, who had arrived on the Sun Chariot, appeared on the Devas' battlefield.

-----

Rumble.

A sky filled with dark clouds.

Four Administrators walked through the valley, buffeted by strong winds and lightning, conversing among themselves.

"It seems we underestimated them."

"No one thought it would be an easy battle. It was a mistake to underestimate Celestial Realm and The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal."

"Four have already died... "

The plan to overthrow Celestial Realm had turned into a bubble.

The faction of Taishang Laojun had disappeared, and four Administrators had died.

The losses were considerable.

And more so because this happened after killing Vishnu and being confident of victory.

Maybe they could lose.

A feeling of unease began to blossom.

Moreover...

"Wasn't there one more?"

This time, even an unregistered variable in their Ranking had intervened.

"Do you mean that guy, Kim YuHun?"

"Yes."

"Has anyone identified him?"

.....

Silence.

None of the Administrators knew anything about the mysterious player named Kim YuHun.

What kind of skills he had.

When he had completed the Tutorial, and even where he had been until now.

Chirp~

The steps of the four Administrators walking side by side came to a halt.

Now was not the time to worry about that guy.

Rrrrrrrr-.

The roar of a beast gradually sounded.

At the end of the dark valley, the slitted eyes of a red reptile glowed in the darkness.

"You've waited a long time, Vritra."

Vritra.

One of the oldest monsters in this Tower.

Located at the pinnacle of the Dragon Race, a being that had been asleep since shortly after the battle against Indra.

-What are the Administrators doing here?

Rumble-!

Before his question, an Administrator looked up at the thundering sky and mentioned the name of a Dragon, known as the strongest.

"We've come to see Ananta."

Chapter 570

Side Story 46

YuWon and Zeus conversed for quite a while.

Zeus had much more information about the Administrators than YuWon had thought.

He knew about their movements, the traitors within Deva, and even the dark influence of the Administrators that spread everywhere.

'It seems like they've been quite busy.'

For the past ten years, YuWon had enjoyed peaceful days.

Thanks to everyone forgetting about him, he could live the days he longed for.

However, Zeus hadn't stopped during that time.

He had become the best and led the most powerful Guild. He had become the axis of the Great Guilds and hadn't taken his eyes off the movements of the Administrators.

The conversation continued.

Pandora fell asleep during the boring conversation, and Hercules could only move his eyes from left to right without really participating.

Just when the conversation was about to end, YuWon was convinced by the information Zeus had provided.

"Who helped you?"

"Do I have to tell you?"

"It seems you have no intention of doing so."

"You're very sharp."

A sign that he would also hide something since Zeus was hiding something.

YuWon frowned and looked at Zeus.

"Anyway, it must be one of the Administrators."

"Yes, probably."

A response that was neither affirmative nor negative.

It didn't seem like Zeus was going to give a decent answer even if he asked more.

The missing link to gaining information about the Administrators.

Zeus seemed to intend to monopolize it for himself.

'It won't be easy for him to give it to me.'

YuWon and Zeus weren't exactly comrades.



As always, they only shared a common goal. To achieve it, they revealed what was necessary to each other, and each kept their own secrets.

YuWon brought the cold tea cup to his lips.

Of the information he had gained from Zeus, only one thing worried him.

'Ananta....'

Ananta.

The ancient enemy of Deva, a being that Vishnu couldn't kill and could only seal.

'He has allied with the Administrators.'

If the Administrators involved him, the fight would become even more complex.

"We can't allow this to drag on."

At YuWon's murmur, Zeus opened his mouth.

"Do you mean Ananta?"

"Yes."

"Who is he?"

Hercules still had a perplexed expression.

Unlike YuWon and Zeus, he didn't know the name Ananta.

'For him not to know, it must be a name that has been lost in history.'

It was natural for Hercules not to know Ananta. Only the High-Ranks of Deva close to Vishnu knew that name.

Moreover, Hercules was quite young among the High-Ranks.

"He is a monster that Vishnu sealed a long time ago."

"Not only Vishnu, but also several ancient Rankers fought against him. Including the Bull Demon King and Odin."

"How do you know that? You're the one who most recently entered the Tower."

At Zeus's question, YuWon smiled slightly with his golden eyes.

It was a timely question.

"I experienced it."

"You experienced it...?"

"..."

Zeus, right across from him, was pouring tea into an empty cup.

He seemed to be trying to act as if nothing, but for a brief moment.

A slight brow movement caught YuWon's attention.

"Using the Golden Cinder Eyes while observing me is a bit cheating."

Whoosh.

The Golden Cinder Eyes, used to observe Zeus's expression.

Thanks to the Golden Cinder Eyes, which could detect even the subtlest changes in the opponent's expression, as well as the truth and lies hidden in them, Zeus had no choice but to reveal his intentions.

"Well, I guess you're right. The information was given to me by the Tutorial Administrator."

Tutorial.

YuWon, remembering the enormous beggar-like Administrator he had met a long time ago, his eyes sparkled.

"He came to me and revealed information about the Administrators. He said he didn't want the outcome of this battle to tilt one way or the other."

"Originally, did you think we would lose?"

"Of course... although..."

A slight brow movement caught YuWon's attention.

Looking YuWon in the face, Zeus uttered words that were difficult to say.

"That guy also forgot about you."

The Tutorial Administrator was special.

The lower the level of the Administrator managing a floor, the weaker they were, but he was an exception.

Tutorial.

The lowest place in the Tower, where all worlds gathered in the Tower.

'I have no memory of that guy.'

Even without that, it was already quite strange.

An Administrator who didn't exist in Azathoth's memory.

And that same Administrator had visited Zeus and given him information about the other Administrators.

