

Leveling with the Gods

Chapter 9

YuWon slowly stepped into the safe zone.

People whispered amongst themselves at the unbelievable sight.

“Wha-What did he just do?”

“You could kill them?”

“Then...”

People’s gazes switched focus from YuWon to the countless corpse chunks on the ground. If the Earthworms were killable, could the thousands of people who were massacred outside the safe zone have lived instead?

“Hey, YuWon—!”

Someone approached YuWon.

When YuWon turned his head towards the familiar voice, he saw Kim MyungHoon making his way out of the crowd towards him.

“Where did you go? I was worried because you suddenly disappeared.”

YuWon thought MyungHoon must be pretty adept at acting. In front of all these people, he was able to act so friendly to an underclassman that he used to use as a punching bag until just yesterday.

MyungHoon decided that showing off his “friendship” with YuWon to the crowd would be beneficial to him.

Instead of replying to MyungHoon, YuWon looked around his surroundings.

The atmosphere was heavy. There was a mix of fear, wariness, and hope in the people’s gazes.

Paying no heed, YuWon walked towards the numbers engraved on the invisible wall at the center of the safe zone.

The maximum capacity was 1500 people. 1427 fell quite short of that number. Also...

"The food that they have..." YuWon asked, pointing to the food that people held in their hands, food that looked like it was looted from convenience stores and fast food restaurants. "Did you guys leave the safe zone for it?"

The closest convenience store was 20 meters* away from the safe zone. It appeared as though the food that they had was sourced from outside the safe zone.

*PR/N: 20m = 65ft

"We had no other choice. We didn't have a lot of food left, and the 3rd and 4th Tutorials will surely be harder than this," MyungHoon replied.

"So what you're saying... is that you guys need rations."

"That's right."

"You guys aren't wrong."

There were less than three minutes remaining for the 2nd Tutorial.

The earlier commotion was probably people arguing about securing more rations before the 2nd Tutorial finalized.

"Is that the resupply squad?" YuWon looked over at the group of timid and anxious looking people. "They're people that were pushed to the outer zone, aren't they?"

They were people that were in the orange safe zone. People that almost died. Those were the people that had brought back rations for the group.

"So, what, you guys were going to force them to go outside again? So they can bring back more food?"

"Well, they're people that would have died anyway."

MyungHoon was right. They're people that should have died.

However, the people that exiled them to their deaths once already had no right to be deciding the fate of these people.

"Since they should have died, you want them to risk their lives to bring back food?" YuWon said, staring MyungHoon dead in the eyes.

MyungHoon started shaking after seeing YuWon's expression. YuWon wasn't doing anything other than staring at him, but MyungHoon couldn't help but cower. This wasn't the same YuWon that he once knew.

MyungHoon avoided YuWon's gaze, but when he noticed his group standing nearby, it gave him back his courage.

Looking YuWon straight in the eyes, Kim MyungHoon started talking. "It seems that you still haven't adjusted yet."

"Adjusted?"

"You still think this is the same comfy, cushy world that you lived in? A world with laws and morals?" MyungHoon gauged people's reactions after asking that question.

He could see a handful of people nodding. It was partly because they agreed, but also because they were trying to justify their actions. It couldn't be helped since the world had changed. To survive, you had to sacrifice someone else.

That thought process is how they ended up sending that "small group" of people outside of the safe zone.

"YuWon, in order to survive, you need to become a coward. Be cowardly, and be selfish. I'm giving you advice, not as a sunbae,* but as another human being.

*TL/N: Korean equivalent of senpai.

"Adjust, you say..."

YuWon couldn't help but let out a laugh. To think he would hear this from a brat like Kim MyungHoon of all people.

[FINALIZING THE 2ND TUTORIAL.]

[Distributing 500 points to all the participants in the safe zone.]

[You have obtained an inventory pouch.]

[Your inventory pouch will disappear upon dying.]

Plop—

A small messenger bag fell on top of everyone's heads. YuWon picked up the bag before speaking.

“There are many ways to survive. I don’t really want to interfere or give you any advice. But here’s the thing.”

[THE 3RD TUTORIAL WILL NOW BEGIN.]

“Don’t cross the line. No matter what.”

YuWon didn’t specify what that “line” was, but he didn’t have a lot of time to just stand around and talk.

As soon as he finished talking, YuWon looked away from MyungHoon. It was now time for everyone to focus on the contents of the next Tutorial.

[Hunt the monsters in the sector and collect 50 essence.]

[In 70 hours, the gate will activate.]

[After the time limit, the sector will be destroyed.]

[TIME LIMIT : 72 : 00 : 00]

Voom, woom—

In the middle of a street in the safe zone, a long, opaque tunnel appeared. There was a number on the tunnel.

[0 / 50]

It was the number of essence that the participants of the 3rd Tutorial had to collect.

The opaque color meant that the gate hadn’t activated yet.

“Is that... the tunnel?”

You could move onto the next Tutorial sector after collecting 50 essence. That tunnel was the pathway that transferred you to the next Tutorial sector.

It was a pretty simple mission.

Everyone who heard the Tutorial’s explanation had a similar thought.

“It’s just like a video game...”

Hunt monsters and collect items. It’s a quest that anyone who has played any amount of video games would have gotten at least once. However, the real world wasn’t a video game. It wasn’t quite as simple a thing to do.

“O-Over there!”

“Zombies? A-Aren’t those zombies?”

A few zombies could be seen in the middle of the street. People thought they had disappeared after the 1st Tutorial.