"Now tell me. You said you experienced Ananta?"

The Tutorial Administrator's story was worth hearing.

He had received one; now it was time to give one.

YuWon nodded and answered Zeus's question.

"Ah, yes. I did."

"How?"

"You know where I come from, right?"

YuWon, who answered a question with another, stood up immediately.

Zeus, who hadn't received the answer he wanted yet, frowned a bit, and YuWon gestured to Hercules to get up.

"We can't stay here; we have to hurry."

"Are you going to move without giving a proper answer?"

"Didn't I say before?"

According to his memories, quite some time had passed since Ananta woke up. And most importantly, Vishnu, guarding the seal, had died recently.

"We can't waste time."

From now on, time was their enemy.

-----

Boom, boom.

The valley trembled with each step Vritra took.

The four Administrators followed Vritra into the depths of the long valley.

Drip, drip.

A river flowed through the valley.

As the scent of grass began to waft, Vritra, leading the way, turned around and looked at the Administrators.

"If you try something stupid, I'll set all of you on fire first, so keep that in mind."

"Don't worry. Since we have the same goal, there's no reason for us to betray you here."

Swish~

Vritra, who stared at them for a while and warned them again, stepped aside and folded his outstretched wings.

And then, what was revealed was...

"A tree?"

"Is it Vishnu's ability?"

A massive yellow Dragon surrounded by trees.

No.

It wasn't just one Dragon.

"Yamata no Orochi would cry."

"How many heads does it have?"

A Dragon with an countless number of heads.

Monsters with multiple heads like Hydra or Yamata no Orochi were insignificant compared to him.  
Ananta.

That monster with the name meaning "infinite" was a being that stood at the top of monsters like Yamata no Orochi or Vritra.

Grrr~

Was it because of the uninvited guests?

The heads of Ananta opened their mouths one by one and roared threateningly. Upon hearing that sound, Ananta's closed eyes began to open.

Bound to the tree, he looked at the four Administrators who had found him.

"What are the great Administrators doing here?"

Unlike his threatening attitude with clenched teeth, Ananta's voice was calm and polite.

While the other Administrators shuddered at the appearance that the body and heads were separate entities, the highest-ranked Administrator among the four took a step forward.

"We will release you from the seal so that you can help us."

"The seal is already broken. I am just resting at the moment."

"Now that you've opened your eyes, you can do anything with your power. But if you force the seal now that you've opened your eyes, you will also suffer damage."

Vishnu's tree that sealed Ananta was powerful. It not only bound his body from the outside but was also embedded in the hundred hearts of Ananta.

If he forced the seal now that he had opened his eyes, he might fall into a long period of sleep again.

"We will help you. In return, you also help us, Ananta."

The Administrator said this and explained the plan they had.

It was a plan to reclaim the Tower, which was originally their world, and expel the entities known as Players.

Then...

"If you can do it, do it. I will wait."

He received a rather positive response.

"Hoo-."

"It seems to have gone well for now."

At Ananta's response, the Administrators approached him.

The closer they got, the more chills they felt.

'How strong was he at his peak?'

'Did those guys seal him?'

'Good thing we hurried. If we had delayed, he would have devoured us.'

The Administrators clung to Ananta to break the seal.

A green glow emanated from the hands of the Administrators.

The work to undo Vishnu's seal had begun.

-----

Ananta closed his eyes again.

He silently waited for the Administrators to break his seal.

A day and a half.

The Administrators had been working hard to break Ananta's seal for a considerable amount of time.

"I didn't think it would take this long."

Was it really a weakened seal?

Crunch~.

The trees embedded in Ananta's hearts twisted and slowly came out.

Very slowly and with the utmost care.

The speed at which the seal was breaking was much slower than initially expected.

"It's not just Vishnu's tree."

"Yes. That guy couldn't have created a seal of this power on his own."

"There are some more. And besides-."

The 51st-floor Administrator broke into a cold sweat as he watched the most annoying force resisting his power.

"There's something much more annoying mixed in here than Vishnu's seal."

This was different from a simple seal. If it had been just a simple type of magic seal, it wouldn't have taken this long.

Moreover, if that were all, Ananta would have already broken the seal on his own.

"It probably won't be easy."

Crunch~.

As doubts about the seal increased...

"That's a spell I created myself with great dedication."

"A spell?"

The Administrators turned their heads upon hearing an unfamiliar voice.

Two people walked towards them from the other side of the valley.

Step, step.

"Well, it seems that guy Gandharva didn't just set up a simple seal. He really had us in his sights."

A tall man with two horns on his head and a black club in his hand.

"As expected, it's always more fun when I'm with my Hyung-nim."

Son OhGong, with an expression that couldn't hide his joy, walked with the Ru Yi Bang hanging over his shoulder.

The Great Sage, Heaven's Equal (平天大聖) and The Great Sage, Who Pacifies Heaven (齊天大聖), who once fought together against Celestial Realm, approached Ananta.

Vritra, upon discovering the Bull Demon King, bared his teeth and looked at him with his torn red eyes.

Bull Demon King.

The being who, along with Vishnu, had sealed the King of Monsters, Ananta, with a powerful spell.

-Bull Demon King, how dare you come here-!

In the instant Vritra's cry echoed in the valley...

Zas!

In the blink of an eye, the Bull Demon King's hand, which was already next to Vritra's head, grabbed his teeth.

"Shut up and close that stinky mouth first."

Boom!

The Bull Demon King, gripping Vritra's teeth, slammed him to the ground with all his might.

Son OhGong, participating in a battle with him for the first time in a long time, smiled at his Hyung-nim's fiery action.

"You're still alive, brother."