But it wasn’t just zombies. Various other monsters started appearing. There were giant spiders, as well as pigs with sharp, spiky fur. There were even centipedes the size of a human arm crawling up the sides of buildings.

“Uh, uhhh...”

“The world is...”

The entire world had already become a dungeon.

That’s when someone shouted, noticing the ground, “The safe zone is still here!”

“I-It really is!”

YuWon clicked his tongue, disapproving of their cheer.

“... Tsk.”

The people who cheered probably wouldn’t survive much longer. The objective of the 3rd Tutorial wasn’t surviving, but “hunting.”

50 essence. The only way to truly survive was to collect them, allowing you to move onto the next Tutorial. You couldn’t progress any further with just self-preservation in the safe zone.

YuWon got up from his spot and started moving again.

“YuWon!”

MyungHoon’s voice stopped YuWon. He was about to step out of the safe zone when he turned his head to look back at MyungHoon. He wore an annoyed face that said, ‘If you have something to say, be quick.’

“What if we team up? Won’t it be more convenient for you if you have companions?” MyungHoon offered, holding out his hand.

This was the second time MyungHoon held his hand out to YuWon during the Tutorial. The first time was at the start of the 2nd Tutorial, and now once again in the 3rd Tutorial.

YuWon stared blankly at his hand before replying.

“I don’t think it’s even been a day yet. Did you already forget?”

“What?”

MyungHoon was confused by his response, before becoming enraged.

“If you want to survive, don’t try to latch onto someone. Be a good boy and wait over there. Know your place.”

It was what YuWon had told him right before the 2nd Tutorial started.

MyungHoon was furious. His expression was enough of an answer to YuWon’s question.

“So you do remember.”

Those were YuWon’s last words to MyungHoon before he turned his back and stepped out of the safe zone again.

Watching YuWon vanish as soon as he had returned made MyungHoon grind his teeth.

“That son of bitch, acting all high and mighty...”

YuWon could already walk around freely outside the safe zone starting in the 2nd Tutorial. The outside was crawling with monsters, but he was perfectly safe by himself.

MyungHoon thought to himself, ‘So I need to defeat these guys and get essences or whatever?’

He looked around at the monsters outside. There were many different types this time.

The 3rd Tutorial was unlike the previous two. You couldn’t survive simply by running away. It was a mission where you had to gather 50 monster drops in order to survive.

“50, you say...”

He assumed the bags were given to all the participants to use as a means to hold the essence.

MyungHoon kept looking back and forth between the bag and the monsters outside the safe zone. After making a realization, the corners of his lips perked up.

“You all heard it, right?” MyungHoon asked the people around him after wiping the smirk off his face.

There were two types of people in the crowd. The first were people terrified of the fact that they had to fight monsters. The second were people who had built up the resolve to fight.

“I’m sure you all know what we have to do in order to survive.”

MyungHoon raised his knife.

“Let’s do this, together.”

* * *

Reaper Scans

Translator – NumbaWon

Proofreader – BringTheRayn

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YuWon watched MyungHoon rally up the people once again.

‘He sure became cunning and inflammatory.’

A world that was suddenly turned upside down was enough to make any person go crazy. In the process, people often became cruel and selfish. So MyungHoon’s change was honestly nothing unexpected.

‘If anything, this is a completely normal thing to happen.’

That’s why YuWon didn’t have any intention to butt heads with people like MyungHoon.

There were many ways to survive, which meant he couldn’t interfere with every single person just because their methods were immoral.

‘Besides...’

YuWon walked down into the subway station.

‘I’ll never see him again after the 3rd Tutorial anyways.’

Zip—

YuWon turned the bag he was wearing upside down.

Pour—

The marbles that spilled out of the bag went inside the new inventory pouch he had obtained. There must have been over a hundred of them.

[Mana Essence]

[132 / 50]

Was it because the 3rd Tutorial had started?

He could see the display for the number of marbles in his inventory pouch.

YuWon threw away his bag and hung his inventory pouch on his hip.

‘I’m lucky I obtained this much essence in the 2nd Tutorial.’

Mana essence was essential to passing the 3rd Tutorial. These items were obtainable from the Earthworms in the 2nd Tutorial. That’s why until the 2nd Tutorial ended, YuWon focused on collecting mana essence by hunting Earthworms.

YuWon’s hunting speed was remarkably fast. In just a day, he far exceeded the necessary number of essence to pass the Tutorial. He could make it through to the 4th Tutorial without doing anything else, but...

“I wonder if I can collect a thousand of them.”

YuWon had no intention of being satisfied with just 132 essence.

“Krrrrr—”

“Shhrrrk, shiik—”

At the start of the 3rd Tutorial, the inside of the subway station changed into a different dungeon. There were not only Earthworms, but also zombies, Moss Spiders, and even Subterranean Snakes.

All kinds of monsters gathered in the subway station to create the largest dungeon within the Hongdae sector.

“There really are a lot of them.”

Was this perhaps a greeting for the first person to enter the dungeon? The monsters all rushed towards YuWon.

Seeing the warm welcome, YuWon mumbled to himself, “... Shall I try this again?”

Shweek, shwaaa—

YuWon raised his hands. The mana in the environment started gathering over his palms.

30 Arcane Power with 0.5% proficiency in [Master of Mana.] Compared to his first try, he only had 4 more Arcane Power and a sliver of additional skill proficiency but...

Shwik, shweek—

As if that was enough, the unstable orb of mana started slowly stabilizing.

How long had he focused for?

[You created a proper Mana Blast.]

[Registering Mana Blast as a skill.]

Above YuWon's hands, a proper [Mana Blast] had formed.

REAPER SCANS

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